**JOINT DECLARATION OF INTENT REGARDING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF RAIL FREIGHT CORRIDOR NORTH SEA - BALTIC**

**THE MINISTRIES IN CHARGE OF TRANSPORT OF**

**THE KINGDOM OF BELGIUM, THE REPUBLIC OF ESTONIA, THE REPUBLIC OF FINLAND, THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY, THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA, THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA, THE KINGDOM OF THE NETHERLANDS, THE REPUBLIC OF POLAND AND THE KINGDOM OF SWEDEN**

The implementation of a European rail freight network is one of the objectives of the European transport policy. In this policy framework, the goal is to encourage the gradual development of trans-European corridors for competitive rail freight transport, thus enabling higher usage of the railway system with positive effects on modal shift. The gradual establishment of corridors giving a higher level of quality to rail freight transport has to be achieved through improvements in capacity, including the upgrading and the rehabilitation of infrastructure or through the development of traffic management systems and better access to the terminals of the corridor. The improved level of quality offered by rail infrastructure should make it possible to develop seamless international rail freight services or create new ones.

Regulation (EU) No. 913/2010 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 September 2010 concerning a European rail network for competitive freight (hereinafter referred to as 'the Regulation') came into force on 9 November 2010.

The Regulation lays down rules for the establishment and organisation of international rail freight corridors with a view to the development of a European rail network for competitive freight. It sets out rules for the selection, organisation, management and indicative investment planning of freight corridors. The Regulation applies to the management and the use of railway infrastructure included in rail freight corridors.

The Regulation has set up North Sea - Baltic corridor (NSB) former Rail Freight Corridor No. 8 (RFC 8) as one of the initial freight corridors. In line with the provisions of the Regulation, it became operational on 10 November 2015.

The list of initial freight corridors in the Regulation has been amended by Regulation (EU) No. 1316/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Connecting Europe Facility. RFC 8 has been given a new designation with the name Rail Freight Corridor "North Sea - Baltic". Furthermore, its primary route network has been extended towards the Republic of Estonia and the Republic of Latvia, pursuant to the stipulations of Annex II of Regulation (EU) No. 1316/2013, with a provision

to take the necessary implementation measures until 10 November 2020. However, in line with Annex II of Regulation (EU) No. 1316/2013, 'until the realisation of a Rail Baltic line in 1 435 mm nominal track gauge, the specificities of different track gauge systems shall be taken into account in the establishment and operation of this corridor'.

Article 8(1) of the Regulation stipulates that each rail freight corridor needs an Executive Board, composed of representatives of the authorities of the Member States concerned.

The Executive Board of the RFC 8 was created on 20 March 2012 by adoption of a mission statement. The Executive Board of the RFC was supplemented with a new board member, the representative of the Czech Republic.

The publication of Regulation (EU) 2024/1679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network marks the next phase in the corridor cooperation, addressing, among other, the extension of the RFC NSB to the Kingdom of Sweden and the Republic of Finland and to Ukraine on one side and the withdraw of the Czech Republic on the other. It also introduces a number of quality objectives to be tackled by the Rail Freight Corridor, under the name of 'rail freight governance'.

The challenging needs for military mobility on the NSB corridor are identified, e.g. as outlined in the JOINT REPORT TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL on the implementation of the Action Plan on Military Mobility 2.0 JOIN(2025)11 from 20 March 2025.

The Ministries in charge of transport of the Kingdom of Belgium, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Finland, the Federal Republic of Germany, the Republic of Latvia, the Republic of Lithuania, the Kingdom of the Netherlands, the Republic of Poland and the Kingdom of Sweden:

- recognise the contribution of rail freight to Europe's socio-economic development and to the environment;
- stress the high potential of rail freight corridors to utilise in a more efficient and effective way the TEN-T Core Network and Extended Core Network;
- stress the high potential of the corridor within the stronger developing connections to Asia and its high potential in terms of multimodality and its benefits for the global transport;
- share the ambition to continue to work together to develop a network of rail freight corridors by the management of the corridors and their interconnections, but also by the improvement of the interoperability, the removal of bottlenecks, the harmonisation of operational rules, the capacity management and where applicable military mobility;

- wish to increase the involvement of the business community in developing the rail freight corridors;
- acknowledge the work carried out until now on the basis of the Agreement adopted on 8 October 2014 and Joint Declaration of Intent adopted on 22 November 2019;
- emphasize that attention should be given by Infrastructure Managers, with support from Ministries and other stakeholders, to cross-border operational issues which still create bottlenecks;
- consider that the present Joint Declaration of Intent is without prejudice to the competence of the Member States regarding planning and funding of the rail infrastructure on their territories;
- encourage the regulatory bodies and national safety authorities to improve their cooperation along the rail freight corridor.

With regards to the above and in order to comply with the provisions laid down in Article 8(1) of the Regulation, the Ministries have come to the following understanding:

**Generally:**
The Joint Declaration of Intent adopted on 22 November 2019, replacing the Agreement adopted on 8 October 2014, replacing the Mission Statement of the original Member States of this Corridor adopted on 20 March 2012, will be amended as follows:

**Participation of Czechia, Finland, Sweden and Ukraine:**
The Czech Republic will not be longer represented on the Executive Board of Rail Freight Corridor North Sea Baltic ("the Board").
The Republic of Finland and the Kingdom of Sweden will be represented on the Board, based on North Sea – Baltic European Transport Corridor aligned by the Regulation (EU) 2024/1679 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 June 2024 on Union guidelines for the development of the Trans-European Transport Network.
The Ukraine is encouraged to cooperate with the Board, whenever it is convenient.

**Composition and responsibilities of the Board**

The Board will be composed of representatives of authorities of the Member States concerned.

Under the EU legislations and political commitments referred to in the introduction to this Joint Declaration of Intent, the responsibilities of the Board will include:

- to implement Regulation (EU) No 913/2010, in particular the governance structure foreseen in Article 8, with regard to the Rail Freight Corridor North Sea-Baltic;
- In accordance with Article 52 Paragraph 6 of Regulation (EU) 2024/1679/, to coordinate the work of the Rail Freight Corridor North Sea Baltic and the Trans-European Transport Network North Sea-Baltic European Transport Corridor with the European coordinator and national authorities;

- to work together where necessary with the European institutions and organisations, the national railway safety authorities, and the regulatory bodies of its members.
- to ask the Management board to report on any matter relating at the smooth functioning of the corridor;
- to ensure the extensions of the North Sea-Baltic corridor rail freight are duly established; however, in line with the provisions foreseen in CEF Regulation (EU) No. 2021/1153 which, in recital 68, preserves the effects of Article 29 of Regulation 1316/2013, indicates that 'until the realisation of a Rail Baltic line in 1 435 mm nominal track gauge, the specificities of different track gauge systems shall be taken into account in the establishment and operation of this corridor.'
- to take decisions on general matters of common interest concerning the internal functioning of the Rail Freight Corridor North Sea-Baltic without prejudice to the competence of Member States regarding the planning and funding of rail infrastructure;
- to support the need of infrastructure managers by taking relevant decisions in time, as well as to have sufficient resources for the development and the deployment of ERTMS and interoperability, but also for all other measures of the corridor's investment plan intended to improve the corridor's quality, without prejudice to the national and community budgetary competences;
- to monitor the realized progress with regard to the implementation plan's measures on the basis of the reporting performed by the Management board;
- to consider, and where appropriate to support the requests of the Management board for European subsidies within the framework of Regulation (EU) 2021/1153 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 7 July 2021 establishing the Connecting Europe Facility and repealing Regulations (EU) No 1316/2013 and (EU) No 283/2014;
- to support the involvement of National Safety Authorities and Regulatory Bodies in the development of the Rail Freight Corridor and to facilitate the dialogue with the Management board and where needed take relevant actions without prejudice to the competencies of these bodies.

**General rules for the functioning of the Board**

The working language of the Board will be English.

The Board will take its decisions on the basis of mutual consent of the representatives of the authorities of the Member States.

The Board will take decisions which are provided for by Regulation (EU) No 913/2010; these decisions are legally binding and directly applicable. They will be signed by all the members of the Board and should be published.

The Board should adopt its rules of procedure.

The decisions taken by the former Executive Board established by the Mission Statement of 20 March 2012 replaced by the Agreement of 8 October 2014 as well as the decisions taken by the former The Executive Board of Rail Freight Corridor North Sea - Baltic within

Joint Declaration of Intent of 22 November 2019 remain valid for the parties to these decisions only provided they remain a member of the Board.

**Signed in English in (place) on (date)**
(Signatures of all MS of RFC North Sea-Baltic (Ministers or State Secretaries) – alphabetical order. Minister of Mobility of the Kingdom of Belgium




Jean-Luc Crucke
Brussels, 2 December 2025

Federal Minister of Transport of the Federal Republic of Germany

Bescherming van persoonlijke levenssfeer

Patrick Schnieder

Minister of Infrastructure of the Republic of Estonia

Bescherming van persoonlijke levenssfeer

Bescherming van persoonlijke levenssfeer

Minister of Transport and Communications of the Republic of Finland

Bescherming van persoonlijke levenssfeer

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of the Rail Freight Corridor North Sea – Baltic

Minister of Transport of the Republic of Latvia



Bescherming van persoonlijke levenssfeer

Juras TAMINSKAS

Minister of Transport and Communications of the Republic of Lithuania

Minister for the Environment and Public Transport

Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management of the Kingdom of Netherlands

Thierry Aartsen

Bescherming van persoonlijke levenssfeer

Dariusz Klimczak

Minister of Infrastructure of the Republic of Poland

Bescherming van persoonlijke levenssfeer

Andreas Carlson

Minister for Infrastructure and Housing of the Kingdom of Sweden

Bescherming van persoonlijke levenssfeer