

Strengths of rail freight transport for European supply chain become extra visible in the Corona crisis

- More and more shippers see rail freight transport as a sustainable and safe alternative to road transport, which is becoming increasingly expensive and hindered by traffic jams. Efficient, reliable and new transport concepts are increasingly attracting shippers to rail.
- **The corona virus is putting us all to the test, both personal and in business. As a rail freight transport sector, we have a special responsibility to ensure that the European population and economy are supplied efficiently and reliably.**
- **Rail freight transport, a reliable partner in logistics.**
- **The strengths and advantages of rail freight transport are particularly evident now:**
 - **One of the major advantages of rail freight is that few people move large volumes of goods.** Only one locomotive driver is needed for 40 to 60 trucks. Large volumes of goods can be transported from origin to destination with just a few people. This substantially reduces the risk of spreading the Corona virus.
 - **No traffic jams and long waiting times at the borders, thanks to standard and regular transit train connections.** As a result, goods are delivered on time, predictably and efficiently in all European economic centers and ports.
 - **There is sufficient freight capacity on the freight trains and, if necessary, operating frequencies can be increased.** There is no shortage of locomotives, personnel and wagons. There is sufficient terminal capacity. Due to the downscaling of rail passenger traffic during the Corona crisis, there is sufficient capacity on the railways.
 - **The rail freight carriers, intermodal operators and rail freight forwarders affiliated with RailGood are ready to offer customers suitable transport and logistics solutions.**
 - **Personnel in the rail freight sector are motivated** to provide good transport services and to serve customers well.
 - Be assured that the rail freight carriers, intermodal operators and rail freight forwarders together with infra manager ProRail (and other chain partners) are working hard every day to ensure that rail freight transport supplies the logistics chains in the Netherlands and Europe. We will continue to do so in the coming weeks, possibly months, and of course also after the Corona crisis.
 - **During this awful Corona crisis, we must follow all health guidelines and advice from the health authorities. Let's all make sure we all stay healthy!**
For frequently asked questions about the Corona virus and health, see:
<https://www.rijksoverheid.nl/onderwerpen/coronavirus-covid-19/veelgestelde-vragen-over-coronavirus-en-gezondheid>
- **In the short term, action has been and is being taken to tackle problems as quickly as possible and to manage risks.** First measures taken are:
 - The rail freight carriers have taken timely (often coordinated) measures to reduce the risk of infection with the COVID-19 (Corona) virus. For example, when changing locomotive drivers, the driver to be replaced first steps out of the cab before being replaced by another driver. This prevents a meeting in a confined space. The cabs of the locomotives and workplaces are properly disinfected. Departments with planners and process controllers are split up as much as possible.
 - Temporary measures are needed to prevent the operational personnel of rail freight carriers and rail infrastructure managers from being deployed because planned examination, guidance and retraining cannot take place in the coming weeks, possibly months, due to limitations related to the outbreak of the Corona virus. In the Netherlands, two decisions were published by the Environmental and Transportation Inspectorate on March 20, 2020. Similar measures have been taken in Germany and Switzerland.

- **What are important measures RailGood requires from the government and rail infrastructure managers in the short term?**
 - **Ensure that at least one hinterland rail connection per corridor to and from the seaports, multimodal hubs and industrial complexes is always open 24/7 at the rail infrastructure managers** in case of disproportionate loss of traffic control or track maintenance personnel. ProRail is working hard on this.
RailGood supports the request made by ERFA to the European Commission to set up green lanes in the Rail Freight Corridors as soon as possible to guarantee European supply chains with sufficient rail capacity and quality. Even now that the passenger services are being reduced, the capacity allocation of rail infrastructure managers must remain open for freight transport every day and traffic control 24/7.
 - **A temporary suspension of the infra charges for parking wagons and locomotives in order to reduce the costs of rail freight carriers.** RailGood has submitted a request in this to the Ministry of Infrastructure and Water Management and Dutch infrastructure manager ProRail. Wagons from a standstill industry need to be parked longer. Wagons must also be buffered for repositioning. That should not become a cost fiasco for the rail freight carriers. That would distract from keeping the freight train services up and running in the Netherlands and Europe.
 - **High priority is that the international locomotive drivers must be able to stay overnight with dinner/breakfast and to drive to and from their train departing and arrival point by car/taxi.** RailGood and rail freight carriers have asked Government for urgent attention to avoid barriers to this.
 - **Maintenance facilities for rolling stock should remain open and mobile maintenance teams should be able to continue to operate.** If this is hampered, the loss of rail freight is inevitable. Naturally, the responsibility to protect personnel/people is properly fulfilled.
 - **Efficient cross-border movements for locomotive drivers, wagon inspectors and maintenance personnel must be guaranteed.** RailGood supports ERFA's request to the European Commission and EU Member States in this.
 - Other rail freight organizations, such as VDV and NEE in Germany and ERFA in the EU, are also working to avoid bottlenecks and risks to minimize traffic disruption, especially for essential goods, in order to guarantee a good supply chain by rail during the Corona crisis.

- **RailGood represents the interests of companies in rail freight transport in the Netherlands.**
In close cooperation with the customers, RailGood strengthens the business climate on the Dutch railway network and the competitive position of rail freight transport in the Netherlands. We stand for safe, economically viable, continuous and competitive rail freight transport.

