

The RFC Network  
User Satisfaction

# Survey

# 2022

Report for RFC RALP

RFC USER SATISFACTION SURVEY 2022

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# 01 STUDY DESIGN

HOW THE SURVEY WAS SET UP

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# STUDY DESIGN

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- 11 respondents || 13 evaluations\*
- Computer Aided Web Interviews (using the online tool Survio)
- Contacts (e-mail address) delivered by RFCs
- 43 invitations sent, possibility to have a personal interview offered
- Field Phase: 19<sup>th</sup> September to 10<sup>th</sup> November 2022

*\* One respondent is counted multiple times if his/her organisation uses multiple corridors.*

# SATISFACTION & PARTICIPATION

**13**  
evaluations

This is a 13% decrease compared to the previous year (15 evaluations in 2021).  
*\*Including 1 interview from DB Cargo (see attachments).*

**11**  
participants

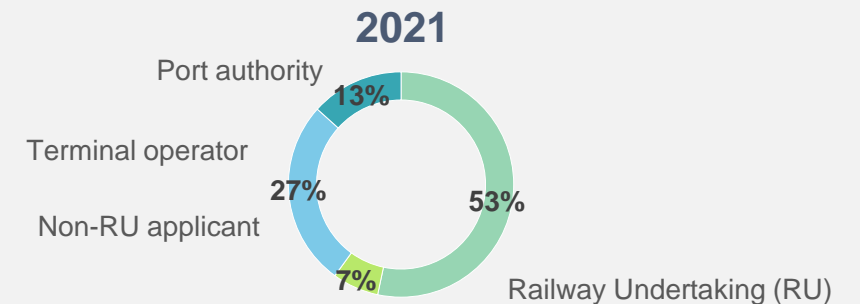
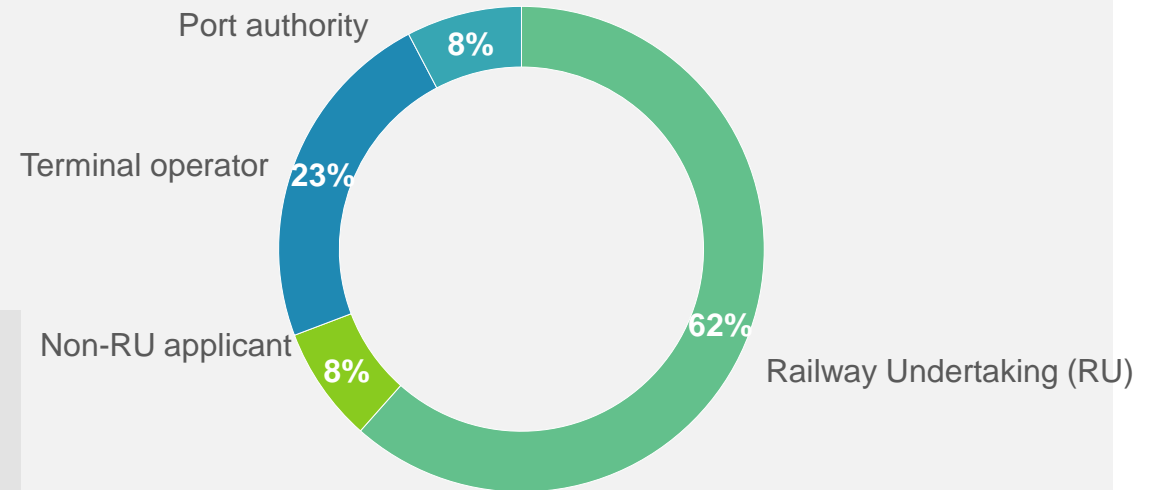
This is constant compared to the previous year (11 participants in 2021).

## Customer satisfaction



*\*Answers given were very satisfied, satisfied and slightly satisfied. This is 16% lower compared to the previous year.*

## Participant groups in % of 2022



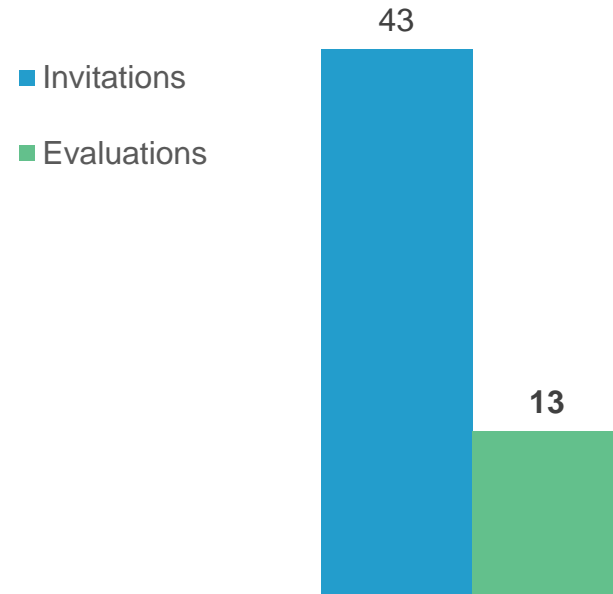
# RESPONSE RATE

Compared to the previous year



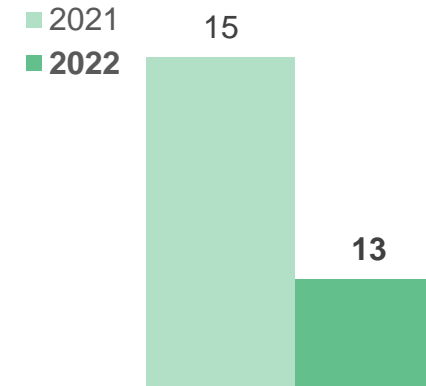
	2022	vs 2021
<b>Total</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>(-2)</b>
RUs/non-Rus	9	
Terminals/Ports	4	
Invitations sent	43	<b>(-18)</b>
<b>Response rate overall</b>	<b>30%</b>	<b>(+5%)</b>

Invitations vs. Evaluations ratio



In 2021: 61 Invitations, 15 Responses

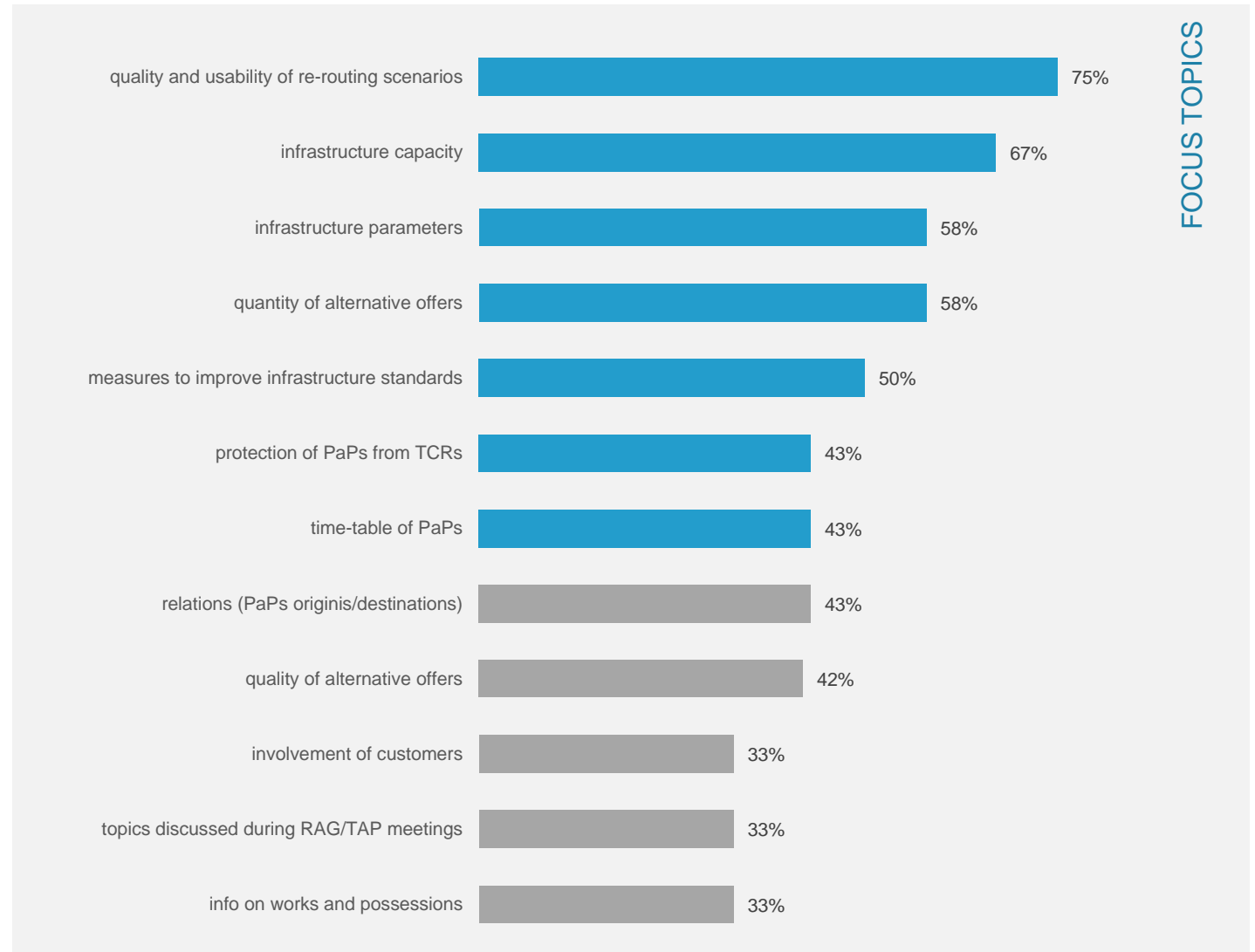
Number of responses 2021 vs. 2022



# SUMMARY – WISH FOR IMPROVEMENT

All respondents

- » Focus topics chosen
- » Answered by: RUs/non-RUs, Terminals/Ports
- » Different sample sizes on every topic



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Topic	Satisfaction Level and Trend	Comment	Responsibility
RFC RALP in general	76% ↓	Lower satisfaction level than 2021, dissatisfaction with the punctuality on the corridor rose	MB / EEIG IMs / RUs
Infrastructure	17% ↗	Infrastructure parameters are steered by Member States	ExB and IMs
TCR coordination	8% →	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annex VII sees IMs in charge of TCR coordination</li> <li>RFC RALP supports international long-term TCR coordination</li> </ul>	IMs
RFC commercial offer	14% ↓	Timetable of PaPs and relations of PaPs were criticised more, consideration of planned pauses for future PaPs needed, PaP via Venlo to be considered Parameters have to be checked to better fit the needs of RUs	C-OSS parameters: IMs and ExB
TPM	25% ↑	Coordination between TPM and RUs and, if needed, with all involved stakeholders like terminals and ports to gain a complete picture of the train run	WG TPM together with RUs
ICM	13% ↓	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parameters on re-routing lines were criticized</li> <li>no sufficient capacity on RFC RALP re-routings in case of ICM</li> </ul>	ExB and IMs
RAG/TAG	33% ↗	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on consideration of AG position in corridor bodies</li> <li>Meeting structure and topics should be under review</li> </ul>	MB and ExB RAG & TAG speaker
Communication services	42% ↑	Significant improvement compared to last year	EEIG



## **02 SATISFACTION WITH THE RFC RALP**

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# INTRODUCTION

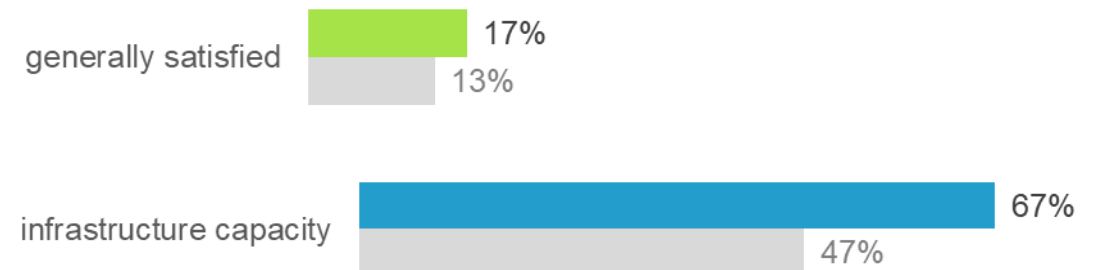
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The RFC USS 2022 is based on the version from 2021 which was optimized to better suit the needs of the invitees and the RFC Network. Only the annual and RFC-specific questions were changed to be up to date focusing on current topics. To stay comparable to the past surveys, the general questions covered the same topics.

Though this new survey does focus on concrete proposals for improvement. The participant could answer each topic with 'generally satisfied' or/and would appreciate improvement in ... (select certain concrete measures). Also, in the survey each topic offered the opportunity to give an open answer under 'other'. Therefore the participants were able to communicate their opinion even better to the RFC Network. The percentage indicates what percentage of participants think that topic needs improvement.

## How to interpret the numbers?

- For every topic, a general satisfaction is indicated (*17% of respondents are generally satisfied with "Infrastructure"*)
- For every sub-item the percentage shows how many respondents indicated this as a field for improvement (*67% of respondents see infrastructure capacity in need of improvement*)



# SATISFACTION WITH RFC RALP

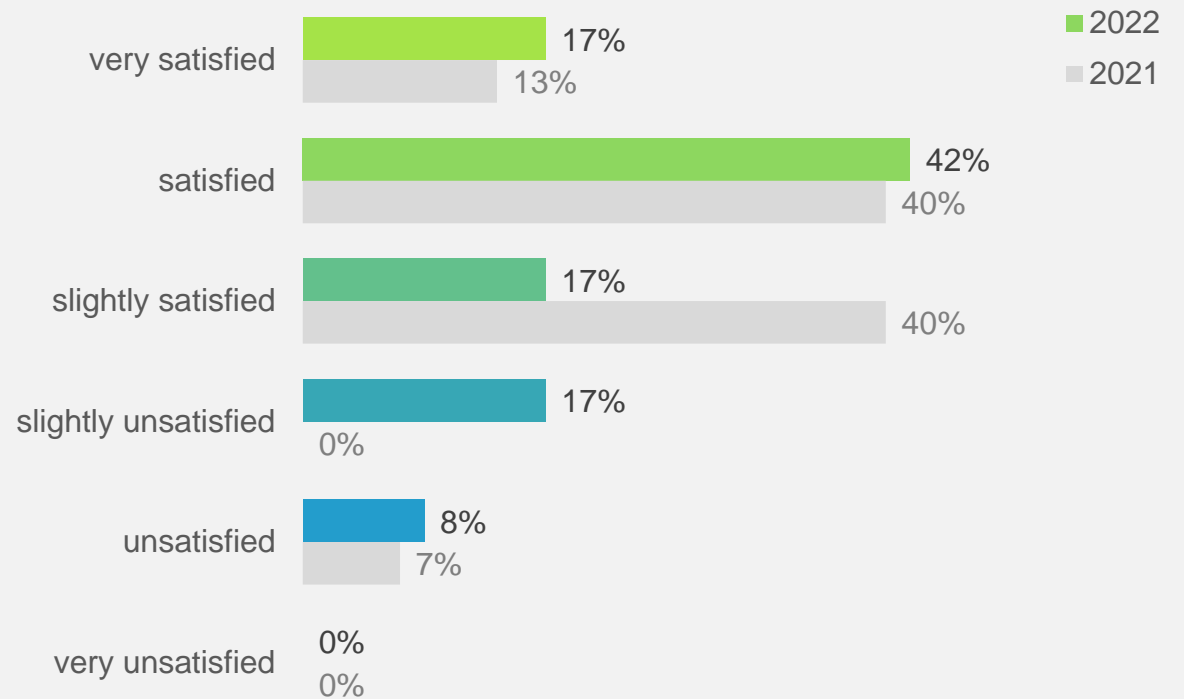
- » Overall, how satisfied are you as a user of the RFC?
- » Answered by: RUs/non-RUs, Terminals/Ports
- » sample size = 12
- +1 interview from DB Cargo (see attachment)

**76%**  
Generally satisfied

*\*Answers given were very satisfied, satisfied and slightly satisfied.*

**19%**  
Decrease of  
overall  
satisfaction

*\*compared to 2021*



*\* Figures rounded without commas*

# OTHER COMMENTS:

## RFC 1:

- We are a neighboring railroad infrastructure company to DB Netz AG and currently not a user of RFC1 - Rhine-Alpine. We are responsible for the "first mile" and "last mile" from the DB/HGK network crossings.
- Low level of cooperation with Corridor, most topics are talked bilateral with IMs.
- Operational quality on the corridor is not satisfying at all (50% punctuality, 13%-20% loss of trains).
- Bad quality, bad contingency management, poor planning, poor international coordination.
- Very good communication, good reports.

# WISH FOR IMPROVEMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE

## Priority areas

- » Which topics related to RFC Infrastructure are the priority areas for improvement according to your opinion?
  - » Answered by: RUs/non-RUs, Terminals/Ports
  - » sample size = 12
- +1 interview from DB Cargo (see attachment)

**17%**

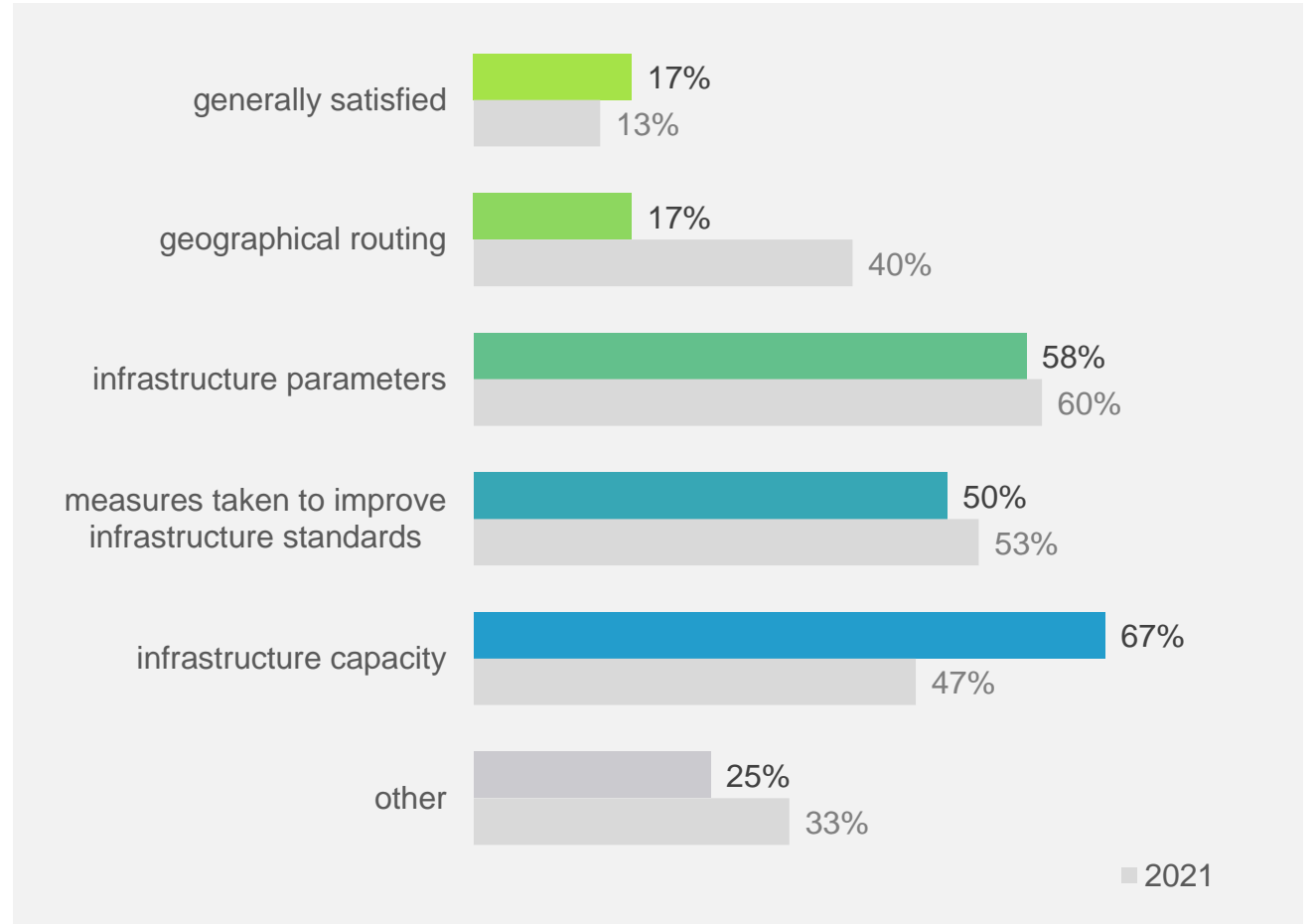
**Generally satisfied**

*This is a 4% increase in satisfaction compared to last year.  
Sample size 2021: 15*

**Focus on**

- 1 Infrastructure capacity
- 2 Infrastructure parameters
- 3 Measures to improve infrastructure standards

*Most mentioned topics*



# OTHER COMMENTS:

## RFC 1:

- Measures taken by the RFC's Infrastructure Managers together with the Ministries in charge of transport to improve the infrastructure standards
- More focus on paths beside the main routes (e.g. Herzogenrath)
- Consider infrastructure parameters, route knowledge and border crossing points in a uniform manner.
- Better timetable harmonisation
  - Basel: Train driver authorisation on DB network in Switzerland (Boarder agreement)
- Optimise legal standards between Germany and Switzerland (Basel).
- Operational rules of IMs not enough harmonised within the EU.
- We have a lot of trains which drive via Venlo. So, it would great if you can offer some PaP's via Venlo. But Venlo is not included in RFC01.
- Lack of capacity in shunting yards, Betuwe line in Germany.

# WISH FOR IMPROVEMENT IN TCR

## Priority areas

- » Which areas of the coordination of planned temporary capacity restrictions (TCR) on the RFC are the priority areas for improvement according to your opinion?
  - » Answered by: RUs/non-RUs, Terminals/Ports
  - » sample size = 12
- +1 interview from DB Cargo (see attachment)

8%

Generally satisfied

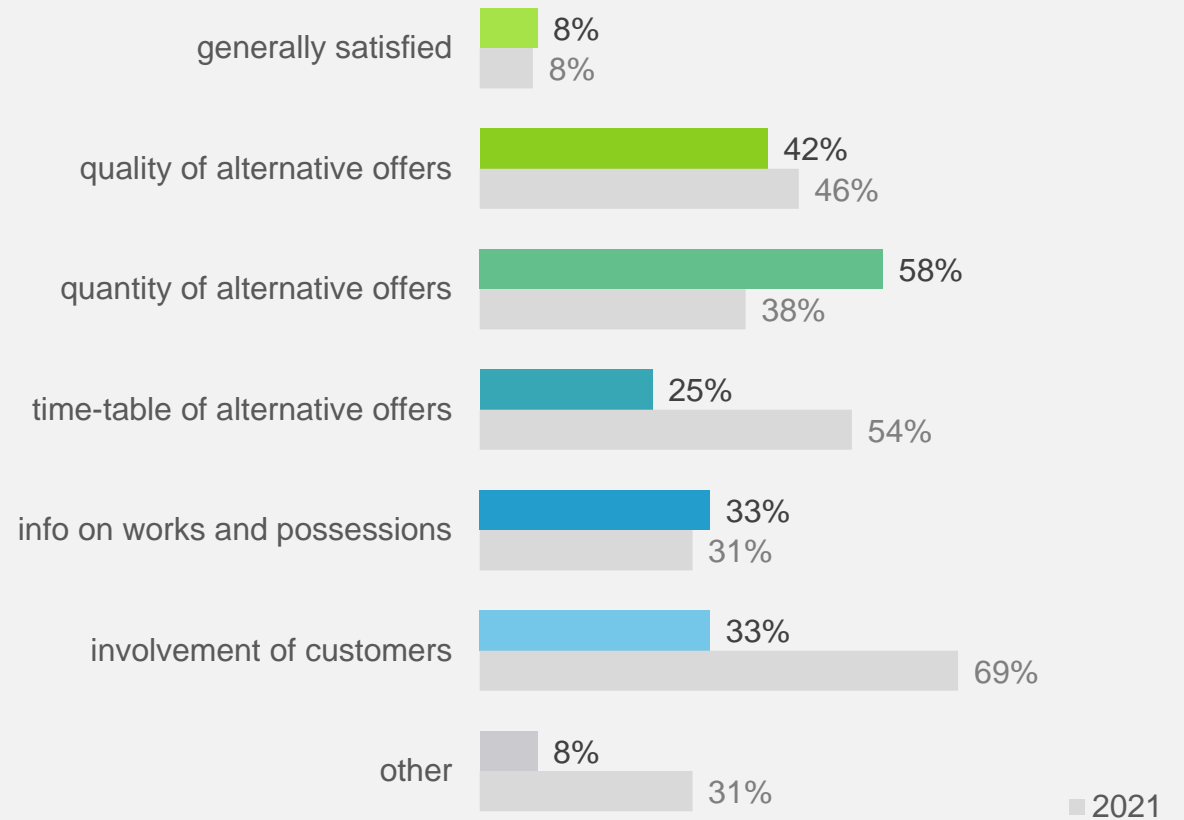
*This is the same as last year.*

*Sample size 2021: 13*

Focus on

- 1 quantity of alternative offers
- 2 info on works and possessions
- 3 involvement of customers

*Most mentioned topics*



# OTHER COMMENTS:

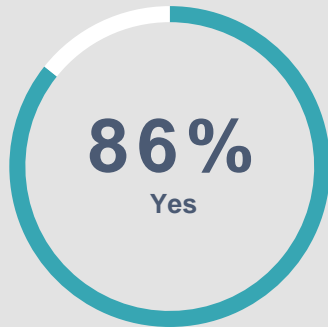
## RFC RALP:

- The question is difficult to answer from an IM's point of view here because, as described earlier, we are not currently involved in the RFC1 processes as NL rail infrastructure.
- TCR: Better communication in terms of international re-routings.
- Coordination in advance must be better, DB Netz coordination with partner Ims
- No TCRs one after the other.
- Better holiday coordination
- There are a lot of construction works in Germany and DB Netz can't reroute/handle all trains. So, we are facing a lot of cancelled trains...
- Long term capacity planning. - Infrabel is dealing with the short-term capacity planning. - infrastructure planning by the government as well as IMs affects the capacity planning of ports.
- More and earlier Information.



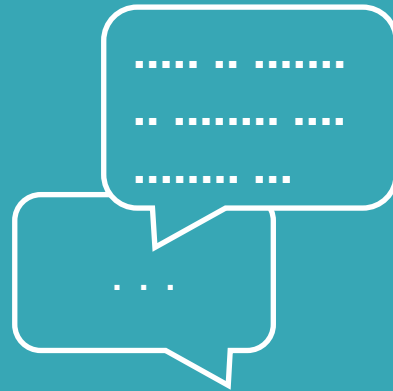
# INVOLVEMENT IN CAPACITY REQUESTS VIA THE C-OSS

## Capacity request via C-OSS



The total number is constant to last year.

## COMMENTS



Reasons for not ordering via the C-OSS:

Lack of knowledge of the PaP request process and the O/D pairs used by the RU within the RFC

Orders via the national path order systems are easier to handle for both parties

- » Were you involved in a request for corridor capacity via the C-OSS as a leading or participating applicant/RU?
- » Answered by: RUs/non-RUs
- » sample size = 8

# WISH FOR IMPROVEMENT IN RFC COMMERCIAL OFFER

## Priority areas

- » In the current RFC commercial offer, which are the priority areas for improvement according to your opinion?
- » Answered by: RUs/non-RUs
- » sample size = 7 (78% of 9)
- +1 interview from DB Cargo (see attachment)

**14%**

**Generally satisfied**

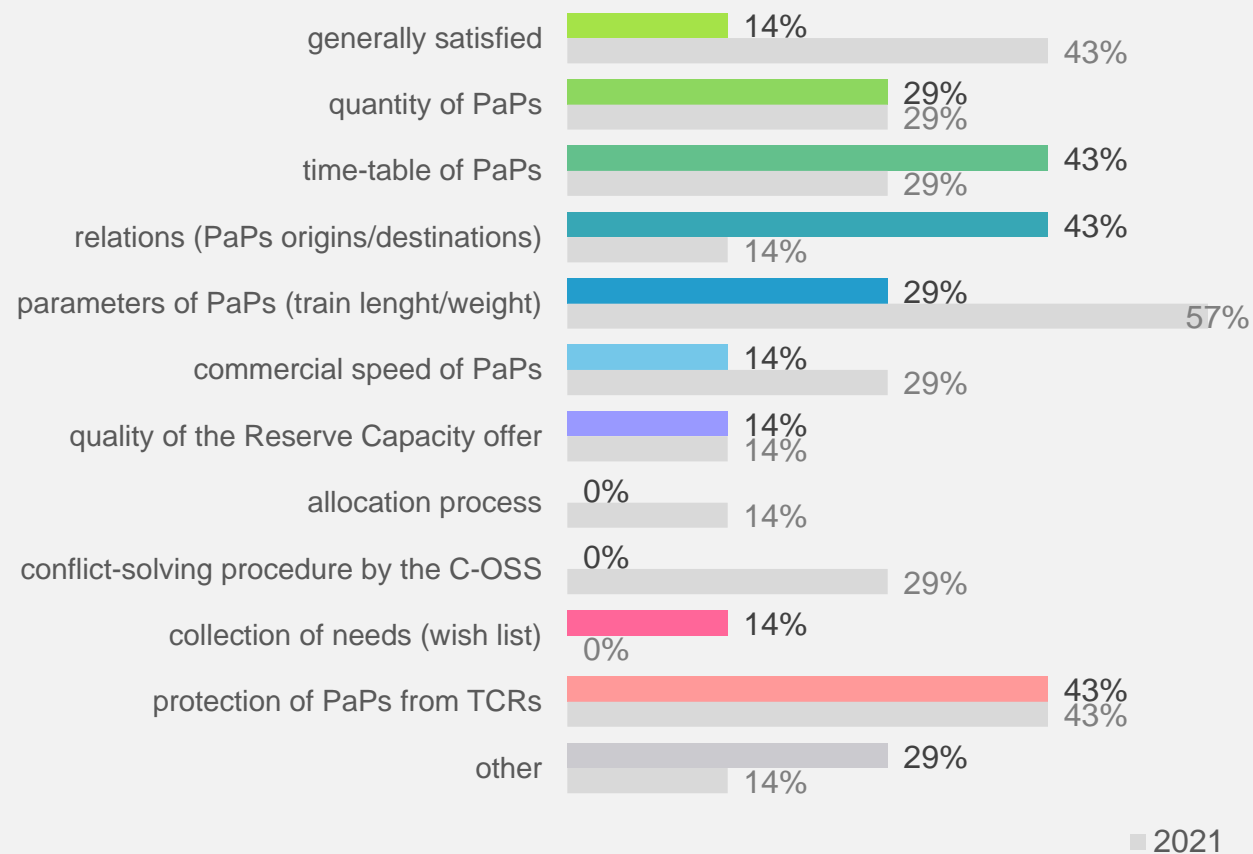
*This is an 29% decrease in satisfaction compared to last year.*

*Sample size 2021: 7*

**Focus on**

Relations  
Time-Table of PaPs  
Protection of PaPs from TCRs

*Most mentioned topics*



# OTHER COMMENTS:

## RFC RALP:

- TT: Including of train driver breaks possibilities for recovery within the PaPs
- Interfaces between path ordering systems would be helpful (e.g., PCS <-> National ordering systems)
- One ordering system rather than many
- PCS train length? Parameters must be transferable, driver recovery times / staff deployment / work assignments / stops.
- PaP's via Venlo are still missing.

# WISH FOR IMPROVEMENT IN TPM

## Priority areas

- » Which aspects of the Train Performance Management (TPM) activities are the priority areas for improvement according to your opinion?
  - » Answered by: RUs/non-RUs, Terminals/Ports
  - » sample size = 12
- +1 interview from DB Cargo (see attachment)

**25%**

**Generally satisfied**

*This is a 12% increase in satisfaction compared to last year.*

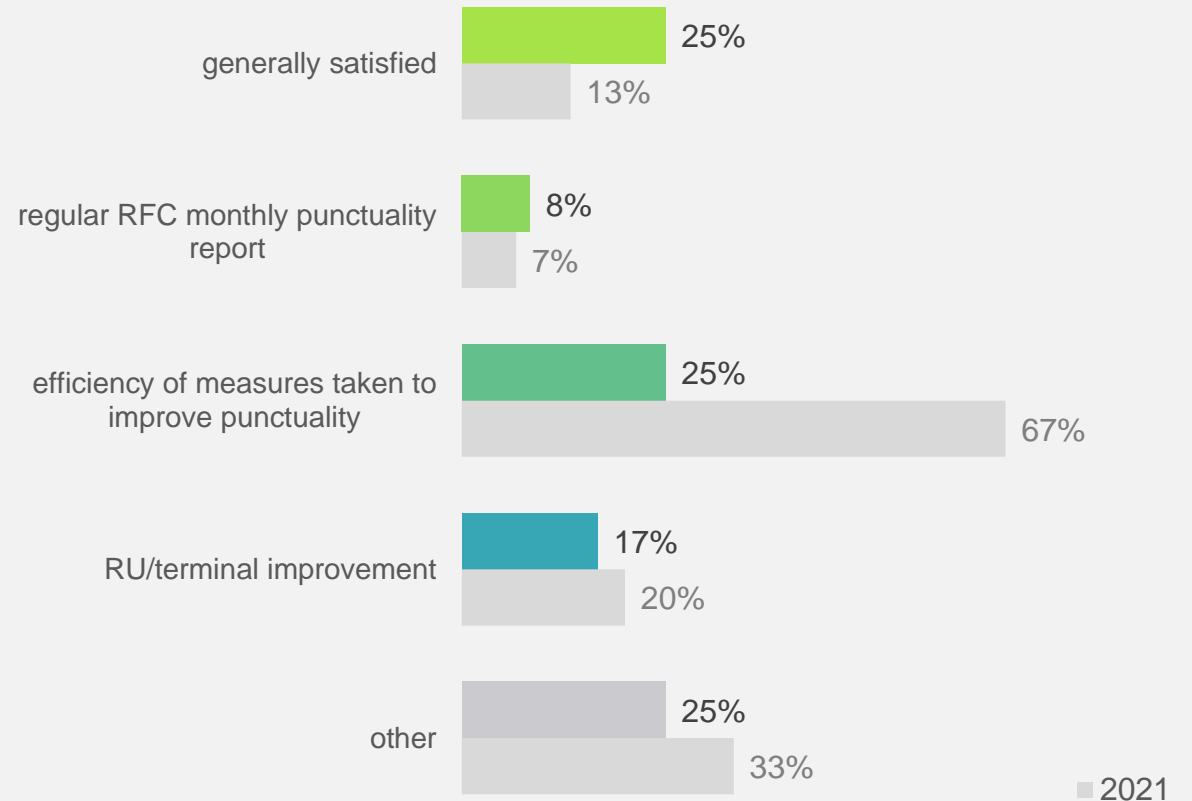
*Sample size 2020: 15*

**Focus on**

**1 Efficiency of measures taken to improve punctuality**

**2 RU/terminal improvement**

*Most mentioned topics*



# OTHER COMMENTS:

## RFC RALP:

- We don't participate.
- Not used in general.
- Only slightly involved in TPM. Currently the ship terminal is decoupled of the rail terminal in terms of transport management.

# WISH FOR IMPROVEMENT IN ICM

## Priority areas

- » Regarding the implementation of the process outlined in the International Contingency Management (ICM) handbook which are the priority areas for improvement according to your opinion?
- » Answered by: RUs/non-RUs
- » sample size = 8

**13%**

**Generally satisfied**

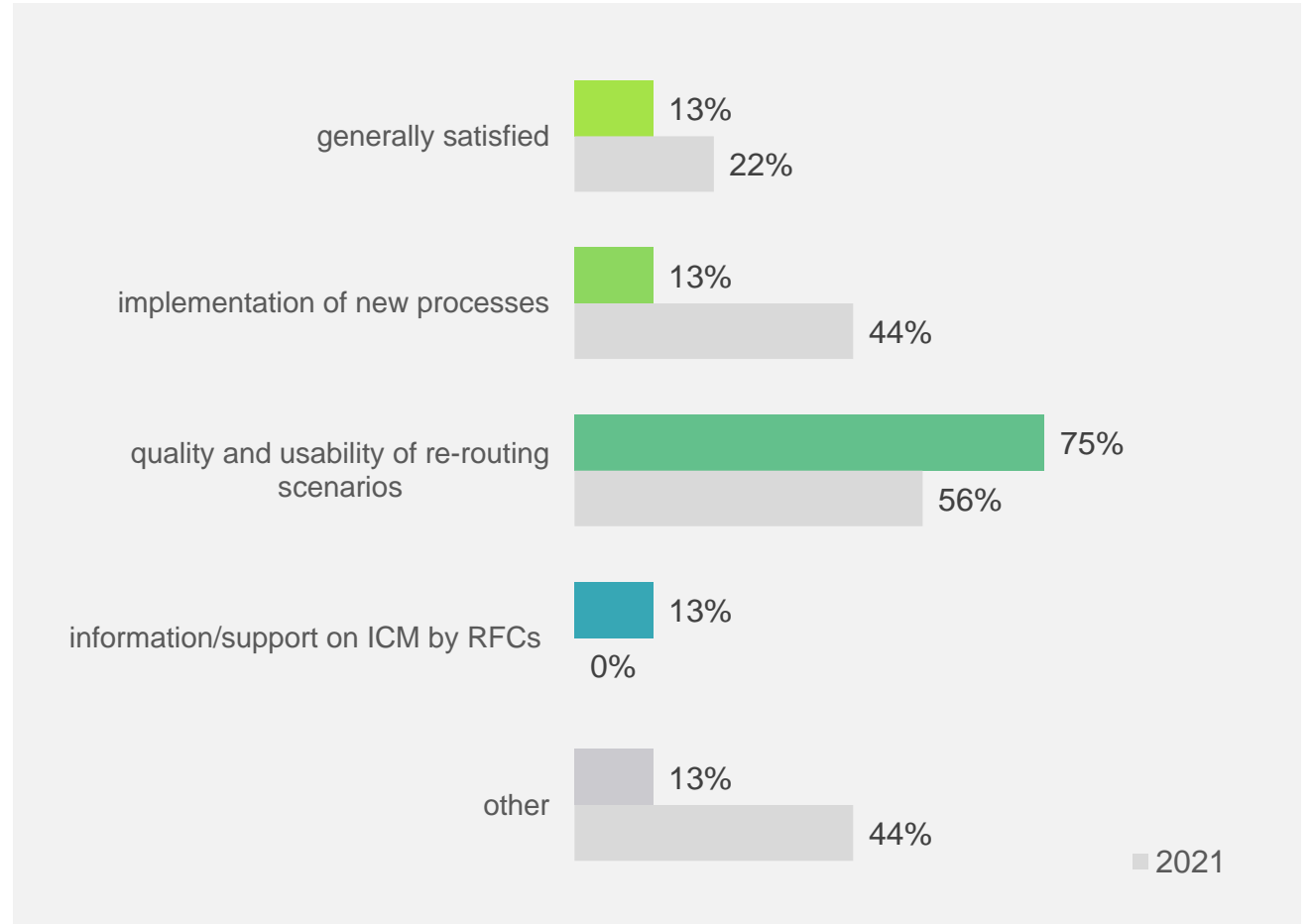
*This is a 9% decrease in satisfaction compared to last year.*

*Sample size 2021: 9*

**Focus on**

**1 Quality and usability of re-routing scenarios**

*Most mentioned topics*



# WISH FOR IMPROVEMENT IN RU/TERMINAL ADVISORY GROUP

## Priority areas

- » Which aspects of the RU Advisory Group/Terminal Advisory Group (RAG/TAG) are the priority areas for improvement according to your opinion?
  - » Answered by: RUs/non-RUs, Terminals/Ports
  - » sample size = 12
- +1 interview from DB Cargo (see attachment)

**33%**

**Generally satisfied**

*This is a slight increase compared to last year.*

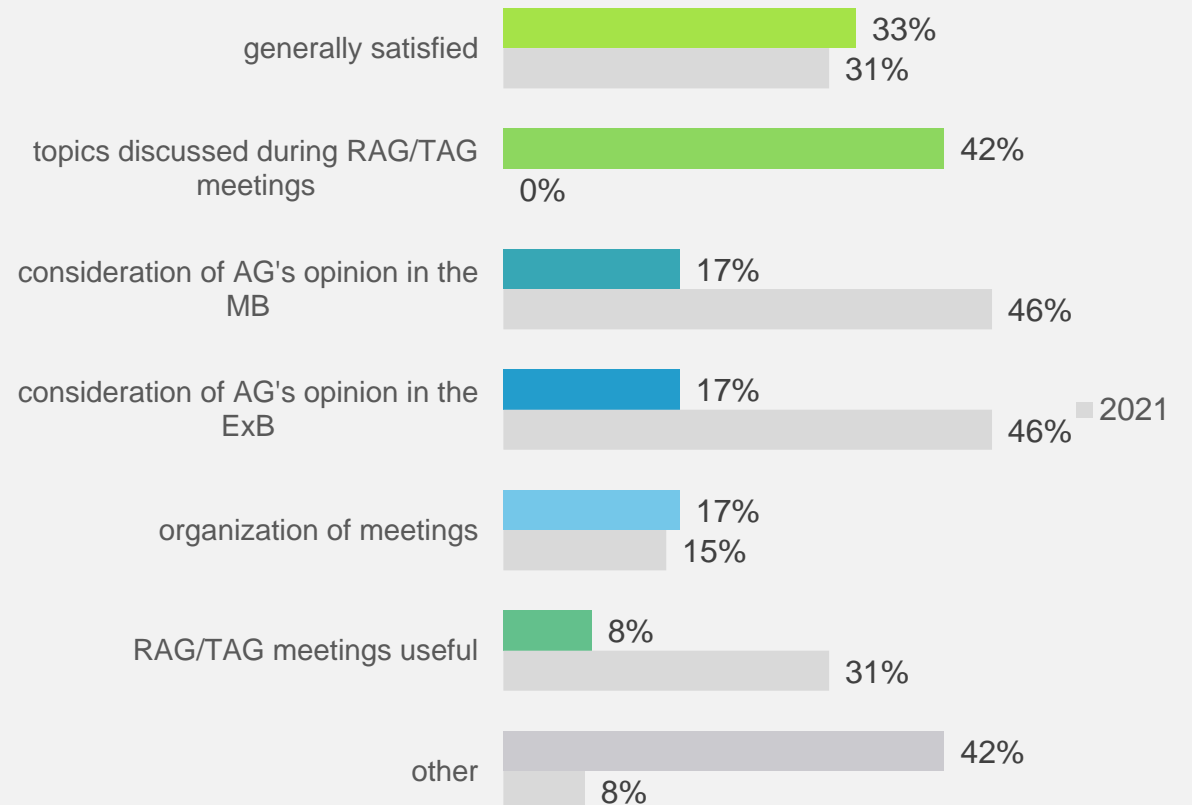
*Sample size 2021: 13*

**Focus on**

**1 topics discussed during RAG/TAG**

**2 consideration of AG's opinion in the MB / ExB**

*Most mentioned topics*



# OTHER COMMENTS:

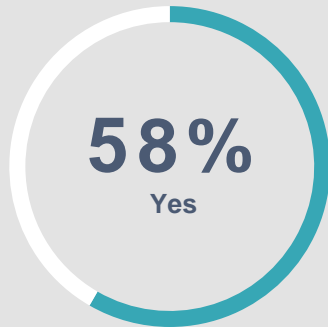
## RFC RALP:

- The RAG has little significance. Better bundeling of topics.
- Consideration of opinion is just the tip of the iceberg. In general, the necessary measures to improve the capacity and quality on the corridor need to be made a reality, esp. in foresight of the upcoming RFC regulation corridors need to be empowered.
- Online TAG meetings makes it easier to participate
- Less theoretical and legal topics should be discussed during TAG meetings (little feedback on made decisions)
- Include all relevant RFCs to bigger TAG meetings (maybe on the Railfreight Days)
- TAG meetings for more general topics.



# COMPANY PARTICIPATION IN RAG TAG MEETINGS

## Participation in RAG TAG meetings



Compared to the past year it has been a 2% decrease.

- » Does your company regularly attend RAG/TAG meetings?
- » Answered by: RUs/non-RUs , Terminals/Ports
- » sample size = 13

# WISH FOR IMPROVEMENT IN COMMUNICATION SERVICES

## Priority areas

- » Which of the following statements on the communication services of the RFC are the priority areas for improvement according to your opinion?
  - » Answered by: RUs/non-RUs, Terminals/Ports
  - » sample size = 12
- +1 interview from DB Cargo (see attachment)

**42%**

**Generally satisfied**

*This is a 22% increase in satisfaction compared to last year.*

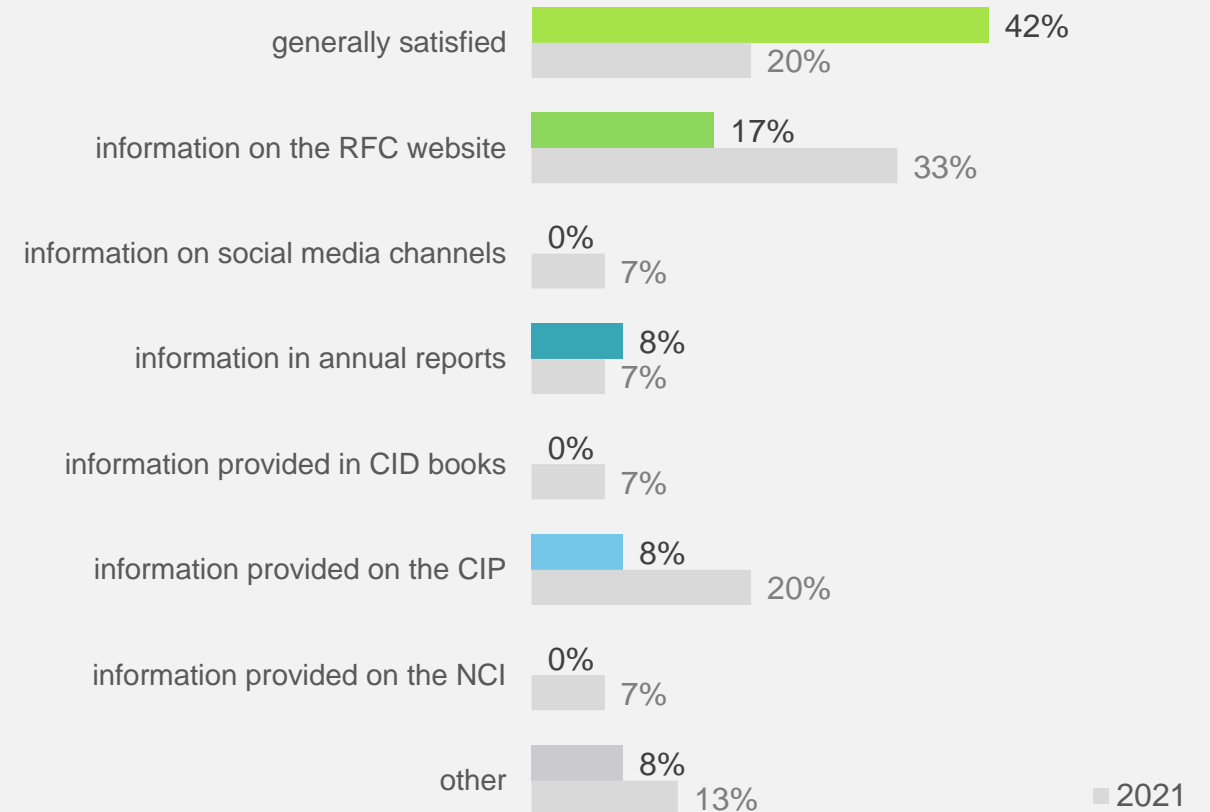
*Sample size 2021: 15*

**Focus on**

1 information on RFC website

2 information provided on CIP

*Most mentioned topics*



# OTHER COMMENTS:

## **RFC RALP:**

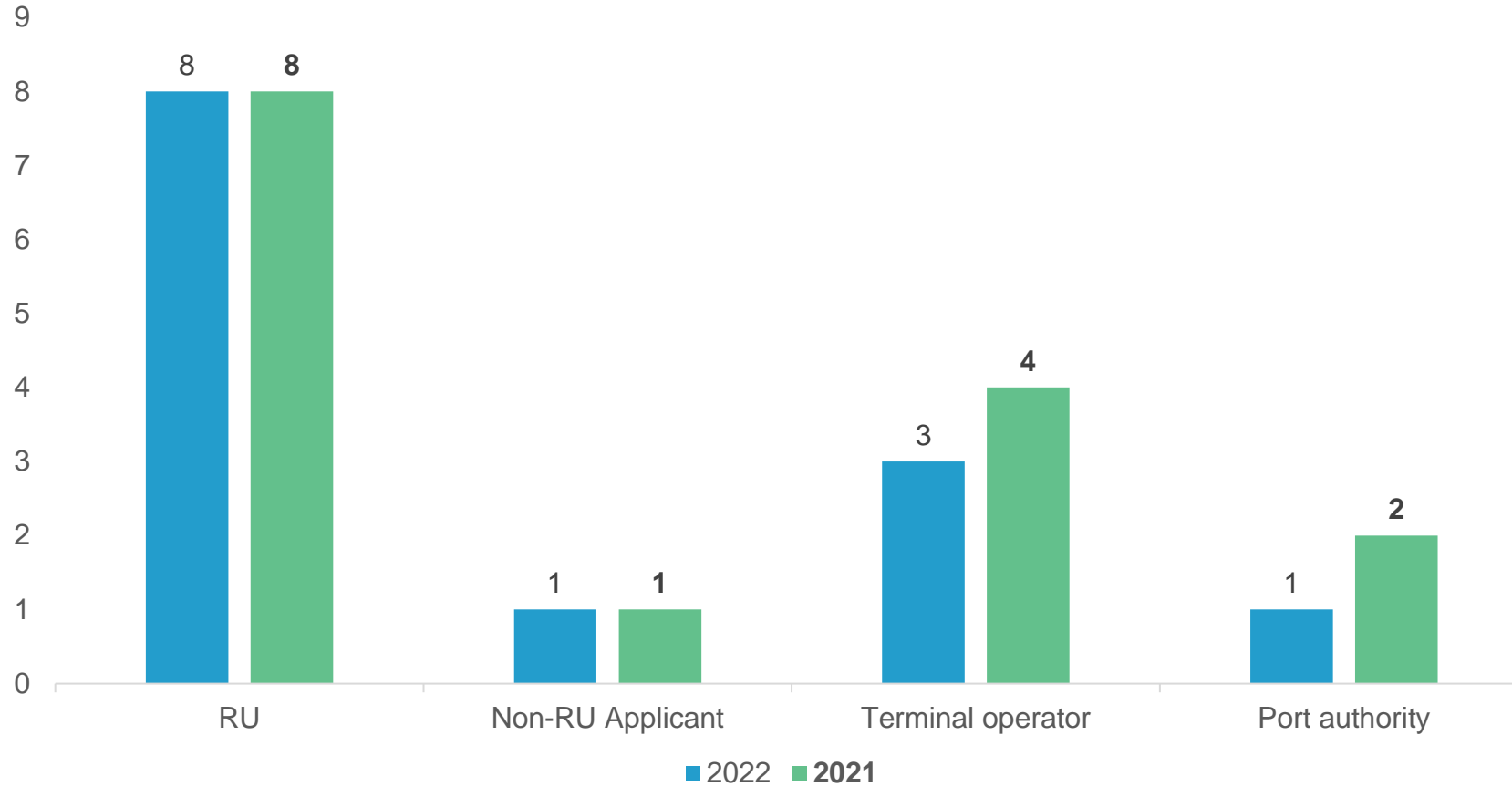
- Informations will be delivered over different ways (e.g. other RUs, construction information events).
- Annual report and social media is used.
- More often.

## **03 SAMPLE DESCRIPTION**

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# SAMPLE DESCRIPTION

Target group



- » "To which of the following type of target groups does your company belong?"
- » sample size = 13; 15;
- » One respondent is counted multiple times if his/her organization uses multiple corridors

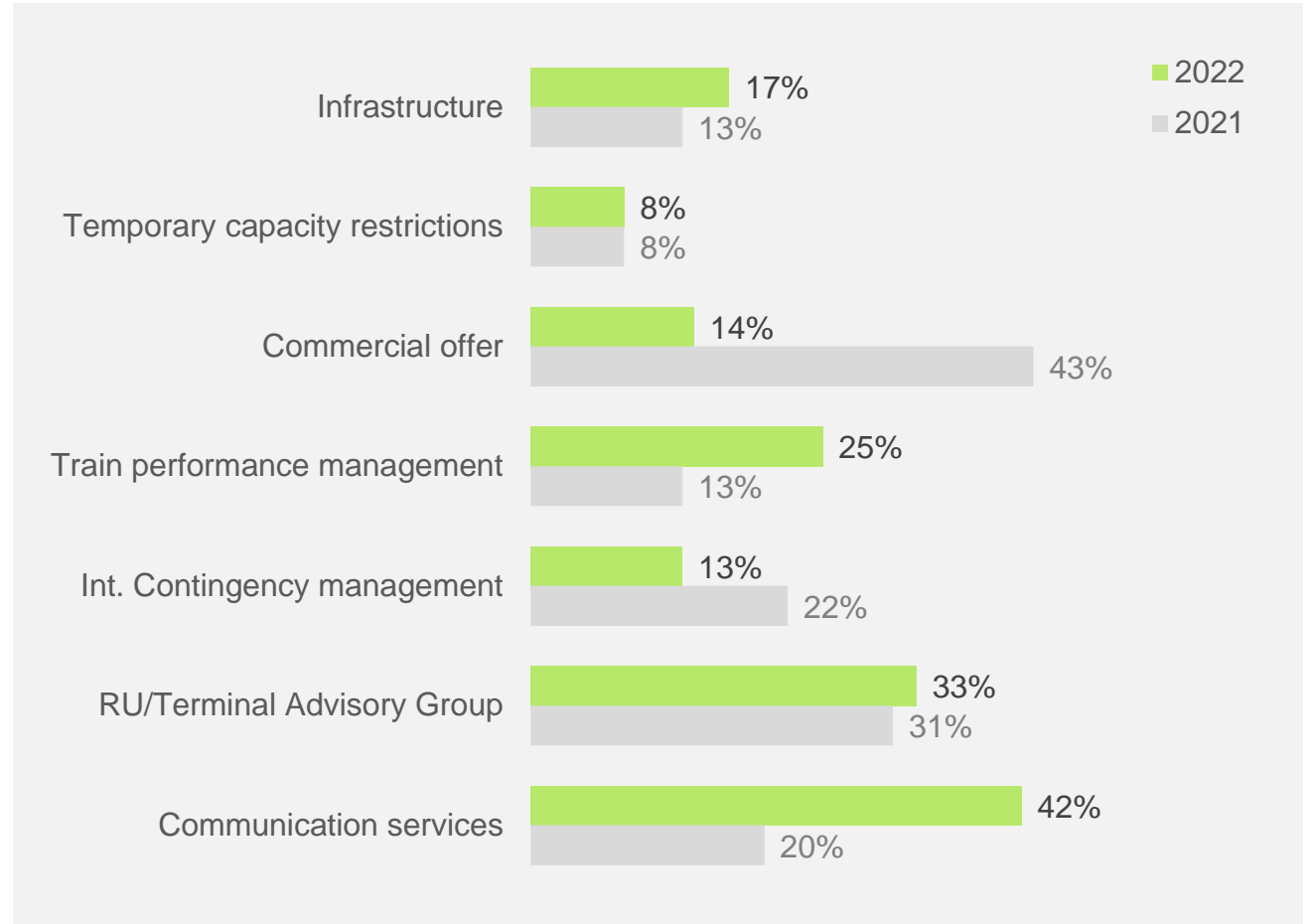
## 04 SUMMARY



# SUMMARY – SATISFACTION RATING

All respondents

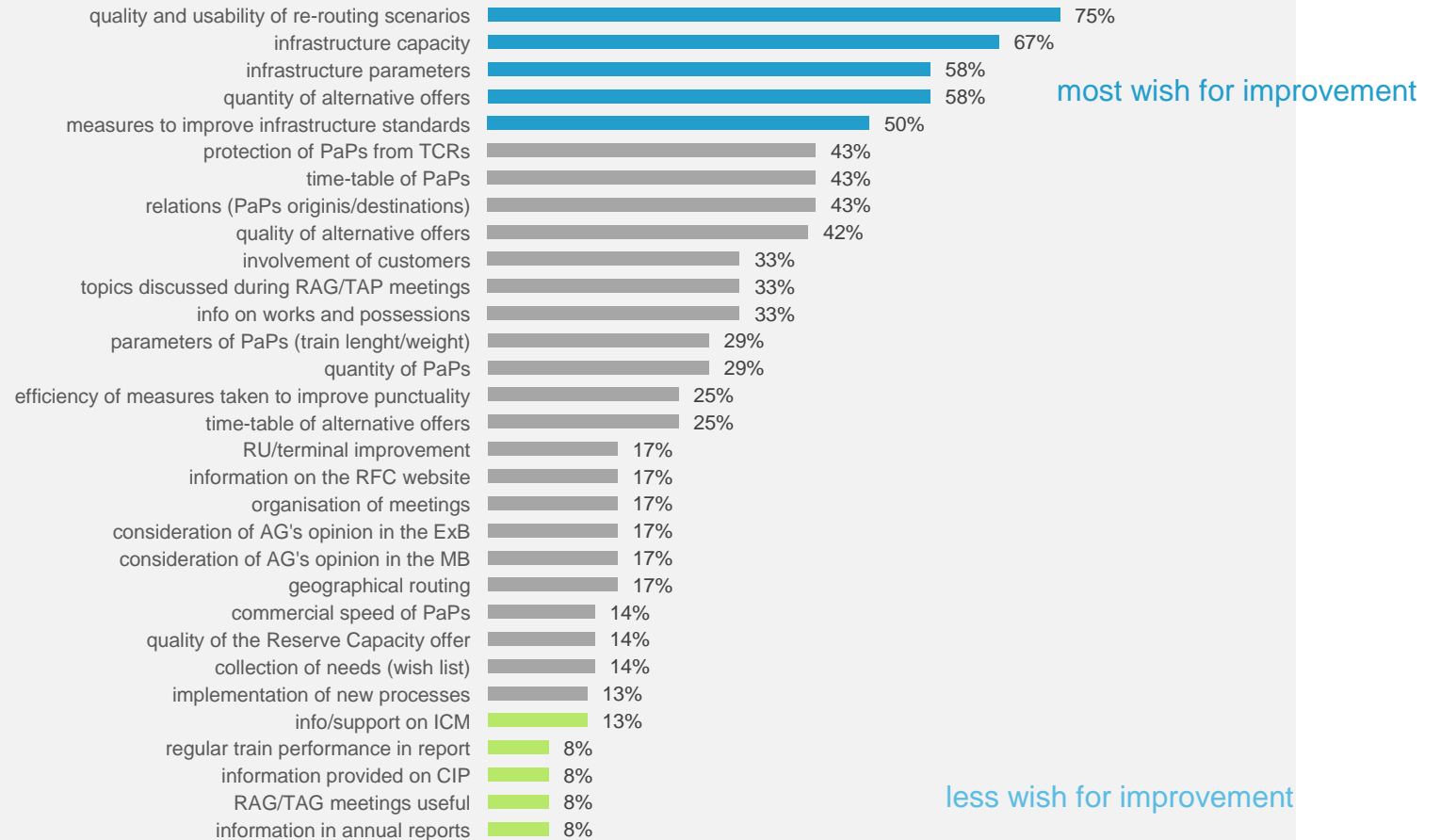
- » General satisfaction
- » This question was not asked in all topics of the survey
- » Answered by: RUs/non-RUs, Terminals/Ports
- » Different sample sizes on every topic



# SUMMARY – TOP 10 FOCUS TOPICS

All respondents

- » The lowest 10 topics of the survey which the participants had the most wish for improvement. They were least satisfied with these 10 topics and the RFCs will focus on improving those.
- » Answered by: RUs/non-RUs, Terminals/Ports
- » Different sample sizes on every topic





# **Attachement: DB Cargo**

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# DB CARGO

## Timetable / PaP offer

- DB Cargo Schweiz (RFC 1) informed us that the PaP offer is not really relevant for them. They rely on their direct connections with the IMs and feel that this works better for them.
- DB Cargo Nederland (RFC 1, 2, 8) told us that they use the PaPs currently only for a few specific trains. At the moment its use is limited, mostly because the amount of offered paths is limited.
- DB Cargo Italia (RFCs 1, 3, 5, 6) pointed out some that the 3 IMs operating on the southern RFC 1 (DB Netz, SBB Infrastruktur and RFI) have different capacity allocation processes and priorities. Consequently, DB Cargo Schweiz did not get the same path that was assigned to DB Cargo Italia. This generated a negative correspondence at the border station Domo 2. The RFC does not support. Furthermore, the path offers on the borders Luino and Domo 2 are not harmonized: different number of paths on the 2 sides of the borders, in particular in case of paths for PC400 loading gauge.
- DB Cargo Headquarters: Different ways for limitation of PaP-parameters (max./ recommended weight and/or length of trains or/and carriages set) for different IMs/RFCs is a big obstacle for requesting PaPs. In some cases (e.g., in the northern part of RFC 3) PaP-parameters have been unnecessarily limited, because in the later

discussion with involved IMs/ RFC-managers exceeding of parameters was agreed and possible for the operation, but not anymore for requesting PaPs (technically blocked by PCS). For these cases, a manual workaround has been implemented (entering wrong parameters for the request of PaP but adding the correct parameters in comments). In almost all cases this workaround hasn't worked in PCS, because of not considering comments by IMs. This issue has been already placed in the C-OSS-community meeting.

Another general problem is deviating timetable data in PCS and in the national system because PCS is not the "single point of true"-system and there are different national processes. Therefore, data in PCS are not reliable, analysis and harmonization of timetable often does not make sense.

Furthermore, we have been faced also this year with the problem of delayed or missing path offers in PCS. Some of path offers have been provided in PCS on 10<sup>th</sup> October, some are still missing. So, in order to enable further national processes (deadline 2. NEP of DB Netz 28<sup>th</sup> September) also here a workaround was implemented: we asked IMs with the ready path offers to provide an extract from the national system in PDF-format, which was sent via e-mail and accepted via e-mail, too (completely outside of PCS).

Additionally, the following shortcomings have been identified in path offers:

- Border time not harmonized
- Some requested days missing in the offer
- Deviating times and parameters in the offer (compared to the request).

## Quality of operations

- DB Cargo Schweiz (RFC 1) found that the quality in the north of Switzerland is no longer sustainable. The reasons are manifold. Construction sites, capacity, etc. They do not expect things to improve in 2023.

## Supporting activities (Working Groups to solve specific problems etc.)

- DB Cargo Schweiz (RFC 1) relied on their direct contacts with IMs to solve specific problems. Cooperation with the Swiss IMs was regarded as very good and constructive, with RFI (Italy) as OK; DB Netz, however, was hard to catch.

# DB CARGO

- DB Cargo Nederland (RFC 1, 2, 8) welcomed the “QCO Bad Bentheim” on RFC 8 and participated in that working group set up to solve serious operational problems. However, as just a few RUs participated – but not the RUs which probably have caused the problems – the effect of the effort was not satisfactory. Our Dutch colleagues concluded that there would probably be a need of some changes in the infrastructure at this border station; this topic was, however, not yet addressed.
- DB Cargo Headquarters: QCOs are a good instrument to analyse problems and to start a dialogue about finding solutions. RFCs are neutral coordinators and a welcomed platform to organise this exchange. Sometimes RFCs should have more power to force adaptations to reach an added value for international operation even if it is not the optimum for each national stakeholder. Perhaps this international thinking and evaluation will be implemented with the revision of 913/2010.

## TCR coordination

- DB Cargo Schweiz (RFC 1) saw one of the biggest levers of improvement in a timely transmission of the adapted timetables (“fplo”). In most cases, construction sites were known at an early stage, but too much time passed before our Swiss colleagues officially received the “fplo” –

usually less than a week before the event. This led often to the fact that our colleagues had to cancel trains or waste costly resources.

- DB Cargo Nederland (RFC 1, 2, 8) criticised that the TCR information on RFC 1 was not always in time (3 weeks before execution). According to ProRail they did not receive the information on time from DB Netz, so they could not plan and inform the RUs in The Netherlands according to the deadlines.
- DB Cargo Italia (RFCs 1, 3, 5, 6) states that the construction works planned by the IMs are often overlapped although this has been pointed out for years.
- DB Cargo Headquarters: TCR coordination should be improved on all RFCs. It is the key more capacity on the existing network. Coordination should include the aspect of planning how to carry out the TCR itself as well as planning and organising re-routing concepts during the TCR-phase. The published TCR Excel sheets are often not as up to date as national systems. One common TCR-tool – in the best case linked to national systems – should be implemented. RUs should be involved in a user group to further develop the system in a customer friendly way. The implementation of Annex VII should be supervised by the RFCs to push forward the national implementation.

## Other critical issues

- DB Cargo Schweiz (RFC 1) mentioned the occurrence of uncoordinated construction activities between DB Netz, SBB Infra and RFI. As a result, capacity needs, and provision of capacity did not fit together.

## Final remarks from DB Cargo Headquarters

As already stated above, the RUs of the DB Cargo group – including our main RU in Germany – currently operate on 10 out of 11 corridors but will start observing the activities on the last missing one (RFC 10: Alpine – Western Balkan) soon.

# DB CARGO

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Even if we do not submit the expected questionnaires, this will not mean that we do not value the RFC activities, initiatives, and progress. We just think that the User Satisfaction Surveys as they are conducted today are not the appropriate means to reflect the quality of the RFC work.

Based on our experience in the past years, the most critical issue on all corridors was and continues to be (at least in the short and medium term) the capacity situation and the reliability of the capacity offers in the RU planning process. This includes international TCR coordination, which is logically part of “the overall capacity issue” and is complicating the problem that capacity is already scarce even without any maintenance and construction works on given line sections.

On all RFCs, we see a willingness to cope with that problem and deliver a decent quality for running freight trains on the rail network that is available. Yes, we may occasionally (sometimes even more often...) “blame” the one or other infrastructure manager for not being able to solve a problem the way we think it should be solved, but we do not criticise the RFC organisations as such. On the contrary, we see the limiting framework within which they operate, thus we want to strengthen them and give them the power to go beyond the limits of that framework. The existing

framework is in many respects still national-oriented rather than Europe-minded (above all what concerns financing and investment planning) and the willingness for changing this is in some Member States rather low.

What we would expect from RFCs in the future is at least to acknowledge that the root of the current capacity problems is the discrepancy of what is politically communicated since decades in the EU and what is actually done in many (not all) Member States. Since the start of railway liberalisation in the late 1990s, the development of the rail network in Europe has obviously not kept pace with the growth of transport (both freight and passenger). And even when problems are finally acknowledged (e.g., relief of particular bottlenecks through infrastructure development) and urgent action is announced, their actual solution takes “ages” (i.e., usually 10 years and longer...), due to not at all harmonised and sometimes very tedious planning and financial procedures in Member States.

Squeezing out the maximum capacity from an existing network, and this is what we observe today in some “crucial” countries, makes it vulnerable, less resilient and thus will be a catalyst for cascading operational problems even if only small irregularities occur. The substantial negative effects of TCR on the operation of

freight trains on certain main routes are a strong indicator for lacking capacity on appropriate alternative routes or even their unavailability at all. Although the current draft of a revised TEN-T Regulation proposed by the EU Commission addresses this issue, the readiness of some Member States to really support this and turn words into deed, which may include changing and reprioritising specific projects within their national transport investment programmes, however, leaves room for scepticism.

Hence, what we would like to add to the RFC task list for the future, is to put a focus on medium and long-term infrastructure development (including cross-border ERTMS migration) by not only communicating what each Member State is planning (this, however, is an important first step, and we appreciate the corresponding activity of RFC 7/9 in this respect), but also to draw conclusions, how these national plans can be harmonised or adapted accordingly in order to generate the highest (and ideally fastest possible) effect for freight train operation on the RFCs.