

Summary of the Corridor Conference Strategy Session

The EGTC Rhine-Alpine organised the **Corridor Conference “Vital Links – Resilient Network from North Sea to Mediterranean”** on 25 September 2024 in Milan with Regione Lombardia. In the light of the merger of the former Core Network Corridors Rhine-Alpine and North Sea - Mediterranean to the new North Sea - Rhine- Mediterranean Corridor, and being aware of the strong interlinks, the EGTC has set the framework for the Corridor Conference as to strengthen the cooperation of key players on main issues of general interest as e.g., Urban Nodes, Greening the Corridors, communication etc.

A keynote session with European Corridor Coordinator for the NSRM Paweł Wojchiechowski, who shared insights on the European Commission’s perspective on the merger of the Rhine-Alpine and North Sea-Mediterranean Corridors, as well as Karen Vancluysen Secretary General of POLIS, who highlighted the intricate relationship and connection between the citizens and the Corridors.



Pictured from left to right: Karen Vancluysen, Paweł Wojchiechowski, Paolo Balistreri

One of the sessions at the Corridor Conference focussed on key issues for a Corridor Strategy for the EGTC Rhine-Alpine to maximise future benefits. The strategy session at the Corridor Conference highlighted several key insights and discussions among participants. Menno Menist presented the current draft state of the strategy. He stressed the importance of establishing a clear vision for the EGTC Rhine-Alpine. He advocated for prioritizing objectives based on what the EGTC Rhine-Alpine can effectively contribute and called for a definitive statement regarding the merged corridor.



Pictured from left to right: Menno Menist, Stefano Pensa, Perrine Lavelle, Antonello Fontanili, Paul Leslie

Stefano Pensa presented a robust framework for quantifying resilience and forecasting various scenarios. He recommended employing mixed tools to prevent and manage disruptions, emphasizing the critical role of maintenance. Pensa also proposed using a resilience score as a prioritization tool, suggesting that the EGTC Rhine-Alpine could significantly contribute to building resilient networks alongside national and private entities.

Perrine Lavelle emphasized the need for active listening among partners to understand each other's situations and constraints without conflict. She noted that inland waterway transport (IWT) projects are primarily cross-border initiatives and pointed to the relevant experience of VNF in the old NSRM corridor.

Antonello Fontanili discussed the transformative effects of digitalization across the transport sector, which fundamentally alters procedures and economic behaviours. He pointed out the implications of these changes for policymaking and governance at all levels.

During the plenary discussion, participants reflected on the need to consider economic growth and innovation in conjunction with substantial investments in infrastructure. The strengthening of Swiss membership in the EGTC was proposed. The discussion also highlighted the importance of a "cohesion-thinking" approach to transport, ensuring it serves the public and optimizes urban nodes within long-distance transport. There was a consensus that transport infrastructure is essential not only for transport sectors but also for various other sectors.



Pictured from left to right: Dario Parravicini, Claudia Maria Terzi, Ilaria Tosoni, Giuseppe Russo

The quantification of resilience levels was deemed vital for prioritizing measures along transport routes, while questions arose about the EGTC's role in digitalization, which largely resides in private hands. Participants agreed that greening initiatives should be prioritized but balanced with economic considerations, recognizing the Rhine-axis as a key economic corridor in Europe. Further insights during the networking session included the potential of developing a digital twin for the corridor, although implementation challenges were acknowledged. Participants suggested that the EGTC should expand its scope to encompass the entire merged corridor and foster collaboration with potential new members in the Western part.



Pictured: Paolo Balistreri, Cecilia Braun, Paweł Wojciechowski and Matthias Proske

Conversations also touched on maximising the EGTC's added value for its current and potential future members due to the capability to address needs that the members may not

be able to fulfil due to resource constraints or lack of knowledge. Additionally, there was a call to enhance representation of French members, as well as to strengthen the emphasis on passenger and public transport sectors through follow-up activities linked to successful projects like RAISE-IT. Recommendations for the EGTC came up to enhance its role as an advocate for its members' interests within the EU.

The need for a strong, bottom-up vision was emphasized that reflects the interests of its members while promoting social and economic cohesion. Also, the growing significance of the role of the Corridor Coordinator was seen as a valuable asset, calling for greater involvement from the EGTC in leading strategic discussions with its members.