



Activity Report

2023

Interregional Alliance for the Rhine-Alpine Corridor EGTC

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1. General Overview

The present report provides an overview of the activities and achievements of the Interregional Alliance for the Rhine-Alpine Corridor EGTC from January to December 2023. The report contains the development of the organizational structure, activities and milestones as well as projects and initiatives. It also states a brief outlook to further activities in 2024. The EGTC meetings and events took place both virtually and in person. The successful series “**Rhine-Alpine Talks**” took place two times in 2023, both in a Zoom format with a respectable turnout. The two events were dedicated to the topics of the TEN-T Revision and its implications, as well as insights generated by the EGTC’s involvement in the PLANET Project. A transition to hybrid forms of cooperation also took place in the implementation of **projects** with EGTC participation. In 2023, the EGTC continued its contribution to the CEF funded project **MultiRELOAD**, and finished up the Horizon 2020 funded project **PLANET**. In order to kick-off the strategy update process, the EGTC has developed a project proposal in Interreg Northwest Europe **Carbon-free RALP**. The application was submitted in a two-step procedure in December 2022 but was unfortunately rejected in April 2023. A number of reasons were given, such as the project being too ambitious with too broad a scope. The EGTC has released a **Paper** on the Analysis and quantification of the contribution of the FENIX Project to environmental sustainability. By connecting to FENIX, public authorities can access data to manage heavy traffic and reduce CO2 emissions, particularly around the port of Genoa. The analysis focused on improving traffic flow, assuming municipalities can use FENIX data for traffic management. This methodology can be applied to similar contexts, such as intermodal terminals along the Rhine-Alpine corridor. The paper demonstrates the environmental and cost-saving potential of FENIX network data. In 2023, considerable work was done in the pursuit of updating and adapting the EGTC Strategy to the evolving landscape of both regional and macroregional requirements. This culminated in the release of the working document Thematic Approach – Key Priorities for the Rhine Alpine Corridor. This document has been iterated upon in the Strategy Workshop with the Advisory Board Members during the 18th Assembly in Limburg, resulting in a final release of the document in 2024, marking a milestone in the work on the Baseline Strategy Phase. The language and priorities were updated according to the changing TEN-T Revision and adjusted to new and evolving member focuses. The assessment of administrative restructuring was started and is expected to culminate in further decisions 2024 depending on the resulting insights

2. Activities

a) H2020 Project PLANET: Workshop on Living Lab on Synchronomodal and dynamic management of TEN-T & intercontinental flows

In response to a growing global logistics flow, PLANET examines the challenges of assessing the impact of emerging global trade corridors on the TEN-T network and ensuring effective integration to the Global Network.

PLANET aims to realise the EGTCN (Integrated Green EU-Global Transport and Logistics Network) by actively designing, providing guidance and building the capacity of public and private stakeholders. The EU-China rail connection (Eurasian rail) has been experiencing strong growth in recent years, yet the long-term economic viability and competitive neutrality of this rail connection needs to be addressed. In addition, rail route's competitive position vis-à-vis other modes is subject for analysis, which should involve the rapid expansion of intra Eurasian rail connections and rail freight services, especially between China, Russia and Central Asian countries.

To this end, PLANET established several future scenarios for assessing the expected impact of emerging trade routes on the TEN-T Corridors using three Living Labs (LLs).

One of the three LLs, Living Lab 2 (LL2) focuses on dynamic and synchronomodal management of TEN-T & intercontinental flows, that is the focus of today's event. LL2 utilises the Port of Rotterdam (PoR) as the principal entry node as well as several rail terminals connecting to Eurasian rails. LL2 analysed the optimal integration of the TEN-T network into global and future trade networks with reference to the Rhine-Alpine corridor. The presenters answered the question: what can state-of-the-art innovations for customs and intercontinental rail freight deliver?

Firstly, Chris Wensink from Panteia gave an overview of the PLANET project. Panteia is a Dutch-based transport consultancy company and was involved in a number of EU projects. Chris is a rail expert and has a wealth of experience in transport policy development and evaluation, corridor and institutional analysis and stakeholder engagement at local, national and international level. He has been involved in the office for European Affairs at the Port of Rotterdam Authority, addressing themes such as TEN-T policy, EU seaport services legislation and the PoR's Port Strategy. Within PLANET Chris acted as leader of Living Lab 2.

Then, Ivo Hindriks from Panteia talked about the Integration of intercontinental rail freight in the TEN-T network, with a particular focus on the Rhine-Alpine Corridor. Ivo has worked for various (inter-) governmental organisations, such as the European Parliament, the Committee of Regions, DG MOVE, DG ENER, the Dutch Ministry of Transport, the port of Rotterdam and others. He specializes in spatial planning, TEN-T policy, transport modelling, impact assessments, modal shift and transport costs calculations. For PLANET, he was involved in simulating the impact of global trade routes on the TEN-T network.

Thirdly, Aljosja Beije, the Chief Technology Officer (CTO) of Docklab, explained blockchain solutions for customs. Docklab is an emerging technology venture studio focusing on solutions for the energy transition and the supply chain. He is also a guest lecturer at the University of Southern California (USC) as well as senior researcher at the Supply Chain Finance lectorate of Windesheim University of Applied Science. Within PLANET he was the Project Manager for all solutions developed by Docklab in Living Lab 2.

Finally, together with Aljosja, Eric Feyen from UIRR presented the platform for document management and collaboration in the intercontinental rail freight. Eric is the Technical Director of the UIRR - the industry association of Road-Rail Combined Transport in Europe. Eric is responsible for all technical dossiers related to the design, development and standardisation of combined transport assets such as infrastructure, wagons and intermodal loading units. Within the PLANET project, he was the task leader related to the legal and policy context analysis within Living Lab 2.

b) Roadmap for Strategy Update Process

In view of the significant developments in the corridor, the EGTC Strategy had to be updated to reflect the changed terminology and goal structure resulting from the TEN-T Revision and the merging of the Corridors. Five phases were identified, the Preparation Phase (1 Jun – 15 Sep 2023), Baseline Phase (15 Sep 2023 – 01 Feb 2024), Draft Strategy (1 Feb 2024 – 31 Jul 2024) Finish Strategy (1 Aug 2024 – 31 March 2025) and Action Plan (1 Oct 2024 – 31 March 2025).

The preparation phase was kicked off with the first Expert Working Group meeting (EWG) on the 6th of June, resulting in an assessment of the status quo and the determination of a general direction to be pursued while providing an overall outline of the process going forward.

Discussion points were covered:

- the aim of the strategy
- the role of the merger
- the timeline and duration of the strategy
- tools to be applied
- methods of raising engagement in the Advisory Board
- external support requirements

In the subsequent EWG meeting on the 29th of September, the results of the first meeting were presented, resulting in updated terminology regarding the priorities with an overview of the goals associated with each new headline. In the next steps, it was determined that the thematic priorities required an update, this would be done via external support. The previously agreed upon Thematic Priorities (Cross-Border Issues, Resilience, Noise Reduction, Smart Mobility, Green Corridor, Communication) were updated and made available to the external service provider, who then revised them further.

The new headings were determined to be named:

- Coordination, Creating Synergies
- Shaping the Merger to North-Sea-Rhine-Mediterranean Corridor
- Carbon-neutral RALP
- Urban & Regional Dimension
- Driving Modal Shift
- Remove Paramount Bottlenecks

The discussion focused on these themes and the attendees were asked to provide their feedback during the meeting as well as after the meeting using a Miroboard to catalogue their input.

c) Thematic Approach Working Document

The inputs of the EWG Meeting that took place on September 29th were condensed and integrated into a draft Thematic Approach document that was used during the Strategy Workshop with Advisory Board Members and EGTC Members on November 15th. During this workshop, members worked together with advisory board members to identify current weaknesses, strengths, tasks and critical bottlenecks pertaining to the already established priorities. Furthermore, participants could state what they perceived to be the responsibilities of the EGTC office in this context, and give feedback on what they felt had to be done concretely about problems and

opportunities. This was followed by recapitulation of the inputs and a discussion. The insights garnered from the Workshop were condensed and implemented in the current (Thematic Approach 3.0 released January 17th) document.

The Thematic Approach 3.0 is foundational for the further establishment of the updated strategy, and will be iterated upon by Panteia incl. support from: Rapp, HACON, Stratec, and Tplan. Additional iterations of the Thematic Approach are expected to be delivered in 2024, culminating in the final action plan to be presented during the **ten-year anniversary of the EGTC** in 2025.

d) *Position Paper* “Analysis and quantification of the contribution of the FENIX Project to environmental sustainability”

The FENIX Project (A European Federated Network of Information eXchange in LogistiX, or FENIX network) conducted some analyses (UC10 pilot ITA 2 Milan/Genoa/La Spezia) to determine the benefits of connecting a public administration to the network through the right connectors. Public administrations in Genoa, La Spezia, Malpensa, and Novara, the main reference basin of ITA2 pilot sites, were questioned for these assessments. This research has shown that the FENIX Project, originally developed to assist the commercial logistics and transport industry, has many elements of interest to a public administration, promoting synergy and collaboration between the two. Knowing the routes and projected arrival and exit times of trucks from a logistics terminal could help the public administration better manage high traffic in their territory to minimise mobility impacts. The hypothesis is that a municipality can use FENIX network data to make traffic more fluid, reducing pollutant emissions and creating positive externalities. Based on the MemEx study on the possible levels of involvement of Genoa or the Liguria Region in the federation of platforms created by FENIX, the analysis distinguished between "Territorial Area" (the reality outside the port coinciding with the urban portion of Genoa around the port) and "logistics area" (the port area that can provide data via FENIX. To assess the advantage of decreased emissions in optimising urban traffic management (final road mile), it was necessary to determine which routes were most representative of traffic in the urban area facing the port accesses and estimate the distribution of heavy vehicles at the reference port gates of the Prà Voltri and Sampierdarena basins, starting from the Port Authority's 5,500 vehicles per day; as well as define the variables to be considered in elaborating the reference estimates, such as heavy vehicle average speed. This evaluation implied that the optimisation intervention focuses on systematising traffic management information in the city region, therefore the motorway segment and terminal paths were

not examined. Port of Genoa heavy vehicle traffic creates 7.2 tonnes of CO₂ per day at the time of the assessment. A traffic regulation intervention using predictive analysis of FENIX network data to regulate traffic signals was estimated to reduce emissions by 6.8 tonnes (saving 0.4 tonnes per day). After analysing the consequences, the emission differential from optimising heavy truck routes between the port region and motorway entrances was assessed. Thus, 120 tonnes of CO₂ (300 working days per year) and 40 tonnes of fuel consumption would be saved annually. Mostly due to less congestion, safety, and pollution, this emission reduction is calculated to be worth 170,000 euros/year. The model could be used to other contexts with similar characteristics to Genoa, providing estimations at the TEN-T corridor level, such as the Rhine-Alpine corridor. Thus, the core network included various intermodal terminals (freight centres) along the Rhine-Alpine axis that resembled Genoa. Five terminals were chosen, one for each country passed by the corridor (excluding Switzerland): Novara: Italy; Strasbourg: France; Duisburg: Germany; Antwerp: Belgium; Rotterdam: Netherlands. The container terminal nearest to the city core was chosen for each because private traffic is most affected and the municipal administration may want to regulate it. In the lack of terminal managers' data, annual container handling figures were used to predict daily truck traffic. Extension of the approach and application of Genoa computation allowed the five terminals to save 351 tonnes of CO₂ and over 118 tonnes of fuel annually. Therefore, the study concluded that the Rhine-Alpine corridor (including Genoa) saves around 471 tonnes of CO₂ and 158 tonnes of fuel annually. The terminal operators' absence of real data makes the estimations cautious, but they show how the FENIX network's information could help them. Increasing the likelihood of entering the FENIX network might increase community savings on hazardous emissions and supply chain expenses, creating a multiplier impact along the corridor.

e) Administrative Restructuring

When the EGTC was founded in 2015, a lean office setup was pursued due to the uncertainties involved in the venture as a whole. As the EGTC has grown from its initial founding line-up, the complexity and intensity of tasks increased correspondingly. To ensure continued quality work, an assessment pertaining to the status quo was started in July 2023. This resulted in extensive interviews and assessments with the Director and office personnel as well as a poll for members to vote on their priorities and requirements of the EGTC and the office.

As a result, a report was delivered and disseminated ahead of the Autumn Assembly in Maastricht, which contained an overview of the status quo. It contained information

pertaining to the current situation in relation to the changing work environment and resulting consequences for the office and Director.

Finally, it was recommended to work on potential alternative organisations options while estimating the costs and funding opportunities. The administrative restructuring is an ongoing process, requiring further work in 2024.

3. Events and Meetings

a) Events

The successful series of the Rhine-Alpine Talks has been taken up in 2023 as well. The following Rhine-Alpine Talks have been organized in 2023:

| Date | Title | Participants registered/ present |
|-------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| 23 Jun 2023 | Synchromodal and Dynamic Management of TEN-T & Intercontinental Flows | 46 / 25 |
| 2 Dec 2022 | Perspectives of the Merger – Towards a new North-Sea-Rhine-Mediterranean Corridor | 41 / 33 |

Besides the digital events organized by the EGTC itself, further events with EGTC participation are listed below:

| Date | Conference / Event / Workshop | Organiser | EGTC representative |
|-------------------|--|----------------------------|---------------------|
| 17 April | Automotive Week | Province of Noord-Brabant | EGTC Director |
| 4 May 2023 | Rhineland Conference | State of Baden-Württemberg | EGTC Office |
| 5 July 2023 | METREX Workshop | METREX | EGTC Office |
| 22 September 2023 | RH2INE Conference | RH2INE | EGTC Director |
| 4 October 2023 | German-French Forum | Eurométropole Metz | EGTC Director |
| 5-6 October 2023 | Sustainable Freight in the Metropolitan Regions: last mile solutions | METREX | EGTC Office |
| 13 November 2023 | 19 th RALP Corridor Forum | DG MOVE | EGTC Director |

b) Project Meetings

Following annual / semi-annual meetings of projects with EGTC participation took place:

| Date | Project | Place |
|---------------|--------------------------------|-------|
| 10 March 2023 | MultiRELOAD Consortium Meeting | Zoom |
| 29 March 2023 | MultiRELOAD Rhine Ports | Zoom |
| 20 April 2023 | PLANET Regular Meeting | Zoom |

| | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------|--------|
| 21 June 2023 | PLANET Final Review | Zoom |
| 19-20 September 2023 | MultiRELOAD Annual Meeting | Vienna |

c) Internal meetings of EGTC

- Assembly and Advisory Board Meetings:

The meetings of the Managing Committee, the Assembly and Advisory Board of the EGTC were held partly online and partly on-site in 2022.

| Date | Meeting | Place |
|--------------------------|---------------------------------|--------------|
| 17 Mar 2023 | EGTC Managing Committee Meeting | Zoom |
| 12 May 2023 | EGTC Assembly Meeting | Zoom |
| 15 September 2023 | EGTC Managing Committee Meeting | Zoom |
| 15 November 2023 | EGTC Advisory Board Meeting | Limburg |
| 15 November 2023 | EGTC Assembly Meeting | Limburg |
| 08 December 2023 | EGTC Managing Committee Meeting | Zoom |

- Working Groups:

| Date | Meeting | Place |
|--------------------------|----------------------|--------------|
| 06 June 2023 | Expert Working Group | Zoom |
| 29 September 2023 | Expert Working Group | Zoom |
| 13 October 2023 | Focus Group Strategy | Zoom |
| 24 November 2023 | Focus Group Strategy | Zoom |

d) Milestones

| | |
|-------------------------|---|
| 31 March | Analysis and quantification of the contribution of the FENIX Project to environmental sustainability Paper released |
| 21 June 2023 | PLANET Final Review Event completed |
| 07 November 2023 | First Thematic Approach Document disseminated |
| 08 December 2023 | Contract for EGTC Strategy Development awarded to consortium led by Panteia |

4. Projects and Proposals

Another goal of the EGTC – “Directing funds to corridor related activities and projects helping to implement the joint strategy” was further pursued.

Three projects were implemented in 2023:

a) *FENIX – A European Federated Network of Information eXchange in Logistics*



FENIX started on 01.04.2019 and went on until March 2023 in the CEF Transport funding programme (formally prolonged by 12 months due to pandemic). Administrative closing procedures with CEF until early 2024.

FENIX developed the first European federated architecture for data sharing serving the European logistics community of shippers, logistics service providers, mobility infrastructure providers, cities, and authorities in order to offer interoperability between any individual existing and future platforms.

FENIX main objectives:

- establish a federated network of transport and logistics actors across Europe, enabling sharing of information and services needed to optimise TEN-T (A2&A3)
- demonstrate the operational feasibility and benefits through the organised national pilots –focus on testing the achieved interoperability capabilities (A4)
- set up the EU corridor community building programme and to promote the benefits to the participants in terms of reduced costs and GHG emissions (A5&A6)

b) PLANET Progress towards Federated Logistics Through The Integration Of TEN-T into A Global Trade Network



Co-funded by the Horizon 2020 programme
of the European Union

PLANET addressed the challenges of assessing the impact of emerging global trade corridors on the TEN-T network and ensuring effective integration of the European to the Global Network by focusing in two key R&D pillars:

- A Geo-economics approach, modelling and specifying the dynamics of new trade routes and its impacts on logistics infrastructure & operations, with specific reference to TEN-T, including peripheral regions and landlocked developing countries;
- An EU-Global network enablement through disruptive concepts and technologies (IoT, Blockchain and PI, 5G, 3D printing, autonomous vehicles / automation, hyperloop) which can shape its future and address its shortcomings, aligned to a federated network of T&L platforms.

PLANET was implemented from June 2020 on and was concluded with its final review in June 2023.

c) MultiRELOAD Port solutions for efficient, effective and sustainable multimodality

MultiRELOAD enhances the collaboration between different freight nodes in Europe to jointly test innovations and create favourable market conditions for multimodal freight transport solutions. To this end, MultiRELOAD will demonstrate solutions in three Innovation Areas with specific aims by 2025, mirroring the measures of the EU's Smart Mobility Strategy. Innovation Areas:

- **Smart multimodal logistics:** facilitate a shift from road to rail & IWT of 5%
- **Digital & Automated Multimodal Nodes and Corridors:** increase operational efficiency by 20% raise of handling capacity
- **Innovative business models:** leading to an average cost reduction of freight transport by 10%

For a total of 36 months beginning in September 2022, the MultiRELOAD consortium comprising of ports, highly innovative technology, logistics and service providers,

leading European research institutions and well-connected networks are cooperating intensely to facilitate significant modal shift to sustainable modes of transport, radical efficiency increase of supply chains and capacity-sharing (data, infrastructure, loading space, etc.) for all operators within the key Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T) Rhine-Alpine and Rhine-Danube Corridors.

5. Outlook

In 2024, the EGTC will continue the strategy update process. In 2017, the EGTC members updated the strategy paper. In the meantime, recent developments and plans on the European level such as the TEN-T Revision and Merger of Corridors have shown the need for an update of the EGTC Strategy. In the course of the strategy update, the thematic focus groups may be adapted to the newly emerged priorities and changes in light of the upcoming TEN-T Revision which is expected to be finalised and public in Spring 2024.

The EGTC will continue to express its position in the corridor relevant networks on European level – e.g., by participating in the Corridor Forum, by communicating its position on relevant topics, especially the possible merger with the North-Sea – Med Corridor in the new TEN-T layout.

The 10 years Anniversary of the EGTC will be planned in 2024 and is expected to take place sometime in Spring 2025. The location and exact date will be disclosed to the EGTC Members once they are firmly established.

Finally, the cooperation on the corridor level will be kept alive by implementing our current projects and through physical and virtual events.

Dr. Cecilia Braun

Director

March 2023



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