

Position Paper

Reducing the negative impact of Temporary Capacity Restrictions (TCRs)



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Successfully reaching the ambitious goals of the European Green Deal and its Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy (SSMS) requires a substantial shift of traffic onto the railways. To cope with this additional traffic, a robust rail infrastructure and sufficient rail capacity is needed. Existing rail infrastructure must be maintained and upgraded, while missing links must be built. A proper rail infrastructure, in turn, requires works and construction sites. Consequently, TCRs on the rail network are unavoidable, but need to be managed in a way so that their negative impact on rail services is minimized.

In fact, inadequately planned, poorly coordinated, not harmonised, overestimated, unstable and/or insufficiently communicated TCRs significantly reduce the quality of rail passenger and freight services. Consequently, customers decide for different modes of transportation. In addition, TCRs lead to a significant increase in costs for Railway Undertakings (RUs): longer travel times require more resources, e.g. drivers, energy, and rolling stock. Rail services' attractiveness can be strongly deteriorated by a high volume of TCRs that lead to multiple changes of allocated paths, timetable variants or non-running days. RUs may also experience additional costs when trying to win back customers who had been lost to road due to previous TCRs. In the long run, RUs lose out on income from customers who decide for other modes of transport due to unfavourable travel or shipping experiences by rail.

1. Full implementation of existing rules

Delegated Decision (EU) 2075/2017 replaced Annex VII of Directive 2012/34/EU to increase the transparency of the process for planning, coordinating and communicating TCRs. The intention was to provide RUs with sufficient time to adjust the service towards the customer as well as the resource planning to TCRs, thereby mitigating unpredicted cancellations and delays and maintaining rail's competitiveness compared to other modes of transport. These benefits have not been fully achieved all-over the EU, as the transition away from multiple systems and principles used to plan, coordinate and communicate TCRs on the rail network has not been finalized in every Member State. Depending on available alternative routings, it is key to strike a good balance between the cost for infrastructure measures that accrue to IMs, the duration and extent of a TCR and its negative impact on rail traffic. The right balance between costs and market orientation/capacity footprint could be found for instance in a dialogue that includes the involved stakeholders such as IMs, RUs, national and local public authorities incl. the financing parties. Currently, IMs do not always prioritize the maximum possible utilization of capacity nor always sufficiently take the impact on RUs such as additional planning efforts, asset and resources, into account, when planning TCRs.

European Infrastructure Managers commit to a full and proper implementation of Annex VII of Directive 2012/34/EU. Proper implementation does not only refer to planning TCRs according to the rules of Annex VII, but also to executing these plans accordingly. This should include the construction work itself as well as international coordination and optimization of re-routed traffic flows ("Work" + "Run").

2. Better international coordination of TCRs by implementing Timetabling and Capacity Redesign (TTR) and Digital Capacity Management (DCM)

Driving a train across Europe should become as easy as driving a truck or bus. For this, it is essential to plan TCRs and to inform and involve applicants at an earlier stage, coordinate and align them across borders to minimize the impact on timetables and to keep re-routings free of TCRs. TCRs must be dimensioned in a way that allows RUs to handle their traffic efficiently and in a customer-oriented manner. It is important to ensure maximum reliability of information on TCRs in terms of their duration, location and, in particular, the caused traffic congestion, as well as on the effects of the implementation of track works. RailNetEurope (RNE) and Forum Train Europe (FTE) are working on the implementation of TTR and DCM, which will support an earlier planning of TCRs, as well as their international coordination. In fact, TTR aims at a harmonised international process for TCR planning and timetabling which is transparent, efficient and safeguards the necessary capacity to execute TCRs.

Once implemented, the TTR capacity model, at an early stage (36 to 18 months prior to timetable change) will not only set the volumes of the transport per market segment, but also the share for TCRs. The capacity models are being created at least annually to ensure improvements based on learnings and new situations. An overestimation of capacity required for TCRs must be avoided. During the capacity supply creation stage (18 to 11 months prior to timetable change) all objects, including TCRs, are shown in a capacity diagram requiring greater anticipation for TCR planning and stability.

DCM will be the IT ecosystem that enables TTR. It will be a platform where multiple applications coexist and communicate, including the national systems of the stakeholders, using common standards and databases. It combines the planning of TCRs, the provision of available capacity and the path allocation process through a TCR Tool, a European Capacity Management Tool, and a Capacity Broker. The TCR Tool includes the visualization on Gantt and Map, as well as coordination and publication functions. Investments for the implementation of TTR and DCM are expected to amount to 1 billion euro for the whole sector including investments for central tools but also at the level of individual stakeholders such as IMs and RUs, according to a calculation conducted by RNE¹. DCM implementation may benefit from an early roll out in first mover countries to facilitate and accelerate benefits for IMs and RUs as well as to gain valuable experience for the overall implementation on the European level.

In addition, the rules and practices that are applied in Member States to plan works and change the timetable in case of TCRs must be harmonized in EU legislation. This harmonization should be based on the common rules for a TCR timetable development within the TTR project. It should include harmonized TCR rules such as on what basis what type of trains to be rerouted, repositioned in time, reduced in speed or restricted in journey or if ultimately needed cancelled. At the same time, the common process of communication of the modified timetables with customers and other stakeholders must be harmonized.

For TCRs to be better internationally aligned, the timely implementation of TTR and DCM is of utmost importance. Hence, we ask the European Commission for a surgical and quick review of the applicable rules allowing for TTR to be implemented as soon as possible. In addition, co-funding support addressed at

¹ Figure based on RNE business case document accessible [here](#).

IMs and RUs for introducing DCM and TTR is needed in all areas of capacity and path management together with the modification of the rules and implementation of common IT tools.

3. Multiannual financing of the IM

IMs require a stable economic environment for conceptual TCR planning and capacity management. Currently, different European member states set differing economic conditions and different funding timelines for the maintenance and modernisation of railway infrastructure. An unstable economic environment, such as unpredictable funding in terms of timing and amount, leads to difficulties in planning construction and maintenance work and, therefore, often to inadequately planned, poorly coordinated and insufficiently communicated TCRs. The consequences are uncoordinated timetable adjustments and a negative impact on end customers. As the TTR programme foresees a planning period of up to 5 years, IMs should receive secured multiannual funding and cash flow for operation, maintenance and upgrading for a period of at least 5 years. This shall be supported by aligned financing procedures and timelines across Member States.

In addition, the multiannual framework could be targeted at lowering the impacts of TCR on rail services. Long term TCRs that occur after timetabling and capacity allocation is finalized have a particularly negative impact on RUs and end customers. The negative impact of such TCRs on RUs, e.g. additional costs for assets and resources could be estimated in consultation with affected RUs and could be considered in the planning, funding and execution of TCRs.

We ask the Member States to provide stable and timely announced funding for the maintenance, renewal and new construction of rail infrastructure so that the goals of the Green Deal and SSMS can be reached. In addition, we ask the European Commission to ensure that Member States, based on Directive 2012/34/EU, provide their IMs with multiannual funding, that should try to balance the costs of TCRs for IMs and their negative impact on rail services, for a period of at least 5 years. Furthermore, we ask the Commission to include in their Rail Market Monitoring (RMMS) an analysis covering if Member States provide their IMs with multiannual financing, as well as the accuracy of the actual implementation on a yearly basis, i.e. if the money received by the IMs each year matches the plan.

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