



One Corridor – One Strategy

2017

Interregional
Alliance
for the

**Rhine-
Alpine
Corridor**

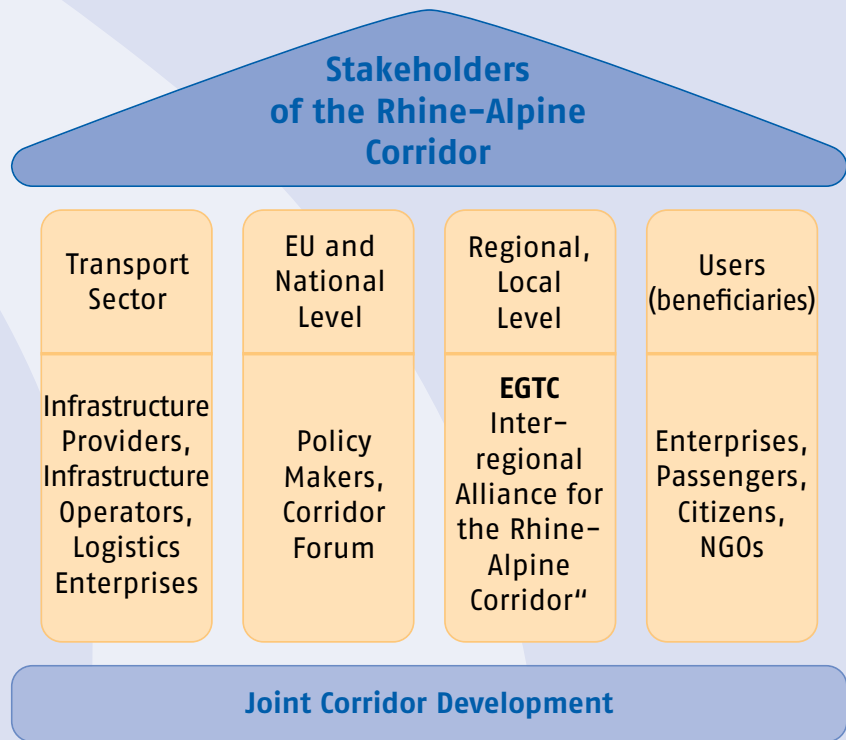
EGTC

1 Introduction

The Rhine–Alpine Corridor is one of nine European Core Network Corridors, which have been introduced by the EU to facilitate the coordinated implementation of the core network. The basic principle of this European transport policy is to complete seamless connections for the sake of efficient, future-oriented and high-quality transport services for citizens and economic operators.

The Rhine–Alpine Corridor is a spatially coherent axis with a multitude of common interests and inter-relations between its single regional areas. The European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation „Interregional Alliance for the Rhine–Alpine Corridor EGTC“ representing the local and regional level should be considered an elemental stakeholder contributing to the joint development of the Rhine–Alpine Corridor as part of the Trans–European Network.

The Interregional Alliance for the Rhine Alpine Corridor, a European Grouping for Territorial Cooperation (EGTC) has been founded in April 2015 in order to join forces and to speak with one voice for its members. The EGTC continues the strategic initiative of the INTERREG IVB NWE Project „CODE24 – Corridor Development Rotterdam–Genoa“ (2010–2015). It aimed at a joint integrated approach towards the future development of the Rhine–Alpine corridor and intended the interconnection of economic development, spatial, transport and ecological planning and thus, addressing urgent conflicts of capacity, sustainability and quality of life along the corridor. After five years, the CODE24 project partners pre-



sented a common Strategy for the future development of the Rhine–Alpine Corridor, the main transport corridor of Europe.

The EGTC continues securing a long-term transnational partnership and cooperation of local and regional stakeholders along the Corridor. The common Strategy for the development of the Rhine–Alpine Corridor presented by the CODE24 partners provides the outlook for the future tasks of the EGTC. The common Strategy is a living document and is updated by the EGTC regularly.

An integrated planning of landscape, settlement and transport development is necessary for this densely populated and heavily used area. The acceptance of infrastructure development in all regions is only possible when the development for goods transport doesn't create any disadvantages for regional and long-distance passenger transport.

Planning has to be carried out collaboratively by all stakeholders involved: the responsible authorities (international/national/regional/local) the transport sector and the users. For the international collaboration in these spaces, as well as the implementation of the corresponding tasks, the relevant platforms for cooperation need to be created.

The EGTC is member of the Rhine–Alpine Corridor Forum since 2015.

2 Corridor Assessment

2.1 Main challenges

Three main challenges in developing the Corridor as identified within the CODE24 project are:

Stimulating international competitiveness

Effective use of capacity and an effective input of financial means on a European level offer a sound basis for the focus of settlements near transport infrastructures. As mobility is essential in an increasingly global economy, Europe needs to invest in sufficient and reliable infrastructure. Otherwise, it will not be able to keep up in international competition. If the Rhine–Alpine Corridor as the most important transport axis in Europe wants to keep its position it also has to face up to competition amongst European Corridors.

Setting priorities in financing

There is not enough public money available to be able to finance all the desired projects. The planned projects for solutions to reduce bottlenecks and accelerate the completion of the Rhine–Alpine corridor run up to a cost of around 35 billion €. To use the limited financial resources efficiently, priorities have to be set along the corridor and even more on European and national level. Possibilities for continued funding need to be found in order to maintain planning reliability for regional enterprises. A coordinated and integrated development for spatial planning and infrastructure is a necessity.

Using development potential

For a provident use of land and an efficient organisation of logistics and mobility, landscape and settlement development needs to be coordinated with transport infrastructure and service. The railway network and redevelopment reserves need to be valued to create a multifunctional axis which will strengthen the living and working environment in densely populated metropolitan regions and agglomerations between the North Sea and the Mediterranean.

2.2 Collaborative planning

The results of CODE24 regional workshops showed that many regions along the axis have similar problems. It is also apparent that actions in one region have an effect on other regions along the Corridor. Therefore, the search for solutions needs to be a collaborative one.

Along the Corridor, two lines of conflict repeatedly show up:

- 1) protection against railway noise caused primarily by goods transport, and
- 2) fear of displacement, i.e., limited development options for regional transport.

Three postulates can be derived from this:

Integrated planning

The challenges of the Corridor have an influence on the spatial development of the regions involved. Solutions have to be found with stakeholders from all areas. Only if all problems are on the table, enduring solutions can be found to avoid further “bottlenecks” in planning processes.

Involving stakeholders

The authority for spatial and infrastructure development is distributed among several departments and administrative levels. The circle of affected stakeholders in functional spaces has little in common with the administrative authorities. Where future collaborative operations take place, collaborative planning and constructing should be done first. The EGTC offers a partnership that represents major interests along the corridor.

Create platforms

To find a solution for the most important coordination assignments, the parties that are relevant to the task need to be involved at an early stage. To do this, relevant platforms need to be created. The EGTC founded by the CODE24 partnership in 2015 is such a platform. It is a member of the European Rhine–Alpine Corridor Forum representing there the interests of local and regional stakeholders along the Corridor.

To test the feasibility of a project with regard to its acceptance by the population and its effect in the long run, not only along

the entire Corridor, but also for the population affected, the following criteria are regarded to be the minimum requirement for corridor projects:

- ▶ Regional support for the planning organisation
- ▶ Participation of the affected population
- ▶ Integrated regional spatial development strategy.

In contrast, spatial planning strategies and plans are of a relatively short-term nature in the area of settlements. They usually assume a time horizon of less than twenty years. These different time horizons for the development of settlements and infrastructures often lead to conflict. Therefore, it is important for the planning reliability of regional enterprises and private partners to have clear collaborative strategies as planning guidelines.

The planning of infrastructures is a long-term task. It can have preparatory lead times of twenty to thirty years. Building upon the TEN-T network the Rhine-Alpine Corridor needs more strategic time-planning (up to 2050) in order to secure the necessary space. However, this planning horizon leads to great uncertainty concerning the availability of new infrastructure and the resulting obviousness of spatial planning measures.

3 Priorities and Strategy

3.1 Setting development priorities

For the development of the Rhine-Alpine Corridor and related measures and infrastructures, regions and local stakeholders should be involved at an early stage. EGTC also states that rail and waterways should be preferred to road and air. Any initiative to make transport more efficient and to decouple transport from economic growth is necessary and should be pursued.

Funding priorities should be considered for projects that fulfil the following priorities which should particularly apply if funding is not available:

Optimise the network, procedures and the cooperation of key players

Existing infrastructure still offers potential for improvements. Provisions that will advance disposability, i.e. redundancy, need to have priority status. Also projects aimed at optimising reliability, functionality and overall integration between transport modes, logistics clusters, terminals and spatial development especially with operational measures aiming at higher efficiency need to have priority. This goes far beyond investments in infrastructure and includes improvements in operational procedures as well as a wealth of business development activities. A better balance of transshipment between the North Sea ports and the Mediterranean ports is one essential ingredient to fulfil this goal, making benefit from Swiss alpine tunnels with better

infrastructure access from Mediterranean ports to the hinterland. Furthermore, efficient rail noise reduction (particularly rolling stock and rail track) and ramp-to-ramp rail-oriented management of the complete logistics chain will raise public acceptance for rail.

Raise capacity

Increased speed in dealing with a node system offers only limited advantages to certain stretches, routes and connections relations. Since at present, the node times for boarding relationships are mostly already adjusted, only great differences in speed are still advantageous. Raising capacity, also of terminals, however, quickly implicates advantages for all transport carriers.

Integration of land-use and transport, noise mitigation, alternative fuels

Where negative externalities of infrastructure development inhibit the development of an area, it could mean impeded use of a larger redevelopment potential or a limitation of settlement and high-quality nature areas. A high noise exposure threatens healthy living and working conditions and a high level of quality of life along the Corridor on one hand and results in less acceptance of the corridor as such and all attempts to develop it further on the other hand. Noise control measures and landscaping therefore have a key role in a common Strategy for the Corridor. The development of an electric fleet and use of other alternative fuels that cause less emissions and noise than conventional fuels can enhance sustainability.

Accelerate speed

Europe is far behind in the use of high-speed trains. In China, the distance between Rotterdam and Genoa is covered, according to schedule, in about three hours. These kinds of times would make the train a worthy competitor of airplanes across the entire European continent. However, the population density of the European continent and the desired connections between cities and places of interest demand different strategies. Provisions for an increase in speed need to be implemented in places where other forms of operation will not be impeded.

Ensure acceptance

This horizontal priority supports the previous four priorities and shall improve the visibility and promote the Corridor as well as create awareness and acceptance of the measures and projects necessary for an integrated development of the Corridor. Communication between the various affected and involved stakeholders from local citizen to local, regional, national and EU stakeholders shall ensure this.

3.2 A common Strategy

Capacity and reliability are clearly given preference over speed, with the argument that the smaller scale settlements in the catchment area of the Rhine-Alpine Corridor can only marginally profit from high-speed transport. Investments in mixed use lines instead create benefits for all transport modes. This suggests a Strategy for the Corridor that prioritises improvement of capacity to development of new infrastructure. The joint Strategy is taking into account also measures for the coordination of infrastructure with the necessities of regional spatial strategies. Where necessary, modification or alternatives to existing infrastructures will be adopted to guarantee quality of life.

High-speed transport is not being realised along the Rhine-Alpine Corridor as a unified strategy, rather in places where capacity allows it without limiting other forms of transport in their development.

The priority treatment of passenger transport is being given up in favour of a management of the Corridor that prepares a sufficient amount of tracks for all categories of trains, with long-term security (e.g. ERTMS – European Rail Traffic Management System) and international coordination.

Regional railway systems share the goods sections where capacity allows for it. Where capacity is missing, regional «S-Bahn»-systems will be transferred to separate tracks.

Measures necessary according to this Strategy:

Optimize the Network by:

- ▶ Identifying and reduce administrative burdens to avoid unequal treatment of different transport modes as for example energy tax vs deducted tax on diesel or railway infrastructure fees vs road usage fees.
- ▶ Increase use of innovative IT and communication technologies and improve data exchange of real time traffic information – also between shippers, forwarders and port authorities. The consequences of the digitalization (logistics 4.0) for the cargo flow in the corridor are further points for discussion.

Raise capacity by:

- ▶ Inter- and multimodality (air, road, rail and IWW) and the successful implementation of modal shifts are as important as the coordinate mixed use

of the infrastructure for passenger and freight services.

- ▶ Smart corridor: incorporation of transport, technology (IT), energy efficiency and the implementation of small scale projects along the corridor
- ▶ Elimination of capacity problems of the railway transport on the Corridor
- ▶ Make rail freight and passenger transport services efficient
- ▶ Optimization of long-distance passenger rail connections
- ▶ Enhancement of crucial railway nodes throughout the Corridor
- ▶ Raise capacity through an efficient and demand-oriented infra- and super structure in the corridor as well as a better integration of hubs in the international network.

Integration of land-use and transport, noise mitigation, alternative fuels

- ▶ Improvement of noise issues along the Corridor to ensure acceptability of rail as an environmental friendly mode of transport:
Active noise protection precedes passive noise protection. By 2020 all rolling stock should be retrofitted without affecting the competitiveness of rail towards road.
Rail noise mitigation along existing lines as a prerequisite to strengthen the settlements along rail lines which in turn is relevant to avoid urban sprawl.

- ▶ Promoting use of alternative fuels on roads and waterways reduces the carbon footprint of transport along the Corridor.

Ensure acceptance

- ▶ Elaborate a communication strategy to facilitate the acceptance of infrastructure measures and therefore to be more visible at European level
- ▶ Implementation of a communication strategy which shall promote the themes of the Corridor and make them more visible at European level
- ▶ Role of the EGTC as intermediate entity that can facilitate consultation between the various parties, public and private
- ▶ Raise public acceptance for rail
- ▶ Increase the acceptance of infrastructure projects in the logistics sector
- ▶ Greater visibility of the importance of the logistics sector taking into account socio-political expectations of consumers and citizens. The conflicting use of land in urban systems leads to regular debates on logistics versus industry
- ▶ Raise awareness of infra-structural bottlenecks.

Concrete projects and initiatives that contribute to this Corridor Strategy, prepared, implemented or supported by the EGTC:

- ▶ ERFLS – European Rail Freight Line System – “international ICEs for freight”, system to connect (smaller) rail-road-terminals on the Corridor Rhine Alpine.
- ▶ RAISE-IT – Rhine-Alpine Seamless and Integrated Travel Chain – “optimal connection of urban nodes to long distance high speed connections, incl. an international integrated timetable”
- ▶ Corridor Capacity Platform – “a multimodal capacity matching platform to optimize transport”
- ▶ LNG for heavy duty transport “develop a network of LNG filling stations along the corridor for LNG trucks”
- ▶ Rhein-Ruhr Rail Connection: Spatial, environmental, technical and economic feasibility study of a Rhein-Ruhr Rail Connection in the pre-identified section „Iron Rhine“ (Rheidt-Antwerp) located in „other sections“ of the Core Network.
- ▶ Connected Electric Fleet – “using information about electric vehicles in the Dutch-German border region for better analysis of need for electricity”.

The essential measures to bring to life this joint Strategy are indicated in the following map:



4 Conclusions

The common Strategy for the development of the Rhine-Alpine Corridor as presented by the CODE24 partners provided the outlook for the future tasks of the EGTC „Interregional alliance for the development of the Rhine-Alpine Corridor“. First revision of the Strategy was done by the EGTC in 2016 and is presented in this paper. The key lessons learned from the CODE24 results are threefold:

First, **continuing cooperation and development is vital**, both for the maintenance of the current physical infrastructure network and for enduring transnational coordination on the institutional level. The EGTC provides a useful platform to do this.

Second, **integrated planning of spatial, economic and transport development is key in creating sustainable and healthy living and working conditions along the corridor**. The EGTC takes this into consideration by joining local and regional perspectives in a bottom-up integrated regional development approach.

Finally, the **investment priorities regarding strategic transport infrastructure projects** could be highlighted. These projects are aimed first and foremost at increasing capacity along the lines and in the nodes. In a next step, projects aimed at accelerating speed along the corridor can also be considered. Besides such infrastructural investments,

facilitating economic measures strengthening multimodal logistic developments will significantly contribute to the overall development of the Corridor. The joint Strategy of the EGTC provides the right context to discuss and balance the future prioritisation of these projects.

The EGTC shows how this Strategy is brought to life in local and regional projects that affect the development of the entire Rhine-Alpine Corridor!

Contact

If you need more information or if you are interested in becoming a member of the EGTC please contact:

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