



# Memorandum of Understanding

on the needs and aims for the development of the Berlin-Poznań-Warsaw-Białystok Commuting Growth Corridor

## Conclusions

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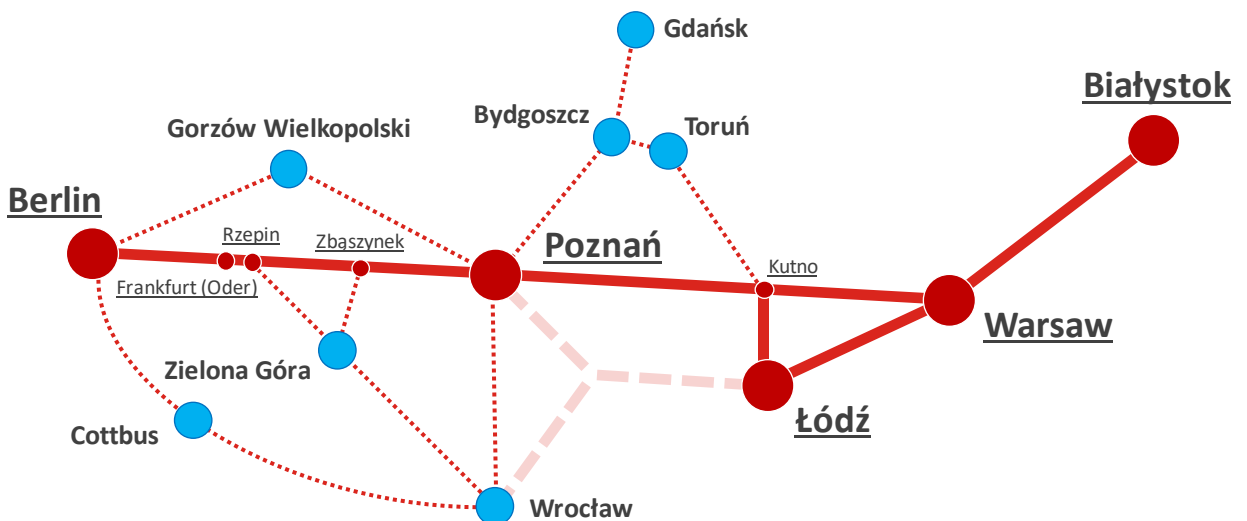


The Berlin-Poznań-Warsaw-Białystok Commuting Growth Corridor is characterised by a good quality of railway infrastructure (electrified double-track connection).

Large investment projects are in process of realisation and will be finalised within few years, leading to important improvements. These include the finalisation of the upgrade of the railway line Berlin – Frankfurt (Oder), the modernisation and upgrade of the railway line Poznań – Warsaw (in particular for more efficient freight transport) and the modernisation and upgrade of the railway line Warsaw – Białystok.

In particular between Warsaw and Białystok, as part of the Rail Baltica project, a new quality of railway infrastructure will be achieved through the consequent removal of level crossings and the preparation of tracks for  $v_{\max} = 200$  km/h.

**Figure 1: Berlin-Poznań-Warsaw-Białystok Commuting Growth Corridor**



In consequence, increased attention needs to be paid to the efficient use of the improved infrastructure. With this regard, the following issues are of particular interest:

- Systematic improvement and expansion of travel offers, including cross-border connections
- Systematic improvement of the capacity and functionality of railway nodes

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As regards the improvement of the capacity and functionality of railway nodes along the Berlin-Poznań-Warsaw-Białystok Commuting Growth Corridor, the following challenges and needs have been identified:

**Berlin node** In 2020 the Berlin-Brandenburg Airport (BER) will be operational, and a high-quality railway connection between Berlin main station and the airport will be urgently needed. The necessary infrastructure will be ready in 2023.

With the single airport, cross-border flows of passengers (and commuters working at the airport) will be bundled, creating new opportunities for feeder connections from and to Szczecin, Poznań, Zielona Góra, Gorzów Wielkopolski and Wrocław.

In particular in long-term perspective, there is a need for more capacity of railway infrastructure between Berlin and Frankfurt (Oder). Due to increasing conflicts between regional, long-distance and freight transport it is necessary to check efficient measures for future development (no-regret measures), considering the role and functions of alternative routes.

**Frankfurt (Oder) / Rzepin node** There is the need for a strategic decision on the development of cross-border connections between Berlin, Frankfurt (Oder) and Zielona Góra (increasing number of direct connections or support of change connections). Depending on the decision, the connecting functions of the nodes in Frankfurt (Oder) and Rzepin might be specified.

**Zbąszynek node** The Zbąszynek node serves regional and long-distance transport between Zielona Góra, Gorzów Wielkopolski and Poznań. In future, there might be the need to check a bypass for high-speed and freight transport.

**Poznań node** The Poznań node has high relevance for change connections, with the possibility to reach all parts of western Poland. With this regard, it is urgently needed to improve the functionality and the quality of service of the main station.

The capacity of the Poznań node for regional and metropolitan transport needs to be increased, reflecting the dynamic development of travel offers and increasing demand (Poznańska Kolej Metropolitalna).

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**Kutno node** Until construction of the “Y” project, the Kutno node has high relevance for change connections. With this regard, strategic decisions have to be taken – should there be frequent offers with efficient interchange between trains or less frequent direct connections. Today, the travel offer is based on less frequent direct connections.

There is urgent need for the increase of the capacity of railway infrastructure towards Łódź, in particular after finalisation of the Łódź city tunnel.

**Łódź node** After finalisation of the Łódź city tunnel the competitive position of regional and metropolitan transport will be significantly strengthened, leading to a strong impact on urban development and the development of the Łódź agglomeration. The Łódź Agglomeration Railway (Łódzka Kolej Aglomeracyjna, ŁKA) facilitates this process.

Accordingly, there is urgent need to increase the quality and the capacity of the railway infrastructure along feeder lines.

The construction of the “Y” project would significantly strengthen the competitive position of the Łódź agglomeration within Poland. Łódź would become a major node for change connections.

**Warsaw node** The Warsaw node is a well-developed railway node with well-developed systems of local, regional, metropolitan and long-distance transport.

However, there is the need to push the development to the next level through the increase of the capacity of railway infrastructure and the improvement of the quality and density of travel offers in all directions.

With this regard, the Warsaw city tunnel is a sensitive bottleneck, and particular attention needs to be paid to the development of solutions to increase the capacity of the railway infrastructure.

**Białystok node** The Białystok node serves as gateway to the Podlaskie region, the Warmińsko-Mazurskie region, Lithuania and Belarus. Additionally, it provides access to areas attractive for recreation and tourism. Therefore its gateway functions need to be further strengthened.

Additionally, in all major nodes in Poland there is the need to introduce and to improve integrated approaches in local and regional transport, in particular through the coordination of timetables and offers of bus and railway transport.

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As regards the improvement and expansion of travel offers along the Berlin-Poznań-Warsaw-Białystok Commuting Growth Corridor, the following challenges and needs have been identified:

- Design of offers**    Increased travel times and frequent change of timetables through extensive construction works in the railway network
- Preference for point-to-point connections, limiting the number of available connections and complicating the design of integrated timetables
- Financing of offers**    Increased costs for operators through extensive construction works in the railway network
- Limited funds for the financing of interregional services (InterCity, TLK); low level of cost efficiency of interregional services due to direct awards instead of tendering of service contracts
- Rolling stock**            Limited availability of rolling stock, need for renewal and modernisation (enabling step-by-step replacement of less attractive TLK trains by InterCity trains)
- Purchase of electric multiple units (Stadler Flirt and PESA Dart) with increased comfort and reduced handling costs
- Investments towards high-speed services and premium-quality offers (ED 250 Pendolino electric multiple units)
- Limited flexibility of EU-supported rolling stock due to the assignment of operation to designated lines
- Lack of modern multi-system vehicles for cross-border transport

As a result, there is a lack of frequent, reliable and integrated services in long-distance railway transport. Basic (public) services are provided, but additional and visible added-value is not yet available to the passenger.

**This needs to be changed to make the Berlin-Poznań-Warsaw-Białystok Commuting Growth Corridor operational.**