

The Rhine–Alpine corridor – an assessment

A backbone for railfreight

A trip along the Rhine corridor from Antwerp and Rotterdam to the Swiss border, also known as the Rotterdam–Genoa corridor, gives some interesting perspectives on the development of railfreight on this route. Anitra Green got on board for the ITJ.

A report on the southern end of the Rhine–Alpine corridor will follow in a future issue.

The Rhine–Alpine corridor (corridor 1) is taking shape, though a lot still needs to be done. The clear aim is to shift traffic from road to rail, meet market requirements and improve European railfreight services. It is a collaborative effort between the rail infrastructure authorities in the countries concerned and aims to create interoperability, eliminate bottlenecks and develop a total service concept. The authorities involved are ProRail, Infrabel, DB Netze, SBB, BLS, Swiss Train Paths and RFI, with the support of the EU.

Volumes in Rotterdam and Antwerp are expected to grow strongly in the next 20 years, especially in the box trades.

According to the port of Rotterdam, the modal split is likely to shift significantly by 2035, with the railways' share rising from 14% in 2009 to 20% – which could mean handling 3.6 million teu. Barge traffic is slated to increase from 40% to 45% (to 8.2 million), while road traffic's share could drop from 46% to 35%, which would still represent 6.4 million teu.

Rail links from ports are being improved to meet this enormous demand for new capacities. About 500 trains a week now run on the Betuwe line between Rotterdam and the German border, but the connecting line in Germany between Emmerich and Oberhausen needs to be

upgraded from two to three tracks. Work on this project will start next year, with completion due in 2022. Meanwhile, Antwerp is in the final stages of tests runs on a new rail link through the port, the Liefkenshoek link, which provides a fast direct connection to its marshalling yard.

Inland ports are expanding too. Duisburg runs around 350 freight train connections a week to more than 80 European destinations. It is also developing its Logport III logistics facility, with a new intermodal terminal for the chemical industry. Logistics service provider Con-targo is based there. It operates 25 inland terminals and handles 2 million teu a

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Photo: Anitra Green

Terminal capacities along corridor 1 – Cologne is pictured – are being expanded to cope with expected volume increases.

year. At its Neuss facility it is planning a new truck/train terminal, which due to come on line in September 2016.

RheinCargo, a trimodal service provider owned by Hafen und Güterverkehr Köln (the Cologne port operating company HGK) and the port operator Neuss-Düsseldorfer Häfen (NDH), handles freight in its regional and international network and carried around 24 million t of goods by rail last year. It is now setting up a new bimodal facility, Terminal Nord, due to come on line this year. The railtracks have been laid, the first gantry is being erected and the search for an operator is on.

In Mannheim/Ludwigshafen, the bimodal Kombi-Terminal Ludwigshafen organises chemical transport to and from a BASF plant, and acts for third parties (60%). It is a BASF, Bertschi, Kombiverkehr, Hoyer and Hupac partnership and handled record volumes last year.

Eliminate a bottleneck in Basel

One section of Switzerland's A2 motorway is called the Basler Osttangente. It straddles the Rhine between the Gellert residential area south of the river and the Black Forest tunnel (Schwarzwaldtunnel) north of it, not far from the border with Germany. It is the most intensely used road in Switzerland, with around 150,000 vehicles a day bringing the segment to the limits of its capacity. Some estimates concerning future traffic developments have predicted that without any expansion work, road hauliers may have to face up to four hours of traffic jams a day there by the year 2030.

A tunnel under the Rhine as a solution?

The federal government and the cantons of Basel-Stadt and Basel-Landschaft have already disagreed for a while on the way to expand the section. Now the country's federal roads office Astra has proposed a compromise. Instead of adding two more overground lanes, the authority has suggested a tunnel from the Wiese intersection in the north to Birsfelden in the south.

The government's overground project was budgeted at CHF 900 million. A tunnel has been pencilled in at CHF 1.4 billion. Astra said that «about CHF 300 million needed for any extension to Germany are not included in this figure.» The cantons have welcomed Astra's proposal in principle, but there is no agreement yet concerning the shouldering of the additional expenses. Discussions are set to continue in autumn. *cd*

There is a lot of competition amongst the firms providing transport. Hupac, a Swiss intermodal specialist, boasts of having a 45% share in the transalpine market, competing with 25 other intermodal operators. It insists on using only one traction provider for the whole of any given route, in contrast to DB Schenker Rail or BLS Cargo, for example, which prefer to cooperate with strong local partners. Incidentally, DB Schenker Rail, which claims to have a market share of 25% through Switzerland, used to cooperate with BLS Cargo, but switched to SBB Cargo in December last year; the change was worthwhile, they say (see also *ITJ* 15-16/2014, page 31).

The body EEIG Corridor Rhine-Alpine EWIV coordinates these interests. Information is published in a customer information platform. One new measure is a pre-arranged paths product (pap), structured in segments. Rail operators can apply for a sub-set in combination with at least one border crossing, and once allocated, that slot cannot be taken away. The entity is also studying a 740 m train, for longer trains mean higher productivity – up to 15% more capacity per train and path.



8. St. Galler Logistikdienstleistungs-Kongress

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Der **St. Galler Logistikdienstleistungs-Kongress** hat sich in den letzten Jahren als eine feste Grösse in der Tagungslandschaft in der Schweiz sowie im deutschsprachigen Raum etabliert und findet in diesem Jahr bereits zum achten Mal statt. Unter dem Motto „**Netzwerke – Führung – Business Innovation**“ werden am **15. und 16. September 2014 im Ramada Plaza** in Basel von einem hochkarätigen Referentenkreis kooperative und innovative Lösungsansätze in der Logistik, die langfristige Wettbewerbsvorteile am Markt ermöglichen, diskutiert.

Der 8. St. Galler Logistikdienstleistungs-Kongress wird am Vorabend, dem 15. September 2014, mit einem festlichen **Bankett** eröffnet, bei dem **Prof. Dr. Claus Hipp** als Unternehmer-Persönlichkeit angekündigt ist. Am **Kongresstag**, dem 16. September 2014, werden namhafte Experten der Schweizer und Europäischen Wirtschaft Vorträge zu hochaktuellen Themen aus der Logistikbranche halten.

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