



# Fit4Freight Meeting Minutes: RAG MoU

## Meeting Details

- **Date:** 17 July 2025
- **Meeting:** UIC Freight Department – RAG MoU
- **Topic:** Introduction of the newly develop RAG MoU
- **Introduction to UAC Freight:** Joost and Philip introduced the UAC Freight department, explaining its organization into competence centers and the purpose of the Fit for Freight webinars.
  - **UAC Freight Organization:** Joost and Philip explained that the UAC Freight department is organized into seven competence centers plus one coalition, which includes members from the entire freight community, not just UAC members. This structure aims to bring value to customers and ensure proper knowledge dissemination.
  - **Fit for Freight Webinars:** Philip mentioned that the Fit for Freight webinars are short, topical sessions organized around lunchtime, focusing on specific issues. These webinars are held in spring and autumn sessions, with the spring session recently covering data and the current session focusing on corridor developments.
- **Corridor Development and ECHO Project:** Joost discussed the ECHO project, which focuses on efficient cross-corridor organization and the coordination of railway advisory groups for the European Union's rail freight corridors.
  - **ECHO Project Overview:** Joost explained that the ECHO project, which stands for Efficient Cross-Corridor Organization, has been running since 2012. It is a coordination project involving railway advisory group speakers who work on the European Union's rail freight corridors.
  - **Coordination Efforts:** The project aims to create unified positions towards infrastructure managers and consultations with the European Union. It also involves exchanging best practices and ensuring that railway advisory groups speak with one voice while adapting to local circumstances.
  - **Legal Landscape Feedback:** Joost highlighted that the railway sector has been actively providing feedback to the European Union on the rail freight corridor legal landscape and new regulations to improve capacity and quality. The railway advisory group speakers have coordinated much of this input.

- **Legal Background and Changes:** Sandra Kuhlmann provided an overview of the legal background and recent changes affecting rail freight corridors, including the 10T regulation and the RFC regulation.
  - **10T Regulation:** Sandra explained that the 10T regulation, initially from 2013, focuses on infrastructure investments, planning, interoperability, and harmonization. It defines standards for infrastructure managers to ensure trains can run smoothly across borders, similar to trucks on roads.
  - **RFC Regulation:** The RFC regulation, published in 2010, aims to support rail freight in Europe by making it more competitive with other transport modes. It includes provisions for pre-arranged paths, coordinated planning, and traffic management across borders.
  - **Recent Legal Changes:** Sandra discussed recent changes, including the amended 10T regulation, which now requires the European coordinator to consult with rail freight corridors on investment plans. Additionally, the upcoming capacity regulation will replace the RFC regulation, leading to a transition period until 2030.
  - **Future of Rail Freight Corridors:** Sandra noted that after 2030, the rail freight corridors will no longer exist, and it is unclear who will take over their tasks. The sector needs to find a solution for this transition period to ensure continued coordination and consultation.
- **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU):** Paul Hodgson explained the need for a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to formalize the role of railway undertakings and strengthen their voice in the rail freight sector.
  - **Need for MOU:** Paul explained that the MOU is necessary to formalize the role of railway undertakings in the rail freight sector, ensuring their positions are more structured and recognized. This formalization is in response to the evolving legal landscape and the need for more formalized positions.
  - **Goals of MOU:** The MOU aims to strengthen the voice of rail freight through corridor organizations, clarify rules for setting positions, and define the rights and obligations of RAG speakers. It also seeks to motivate railway undertakings to participate and ensure their opinions are considered.
  - **Implementation Steps:** Paul outlined the steps for implementing the MOU, including presenting it to the RFC Management Board, publishing it on the RFC website, and collecting agreements from railway undertakings. The goal is to have a unified approach across all corridors.
- **Clarifications on MOU:** Andrea Penzo addressed clarifications and questions raised during the previous presentation of the MOU, including the voluntary nature of participation and the importance of transparency and inclusivity.
  - **Voluntary Participation:** Andrea clarified that participation in the MOU is voluntary, but it offers advantages for those who join. Railway undertakings that do not participate will not be able to join internal RAG meetings where decisions are made.

- **Transparency and Inclusivity:** The MOU aims to ensure transparency by requiring the publication of meeting dates, timely provision of documentation, and the publication of meeting minutes within four weeks. It also sets rules for voting and consultation to ensure inclusivity.
- **Voting and Consultation:** Andrea explained that the MOU defines rules for voting and consultation, tailored to small advisory groups. It includes quorum requirements, reporting of majority and minority positions, and ensures that all voices are heard in the decision-making process.
- **Speaker Role:** The MOU defines the role of the RAG speaker, including their responsibilities, election process, and the possibility of having multiple speakers. It emphasizes the need for neutrality and independence from their own companies.
- **Next Steps for MOU Implementation:** Damian Rak outlined the next steps for implementing the MOU, including presenting it to the RFC Management Board, publishing it on the RFC website, and collecting agreements from railway undertakings.
  - **Presentation to RFC Management:** Damian explained that the first step is to present the MOU to the RFC Management Board for discussion and acceptance. This step is crucial for gaining official support and moving forward with implementation.
  - **Publication on RFC Website:** Once accepted, the MOU will be published on the RFC website in a visible and accessible manner. This ensures transparency and allows all interested railway undertakings to review and understand the document.
  - **Collecting Agreements:** The final step involves collecting agreements from railway undertakings. This will be done through email confirmations to the RAG speaker and RFC Managing Director, ensuring that all participating undertakings are officially on board.
- **RAG Membership and Responsibilities:** Sandra Kuhlmann and Paul Hodgson discussed the responsibilities of the Railway Advisory Group (RAG) members, including developing common positions, advising on rail freight matters, and fulfilling regulatory tasks.
  - **Membership Criteria:** Sandra explained that RAG membership is open to any railway undertaking interested in using the rail freight corridor, not just those currently operating trains. Interested parties can contact RAG speakers or Joost to join.
  - **Developing Common Positions:** Paul emphasized the importance of developing common positions among railway undertakings to present a unified stance on issues such as temporary capacity restrictions and infrastructure development. This helps in advising infrastructure managers and ministries effectively.
  - **Advisory Role:** The RAG serves as an advisory body, providing input on rail freight matters to infrastructure managers, ministries, and the EU coordinator.

This includes trends in rail freight, investment priorities, and performance monitoring.

- **Regulatory Tasks:** RAG members are responsible for issuing opinions on management board proposals, submitting opinions on implementation plans, and providing input on infrastructure development. These tasks are mandated by EU regulations.
- **Decision-Making Process:** Andrea Penzo explained the decision-making process within the RAG, including voting rights, quorum requirements, and the role of the RAG speaker.
  - **Voting Process:** Andrea detailed the voting process, which includes both written and meeting-based decisions. Members receive topic descriptions two weeks in advance, and decisions are made by simple majority. No reaction means abstention.
  - **Quorum Requirements:** The quorum for decisions is dependent on the size of the RAG, with a minimum of three votes from independent companies required. This ensures that decisions are representative and not dominated by a single entity.
  - **Role of RAG Speaker:** The RAG speaker represents all member opinions, including minority views.
- **Next Steps and Closing Remarks:** Joost and Philip provided closing remarks, outlining the next steps for the MOU and inviting participants to future Fit for Freight sessions.

#### **Follow-up tasks:**

- **MOU Publication:** Publish the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on the RFC website in a visible manner. (RFC Management)
- **RU Agreement Collection:** Collect agreement from all railway undertakings (RUs) operating on the corridor by presenting the MOU and asking for their confirmation via email. (RAG Speaker)
- **Clarification on Voting Rights:** Define the quorum requirement for voting within each railway advisory group (RAG) to ensure fair representation of independent railway undertakings. (RAG Members)
- **Post-2030 Roadmap:** Prepare a roadmap to safeguard the important roles and tasks of the RAG post-2030, in collaboration with infrastructure managers. (RAG Speakers)