

October 2018

Briefing on IRG-Rail's Annual Forum 2018

CLECAT attended Independent Regulators' Group (IRG) Rail's second annual forum which took place on 27th September in The Hague. The forum gathered industry stakeholders, including Regulatory Bodies, Infrastructure Managers, Rail Undertakings and associations who primarily discussed disruption management and the current developments regarding quality on Rail Freight Corridors (RFCs). The main conclusions reached during the second annual forum are outlined below:

Disruption Management

The morning session of the forum focused on disruption management which has attracted significant importance following the Rastatt incident in 2017. As a result of the mismanagement that followed the incident, the [Handbook for International Contingency Management](#) was created, which provides standards that enable the continuation of freight transport at the highest level in case of an international disruption.

The attendees of the forum highlighted the importance of ensuring effective communication with the neighbouring countries when incidents occur. Guus de Mol, President of the Management Board of the Rhine-Alpine Corridor, stressed that in the mid-term the following measures are of particular importance:

- the harmonisation of operational rules
- overcoming language barriers
- improving the existing infrastructure
- improving capacity indication, especially for re-routing lines

On language requirements, the European Commission has published a preliminary version for a [draft regulation amending Annex VI of the Train Driver Directive \(Directive 2007/59/EC\)](#) to allow pilot projects exploring alternative options (CLECAT Newsletter 2018/25 refers).

Performance of Rail Freight Corridors based on KPIs for 2017 and 2018

- **Capacity:** it has been decided for most RFCs (1,2,4,6,7,8) to decrease the offered capacity from 2017 to 2018, to harmonise the volume of offered capacity with real demand coming from the market. The percentage of requested capacity, in comparison with the offered capacity, has increased in most RFCs, which according to IRG, demonstrates the good work of C-OSSs in defining a PaP product closer to the customers' needs.
- **Data:** the quality and homogeneity of data has to be improved.
- **Infrastructure:** the level of details of TCRs and involvement of RUs needs improvement.
- **Allocation processes:** a decrease in user satisfaction was registered in 2017 for the results of allocation processes through the C-OSSs

- **PaP products:** positive feedback has been received from the market for PaP products. The best results appeared with the FlexPaP concept in general, the CID overall and the monthly performance reports.

Quality in the Rail Sector

The afternoon session comprised presentations on current developments about quality in the rail sector, including:

- Common Template for Service Facilities
- Timetable Redesign
- Technical Barriers

In an effort to make the sector more flexible, an update for the outdated timetabling system was presented, which is currently being carried out in a pilot project. This system is based on a capacity model and aims at being market-oriented, efficient and reliable.

Ms Karen Davies from the European Rail Agency (ERA) argued that more flexibility and customer-orientation is needed to increase the attractiveness of the rail sector. Moreover, as the 2017 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) showed a correlation between the number of national rules and punctuality of trains, she stressed that the breakdown of technical rules and barriers is of utmost importance to lead to a Framework based on safety, quality and sustainability.

Improvement of Rail Freight in Europe

The presentations were followed by a panel discussion, focussing on how to improve rail freight in Europe and the role of regulatory bodies.

Following the customer needs was emphasised as one of the aspects which needs to be addressed, while always following the approach “Think European, act national!”. In that regard, the following key areas in need of attention were defined:

- language requirements
- Track Access Charges
- Infrastructure Management
- Efficiency and Interoperability

In concluding the event, the panellists emphasised that the rail regulators should not hide between rules and regulations if that would mean losing sight of the ultimate goal, i.e. increasing the quality of rail freight. Furthermore, they stressed that the regulators should use all tools which are at their disposal to ensure a level playing field.