



Creating a single European rail capacity market – RUs' position on unified processes

Railway Undertakings – organised in FTE, ERFA and Allrail – consider the single European market as a necessary ambition to allow seamless domestic and cross-border traffic making running a train as easy as running a truck or a bus.

With today's capacity management being national or IM-specific conversions of 2012/34/EU and other EU legislation, alignment between IMs capacity management processes and also specific cross-border capacities depend on voluntary action by the IMs or national Ministries and thus are hampered. RUs operating on more than one IM network face the challenge of following different standards. Sometimes RUs are even in the absurd situation that the RU needs to invest scarce resources to foster/moderate the alignment between different IMs.

Examples can be seen in totally diverging periods for network statement consultation, the difference in ad-hoc request response times or in the different handling of TCRs on cross-border lines without coordination. Differences exist even in the definition of planning and operations, where in one country, a train may be considered delayed (in operation) in the next country and the same train may require a new path (planning). Even the well-established draft and final path offer deadlines in the annual timetable are not fully aligned yet.

To improve customer services, reduce the hurdles for cross-border trains, and for business expansion, RUs ask IMs and policymakers for the creation of a real single European rail capacity market, without specific national standards. **The goal** is that the capacity planning is done the same way all over Europe, no matter if on one IM network or across several borders. This shall be supported by a harmonised European legal framework.

Therefore, **the RUs ask for**

- The same processes everywhere in Europe, including the same timelines and workflows
- Avoiding any difference in the handling of national and international traffic
- Covering all items of capacity management in the common process including early planning, TCR planning, Annual Timetables, and later requests as well as subsequent changes.

To enable these needs, RUs ask

- To put IMs directly into responsibility for aligned handling and aligned capacity. IMs need to be directly in charge of processes alignment, provide harmonised capacity and act “as if they were one” towards the applicants.
- To avoid intermediate business layers in the capacity management process like Rail(Freight)Corridors or RNE in the interface to applicants, as this increases bureaucracy, adds complexity, may result in unclear responsibilities and consequently may water down improvements. Of course, it shall not hinder IMs from using associations (like RNE) to facilitate the IM internal alignment.
- To create real enforcement of rules directly all over Europe. This cannot be done by voluntary associations that will hardly judge/investigate the members they depend on. This requires independence from other actors, the right expertise, timeliness and clear legal mandates (see also FTE-ERFA-ALLRAIL position paper on international decision-making).
- To create a European legal framework directly covering these aspects and avoiding national specifics in all capacity management stages, including path and TCR planning. With this RUs in FTE assume a major step forward into a common rail market, promoting both domestic and cross-border rail traffic and improving the competitiveness of rail in regard to other modes that do not suffer such fragmented capacity management.
- To establish a standardised European-wide applied IT eco-system to support the process, fostering real cross-border solutions. Combining the technology cross-border would also assist in avoiding differences in the process.

RUs require IMs and policymakers to overcome national thinking and combine their efforts and knowledge. Only if capacity management is done “as if all IMs were unified” the Single European Railway Area can become a reality, the rail sector can become competitive towards road and air. It is necessary to start acting in this way already based on existing legislation as for instance required in 2012/34/EU.