



Promotion de l'Axe Ferroviaire de marchandises  
Scandinavie-Rhin-Rhône-Méditerranée Occidentale A.S.B.L.

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Directorate-General for Energy and Transport

CONSULTATION DOCUMENT

On the progressive implementation of a rail freight-oriented network

FERRMED CONSIDERATIONS

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## I.- FERRMED presentation

### 1.- About FERRMED

The non-profit association FERRMED was officially founded and registered in Brussels on the 5th of August 2004. It is an association of a multi-sectoral character, as an initiative of the private sector in order to promote the freight railway axis Scandinavia–Rhine–Rhone–Western Mediterranean. The main trunk of the Axis begins in Stockholm, crosses the Öresund and Fehmarn straits, connects, in a fan-shaped manner, all the sea ports of the Western Baltic Sea and the North Sea, together with the United Kingdom, it unites the major inland ports; from Duisburg it passes through the Rhine and Rhone valleys – goes from one to another through Luxembourg and Metz – it goes along the western Mediterranean coast from Marseille and Genoa until Algeciras and it interconnects the most important East-West axes of the European Union

### 2.- Objectives of FERRMED Association

To promote the development of the railway infrastructures for freight transport on the main trunk of the FERRMED axis as well as on its principal interconnection axes of its area of influence.

To stimulate the improvement of operation systems and the free competition on the freight railway network of the European Union.

To promote the new “utilisation” procedures in order to optimise the railway transport and the combined/intermodal freight transport by using the railway.

To encourage the establishment of the FERRMED standards on the freight railway network of the European Union.

### 3.- FERRMED standards for the railway freight network of the European Union.

The FERRMED standards that we intend to establish are the following:

★ Reticular and polycentric network with a great socio-economic and intermodal impact (Considering three great North-South and three East-West Trans-European axes)

★ In the great axes:

- Conventional double-track rail lines, which are electrified (advisable voltage: 25.000 volts), and devoted preferentially or exclusively to the freight transport.

- High performance parallel lines available for exclusive or preferential use of passenger transportation.

★ Management and monitoring systems unified for every great axis.

★ Width of the tracks: UIC

★ ERTMS system with “two way working” along the tracks

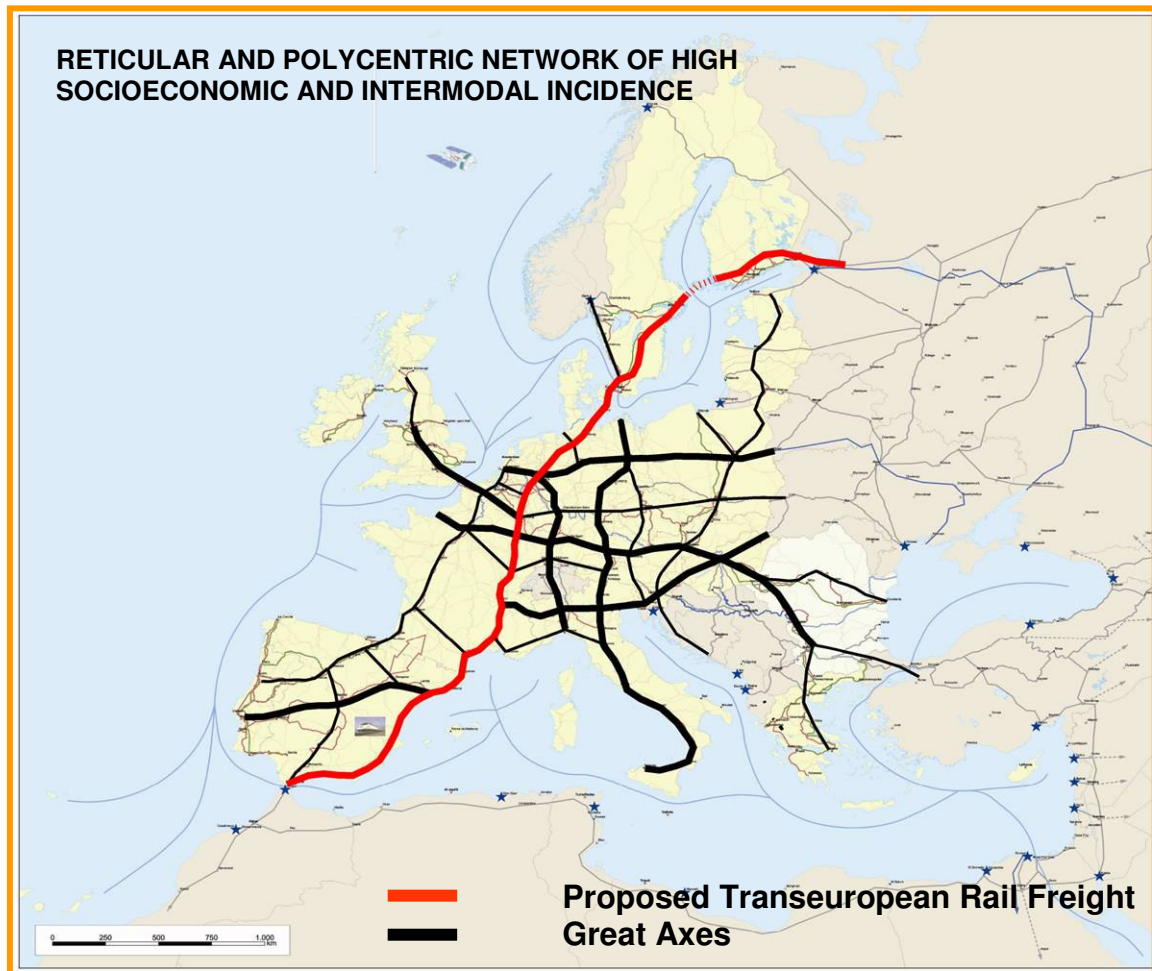
★ UIC C gauge

★ Trains length reaching 1.500 meters and 3600 ÷ 4000 tons

★ The maximum slope is 0,012 and length limitations of the ramps.

★ Usable length of sidings and terminals for 1500 m. trains.

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## II.- Considerations to the Document Items

### 1.- Introduction

FERRMED agrees with the proposition of the Document, but we consider that in the dedicated rail freight network, some main axes with a great socio-economic and intermodal impact (three North-South and three East-west), have to be identified.

In these axes, FERRMED standards have to be progressively implemented with higher ratios for the year 2015 in Reliability (95%) Performance (80Km/h) competitiveness (Modal share 35%-45%)

### 2.- Information Sources

Regarding this issue FERRMED offers to the Directorate-General for Energy and Transport all the information concerning Rail-Freight Oriented Network in the EU, that are displayed in the two mean studies carried out by our Association:

- Demonstrative Study (concluded)
- Technical, Socioeconomic and Demand/Offer Study (to be finished by the first Semester of 2008)

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### **3.- Current situation: insufficient reliability, performance and competitiveness**

#### **3.1.- Competitiveness to be developed**

From FERRMED's point of view, within the Rail-freight oriented Network, high priority must be given to the development of the main axes which link the major sea and inland ports and the main industrial areas.

#### **3.2.- Performance and reliability to be improved: toward a better freight traffic “fluidity”.**

##### **3.21.-Eflorts to reach better quality and reliability**

In this issue, FERRMED opinion is that the creation and allocation of infrastructure capacity within the framework of the Trans-European rail freight network (to remove bottlenecks, further coordination on interoperability matters, comprehensive corridor organisation, cooperation of infrastructure managers, etc) have to be settled in the main axes ( as it is stated in point 3.1)

FERRMED, agrees fully with Mr. Karel Vinck’s proposal on a specific model for corridor organisation as well. EEIG per corridor could be a suitable vehicle.

##### **3.2.2.-Operational priority rules**

Regarding the statement “that capacity still exists on the network”, FERRMED opinion is that for every main corridor (3 North-South and 3 East-West) the analysis of traffics has to consider the different modes of transport in the corridor (rail, motorway and water-way) and in addition to take, into account, the traffic trends in the coming years.

Taking into consideration this point of view, can be stated that, for several main corridors, it is imperative to plan the separation of passenger services from freight traffic at short and medium term.

We agree that for those lines which are not devoted to freight transport (secondary axes from freight point of view), mixed traffic management has to be considered taking into considerations “freight operational priority” for international freight trains

##### **3.2.3.- Cross-border procedures**

We fully agree that it is a key issue to totally eliminate the cross-border processing time, (starting with the main axes proposed by FERRMED).

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### **3.2.4.- Insufficient qualitative tracks or equipments**

FERRMED insists that for the main axes that link the major sea and inland ports and the major industrial areas in the EU, maximum priority has to be given to all kind of actions in order to remove bottlenecks and to separate progressively passenger services from freight traffic.

All these actions have to be planned at the main corridor level.

In several main axes (as FERRMED define them: “axes of great socioeconomic and intermodal incidence”), new dedicated passenger lines are build. This issue facilitate the establishment of parallel devoted freight lines in many sections

FERRMED recommend highly to choose three main corridor North-south and three more East-West, and to prepare an improvement plan in the short and medium term for each axis.

### **3.2.5.- Terminals and marshalling yards**

One key issue is to analyse the number of terminals required in every main axis (many of them already exist) and to determine the intervention on the terminals that play the role of hubs. Mainly, those situated in the main ports, industrial areas and in the crossings among the most important corridors.

In these cases, FERRMED consider that the Terminals have to be able for long and heavy trains (1.500 meters long 3.600 ÷ 4.000 Tons).

What is clear is that any kind of investment in the networks have to be made in the axes that “make more profits”.

It could be of high interest for the economic EU development, that de “main axes of the rail freight network” are jointly defined as a “profitable rail network”.

### **3.2.6.- Improvement in tracking and tracing**

FERRMED agrees that well connected tracking and tracing systems are an essential element for the competitiveness.

Improvement action has to be planned at short and medium term in the entire European rail freight network, starting with the “main axes”.

### **3.2.7.- Charging policies for the access to the infrastructures**

FERRMED agrees strongly that intermodal competition has to be taken into account in order to minimise risk of distortion of competition between modes

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Another key issue is to unify criteria at EU level, and to avoid cross subsidisation between passenger trains and freight trains, that reduce the competitiveness of rail freight transport.

#### **4.- The Community's actions for revitalising rail freight transport**

##### **4.1.- Three packages for the contribution of an European integrated rail area.**

FERRMED agrees firmly in the implementation of the three package including the development of the rail interoperability.

ERTMS deployment and the implementation of other interoperability actions is a very important issue. FERRMED's opinion regards the starting point in this deployment and the implementation on the great rail freight axes (three North-South and three East-West).

All kind of improvement investments have to be made by giving priority to these great axes.

##### **4.2.- Reforms in place need to be fastened**

FERRMED agrees with the reforms that Member States have to undertake.

The key point is to establish a clear timing in order to achieve the proposed eight different reforms/actions, as soon as possible, starting for the great axes.

#### **5.- Objectives**

FERRMED agrees firmly in these objectives, but the key point is the definition of the major rail freight corridors at the European level, considering the socioeconomic importance and the intermodal scope of each corridor, excluding political matters in the way of selecting them.

#### **6.- Possible options and actions**

##### **6.1.- Possible options**

FERRMED opinion is that a combination of option B and option C could be possible. Option C has to be applied in parallel with Option B in some sections of the great axes taking into consideration the traffic volumes in each corridor (both the existing and forecasted traffic in rail and in motorways). In fact, a significant part of the traffic growth forecasted in motorways has to be transferred to rail in order to avoid a collapse.

For the great axes, where option C has to be applied, FERRMED standards should be considered.

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## 6.2.- Description of the measures of option B

### 6.2.1.- Definition of rail freight-oriented network

FERRMED, believed that, as it has already been said, the rail freight oriented network has to be developed considering:

- Traffic volume in the corridors (not only rail but also motorways, because on many occasions volume in rail axes are not important enough due to operation, infrastructure and interoperability problems)
- Intermodal capacity of the axes
- Connectivity of the rail axes with the “motorways of the sea” and “inland motorways” (links with the major sea and inland ports directly or through “antenna” connections).
- Connectivity with the major industrialized areas.
- Good topographic conditions for the rail freight transportation.
- Cost-benefit analysis.
- Potential growth
- Strategic matters (for instance new opportunities at the EU level in the intercontinental traffic with Asia and North Africa.

Regarding these “indicators” FERRMED insists on the selection of three main axes North-South and three East-West, that could be considered as a EU business oriented “core corridors”.

#### North-South great axes proposed.

- 1.- Sthockolm-Copenhagen-Lübeck-Hamburg-Bremen--Duisburg- Koblenz/Liège-Luxembourg/Sarrebruck-Metz-Lyon-Avignon-Marseille-Montpellier-Barcelona-Valencia-Murcia-Almeria/Granada-Motril-Málaga-Algeciras. (FERRMED Axis)
- 2.- Rotterdam-Duisburg-Mamheim-Basel-Bern-Milano-Genova.
- 3.- Rostock-Berlin-Leipzig-Nuremberg-München-Insbruck-Verona-Firenze-Roma-Napoli-Reggio di Calabria/Goia Tauro.

#### West-East great axes proposed

- 1.- Rotterdam-Duisburg-Hannover-Berlin-Warszawa-Minsk-Moscou.
- 2.- Manchester/London/ Le Havre-Paris/ Antwerpen/Bruxelles-Metz-Nancy-Strasbourg-Stuttgart-München-Salzburg-Linz-Wien-Budapest-Kyjv/Bucarest.
- 3.- Lisboa/Sines-Madrid-Zaragoza-Barcelona-Lyon-Torino-Milano-Verona-Ljubljana-Zagreb-Belgrad-Sofia-Istambul/Athenai.

Antenna connections of these main axes with neighbouring major ports and industrial areas should be considered like FERRMED axis does. Connections to Paris, Calais,

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Zeebrugge, Bruxelles, Antwerpen, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Bremerhaven, etc, are included as part of FERREMED corridor.

Complementary axes could be added as a secondary priority axes in order to complete the European Rail Freight Network.

Note.- Be careful with the present remaining capacity of some sections of the Trans-European rail network. Interoperability and operation existing problems makes "apparent" residual capacity.

For this reasons, traffic has been diverted to parallel motorways.

### **6.2.2.-Measures related to the railway systems operations.**

Generally speaking, FERRMED agrees with all the proposed measures, but we would like to state some considerations:

- In most of the cases, the common proposals are only "recommendations". We think over that a Concrete Plan of actions to develop these "measures" at EU, level has to be undertaken as soon as possible.
- The implementation of operation centres in charge of a whole corridor is a great necessity.
- Common corridor organization may involve, as well, multisectoral associations (like FERRMED) as a part of an EEIG.
- Regarding Target characteristics to be met on the corridors, in the medium term, we would like to insist on the adoption of FERRMED Standards, basically concerning maximum train load (3.600÷ 4.000 tons) and maximum train length (1500m).
- Concerning the implementation of interoperable systems, please do not forget to change the width of the tracks in the sections of the main axes included in Spain and Portugal.

### **III.- Answers to the proposed questions**

#### **a) Should priorities be set in the action plan and on which criteria?**

Prioritization of the action plan is a key issue.

The criteria has to be "business oriented", identifying some main axes with a great socioeconomic and intermodal impact, linking (directly or through antenna connections) the major sea and inland ports and the major industrial areas.

Priority actions have to be implemented on the busiest sections of these axes.

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**b) Should other measures be added and should the ones proposed be deepened?**

From our point of view, the measures to be added are the “FERRMED Standards” stated in Chapter I of these Considerations.

The measures to be deepened are expressed in chapter II of these considerations.

**c) How do they assess the costs and benefits of implementing these actions?**

There are several points to be taken into account:

- Costs and benefits have to be clearly identified at corridor level, doing the corresponding benchmarking with other modes of transport.
- In this sense, do not forget the “external costs” from the environmental point of view.
  
- Benefits for the productive and logistic sectors have to be taken into consideration (cost reduction, quality improvement, lead time reduction, major reliability, stocks decrease, better access to the markets, etc):
  
- Incidence in the European economy growth including new jobs generation.
  
- Motorways decongestion.
  
- Savings in the energy consumption.
  
- Alignment with “Kyoto protocol” regarding CO2 emanations.
  
- Balanced modal systems development.
  
- Added “value” of the companies located in the area of influence of the rail freight-oriented network.

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