



Network Rail Consultation on a European Rail Freight Corridor

1. The Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF) is the UK's largest train drivers' union representing approximately 18,000 members in train operating companies and freight companies as well as London Underground and light rail systems.
2. ASLEF wholeheartedly supports the creation of an international freight corridor in order to develop commerce and create green jobs across Europe. The scheme could also lead to opportunities for European funding.
3. ASLEF does not feel that the corridor will be a solution to many other significant barriers. The costs of the Channel Tunnel and dealing with security issues will remain. In addition we still have a lack of paths on HS1, a lack of terminals and slower handling in some countries. There will continue to be issues regarding the incompatibility of the UK rail network with that of the continental railways.
4. The creation of this corridor will however give even more credence to the case for HS2 and a high gauge link between HS1 and HS2 so that freight can connect from the continent and continue on the new line.
5. ASLEF believes that the announcement by DB Schenker that they were to launch a second weekly service between Poland and Barking to carry manufactured goods demonstrates the potential for cross continental

corridors. Due to HS1 being the only European sized railway in the UK it has become the second service to use the route.

6. Developments like this show the significant role rail freight can have in terms of reducing road congestion, carbon dioxide emissions and the improvement of air quality.
7. ASLEF's support for the establishment of an international freight corridor is on the basis that it will help international flows between the UK and rest of Europe. It would also expand the benefits of the Strategic Rail Freight Network whilst focusing the need to expand the use of the Channel Tunnel for freight.
8. It will be essential to provide additional transfer points between road and rail in the correct locations if there are to be increases in rail volumes for both HS1 and conventional rail. There is a problem with Freight Terminals receiving planning permission in the UK and this has to change.
9. There is a significant market for long distance rail freight services between the UK and Continental Europe. However, this is suppressed by a range of barriers such as the costs and then in turn the risks of using the Channel Tunnel.
10. Path reservation would create issues regarding the impact on domestic freight services. ASLEF understands that the route between the Channel Tunnel and London does have protected paths. However, were the corridor to be developed north of London, issues about scarce paths would have to be addressed, in particular on the West Coast Mainline.
11. ASLEF believes that the corridor would overall be beneficial. A recent report from Greengauge21 showed that allocating freed up paths on the

WCML to freight as a result of HS2 being build, would have massive CO2 advantages.

12. ASLEF therefore supports the creation of a European Freight Corridor but feels this measure must be one element of a larger plan to get more cross continental rail freight coming into and out of the UK. This must include ensuring that all arrangements for British and European freight companies are reciprocal and ensure a level playing field.

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