



New routes through Europe

The north-south corridor

The Rotterdam/Antwerp–Genoa corridor is one of the most important routes for freight traffic in Europe and this is why it is currently being expanded. The New Rail Link through the Alps (NRLA), which includes the Lötschberg and Gotthard base tunnels, forms part of this corridor.



The Corridor Rhine-Alpine passes through the industrial heart of Europe.

There are close political and economic links between the countries of Europe. One consequence of this is that huge volumes of goods move through the continent across different national borders. The plan is for most of these goods to be transported on nine rail freight corridors that have been identified by the European Union. These corridors are currently being developed and expanded.

The volume of freight will double

The most important north-south route is the Corridor Rhine-Alpine that links Rotterdam/Antwerp and Genoa. The corridor follows the route of the Rhine through the industrial heart of Europe and connects rapidly growing economic regions, including centres such as Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Antwerp, Duisburg, Cologne, Frankfurt, Mannheim, Basel, Zurich, Milan and Genoa. No other rail-

way line in Europe transports more goods, and forecasts indicate that the volume of freight is likely to increase. For this reason, the EU has made the expansion of the Corridor Rhine-Alpine a high priority and plans to invest 25 billion euros in it over the next few years.

The objective of the five countries that the corridor passes through – the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland and Italy – is to provide a cost-effective, reliable and competitive route for rail freight on the Corridor Rhine-Alpine. Therefore, they signed their first agreement on a coordinated programme of action in 2003. In the years that followed, the corridor was incorporated into the European policy for the development of trans-European transport networks (TEN-T) and is playing a pioneering role in this area.



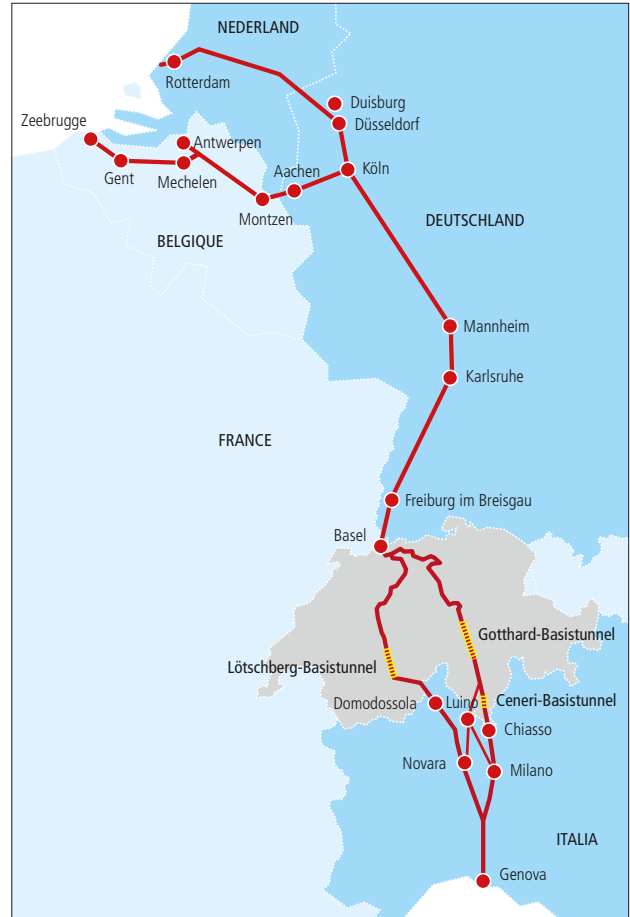
Building new infrastructure

The programme for the development of the corridor consists of a range of projects in a variety of areas. For example, the aim is to simplify border crossings and eliminate bottlenecks by building new infrastructure. This includes the Betuwe route in the Netherlands, a third track between Zevenaar and Emmerich/Oberhausen, two additional tracks between Karlsruhe and Basel, the Katzenberg tunnel and the Milan south-east belt.

Switzerland is building the centrepiece of the corridor in the form of the New Rail Link through the Alps (NRLA) and the Lötschberg, Gotthard and Ceneri base tunnels. The Lötschberg base tunnel has been in operation since 2007 and is being used almost to full capacity. At 57 kilometres in length, the Gotthard base tunnel, which will open in 2016, is the longest rail tunnel in the world. It will be followed by the Ceneri base tunnel in 2020.

Increasing competitiveness

The base tunnels, which provide a level route through the Alps, allow heavy freight trains to cross the mountains at high speed and without the need for additional locomotives. This further increases the competitiveness of rail freight transport. One of the main reasons behind the measures taken by Switzerland is to promote the modal shift from road to rail for freight crossing the Alps, which has been supported by the Swiss people in several popular votes. Rail transport has advantages over road transport both in terms of its energy consumption and its environmental impact¹.



The Corridor Rhine-Alpine is 2500 km in length.

The corridor in figures	
Geographic distance:	Rotterdam–Genoa 1400 km Zeebrugge–Genoa 1500 km
Length of the route:	2500 km
Five countries:	The Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, Italy
Six infrastructure companies:	ProRail (NL), Infrabel (B), DB Netz (D), RFI (I), SBB and BLS Netz (CH)
Four sea ports, six inland ports	
Around 50 intermodal terminals	

Further information

- On the north-south corridor:
www.corridor-rhine-alpine.eu
- On Swiss transport policy:
<http://www.bav.admin.ch>

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¹ Source: www.ecotransit.org