

ANNUAL REPORT

RFC AMBER
2019

TIMELINE 2019

2 January	Website on-line
14 January	Amber Rail Freight Corridor goes operational
	Publication of PaP Catalogue for TT 2019/2020
	Publication of CID Books
18 February	10th Management Board meeting in Ljubljana
	New MaBo Chairperson elected – Mrs Andrea Mosóczi (HU)
19 February	2nd RAG-TAG meeting in Ljubljana
1 March	Managing Director elected – Dr Gerhard Troche
16 May	11th Management Board meeting in Budapest
28 August	New information brochure
13 September	Promotional video
17 September	12th Management Board meeting in Koper
	Approval of the Action Plan
18 September	Grand Opening Event in Koper
	New ExBo Chairperson elected – Mr Boris Živec (SI)
2 October	National consultation with RUs, RNE and other corridors in Budapest
14 October	Publication of Reserve Capacity Catalogue
21 October	The Managing Director assumes position as Chair of the RFC Network
2 December	Successful roll-out of Customer Information Platform
5 December	13th Management Board meeting in Sopron

DEAR READER,

in your hands you hold the first Annual Report of the Amber Rail Freight Corridor. In 2017 the European Commission had approved the establishment of RFC Amber through Commission Implementing Decision 2017/1177, following a joint proposal by the four Member States along the route of the corridor: the Republic of Slovenia, Hungary, the Slovak Republic and the Republic of Poland. The initiative for setting up RFC Amber was also supported by the rail freight community – railway undertakings, intermodal operators and terminal managers – the future customers of the corridor. With the establishment of RFC Amber in 2019 several years of intensive preparations by the Ministries in charge of transport of the countries concerned and the Railway Infrastructure Managers SŽ-I (Slovenia), GYSEV (Hungary), MÁV (Hungary), ŽSR (Slovakia), PLK (Poland) and the Hungarian Rail Capacity Allocation Office VPE bore fruit.

Still before its formal establishment the Members of RFC Amber had set up the Railway and Terminal Advisory Groups (RAG, TAG), holding two RAG-TAG-meetings until 2019. Further, already in its early phase of establishment RFC Amber had participated in the joint stand of RFCs at the TEN-T-Days in Ljubljana in April 2018, presenting the corridor for the first time to a broader public. The activities of the corridor were supported by a Programme Support Action (PSA) under the Connecting Europe Facility of the European Commission.

In January 2019 the corridor published its first offer of pre-arranged train paths (PaPs) as the last step to make the corridor operational, slightly ahead of the legal deadline set by RFC-Regulation (EU) 913/2010. The first new EU Rail Freight Corridor based on the initiative of Member States was born. The Grand Opening Event on 18 September 2019 in Koper, in presence of EU Transport Commissioner Violeta Bulc gathered many high-level Representatives from the countries' Ministries and from Members and customers of our corridor.

The establishment of RFC Amber closed some important gaps in the network of European Rail Freight Corridors: It connects directly the Slovenian Adriatic seaport of Koper – with its growing business and remarkably high market share for rail in hinterland traffic of more than 50% – with important destinations in Hungary and Slovakia; it is the first Rail Freight Corridor linking the eastern parts of Poland, Slovakia and Hungary and connecting at the Hungarian-Serbian border at Kelebia to a freight route to South-Eastern Europe, which gradually is regaining its role as an important international freight artery; at the EU Eastern border at Terespol and at Slawkow in Upper Silesia it links to the Euro-Asian rail landbridge which sees steadily growing transport volumes. A large part of the corridor is today not covered by the TEN-T Core Network; the Member States' commitment and the Infrastructure Managers and Capacity Allocation Office's common work to develop this corridor is therefore of even higher value for the countries, economies and regions concerned. RFC Amber has become the corridor connecting the heart of Europe!

RFC Amber became from the beginning an active Member in the network of European Rail Freight Corridors. Our corridor is fully included in the Customer Information Platform (CIP) of RailNetEurope. From October 2019 until February 2020 RFC Amber chaired the RFC Network, the European-wide cooperation platform of all EU Rail Freight Corridors.

With its establishment RFC Amber enters into a new phase of development, which will be focused on continuous improvement of services and infrastructure and needs to be oriented at customer's expectations. The adoption by the Management Board in September 2019 of an RFC Amber Action Plan, based on input from our Railway and Terminal Advisory Groups, will be an important element in the future work of the corridor. Close cooperation with other RFCs will be another cornerstone.

The successful establishment of RFC Amber would not have been possible without the close cooperation and commitment by many entities, on the side of the Ministries, the Railway Infrastructure Managers and Capacity Allocation Office and the Railway Undertakings and Terminals. We would like to express our gratitude to all Members of the Executive Board, the Management Board, the C-OSS team, the Working Groups, the Secretariat, the Railway and Terminal Advisory Groups and all experts who have been involved and contributed to this joint achievement.

We are confident that the strong commitment by all Members and Parties, the dedication by the persons working for the corridor and the positive spirit of cooperation achieved during the establishment phase create a good basis for the future development of RFC Amber.

We wish all of you a pleasant reading of this Annual Report.



Dr. Gerhard Troche
Managing Director



Boris Živec
Chair of the Executive Board



Andrea Mosóczy
Chair of the Management Board

Working together for improving the conditions for growing, efficient, competitive, sustainable and reliable rail freight





INTRODUCTION	6
Who we are	6
Characteristics of RFC Amber	6
Genesis of RFC Amber	6
Cooperation at EU level	7
Programme Support Action	7
CORRIDOR GOVERNANCE	8
Executive Board	8
Management Board	8
Managing Director	8
Corridor One-Stop-Shop	8
Working Groups	9
RAG-TAG	9
Secretariat	9
PHOTO GALLERY	10
MAIN ACTIVITIES	12
Capacity offer	12
Traffic and Train Performance Management	13
Coordination of Temporary Capacity Restrictions	13
International Contingency Management	13
Customer Information Platform	13
Corridor Information Documents	14
Bottleneck Study	14
Website	14
Marketing & PR	15
Action Plan	15
PUBLICITY AND CUSTOMER ORIENTATION	16
RAG-TAG meeting in Ljubljana	16
Opening Event in Koper	16
Cooperation with customers and stakeholders	17
RFC Amber in the corridor community	17
OUTLOOK INTO THE FUTURE	18

INTRODUCTION

WHO WE ARE

Rail Freight Corridor Amber is a cooperation of the five railway Infrastructure Managers SŽ-I (Slovenia), GYSEV and MÁV (Hungary), ŽSR (Slovakia) and PLK (Poland) and the Hungarian Rail Capacity Allocation Office VPE. These six partners are jointly managing and developing the Rail Freight Corridor in line with **EU-Regulation 913/2010** concerning a European rail network for competitive freight and **Commission Implementing Decision 2017/177** with a view on meeting growing customer expectations and improving the conditions for efficient, competitive, sustainable and reliable rail freight.

The eponym of our corridor is the legendary Amber Road, an important ancient trade route, whose alignment the corridor broadly follows and which it revives in form of a modern Rail Freight Corridor, adapted to the needs of modern transport and advanced logistics. With their cooperation the RFC Amber Members aim at unlocking the growth potential in long-distance freight traffic, promoting rail's key role in a sustainable European transport system and contributing to the prosperity of the countries and regions which the corridor serves.

In the scope of the responsibilities and tasks of the corridor governance is a wide range of activities, including the provision of information about the conditions of use of the corridor, capacity planning and allocation, coordination across borders of traffic management – even in case of disturbances – and Temporary Capacity Restrictions, the promotion of interoperability, development of the exchange with customers and terminals and monitoring of the traffic development on the corridor. The corridor is also dealing with international contingency management in case of major disruptions and with promotional activities.

CHARACTERISTICS OF RFC AMBER

RFC Amber **connects the heart of Europe**, a prosperous region in Central Europe comprising the dynamically and fast-growing economies of Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Slovenia. End-to-end the corridor has an extension of ca. 1,400 km. Including different routes the total length of principal lines is therefore almost the double; with all diversionary and connecting lines the length of the network covered by RFC Amber is more than 3,300 km.

Via the seaport of Koper RFC Amber connects to the world-wide system of **maritime transport**. The corridor covers important **hinterland routes** of the seaport of Koper. RFC Amber also reaches the Serbian border, linking to a railway route through South-Eastern Europe, which gradually regains its role as an artery for international rail freight. At the Polish eastern border the corridor connects to Euro-Asian railway corridors, allowing onward rail transportation to and from Russia, China and the growing economies in Central and East Asia via the Trans-Siberian Railway.

Many new businesses and industries have been established along the corridor in the past years – many of them are using rail in their supply chains. Modern terminals along the corridor are gateways for efficient and environmentally friendly intermodal transport solutions. Major industries have direct access to the rail network.

- 2,853 km of **principal lines** (further 225 km in the future)
- 299 km of **diversionary lines**
- 206 km of **connecting lines**
- Connecting with 53 **service facilities** (terminals, seaports, marshalling yards)

RFC Amber wants to improve business opportunities and strengthen the **logistical competitiveness** of its customers and the countries and regions it serves. For this purpose the countries and railway infrastructure managers are continuously investing into the infrastructure of the corridor. A new rail access to the seaport of Koper is under construction and further improvements are on the way. RFC Amber provides an attractive and flat North-South route East of the Alps ideal for freight trains. Fully electrified from end to end it forms a basis for **environmentally friendly green transport** and sustainable **low emission** supply chains. Cooperation with other freight corridors ensures access to all major destinations in Europe.



Republic of Poland



Slovak Republic



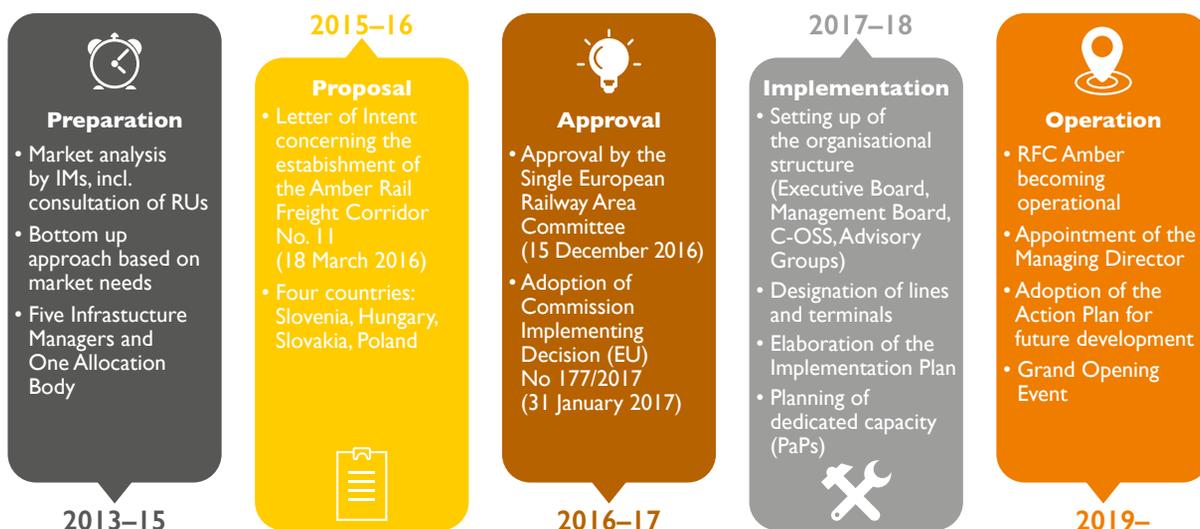
Hungary



Republic of Slovenia

The Amber Rail Freight Corridor (RFC I I) is defined by Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2017/177 with the following Principal Route: Koper — Ljubljana —/Zalaszentiván — Sopron/Csorna —/(Hungarian-Serbian border) — Kelebia — Budapest —/— Komárom — Leopoldov/Rajka — Bratislava — Žilina — Katowice/Kraków — Warszawa/Łuków — Terespol — (Polish-Belarusian border).

GENESIS OF RFC AMBER



RFC Amber played a pivotal role in the development of the European rail network for competitive freight by being the first EU rail freight corridor set up voluntarily on the initiative of the Member States concerned. Following discussions between the Ministries, the railway Infrastructure Managers and the Capacity Allocation Body, complemented by initial market studies and market consultations since 2013, the Republic of Slovenia, Hungary, the Slovak Republic and the Republic of Poland opted for establishment of the corridor and submitted in March 2016 a joint **Letter of Intent** to the European Commission. After a positive opinion by the Single European Rail Area Committee (SERAC) in December 2016 and positive evaluation of the proposal by the Commission, the latter adopted in January 2017 Commission Implementing Decision 177/2017, outlining the principal route of the corridor and forming together with RFC-Regulation (EU) 913/2010 the legal basis of RFC Amber.

From that point of time the Member States, railway Infrastructure Managers and Allocation Body had two years to make the corridor operational, implying the setting up of the governance structure, including a Corridor One-Stop-Shop, the designation of lines and terminals, definition of dedicated capacity, elaboration and adoption of an **Implementation Plan**, of a **corridor information** document and of a **Framework for Capacity Allocation**. Thanks to joint efforts and smooth cooperation among the partners RFC Amber became operational in **January 2019** slightly ahead of the legal deadline.

The establishment of RFC Amber has proven a strong commitment by its Members, which also will be an important driver for its further development.

PROGRAMME SUPPORT ACTION

RFC Amber applied in 2017 successfully for **Connecting Europe Facility** (CEF) funding under a Programme Support Action (PSA) for Rail Freight Corridors. The PSA for RFC Amber, with a total funding amount of circa 1.1 million EUR and running from September 2017 until December 2020, supports the activities of the corridor, aiming at the timely establishment of the corridor in line with the requirements of the RFC-Regulation and also comprising development measures such as the elaboration of a Bottleneck Study.

Beneficiaries of the PSA for RFC Amber are all Parties of the Management Board, i.e. the five Infrastructure Managers SŽ-I, GYSEV, MÁV, ŽSR and PLK and the Hungarian Rail Capacity Allocation Office VPE, and the Ministries in charge of transport of Poland and Slovenia.

The Beneficiaries jointly appointed GYSEV as Coordinator of the Action and concluded a **Cooperation Agreement** for the implementation. The Coordinator monitors the implementation of the Action, registers the accomplishment of milestones and reports on a regular basis, such as in meetings of Working Groups, the Coordination Group and the Management Board and provides Progress Reports in line with the **Grant Agreement** to the **Innovation and Networks Executive Agency** (INEA). The Executive Board also receives regular updates about the state of play of implementation of the Action. The Beneficiaries deliver the requested information and required financial data and documentation upon request to the Coordinator.

At the end of 2019 the majority of milestones (19 out of 21) has been achieved successfully and without or with only very minor delays and ca. 60% of the total budget have been absorbed. INEA has expressed high satisfaction with the quality of implementation of the Action as well as with the reporting.

CORRIDOR GOVERNANCE

EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Executive Board of RFC Amber was established on 5 December 2017 by the Ministries in charge of transport of the four Member States signing a Memorandum of Understanding in Brussels at the margins of the TTE Council. The Executive Board is composed of representatives from the Ministries. From 2017 until September 2019 the Executive Board was chaired by Hungary with Ms Szilvia Mogyorósi from the Hungarian Ministry of Innovation and Technology fulfilling the role of the Executive Board Chair with great dedication. On **18 September 2019**, at the Opening Event of the corridor, Mr Boris Živec, from the Slovenian Ministry of Transport was elected as new Chairperson. Mr Živec had an instrumental role in the genesis of RFC Amber.

MANAGEMENT BOARD

On 6 April 2017 the five Infrastructure Managers and one Rail Capacity Allocation Body of RFC Amber; i.e. SŽ-Infrastruktura (SI), MÁV Hungarian State Railway (HU), Győr-Sopron-Ebenfurti Railways (HU), VPE-Hungarian Rail Capacity Allocation Office (HU), Železnice Slovenskej republiky (SK) and PKP Polskie Linie Kolejowe (PL) signed an Agreement at highest management level formally establishing the Management Board of RFC Amber. The Management Board is made up of high-level management representatives from the above-mentioned companies, who took on the task of implementing RFC Amber and are responsible for managing and developing the corridor. Until **18 February 2019** the Management Board was chaired by Mr Franc Klobučar from SŽ-I, when Mrs Andrea Mosóczy from GYSEV took over the position of Chairperson of the Management Board. Both have shown a strong commitment to their tasks and dedication to the development of RFC Amber. In 2019 the Management Board met four times where decisions were made for the operation and development of the corridor. Further decision-making took place in written form in order to ensure smooth operations and good progress in developing the corridor.

MANAGING DIRECTOR

On **1 March 2019** Dr Gerhard Troche was appointed as the Managing Director of RFC Amber. He is responsible for organising and coordinating the work of the corridor; ensuring together with the Chair of the Management Board the exchange with the Executive Board and the Railway and Terminal Advisory Groups (RAG-TAG), and representing RFC Amber towards stakeholders and cooperation partners and in various cooperation platforms and sector organisations, such as the RFC Network, RailNetEurope (RNE) and the SERAC Working Group for RFCs. The Managing Director supports the PSA Coordinator to carry out its duties stemming from the PSA Grant Agreement. Dr Troche brings with him a long professional experience in the railway field; he has previously also worked at the European Commission, where he was in charge of the Rail Freight Corridors, which gives him a strong background for his role in RFC Amber.

CORRIDOR-ONE STOP SHOP

The Corridor-One Stop Shop (C-OSS) facilitates train path management for international rail freight along RFC Amber. It is a single contact point to receive information about the use of the corridor and allowing customers to request and receive answers regarding infrastructure capacity for international freight trains along the corridor. For RFC Amber PLK acts as C-OSS and since 2018 Mr Roman Stańczak holds the position of C-OSS Manager of RFC Amber.

All Infrastructure Managers and one Allocation Body along RFC Amber set up a joint process for the provision of dedicated capacity in form of Pre-arranged Paths (PaPs) and Reserve Capacity (RC), based on the already existing and harmonized international rules and using the harmonised documents elaborated by RailNetEurope (RNE).

The C-OSS of RFC Amber works in continuous cooperation with a team of experts (forming the Timetabling and One Stop Shop Working Group) appointed by each Member of the Corridor and is also in closely cooperating with the C-OSSs of other corridors (C-OSS Community).

THE MAIN TOPICS DEALT WITH BY THE C-OSS IN 2019 WERE:

- Consulting RUs for preparation of Annual PaP offer (so-called Capacity Wish List)
- Constructing and harmonizing offers for Annual Requests, Late Path Requests and Reserve Capacity Requests
- Elaborating the CID Book 4 with the support of all contributing IMs and AB
- Coordinating and supporting RUs and IMs during the paths ordering phase
- Collecting and analysing customers' international capacity wishes and needs for the annual timetable 2021

THE ROLE OF THE C-OSS IS ALSO TO FOLLOW AND CONTRIBUTE TO RNE PROJECTS RELATED TO CAPACITY ON THE FREIGHT CORRIDORS:

- Path Coordination System (PCS) Development
- Corridor Information Document and Network Statement Working Group (CID and NS WG)
- Review of International Timetabling Process (TTR)
- Participating in the "C-OSS community" meetings gathering all C-OSS of all corridors aiming at finding common solutions and processes for all corridors

COORDINATION GROUP AND WORKING GROUPS

The Management Board has set up Working Groups addressing specific topics, where experts develop new and better solutions to improve the functioning of the corridor; interoperability and service to customers. The cooperation of the experts in each working group is coordinated by a leader whose tasks are organising the work of the group and providing continuously information to the Managing Director, the Coordination Group and the Management Board about the activities and outcomes of the working group, in particular, about draft proposals and solutions and results from analyses. A Coordination Group chaired by the Managing Director has been set up to tackle major complex issues and to elaborate related proposals for Management Board decisions. The leaders of the Working Groups often participate in the Management Board and Coordination Group meetings upon request by the Chair to report on the activities of the respective groups. The Working Groups play an important role in executing the tasks laid down in the RFC Amber Action Plan (see further below).

NAME OF THE GROUP	LEADER
Coordination	Dr Gerhard Troche (GYSEV)
Marketing and Communication	Márk Hány (GYSEV)
Traffic Management, Train Performance and Operations	Attila Józsefné Mucsi (MÁV)
Temporary Capacity Restrictions	Mirosław Kanclerz (PLK)
Timetable and One Stop Shop	Roman Stańczak (PLK)
Infrastructure, Interoperability and ERTMS	Vladimír Nastišin (ŽSR)
Legal	Katja Rac (SŽ-I)

RAILWAY AND TERMINAL ADVISORY GROUPS (RAG-TAG)

Customer requirements in international rail transport are growing. Two permanent Advisory Groups serve as platforms to facilitate the exchange of information, finding solutions and mutual understanding with customers and terminals of the corridor in a non-discriminatory way. These groups may issue opinions on any proposal made by the Management Board. They may also issue own-initiative opinions, which are to be taken into account by the Management Board. The RAG-TAG is composed of all railway undertakings and terminals interested in the use of the corridor. In RFC Amber the groups are jointly represented by a Spokesperson who acts as a contact person between the Management Board respectively Managing Director and the Advisory Groups. The Spokesperson of the RFC Amber RAG-TAG is Mr András Nyíri from Rail Cargo Carrier Kft. He is also representing the RAG and TAG at international platforms such as the Efficient Cross Corridor Organisation (ECCO, under the umbrella of UIC) dedicated to the cooperation of the RAG-TAG Spokespersons from all corridors.

The Advisory Groups for Railway Undertakings and for Terminals improve the exchange with customers and cooperation partners. Usually one RAG-TAG meeting takes place per year, where the customers can meet face-to-face with the decision-makers of the corridor. In these meetings the customers can report any problems they are facing when using the corridor and with the Management Board they can start a process for finding mutually beneficial solutions. A first RAG-TAG meeting of RFC Amber took place on 23 May 2018 in Brzesko, the second meeting took place in 19 February 2019 in Ljubljana. The Opening Event of 18 September 2019 in Koper (see later) was also well attended by customers of the corridor, representatives of RUs as well as terminals.

SECRETARIAT

The Management Board set up a Corridor Secretariat in September 2017 which provides administrative support to the Management Board, the Managing Director and the Working Groups, ensuring that these can smoothly execute their tasks. The Secretariat also supports communication-related and promotional activities and provides logistical support in the organisation of events, such as RAG-TAG-meetings, participation of the corridor in TEN-T-Days and during 2019 as major event the RFC Amber Opening Event in Koper. The Secretariat is located in Budapest and led by Ms Eszter Boglárka Gáboros from VPE.



OPENING EVENT OF THE AMBER RAIL FREIGHT CORRIDOR 18 September 2019 Praetorian Palace, Koper

RFC Amber celebrated the opening of the corridor on 18 September 2019 in the prestigious Praetorian Palace in Koper. The opening event gathered key representatives of the EU Commission, Ministries, Members, Customers and Stakeholders and also involved a site visit to the Port of Koper.

EU Transport Commissioner Mrs Violeta Bulc congratulated RFC Amber to its successful establishment and highlighted its role for facilitating rail freight in Central-Eastern Europe as well as its function as an integrated part of the network of EU Rail Freight Corridors and then the Trans-European Networks for Transport (TEN-T).



Violeta Bulc
EU-Commissioner
for Transport



Keir Fitch
Head of Unit, European
Commission – DG MOVE



Nina Mauhler
State Secretary,
MZI (Slovenia)



László Mosóczi
State Secretary,
ITM (Hungary)



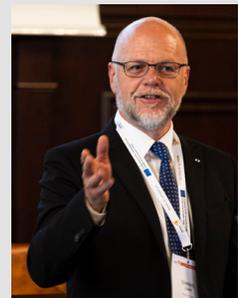
Matjaž Kranjc
Director,
SŽ-I



Andrea Mosóczi
Chair of the Management
Board, RFC Amber



Dr. Gerhard Troche
Managing Director,
RFC Amber



Dimitrij Zadel
President of the Management
Board, Port of Koper



András Nyíri
Spokesperson RAG/TAG,
RFC Amber



Franc Matej
Head of Rail Division,
Metrans Slovakia



Andrej Cah
Management Board Advisor for
Multimodal Transport, Port of Koper



Zoltán Barna-Lázár
Expert,
Freeport of Budapest



Michal Kamiński
Director of Development Investor
Relations and Marketing, PKP Cargo



Dirk Zender
European Quality Assurance
Manager, DB Cargo Europe



Ceremonial handover of the promotional wagons



High-Level Corridor Roundtable with the Members of the corridor



The venue of the meeting was one of the city's architectural landmarks. The event included a site visit to the Port of Koper

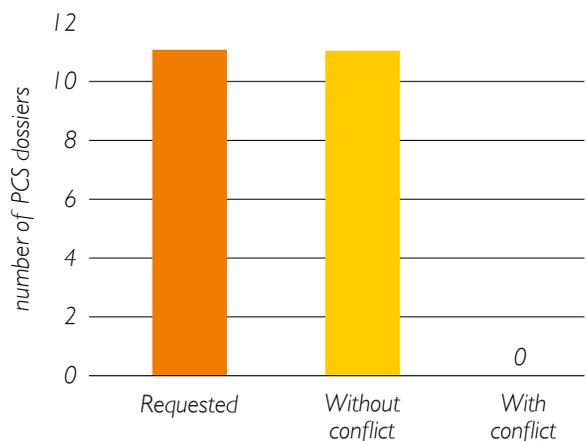
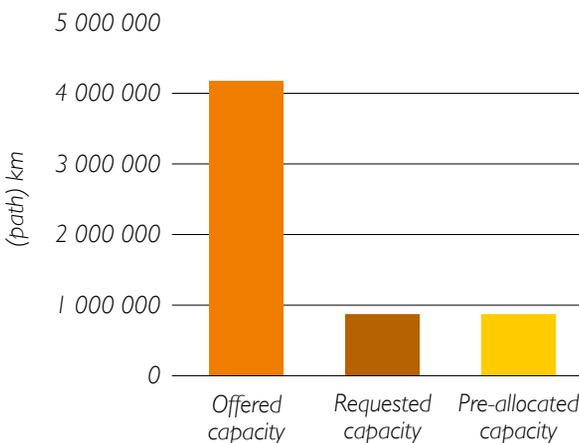
MAIN ACTIVITIES

CAPACITY OFFER

RFC Amber published the first catalogue of **Pre-arranged Paths (PaP)** for timetable 2020 on **14 January 2019**, offering customers around 4.2 million path kilometres for international traffic coordinated among IMs and AB.

Until 8 April 2019, the deadline for placing international path requests, the C-OSS Manager had received 11 requests for TT 2020. All requests were conflict-free. In total 21% of the published capacity was requested. After the pre-allocation phase, the draft and final offers were provided to the applicants in PCS.

The graphs below show the volume of capacity offered, of capacity requested and of pre-allocated capacity respectively the number of requested dossiers.



Volume of capacity on RFC Amber handled by the C-OSS

Volume of requests on RFC Amber handled by the C-OSS

After the pre-allocation phase, the evaluation started with the goal to identify improvements to be implemented for TT 2021. As most crucial improvements were identified the communication with RUs and further development of IT Tools. Some steps towards improvement in these fields have been taken and RFC Amber will continue to work on these issues in cooperation with other stakeholders. In order to provide applicants a PaP offer more adapted to their needs, RFC Amber circulated together with all other RFCs in May 2019 a harmonized list for expression of capacity needs ("capacity wish-list") among all potential applicants, with a deadline to fill in the list by 1 August 2019. Four applicants responded to RFC Amber.

On the basis of the experiences obtained from the RAG-TAG meetings and partially from information provided in the capacity wish-list and the analysis of the requests submitted for TT 2020, the elaboration of the offer for TT 2021 started in September 2019.

Some of the improvements and novelties which have been introduced and may bring a positive effect on the short-term development are the following:

- The PaP from Kelebia to Koper has been divided into two separate PaPs (Koper–Ferencváros and Kelebia–Štúrovo);
- A PaP from Małaszewicze has been extended to Koper, thus offering a path over the entire length of the corridor;
- The PaP from Czechowice Dziedzice to Žilina allows for **extra-long trains of 662 m** (compared to 360 m usually allowed);
- New PaP from Čana to Szolnok connected with RFC OEM for transport to Romania.

Applicants have the possibility to request adjustment of the running times of the published PaP according to their individual needs within a certain bandwidth. The PaP construction was completed on time in December 2019 and the PaP catalogue for TT 2021 was published in PCS on **14 January 2020**.

On **15 October 2019** RFC Amber published **Reserve Capacity (RC)** for TT 2020 for the first time through its C-OSS, offering customers around 4 million path-kilometres of ad hoc paths. The offer was published in PCS and also as an overview of the available capacity on the corridor website.

Reserve Capacity on RFC Amber was offered as a guaranteed contingent of "capacity slots" and international freight paths per day and section (flexible RC approach) in Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and as PaPs in Hungary, which applicants may request up to 30 days before a train run. No request for RC for TT 2020 has been placed.

TRAFFIC AND TRAIN PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

The Traffic Management, Train Performance and Operations Working Group was established in 2018. In 2019 the Working Group did preparatory work for the start of traffic in TT2020. Two main topics in focus during 2019 were the preparation of the processes for **train performance monitoring** and international contingency management (ICM). During the latter part of the year the group also became involved in tasks of the RFC Amber Action Plan (see further below).

Train performance management aims at improving the performance of railway traffic; it consists of train performance monitoring, action planning and implementation. Since 2019 was the first year of operation for RFC Amber, the Working Group focused its activities on train performance monitoring (data collection, reporting and analysis) in order to identify the characteristics and crucial points of train traffic on RFC Amber. On the basis of this information further steps can be taken. The Working Group agreed that in the reports all international trains running on RFC Amber will be taken into account with trains running on pre-arranged paths (PaPs) and those running outside PaPs monitored separately.

The IT tools used for monitoring (**Train Information System – TIS, Oracle Business Intelligence – OBI**) are provided by RailNetEurope (RNE). The leader of the Working Group downloads the **reports** from OBI according to the **KPIs** defined in the RNE Guideline for KPIs and sends them to the Members for further investigation. The monitoring points on the corridor have been provided by the Members and have been included into RNE's systems, the reports are generated by using data based on these points. In an initial phase only the basic reports (e.g. RFC Monthly Punctuality Report) will be used for monitoring. Later the Working Group will include other reports, as needed. All this information will be included in the TPM Manual.

COORDINATION OF TEMPORARY CAPACITY RESTRICTIONS

The coordination and publication of Temporary Capacity Restrictions (TCRs) in RFC Amber is delegated to the TCR Working Group, headed by PKP PLK S.A. The **plan of TCRs** is built on a yearly basis including the works foreseen by each of the RFC Amber Infrastructure Managers. The aim is to reduce the impact of works to a minimum and to find alternative train paths or **alternative routes** in good time in case of planned line closures or capacity restrictions so that freight traffic can keep moving. The TCR Working Group coordinates TCRs along the corridor and exchanges experiences and best practice in the field of TCRs between its Members.

In accordance with Regulation (EU) 913/2010 and the RNE Guidelines for Coordination/Publication of Planned Temporary Capacity Restrictions RFC Amber publishes a single document containing the overview of Temporary Capacity Restrictions on the corridor. The TCR Working Group updates the coordinated TCRs at least twice a year in August and January. The current TCRs relate to TT 2021 and TT 2022.

INTERNATIONAL CONTINGENCY MANAGEMENT

The IM Handbook on International Contingency Management defines international disruptions and gives guidelines for capacity allocation, **disruption management** and **communication processes** and also defines the roles of the participants. Each RFC coordinates with their Member Infrastructure Managers and other concerned RFCs the development of an international re-routing overview, combining national **re-routing plans** across borders along the RFC. Coordinated by the Traffic Management, Train Performance and Operations Working Group the corridor prepared its re-routing overview with pre-defined, categorised **re-routing lines** and with all relevant information regarding technical parameters and other operational requirements. This overview will be followed by the elaboration of re-routing scenarios and maps describing and visualising the re-routing options. In order to gain practical experience the Working Group will organise simulations.

CUSTOMER INFORMATION PLATFORM

The Customer Information Platform (CIP) is an interactive, internet-based information tool, in which all operational RFCs participate. By means of a **Graphical User Interface (GUI)**, the CIP provides precise information about the routing, terminals, infrastructure investment projects and maintenance works as well as about basic track properties of the participating Rail Freight Corridors (RFCs). The inclusion of RFC Amber into the CIP was completed on **2 December 2019**, when information about RFC Amber became **accessible to public users** of the Customer Information Platform.



The user interface of the CIP is continually being enhanced to further increase the service to CIP users. In this regard, the International Contingency Management (ICM) re-routing options have been implemented into the CIP recently. This new functionality enables the users of the CIP to display in an interactive map all ICM lines along the respective Rail Freight Corridors (RFCs) together with re-routing options for individual ICM lines. For each re-routing option, the user may obtain a geographical representation of the re-routing line along with detailed information on line properties along such lines.

At the moment the CIP displays **harmonised corridor information** 24 hours a day, 7 days a week on railway infrastructure in 18 European countries covering the network of nine RFCs, including RFC Amber.

 CIP is available at cip.rne.eu website.

MAIN ACTIVITIES

CORRIDOR INFORMATION DOCUMENTS

Regulation (EU) 913/2010 requires the corridor to elaborate a Corridor Information Document providing information to customers and all those interested in the corridor. This obligation is met by publishing a set of documents – so-called CID-Books – which are regularly updated. The CID-Books follow a **standardized structure** elaborated by RNE and agreed among all RFCs. The CID is divided into five books.

In 2019, the revision of the common structure of Book 3 (**Terminal description**) and Book 4 (**Procedures for capacity and traffic management**) took place and RFC Amber adapted its Books accordingly, following the approval of the revised structure by the RNE General Assembly.

According to the new structure, CID Book 3 contains a simplified terminal list with links to the websites of the service facilities.

Also, the adaptation of CID Book 4 has been successfully accomplished. This Book provides all relevant information concerning the procedures of the C-OSS, **allocation of capacity to freight trains**, authorized applicants and traffic management, as well as the coordination of temporary capacity restrictions.

The updated CID Books were accepted by the Management Board on **5 December 2019**.

 CID Books of RFC Amber are available at rfc-amber.eu/downloads/grp/corridor_information_document

BOTTLENECK STUDY

The elaboration of a comprehensive “Study on bottlenecks along RFC Amber No.11” is one of the main activities in the RFC Amber Programme Support Action aiming to support the future development of the corridor. The implementation of this activity is expected to give an in-depth understanding of the compliance of the corridor infrastructure with **TEN-T minimum requirements** and **TSI line performance parameters** as well as of bottlenecks in terms of capacity and line standard. It also is expected to help **identifying potential measures** for infrastructure and operational improvements for efficient rail freight operations along the network of RFC Amber. The study shall provide **decision support** for future investment in infrastructure and operational, administrative and capacity-related measures and improved cross-border cooperation along RFC Amber.

The first step was to set up the project management in order to manage and control all project phases, including the following activities:

- elaboration of a Work Plan which identifies the methods to be used, the staff resources to be deployed and a schedule for the activities to be carried out;
- organising a kick-off meeting where the Work Plan, the status of preparatory activities, the proposed prognosis model and the methodology for evaluation were presented and further details of the assignment discussed and agreed.

The kick-off meeting was held on **12 March 2019** in Budapest; on the meeting even an ad-hoc working group was established made up of the Member's experts to be in charge of coordination of the project internally within their organisation.

The **data collection** phase was finalized in **November 2019**. The infrastructural bottlenecks identified in the data collection phase were discussed and commented by the ad-hoc WG members. The RAG Spokesperson has also been addressed in order to gather data on rail freight demand, cargo volumes and capacities at terminals. The main infrastructure and other parameters of all sections of RFC Amber have been consolidated, processed and finalised with the consent of the relevant IMs. Cartographic illustrations of the main parameters and planned projects have been made available. The involvement of the RAG-TAG Spokesperson into this project is quite significant as the bottlenecks from customers point of view must be strongly examined, thus, the Consultants developed the questionnaires for the RUs hand-in-hand with the RAG-TAG.

WEBSITE

The website of RFC Amber went online on **2 January 2019**. The Corridor Information Documents, information about the publication of PaPs and further information have been made available from that date. The website is hosted by MÁV.

The content of the website is defined and **continuously updated** by the relevant WGs of RFC Amber. Information about the PSA and a photo gallery of public events have also been added. **News** are kept up-to-date and the corridor management pays attention to the accuracy of the content.

Dedicated **functional email addresses** were also designated to the Managing Director, C-OSS and the Secretariat in order to be more transparent and make it easier for external partners to contact the corridor.

 Weblink: rfc-amber.eu

MARKETING & PR

Visibility items have been purchased at several occasions since the beginning of the Action. A larger purchase (ribbons, colourful highlighter pens, ball pens, linen bags, notebooks, hangers, badge holders, power banks, etc.) was carried out jointly by GYSEV and VPE for use at publicity events, such as the Opening Event.

An **information brochure** about the corridor was already elaborated for the TEN-T Days in Ljubljana in 2018 and was updated in 2019. The new brochure delivers general information about the corridor; its capacity products, functions, organizational structure and contains a map of the corridor and contact data. The graphical design was finalized in **August 2019**. The brochure was printed in 200 pieces and distributed for the first time at the Opening Event.

Promotional freight wagons have been ordered with the logotypes of the corridor, its Members, the EU and the CEF-funding and the flags of the four countries of the corridor. The wagon also displays text slogans and the internet-address of the RFC Amber website. The purchase was carried out by GYSEV, the producer of the wagons was PIKO. The promotional wagons have been given i.a. to the speakers and panellists of the Opening Event and also to other high-level representatives and are mainly aimed for the purpose of being handed over as high-level promotional gifts in the future, too.



A **promotional video** of RFC Amber was accomplished on **13 September 2019** and had its premiere at the RFC Amber Opening Event. It will even in the future be used during marketing events and meetings with stakeholders/partners. Footage for the video has been provided by all partners and from certain Railway Undertakings of the RAG and TAG. The circa 5-minute long movie with music, subtitles and narration is permanently available on YouTube and has also been embedded on the corridor's website.

The video is available at www.youtube.com/watch?v=CxkenAvexoQ

Last but not least, three pieces of **roll-ups** have been purchased by GYSEV for promotional purposes and for use at national and international fairs and other events which the corridor organises or participates in.

All items elaborated by RFC Amber contain the **acknowledgement of the Union Funding**.

ACTION PLAN

With a view on identifying concrete activities aiming at the future development of RFC Amber after its establishment the Managing Director entered in May 2019 into contact with the RAG-TAG Spokesperson to discuss possible activities and priorities. The outcome of these discussions resulted in an Action Plan, which became adopted by the Management on **17 September 2019** and for the first time publicly announced on the Opening Event of the corridor in Koper on 18 September 2019.

The Action Plan contains both **short- and long-term activities** for the Management Board and suggests, on an indicative basis, **complementary activities** to the Executive Board and the RAG-TAG. The activities for the Management Board were assigned to the different Working Groups concerned. Implementation of the activities started during autumn 2019. The intention was to present (intermediate) results at the RAG-TAG meeting in spring 2020 (in the meantime postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic). It is foreseen to review and, if and when appropriate, update the Action Plan as needed based on consultations of the RAG and TAG.

With the RFC Amber Action Plan the corridor demonstrates its **customer-orientation** and ambition to develop the corridor in line with market needs.



PUBLICITY AND CUSTOMER ORIENTATION

RAG-TAG MEETING IN LJUBLJANA

The second RAG-TAG meeting of RFC Amber took place on **19 February 2019** in Ljubljana. The meeting focused on the **achievements by the RFC Amber governance** to implement the corridor on time, CIP and the capacity offer for TT 2020/2021. From the side of the Executive Board, Ms Szilvia Mogyorósi, Head of the Railway Infrastructure Department at the Ministry for Innovation and Technology in Hungary expressed her thanks for the organisation and summarized the position of the corridor; emphasizing the strong political commitment towards RFC Amber and emphasizing the need of involvement of the RAG and TAG into the work of the corridor.



Mr Franc Klobučar, the previous Chairman of the Management Board gave a short overview over the initiatives and activities which enabled the timely establishment of RFC Amber and solemnly gave the floor to Mrs Andrea Mosóczy, who had just been elected as new Chairperson of the Management Board. Mrs Mosóczy highlighted the roadmap for the implementation phase of the corridor and emphasised the importance of achieving major milestones laid down in the PSA for the establishment phase of the corridor.

Mr András Nyíri, Spokesperson of the Railway and Terminal Advisory Groups (RAG-TAG) of RFC Amber emphasized that the Implementation Plan of the corridor contains all information about track renewals and reconstructions being done or planned for the next 5-10 years and discussed these works and their impacts with the relevant representatives present at the meeting.

The new website of the corridor was introduced by Mr Jaroslaw Majchrzak (PLK), Member of the Management Board. The afternoon session followed with a presentation by Mr Miloslav Kogler (RNE) about new functionalities in the Customer Information Platform (CIP) and the project on redesign of the international timetabling process (TTR); last but not least the C-OSS Manager Mr Roman Stanczak (PLK) presented the PaP offer for TT 2020/2021.

After a short wrap-up of the meeting the major conclusions were drawn by Dr Gerhard Troche. He emphasized that on his first RAG-TAG meeting as coming Managing Director of RFC Amber he learned a lot of important things from the participants and that he is sure that there will be a fruitful relationship between the management of the corridor and its customers. The Managing Director also emphasized that he is open for personal meetings with the customers and aims to build good relationship with them.

OPENING EVENT IN KOPER

The well-attended Grand Opening Event of our corridor took place on **18 September 2019** in the prestigious Praetorian Palace in Koper, in presence of EU Transport Commissioner Mrs Violeta Bulc, further **high-level representatives** from the European Commission, the State Secretaries for Transport of Hungary and Slovenia and high-ranking Representatives of all Ministries, CEOs and Directors of several Railway Infrastructure Managers and – last but not least – many Representatives of customers and stakeholders, even from countries outside our corridor. Commissioner Bulc gave an inspiring welcome address to the participants and congratulated the Amber Rail Freight Corridor to this historic milestone. Also, the promotional video of RFC Amber had its premiere at the Opening Event.

The evening before the Opening Event a high-level dinner was organised by the corridor management for the speakers and high-level representatives of the event. At this occasion the Managing Director handed over the first pieces of promotional wagons to the Chairperson, the Secretariat and the Marketing WG Leader; thanking them for their support in the organisation of the event.

The speeches were followed by a High-Level Corridor Roundtable with the corridor Members responding to various questions concerning their view about the corridor. Dr Gerhard Troche, Managing Director of the Amber Rail Freight Corridor and Moderator of the Opening Event, concluded that the positive spirit of cooperation achieved during the establishment phase of the corridor creates a good basis for the future development of the corridor.



The Opening Event finished with a **site visit to the Port of Koper**, allowing interesting insights into a port, which is an important origin and destination of freight trains using the Amber Rail Freight Corridor and which shows a remarkably high share for rail in its hinterland traffic.

A photo gallery of the event has been compiled on pages 10-11 of this Annual Report.

CO-OPERATION WITH CUSTOMERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

RFC Amber aims at having a good relationship with its customers and stakeholders. This goal is supported both by day-to-day business activities of the corridor and the cooperation with the RAG-TAG as well as by targeted activities, such as participation of the corridor in major events on national and international level, providing fora for exchange and spreading of knowledge about RFC Amber.

The C-OSS is continuously providing information to current and potential new customers. The Railway Undertakings (RUs) of the RAG are contacted regularly before the elaboration of the PaP offer allowing them to indicate their capacity needs in **“Capacity Wish-Lists”** via the RAG Spokesperson Mr András Nyíri, facilitating a customer-oriented construction of train paths and improving the capacity usage. The CID-Books 1-5 of the Corridor Information Document have been prepared to provide information about the conditions of use of the corridor to applicants; they are published on the corridor’s website.

On **25 September 2019** the Polish railway sector association ProKolej organized a conference “Rail 22 – Masterplan for rail freight” at **TRAKO**, the biggest railway fair in Central-Eastern Europe, taking place each second year in Gdańsk in Poland. The Managing Director of RFC Amber, Dr Gerhard Troche, represented the corridor in the roundtable. An important question discussed at the Roundtable concerned the contribution, which RFCs in general and RFC Amber in particular could provide to facilitate cross-border rail freight. Dr Troche emphasized the role of the corridor’s C-OSS to request capacity at a single contact point and the role of the corridor as a permanent solution-oriented cross-border platform with access to experts from all Members to jointly discuss with customers issues in international rail freight.

On **2 October 2019** a multi-corridor **national consultation** took place in Budapest with the RUs concerned along the corridor, discussing current issues and problems of international rail freight. The meeting was held together with RFC Mediterranean and RFC Orient/East-Med; RNE also participated.

The corridor maintains a **regular exchange with the RAG-TAG Spokesperson** and identified a number of short and long-term tasks of major importance for the RUs and Terminal Managers of the corridor, which were laid down in an Action Plan. The RAG has also an active role in the elaboration of the Bottleneck Study and was participating in meetings of the ad-hoc working group dedicated to the study. The Managing Director also undertook in 2019 several bilateral meetings with the RAG Spokesperson and other customers and stakeholders, including the European Commission.



RFC AMBER IN THE CORRIDOR COMMUNITY

Since the corridor became operational it participates actively at the RFC Network activities, SERAC meetings, activities running under the umbrella of RNE, UIC (ECCO meeting), etc. Since March 2019 the Managing Director is in charge of the attendance of and handling tasks stemming from these meetings. Starting from **21 October 2019**, the Managing Director of RFC Amber was **chairing the RFC Network**, which during his term dealt in particular with issues relating to the future funding of the RFCs and the evaluation of the RFC-Regulation.

In order to develop the services of RFC Amber and to support applicants, the C-OSS Manager participated in several **international customer events** in 2019, such as:

- PCS Trainings in Budapest and Warsaw
- RAG/TAG Meeting in Ljubljana
- Forum Train Europe Conference (FTE B) in Ljubljana
- Opening Event of RFC Amber in Koper.

Activities aiming at promoting RFC Amber and improving the exchange with customers and stakeholders are expected to be stepped up further, including more active work with media releases and presence at events such as **TEN-T Days** and **Rail Freight Days**.

RFC Amber is still a young corridor, but with its establishment in 2019 it had reached a major milestone. It was not stopping at this milestone, but rather passing it at high speed. Already in the latter part of the establishment phase all staff involved in the corridor could feel the focus of the work gradually shifting from setting up a governance structure and implementing administrative procedures – in short: "putting the corridor on track" – towards improving and developing the corridor in line with customer needs. We could positively note that many of the speeches and presentations at the Opening Event of our corridor in Koper in September 2019 already articulated some worthwhile ideas and expectations in this direction.

It was therefore only consequent that the corridor as one of the first steps after becoming operational started elaborating an „Action Plan“ in close exchange with the Spokesperson of the Railway and Terminal Advisory Groups (RAG-TAG). This Action Plan was adopted by the Management Board in September 2019, on the day before the Opening Event, giving guidance to the future work on developing the corridor. The Plan contains both short- and long-term tasks with a focus on i.a. issues of axle-loads, train length and processes in border stations – issues, which our customers highlighted as important for the performance and competitiveness of rail freight on the corridor. At the end of 2019 the Working Groups of our corridor had started on most of the tasks and intermediate results are expected during spring 2020.

One positive outcome of the Action Plan was already that the RFC Amber C-OSS in January 2020 could on a first section start offering Pre-Arranged Paths for the timetable TT 2021 with a substantially bigger train length than usually allowed, in the concrete case on a cross-border line between Poland and Slovakia, where only rather short trains are allowed today. It is our ambition to identify in our continued work train paths with an extended train length on further parts of the corridor.

Another important task laid down in the Action Plan is the identification of potential infrastructure improvements for rail freight together with the users of the corridor. The outcome of this task could provide input and decision support to infrastructure planning and funding on both national and European level.

Besides the RFC Amber Action Plan one other document, the Bottleneck Study – to be finalised at the end of 2020 –, will provide important input to the future work of the corridor. The study analyses infrastructural, administrative and capacity bottlenecks. Intermediate results from this study have already been provided to the Ministries and the European Commission. When the final results are available RFC Amber will discuss the conclusions to be drawn with customers and stakeholders and, where appropriate, feed the outcome into an update of the Action Plan.

In addition to the activities foreseen under the Action Plan RFC Amber will also aim at improving the quality of services in its day-to-day business. This includes inter alia the ambition to improve the coordination of Temporary Capacity Restrictions and to strengthen the contingency management in case of major disruptions. To these activities must also be counted the close cooperation with other RFCs under the umbrella of the RFC Network and the cooperation with RNE; these co-operations and other activities on European level are of high importance for the corridor, taking into account that the EU Rail Freight Corridors are interchanging traffic with each other in many points.

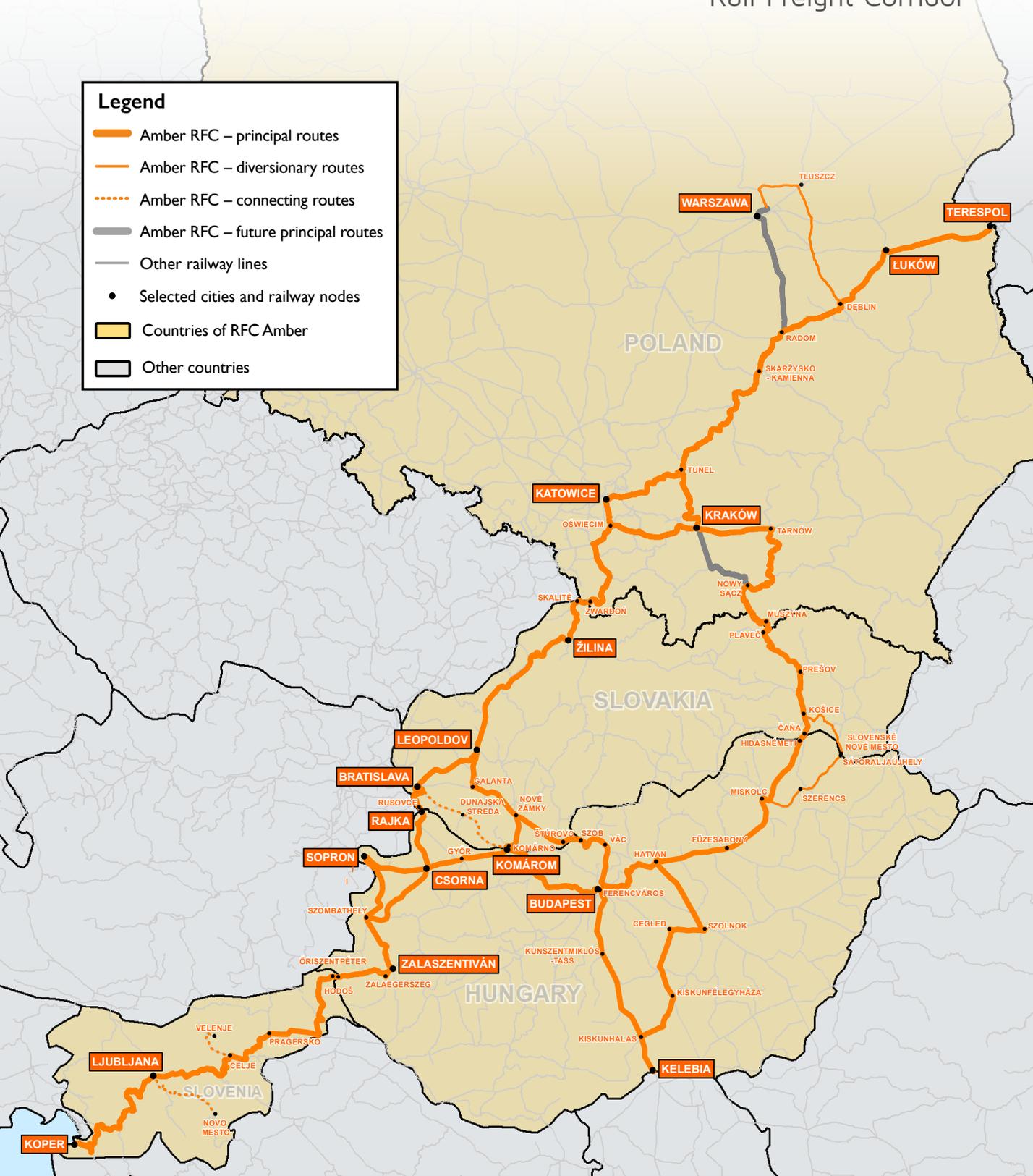
With its establishment RFC Amber has already proven its value by closing key gaps in the network of RFCs, thereby increasing the overall coverage of the European rail network for competitive freight and strengthening its resilience in case of disruptions in other parts of the network. Major parts of RFC Amber are today not part of the TEN-T Core Network. The emergence of RFC Amber on the initiative of the Member States concerned, supported by feedback from our customers, confirms that there is a need to develop and improve the conditions for international rail freight even outside this Core Network.

The increased recognition of the importance of transport system resilience and the ability to respond to major network disruptions has also drawn the attention of a broader public, including policy decision makers on European and national level, to this fact. It would therefore be reasonable that the Member State's commitment to develop RFC Amber together with the effectiveness of the common work of the RFC Amber Infrastructure Managers and Capacity Allocation Office will be reflected in the context of possible future extensions of the TEN-T Core Network.

Connecting the Heart of Europe

Legend

- Amber RFC – principal routes
- Amber RFC – diversionary routes
- Amber RFC – connecting routes
- Amber RFC – future principal routes
- Other railway lines
- Selected cities and railway nodes
- Countries of RFC Amber
- Other countries



Created by:
PKP Polish Railway Lines
Real Estate and Railway Geodesy Department
GIS UNIT
03-234 Warszawa, Szczęśliwca al. 74
http://www.pkp.pl

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Data related to borderlines of European countries is derived from ESRI (www.esri.com) and other publicly available sources.
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CONTACT DETAILS



Andrea Mosóczi
Chair of the Management Board
+36 30 248 5813
amosoczi@gysev.eu



Dr. Gerhard Troche
Managing Director
+36 30 604 4512
director@rfc-amber.eu



András Nyíri
RAG-TAG Spokesperson
andras.nyiri@railcargo.com



Roman Stańczak
C-OSS manager
+48 22 473 3469
c-oss@rfc-amber.eu



Eszter Boglárka Gádoros
Secretariat
+36 30 184 7884
secretariat@rfc-amber.eu

WE WORK TOGETHER

PLK | PKP Polskie Linie Kolejowe S.A.
PKP Polskie Linie Kolejowe Spółka Akcyjna | **IM, Republic of Poland**
info@plk-sa.pl

ŽSR | Railways of the Slovak Republic
Železnice Slovenskej Republiky | **IM, Slovak Republic**
hovorca@zsr.sk

MÁV | MÁV Hungarian State Railways Company Limited by Shares
MÁV Magyar Államvasutak Zrt. | **IM, Hungary**
forgalom.palyavasut@mav.hu

GYSEV | Győr–Sopron–Ebenfurti Vasút Zrt.
Raab–Oedenburg–Ebenfurter Eisenbahn AG | **IM, Hungary & Austria**
gysev@gysev.hu

VPE | VPE Hungarian Rail Capacity Allocation Office
VPE Vasúti Pályakapacitás-elosztó Kft. | **AB, Hungary**
vpe@vpe.hu

SŽ-I | Slovenian Railways – Infrastructure Ltd.
(Slovenske železnice – Infrastruktura, d.o.o.) | **IM, Republic of Slovenia**
vposta.infra@slo-zeleznice.si

