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Content

Submissions & Contributions

Railtalk Magazine Xtra, a magazine written by the Enthusiast for the Enthusiast. So why not join the team. We are always looking for talented photographers and writers to join us at Railtalk. Be it though pictorial submissions or via a written article featuring an event or railtour, we greatly appreciate any contributions to the magazine however big or small.

Photographic Contributions

All Photographic contributions should to be sent to us via email, post or via the members section page on our website. Contact addresses are provided above.

All images should be provided at a resolution of at least 2400px x 1700px at 240dpi.

Welcome to Issue 221Xtra

It's all change in Hungary from the start of the year as Minister of Construction & Transport János Lázár has announced a series of structural changes and improvements to railway services.....

Lázár said that 'in line with the Hungarian government's conscious strategy' to increase cross-border railway group GySEV's role in the operation of public transport in Hungary, a further capital increase was granted to the Hungarian-Austrian operator in December, following a previous investment agreement in October. The latest move has seen the Hungarian state increase its stake in the company from 71·8% to 75%, while the Austrian government's minority shareholding has fallen from 28·2% to 25%. Also in December, Hungarian logistics company Waberer's International agreed to acquire a 62·5% stake in GySEV Cargo.

The operation of more routes in Hungary is to be transferred to GySEV later this year, leading to all of the regional passenger traffic in the northwestern provinces of Győr-Moson-Sopron, Vas, Zala changing hands, along with most of those running in Veszprém. All the affected GySEV employees will be taken on by state railway group MÁV-Volán. It was renamed after its merger with national coach company Volánbusz, which was completed at the end of the year.

GySEV rolling stock is to be used throughout the country to reinforce services now operated by national carrier MÁV-Start which has an ageing fleet. As a first step, GySEV locos are to be deployed to haul MÁV-Start's Budapest – Békéscsaba inter-city services.

MÁV-Start vehicles currently used on the routes to be transferred to GySEV will be freed up for transfer to eastern Hungary. The nine inter-city electric multiple-units that Stadler is supplying to GySEV under a March 2024 contract are to be allocated to the Budapest – Beograd route as its upgrading nears completion; they had been initially bought for use on routes in western Hungary.

Lázár also confirmed that the Budapest – Beograd line is scheduled to reopen in January 2026 after its Chinese-backed rebuilding. He added that GySEV's Austrian operations, where it is branded Raaberbahn, are not affected by the latest changes.

Leased locos and new coaches

In a further flurry of announcements, Lázár reported that MÁV-Volán is to receive a total of 40 electric locomotives this year under leasing agreements, and a further 15 in 2026. MÁV-Volán has been testing Alstom Astride locos owned by Akiem since October and the railway group is planning to lease 15 of them with an option for 12 more.

Under a December agreement, MÁV-Volán has taken on 15 Henschel Class ME diesel locomotives from Swedish leasing company Nordic Re-Finance; these are to arrive with MÁV-Volán later this year. These deals will see the railway group augment its pool of 24 Siemens Eurosprinter electric locos leased from Akiem under agreements signed in 2023 and 2024.

Details of the lease agreements for the latest batch of 55 locos have not yet been released. With the new arrivals, the age of the Hungarian locomotive fleet is set to fall significantly. Half of the locos would be under 40 years old, compared to only a quarter of the fleet today.

Lázár also announced that the government is to procure 285 loco-hauled coaches for inter-city services this year at a cost of HF330bn. This would be the first order for new long-distance rolling stock placed by MÁV-Start in many years.

MÁV-Volán meanwhile is aiming to complete in-house production of 50 new coaches for inter-city services and the repair of a further 50 by June as part of efforts to return stored vehicles to active service.

Until next month...

David

This Page

Sunrise over Kolín on New Year's Day and ČD Class 162.018 waits to depart with train No. Os5005, the 07:45 to Česká Třebová. *Andy Pratt*

Front Cover

Stadler Rail ABe 8/12 meter gauge No. 52801 is seen at Arosa, Switzerland awaiting departure with a service to Chur on the Arosabahn on December 25th.

James Haywood

Minutes after sunrise, Dakota Missouri Valley Western Railroad Nos. 5500, 5423 and 5557 pass Garrison whilst hauling a freight train from Max to Bismarck. *Laurence Sly*

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Canada

Canadian National Railways locos Nos. 3981, 3986 and an unknown loco with a tank car train are seen in Hinton AB. These locos are ex Citirail lease locos and still have the colours of the previous owner. *Gerard van Vliet*

Now that KCS has become part of CPR you can also see locos in KCS colours in Canada like in this photo with KCS loco No. 4693 in Field BC. *Gerard van Vliet*

CPKC (CPR) locos Nos. 8907 and 8941 are waiting for their next assignment in Field BC. *Gerard van Vliet*

Alstom to overhaul and modernize 181 Bi-Level commuter rail cars for Metrolinx in Ontario, Canada

Alstom, global leader in smart and sustainable mobility, has signed a new agreement with Metrolinx to overhaul and modernize 181 Bi-Level commuter rail cars for GO Transit, the regional public transit service for the Greater Golden Horseshoe in Ontario, Canada. The framework agreement is valued at approximately 500 million CAD (approximately 340 million EUR), subject to the final terms of the agreement*.

Mid-life overhaul and upgrades of the Bi-Level series VIII cars, originally built between 2008 and 2015, will begin by 2026 at Alstom's facility in Thunder Bay, Ontario, and will support approximately 250 high-skilled jobs until at least 2030.

"We thank the Government of Ontario and Metrolinx for their renewed trust and confidence and for recognizing the unique expertise of our team in Thunder Bay, who are the best positioned to upgrade cars they originally manufactured," said Michael Keroullé, President, Alstom Americas. "We are proud to continue delivering a refreshed and modernized fleet with state-of-the-art passenger amenities to enhance the experience of transit users in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area."

A partner of choice

The distinctive green-and-white GO Transit cars have all have been built in Alstom's Thunder Bay facility for almost 50 years. Under a contract signed in 2021, Alstom is already Metrolinx selected supplier for the refurbishment of 94 Series VII bi-level cars and has maintained GO Transit's fleet of cars and locomotives for over 25 years. In addition, Alstom has operated GO Transit's commuter rail network for over a decade, including supplying train crews and providing customer service, on more than 500 kilometres of track across seven lines.

"Extending the life of these coaches is a vital part of our plan for faster and more frequent GO rail service, supporting the demands of our rapidly growing region. With industry-leading amenities on board, these revived coaches will ensure a comfortable and enjoyable customer journey for years to come," said Michael Lindsay, Interim President and CEO, Metrolinx.

State-of-the-art passenger amenities

Improvements to the car interiors will include the installation of outlets with USB ports, updates to panelling and flooring, replacement of customer seating, new accessible lavatories, and energy-saving LED lighting. These upgraded coaches will ensure Metrolinx has the rail fleet available to support service enhancements, including the ongoing GO Expansion program (for which Alstom is also a selected partner), with the goal of alleviating congestion and driving up customer satisfaction in providing faster, more frequent and convenient train service in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA).

An expert in modernization

With an extensive portfolio of FlexCare Modernise solutions, Alstom is a preferred partner for modernization projects to extend the lifespan of rolling stock. Over the years, the company has modernized over 45,000 vehicles across the world. In North America, Alstom has worked on several modification, refurbishments, and overhaul projects for customers such as the Los Angeles County Metropolitan Transportation Authority, California Department of Transportation, the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, the Canadian Rocky Mountaineer, the Maryland Transit Authority, and the Port Authority Transit Corporation serving Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

Alstom is the only global rail company with an industrial footprint in Canada. It has production and engineering sites in Brampton, Kingston, and Thunder Bay in Ontario, as well as in La Pocatière and Saint-Bruno-de-Montarville in Quebec. It also has services sites and substantial operational activities in many of the major cities across the country, from Montreal to Vancouver, the GTHA, Ottawa and Edmonton. Alstom has built close to 80% of all passenger rail cars in Canada, making it a leading player and committed partner in the development of the country's public rail transit systems. Millions of transit users across Canada commute every day on vehicles built, maintained, or operated by Alstom, or using an Alstom signalling technology. In the fiscal year 2023/24, Alstom's activities in Canada supported 8,300 jobs, including close to 5,000 direct employees and its operations contributed 575 million CAD (approximately 388 million EUR) to the country's GDP.

*The contract is expected to be signed and booked during the fourth quarter of FY 2024/25.

Photo: Alstom Thunder Bay © Dan Garrity Media

Canada

CN locos Nos. 2711, 2642 and 2701 with an empty lumber train from Kamloops to Vernon, passes Monte Lake BC. *Gerard van Vliet*

Czech Republic

Retrolok's Class 749.146 waits to depart Praha hl.n. on New Year's Day with Valenta Rail's 'Novoročni Jizda' railtour to Jedlova.
Andy Pratt

Czech Republic

ČD Vectron Class 193.978 has just arrived at Staré Město u Uherského Hradiště on January 3rd with train No. R885 Slovačký Expres, the 07:01 Praha hl.n. - Luhačovice. The electric will be replaced by a diesel here for the remainder of the journey. *Andy Pratt*

ČD Goggle Class 754.061 waits time at Týnec nad Sázavou station on January 4th while working train No. Os9057 09:23 Praha hl.n. - Čerčany. *Andy Pratt*

ČD Class 750.709 has run round its stock at Luhačovice and is ready to return towards Praha at 12:31 with train No. R886 Slovačky Expres on January 3rd. *Andy Pratt*

Czech Republic

On January 1st, Class 749.146 with the Valenta Rail railtour from Praha to Jedlova is seen during a pathing stop at Bělá pod Bezdězev. *Andy Pratt*

Terminal Nymburk – Ceremonial Start of Construction

After several years of careful preparations, construction of the new intermodal transport terminal in Nymburk was launched on January 16th 2025.

The construction will be carried out by companies Hochtief and Viamont. The joint venture, Terminal Nymburk, which is responsible for the construction, was established at the beginning of 2023 by ČD Cargo and Medlog CZ.

A modern intermodal transshipment facility with excellent transport connections to both the main railway line and the city bypass will be built on a 7.5-hectare site.

The ceremonial tapping of the symbolic cornerstone was attended on behalf of ČD Cargo by members of the Board of Directors Zbyszek Waclawik and Martin Svojanovský.

The company Medlog was represented by its director Michaela Svrčková, while Zdeněk Vocásek, the statutory vice-mayor of the town of Nymburk, delivered a speech on the terminal's importance.

Czech Republic

ČD Class 754.007 awaits departure from Trutnov hl.n. on January 2nd with train No. R924 Krakonoš, the 14:42 to Praha hl.n. *Andy Pratt*

Czech Republic

ČD Goggle Class 750.709 is being coupled to train No. R885 Slovačky Expres at Staré Město u Uherského Hradiště to work the final leg to Luhačovice on January 3rd. *Andy Pratt*

Czech Republic

ČD Goggle Class 754.076 pauses at Týnec nad Sázavou while working train No. Os9060 10:47 Čerčany to Praha hl.n. on January 4th.
Andy Pratt

Czech Republic

No. T478.1146 (749.146) pauses at Sázava with a Valenta Rail party train No. R91041 08:00 Praha Vršovice to Ledeč nad Sázavou on December 27th. *Mark Pichowicz*

Czech Republic

No. T478.1146 (749.146) stands at Český Šternberk zastávka during a photostop during a Valenta Rail railtour on December 27th.
Mark Pichowicz

Czech Republic

With the introduction of ETCS on January 1st, many older classes are no longer able to work on the mainline SE of Prague. To say farewell, CD held an event at Olomouc on December 27th - 29th titled 'Legends of the Corridor'. During a photoshoot Nos. E469.165 (121.065), E469.2001 (122.001), E479.1002 (131.002), E499.085 (140.085) and 182.168 are seen lined up round the turntable at Olomouc depot. *Mark Pichowicz*

Czech Republic

Class 754.075, 751.001, 371.005, 350.020 and 151.007 stand around the turntable at Olomouc depot during a photoshoot as part of the 'Legends of the Corridor' event on December 27th. *Mark Pichowicz*

Czech Republic

ČD Vectron Class 193.688 stands at Brno hl.n. on January 21st in charge of Eurocity train No. EC277 Metropolitan, the 09:42 Praha hl.n. - Budapest Nyugati. *Andy Pratt*

Czech Republic

Well presented ČD Goggle No. 754.047 passes light engine through Brno hl.n. to collect its stock ready for the afternoon peak hour workings on January 21st. *Andy Pratt*

Czech Republic

THE FIRST NEW TRAM FOR PRAGUE, THE ŠKODA FORCITY PLUS 52T, IS ASSEMBLED. IT TOOK ITS FIRST RIDE ON THE TEST TRACK.

Thirteen months after the signing of the contract between the Prague Public Transit Company and Škoda Group and eight months after the start of production, the first Škoda ForCity Plus 52T tram for Prague has been produced.

On January 27th, it rode for the first time on the test track at the Škoda production site in Pilsen. The tram's exterior has been completed and the interior is being finished, commissioning and the first tests are underway. Two more vehicles are in an advanced stage of assembly. Rough carbodies of individual sections are being welded on the others. In total, eight trams for Prague are under construction in the Pilsen production workshops. The first tram is expected to hit the streets of Prague in April, when it will start test runs without passengers as part of the homologation process for the new vehicle type.

In December 2023, a framework contract was signed between the Prague Public Transit Company and Škoda Group for the delivery of up to 200 Škoda ForCity Plus 52T trams. The total value of the contract, when fully utilised, is over CZK 16.6 billion. The Prague Public Transit Company has ordered 40 trams, which will be delivered to Prague in phases – the first 20 this year, the other 20 vehicles by the end of 2026. After signing the contract, the teams of both parties worked intensively for several months on the final form of the technical solution, especially the interior elements and fine-tuning of the complete tram design. The final version was approved in May 2024, paving the way for the finalisation of the technical documentation and the start of production. More than 230 suppliers, 76% of whom are from the Czech Republic, are working on the development and production of new trams for Prague. This project thus supports domestic industry and creates employment opportunities throughout the country.

"The first new tram 52T is already here! This is a significant milestone because after almost 20 years, Prague is getting a completely new type of tram. The super-modern low-floor Škoda ForCity Plus 52T trams will offer air conditioning, quiet operation and an advanced anti-collision system. By the end of the year, the first 20 of these top-of-the-range vehicles will arrive, and within a few years, the total number could reach 200," says Zdeněk Hřib, 1st Deputy Mayor for Transport and Chairman of the Prague Public Transit Company Supervisory Board, adding:
"We have started an unprecedented tram boom in Prague. New lines are growing like mushrooms after rain in the capital, which is why it is necessary to expand the tram fleet substantially. In the next two years, we will launch several new lines, for example to Malešice, Strahov, Nové Dvory, Žižkov, or the Museum, where we will build on the already implemented line on Wenceslas Square. In short, trams are a symbol of modern and ecological transport, making Prague a cleaner and more pleasant city to live in."

"We are preparing intensively for the arrival of the new trams. In Prague, the construction of the new Hloubětín depot is nearing completion, and pre-acceptance of the first technological units has begun these days. The Hloubětín depot will be the home of the new trams. It will be the place where they will be commissioned after their return from the factory, sent out on test runs and subsequently into regular operation. I firmly believe that the manufacturer will be able to fulfil all further steps according to the schedule and the contract," adds Jan Šurovský, Vice-Chairman of the Board of Directors and Technical Director of Prague Public Transit Company – Surface.

"Supplying trams for the capital of our country is not only a great honour for us, but also a great responsibility. This project brings stability and employment opportunities to thousands of people across the industry in the Czech Republic. We believe that the new tram will not only be a symbol of technological sophistication, but also of the ingenuity and commitment of all those involved in its development," concludes Petr Novotný, CEO Škoda Group.

What awaits the first Škoda 52T trams in the coming months?
In the coming weeks, the first three trams for Prague will be completed in Pilsen. After the commissioning and dynamic tests on the test track, they will be transported to Prague, where they will begin test runs without passengers in the first phase as part of the homologation of the new vehicle type. These will also include the calibration of the anti-collision system and its unit tests. In the second phase, test runs with passengers will follow. After meeting the requirements of the Czech Railway Authority and successful completion of the test runs, the trams will be homologated for operation in the Czech Republic. In the meantime, the serial production of other trams will continue in Pilsen, and they will be delivered to Prague gradually according to the contract.

Modern trams for a modern city
The new trams for Prague are 100% low-floor and offer higher passenger comfort than the types of vehicles operated so far. The interior is more spacious, with wider passages between the sections, and the full-vehicle air conditioning uses natural, ecological refrigerant. The trams are equipped with a modern information system that improves orientation during the journey. Technological solutions such as axle bogies, electromechanical brakes and energy recovery ensure lower maintenance costs and energy consumption. These features make the new trams not only environmentally friendly but also an economically viable solution for urban transport.

France

Alstom to supply fifteen additional metros equipped with the new Urbalis Fluence signalling and automated control system to the Lille metropolitan area,

Alstom, global leader in smart and sustainable mobility, will supply the Métropole Européenne de Lille (MEL) with fifteen additional 52-metre long new-generation automated metro trainsets, at a cost of around 210 million euro[1]. These new trains will complete the first batch of 27 trains already ordered by the MEL (equipped with the state-of-the-art Urbalis Fluence signalling and automated control system).

The metro trainsets in this new order will replace the old VAL-208 trainsets from 2028 onwards. This order is part of a general policy to modernise the Lille metro network, with the aim of introducing new rolling stock and modifying the automated train control system, to improve transport services on lines 1 and 2.

“Alstom is delighted with this new order from the Métropole Européenne de Lille for this new-generation equipment. These new, modern and comfortable metros represent a considerable asset for improving the network and the passenger experience,” said Frédéric Wiscart, President of Alstom France.

More comfortable, more accessible and more environmentally friendly metros

Based on Alstom’s rubber-tyred metro solutions, the new 52-metre metros will offer greater comfort, improved accessibility and better passenger information. Each train will be able to accommodate up to 545 passengers and ease passenger flow thanks to its “boa” configuration (wide gangways and open circulation without separations between the four cars) which allows passengers to move from one end of the train to the other. The addition of those 15 new metros will give line 1 a fleet exclusively made up of new-generation trains.

On board these metros, passenger information will be enhanced by multimedia displays and screens located throughout the train. There will be areas dedicated to people with reduced mobility, and an integrated video protection system will contribute to passenger safety on board the trains and on the platforms.

The Lille metro’s new environmentally friendly metros are fitted with high-performance traction equipment for improved energy efficiency.

Intervals that can be reduced to 66 seconds during rush hour

The trains will be equipped with the new-generation Urbalis Fluence autopilot system, the first worldwide application of which is for the Métropole Européenne de Lille. An ultra-innovative solution, which embeds the system’s intelligence into the trains, making them more autonomous and improving the system’s overall performance.

The Lille metro network will remain the most frequent metro in the world, with a train running every 66 seconds during rush hour.

A metro made in France

The new trains will be designed and assembled in France.
Six of Alstom’s sixteen sites in France are taking part in the project:

- Valenciennes-Petite Forêt, in charge of studies, design, train assembly, tests/validations and homologation,
- Le Creusot, for the bogies,
- Ornans, for the motors,
- Tarbes, for the powertrain equipment,
- Saint-Ouen, for automated systems and the development of Urbalis Fluence, and
- Villeurbanne, for on-board computing and passenger information.

The automated metros for Lille are part of Alstom’s market-leading Metropolis metro solutions, designed to keep cities breathing for over 60 years. More than 80 customers worldwide operate metros made by Alstom.
ALSTOM™, Urbalis Fluence™, and Metropolis™ are registered trademarks of the Alstom Group.

[1] This contract was booked during the third quarter of Alstom’s 2024/25 fiscal year

Photo: Métro Lille ©Alstom-Samuel Dhote

Germany

Quick solution for steel production after Moselle accident

DB Cargo supports steel production in Saarland after Moselle accident with flexible solutions and rapid deployment

An accident on the Moselle in early December 2024 had far-reaching consequences for the steel industry in Saarland. When a barge rammed the gates of the Moselle lock at Müden and caused severe damage, shipping on this important transport corridor came to a standstill. Companies such as Dillinger and Saarstahl, which rely on the delivery of raw materials such as ore and coal as well as the transport of oversized sheet steel across the river, needed help quickly. This is where DB Cargo came into play.

Fast and flexible solutions
Within a very short space of time, we had to transport more trains with raw materials such as ore and coke for our customer to the blast furnaces in Dillingen / Saar. The steel is produced there, from which the sheet steel is rolled and transported overseas to Rotterdam. In addition to the regular trains, additional iron ore trains were organised, accompanied by a new transport concept from Vlissingen with additional trains.

Teamwork and commitment in top form
This achievement was only possible thanks to a strong team and exceptional commitment. DB Cargo Netherlands, DB Cargo's Control Tower and the operational colleagues from the West and Southwest regions worked hand in hand with the customer. Voluntary two-shift shifts were introduced in the Saarbrücken workshop to get damaged wagons back into operation as quickly as possible. In addition, exemptions from the Dutch infrastructure company ProRail made it possible to operate at weekends.

Thanks from the customer
Frank Becker, Head of Raw Materials Purchasing at Dillinger and Saarstahl, was impressed: "As a land-based company with a port of loading 500 kilometres away, we are dependent on a functioning supply chain. Rail transport plays a key role for us here. Over the festive period in particular, the DB Cargo team made a decisive contribution to ensuring that we were able to produce without interruption thanks to their special commitment and additional transport operations. On behalf of my entire team, I would like to thank you for your great commitment and reliable cooperation, especially in such exceptional situations!"

Strong long-haul driving at DB Cargo: Efficient and flexible

DB Cargo improves efficiency and flexibility by introducing "strong long-haul driving

With the introduction of the "Strong long-haul driving" train driver deployment model, DB Cargo is taking an important step towards greater efficiency and flexibility, which will have a direct impact on the quality of our transports and thus offer customers immediate added value. In step 1, the new model was introduced in combined transport (CT) with the timetable change in December 2024. It optimizes the deployment of train drivers by aligning the operating conditions with today's competitive requirements and managing the trains holistically from a single source. Dispatching is carried out from two central industry centers. For continental combined transport (trains with trailers, swap bodies or tank containers) it is Duisburg and for maritime combined transport (container trains) it is Hamburg. This adjustment also enables faster operational decisions.

The advantages of the new model at a glance
The "strong long-haul driving" model offers a number of advantages:
- Increased flexibility: by adapting the operating conditions of train drivers, longer routes can be driven and it is possible to react better to deviations, which improves transport quality
- Less susceptibility to disruption: operations are more stable due to fewer staff changes, as train drivers drive significantly longer routes
- Less coordination effort: fewer train drivers and dispatchers are involved per train journey, which reduces interfaces and enables faster operational decisions for the benefit of customers

Different deployment models at DB Cargo
DB Cargo has developed new deployment models that are precisely tailored to the different transport needs of our customers. Up to now, we have worked in a relay system: Each train driver drives for a few hours and then hands over to the successor, who drives the train in the other direction. In theory, this is a very effective model, but it doesn't always work with the large number of construction sites, delays or disruptions to the infrastructure.

This is where "strong long-haul driving" comes in. Train drivers work in a more self-organized manner, drive longer routes, spend several nights away from home at a time and receive corresponding extras for this additional flexibility. All train drivers? Depending on requirements. In single freight car transport, train drivers mainly work in the conventional model, i.e. more like before. Most work in the standard model, which is much more flexible - this means, among other things, longer driving times on the locomotive than before, regular overnight stays, etc.

Successful start and outlook for the future
There are currently already 120 highly motivated volunteers working in combined transport in line with the principles of "strong long-haul driving".

The rollout of this model in block train transport is already being planned and will contribute to improving transport quality and meeting customer needs. This model is an important step towards increasing DB Cargo's competitiveness.

Germany

Successful premiere: HHLA Project Logistics coordinates first transhipment in the Port of Hamburg

Well-coordinated cooperation in the Port of Hamburg: HHLA Project Logistics steers the transhipment of rail wagons from seagoing vessel to rail.

At the end of the year, HHLA Project Logistics successfully completed its first loading operation in the Port of Hamburg. The subsidiary of Hamburger Hafen und Logistik AG (HHLA), which normally specialises in project cargoes in Asia, was able to draw on the expertise and network within the HHLA Group for its first order in Germany. It worked closely with the HHLA company UNIKAI Lagerei- und Speditionsgesellschaft.

The oversized cargo consisted of six passenger railway carriages, each between 17 and 22 metres long and weighing between 20 and 47 tonnes, as well as the associated bogies. Manufactured in China, the wagons were transported by ocean-going vessel to Hamburg. The Wallmann & Co terminal loaded the wagons onto inland waterway craft that took them to O'Swaldkai, HHLA's universal cargo terminal.

The HHLA subsidiary UNIKAI took over the handling at O'Swaldkai. After customs formalities had been completed, the wagons were placed on the terminal's own rail track, where they were assembled for onward transport by rail to the Czech Republic.

"With the support of our partners within the HHLA Group and other reliable specialists, we were able to complete this job quickly and smoothly," emphasised Korneli Korchilava, Managing Director of HHLA Project Logistics. He also highlighted the importance of rail for the environment: "I am particularly pleased that with this project we have been able to promote the transfer of traffic to rail and thus contribute to our company's climate protection goals. It is opportunities like this that make the Port of Hamburg such a special location."

With this successful premiere, HHLA Project Logistics has taken an important step into the German market and at the same time demonstrated the capabilities of the Port of Hamburg.

About HHLA Project Logistics
HHLA Project Logistics offers specialist transport solutions for the entire Caucasus region and Central Asia, dealing with heavy and oversized loads and unique requirements every day. The subsidiary of HHLA specialises in all stages of handling project and transit cargo, particularly on behalf of international and local freight forwarders.

High levels of quality and reliability are built into its service with a "safety first" approach taken on every single project (certified to ISO 9001 and 14000 standards). Since 2001, HHLA Project Logistics has had its headquarters in the Georgian seaport of Poti, a hub on the ancient Silk Road. It operates additional branches in Tbilisi (Georgia), Baku (Azerbaijan), Astana and Almaty (Kazakhstan).

Photo: ©HHLA/Vincent Wolff

Germany

Hamburg–Berlin: Traffic concept for the general renovation largely completed

Germany's largest replacement bus service on 26 regional routes
Diversions and longer travel times in long-distance and freight transport
Information service with a regional focus for commuters in February

Deutsche Bahn (DB) is continuing to push ahead with preparations for the general renovation of the Hamburg-Berlin route. In the coming weeks, the final coordination and presentation of the transport concept with the responsible authorities, railway companies, transport associations, municipalities and districts will take place. Passengers and goods will continue to reach their destinations during the nine-month construction phase from August 1st, 2025 to April 30th, 2026. Long-distance and freight trains will run on diversion routes.

There will also be ICE connections between Hamburg and Berlin during the general renovation. There are alternative train services for passengers on regional routes on some routes. In addition, the authorities and railway companies, in cooperation with DB and the bus company ecoVista, are putting Germany's largest replacement bus service on the road.

The general renovation of the Hamburg-Berlin route is part of the overall S3 program for the structural renovation of the DB Group over the next three years. The aim of the program is to make the railway more punctual, reliable and profitable again. In terms of infrastructure, the focus is on rapid renovation of existing infrastructure. A total of 1,500 kilometres of track are to be completely renovated by 2027. DB successfully completed the pilot project for this type of comprehensive renovation and modernization in December on the Riedbahn between Frankfurt/Main and Mannheim.

Dr. Wolfgang Weinhold, program manager for general renovation at DB InfraGO AG : "In order to improve the condition of the infrastructure on the busy Hamburg-Berlin route and to avoid recurring construction sites in the future, we have decided on a general renovation. We are aware that the work will entail restrictions, particularly for commuters in rural areas and in the vicinity of metropolitan regions. We are therefore developing a replacement concept that will still offer travellers attractive alternatives."

As with previous construction work on the route, long-distance trains between Hamburg and Berlin will be diverted via Uelzen and Stendal, and freight trains will sometimes be diverted over longer distances. Long-distance trains will also stop in Lüneburg and Uelzen, as well as in Salzwedel and Stendal.

The journey time will be extended by a total of 45 minutes. In addition, passengers will be able to use connections with a change in Hanover. With up to 65 daily journeys - 36 of which are direct - DB will continue to offer an attractive and reliable long-distance train service between Hamburg and Berlin. A concept has been developed for regional transport that enables fast train connections to Hamburg and Berlin on some lines.

To connect the eliminated local transport stops, up to 173 buses will be in use at peak times, running on 26 lines and covering a total of up to 86,000 kilometres a day. This will make the replacement service for the general renovation of the Hamburg-Berlin route the largest ever in Germany.

In the coming week, DB, together with the regional authorities from Hamburg, Schleswig-Holstein, Lower Saxony, Berlin/Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania and Saxony-Anhalt, will be offering in-depth information sessions for municipalities and districts. For the general public, four sessions, each with a regional focus, are planned in February to present the concept in detail.

Extensive work on tracks, switches and signalling technology
During the nine-month construction phase, DB will renew more than 180 kilometres of tracks and around 200 switches between Hamburg and Berlin. Six additional so-called transfer points will create more stability and flexibility in operations and ensure that, for example, faster passenger trains can overtake slower freight trains. In a first step, DB will equip the routes with the highest capacity around the metropolitan regions, ie between Hamburg-Rothenburgsort and Büchen and the section between Nauen and Berlin-Spandau, with the new European train control system ETCS (European Train Control System).

More attractive train stations and radio masts for better mobile reception
As part of the general renovation, DB is carrying out work on 28 stations along the Hamburg-Berlin route. The aim is to make the stations more attractive and improve the customer experience. Depending on the station, new toilet facilities and weather shelters, more accessibility and improved wayfinding systems are planned. In addition, the important connection to the innovation route for mobile communications is to be expanded with gigabit data rates on the train so that travellers can make calls and surf the internet between Hamburg and Berlin in the best quality in the future. DB is therefore using the general renovation to build radio masts for the future railway radio FRMCS (Future Rail Mobile Communication System).

After the renovation, DB will provide the masts and supply containers as well as the power and data lines to the mobile phone companies for technology-neutral testing and coverage of the route with mobile communications for passengers

Germany

One year of ICE maintenance in Cottbus: Now all DB ICE 4s are coming to Lusatia

New Cottbus plant with convincing performance in its first year
DB bundles heavy maintenance for all ICE 4s in Lusatia
First overhaul of a “short” ICE 4 with seven carriages in Cottbus at the start of the year

Deutsche Bahn (DB) has drawn a positive conclusion after one year of ICE maintenance in Cottbus: In the first year, a total of 13 ICE 4s with over 160 carriages were in the new workshop for maintenance as planned. This means that the employees not only achieved the target for the ramp-up phase after commissioning, but even completed the last overhaul in 2024 slightly ahead of schedule. This contributed to DB being able to use many trains at Christmas and offer travellers reliable connections.

At the start of 2025, a seven-car ICE 4 will be in the workshop in Cottbus for the first time. This is because DB has decided to consolidate the heavy maintenance for all ICE 4 types in Cottbus. In addition to the XXL ICE with 13 carriages and the twelve-car trains, the seven-car trains are now also coming to Lusatia for overhaul. With a total of 137 trains, the ICE 4 is the backbone of DB long-distance traffic. DB has more trains of no other series in its fleet.

Originally, other plants in addition to Cottbus were planned for a longer transition period for the heavy maintenance of the ICE 4. Due to the infrastructure tailored to the ICE 4 and the dedicated teams at the Cottbus plant, ICE maintenance can now be brought together in Lusatia earlier.

Dr. Daniela Gerd tom Markotten, DB Board Member for Digitalization and Technology:”The ICE maintenance in Lusatia is already a great success: Our experts designed the two-track workshop for rapid and efficient maintenance, especially of the ICE 4. And the teams in Cottbus have implemented the optimized processes in practice even faster than expected. This means that the new Cottbus plant is already making an important contribution to high vehicle availability and a stable service from DB in its first year of operation - and is thus supporting the restructuring of the DB Group.”

Hall 2 of the new plant in Cottbus is optimized for the smaller of the two heavy maintenance stages of the ICE 4, the so-called IS 600: The trains can drive into the hall at their full length and under their own power. Employees can then work on the train on three levels at the same time: on top of the roof on the air conditioning systems and pantographs, on the sides on the flaps behind which a lot of technology is located on the ICE 4, and in the continuous work pit under the train.

On the two elevated tracks in the workshop, each bogie of the ICE 4 comes to a precise stop on a work stand. The rails can be folded away so that employees can quickly replace wheel sets and bogies. The overhead line in the workshop can be swung to the side so that the train roof with air conditioning and pantographs is easily accessible for inspection work.

In 2025, DB will continue to increase capacity utilization in Cottbus: A total of 24 ICE 4s are to come to Cottbus for overhaul - twelve short, seven-car trains and twelve long ICE 4s with 12 or 13 carriages. For 14 of the 24 trains, the larger of the two heavy maintenance stages, the so-called IS 700, is scheduled for inspection in Hall 2.

The IS 700 is always in line after 3.3 million kilometres of mileage. When the new plant in Cottbus is complete, this more extensive maintenance stage will move to Hall 1. The DB has been building Hall 1, which is over 500 meters long and has three maintenance tracks, a commissioning track and a painting track, on another part of the Cottbus plant site since January 2024.

For the IS 700, the ICE 4 carriages are uncoupled. In addition to maintenance and overhaul work on doors, pantographs and brakes, couplings and carriage transitions on the IS 700 are also thoroughly checked and replaced if necessary. The employees also work on the running and driving bogies, change the front noses and replace air conditioning systems.

With the two new halls in Cottbus, DB is creating a total of 1,200 new training and industrial jobs. Because IS 600 and IS 700 are already being carried out in Cottbus, the maintenance teams can prepare comprehensively for the full commissioning of the new plant - with IS 600 in the optimized Hall 2 and IS 700 in the even larger Hall 1.

Germany

Shaping the Future of Rail Freight: European Loc Pool expands its versatile portfolio

European Loc Pool (ELP), a leading provider of innovative locomotive full-service leasing solutions, continues to expand its reach with incumbents, private operators and “shippers” in new industrial segments.

While ELP has long been a trusted partner for rail operators in Europe, an increasing number of state-owned operators now rely on its versatile six-axle hybrid locomotives. This growth underlines the broad appeal of ELP’s value proposition which is tailored to meet the challenging demands of modern rail logistics.

Recent additions to ELP’s customer base, such as Rail Cargo Group (RCG), the freight division of the Austrian Federal Railways (ÖBB), and Verkehrsbetriebe Peine-Salzgitter (VPS), the “inhouse” rail freight operators of Salzgitter AG, a dominant producer in Germany’s steel industry, highlight the growing reliance on ELP’s versatile locomotive solutions across different sectors.

ELP’s EuroDual for Verkehrsbetriebe Peine-Salzgitter (VPS)
Dr. Johannes Dreier, Managing Director of VPS, emphasized the importance of the new locomotives: “The handover of our new EuroDual hybrid locomotives marks another milestone in our activities to decarbonize rail freight transport and the Salzgitter Group’s logistics chain. In this way, we are supporting the transformation of our Group’s internal customers and improving the efficiency of our raw material transports thanks to the increased loading capacity.”

These partnerships join a growing list of customers, including Green Cargo, MEG, DB Cargo, and CargoNet. ELP’s commitment to serving diverse industries – including intermodal, construction, heavy dry and wet bulk goods, automotive, timber, retail, and now steel – continues to drive its success.

Driving sustainability and efficiency
ELP’s hybrid locomotives stand out for their ability to handle heavier and longer trains with a single unit, offering up to 40% higher payloads while reducing traction costs. Their hybrid capabilities ensure seamless traction across electrified and non-electrified lines, providing significant flexibility for first- and last-mile operations.

For RCG, the EuroDual’s hybrid capabilities are a game changer. “The EuroDuals provide us with the necessary flexibility and efficiency to respond to rising costs and challenges in first- and last-mile operations,” explained Cenk Seringölge, Geschäftsführer von Rail Cargo Logistics – Germany. “Their hybrid capability enables seamless operation, significantly enhancing our competitiveness and allowing us to deliver tailored logistics solutions.”

ELP’s EuroDual for Rail Cargo Group
“Our locomotives combine sustainability with unmatched operational efficiency, making them a natural choice for both private, public operators and “blue-chip-shippers”. This growing diversity in our customer base showcases the versatility and reliability of our leasing solutions,” said Willem Goosen, CEO of European Loc Pool.

“Our ability to adapt to different industries and operational needs, from national railways to specialized industrial players and private operators, sets us apart. We are proud to support our customers in optimizing their logistics while advancing sustainability,” Goosen added.

With its proven full-service leasing model, ELP continues to empower public and private rail operators to meet the challenges of modern freight transport head-on, while driving future innovation in sustainable rail solutions.

More about Hybrid Locomotives
European Loc Pool (ELP) focuses on innovative six-axle hybrid locomotives from Stadler, thereby setting new standards in European rail freight transport. The EuroDual and Euro9000 locomotives revolutionize European Rail Freight with their combination of electric and diesel operation, also enabling seamless last-mile and shunting operations.

The EuroDual, as a forerunner in the portfolio of European Loc Pool, is a game-changer in rail freight. With its tractive effort of 500 kN and a performance of up to 2.8 MW in diesel and 6.2 MW in electric operation, it offers up to 40% higher loading capacity. The EuroDual is already successfully in operation in Germany, Austria, France, and Scandinavia and was recently approved in Serbia. Slovenia and Croatia will follow in the first quarter of 2024.

EuroDual Locomotive | European Loc Pool
The Euro9000, the ‘next generation’ locomotive, stands for peak performance in the European rail industry. With a tractive effort of 500 kN and a performance of up to 1.9 MW in diesel and 9 MW in electric operation, it enables up to 40% higher loading capacity. As a hybrid multi-system electric locomotive, the Euro9000 expands the geographical deployment and efficiency on the European Rail Network. In addition to the advantages in last-mile- and shunting operations, the Euro9000 distinguishes itself on 3kV DC tracks with a special capability: it features a ‘boost’ capability, enabling it to combine its electric power with the diesel engines, leading to an impressive total performance of 7.7MW at the wheels.

As the ‘launching customer’, European Loc Pool ordered the first ten Euro9000 locomotives from Stadler already in May 2019, and since mid-2023, the ‘next generation’ locomotive has been operating in Europe. The Euro9000 is approved in Germany, Austria, Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Belgium. Italy will follow in 2024..

Alex branded Class 223.081 departs Schwandorf on January 5th, having just taken over train No. 362, the 05:35 Praha hl.n. - München Hbf. *Andy Pratt*

DB Regio Class 218.423 hurries into Schwandorf station on January 5th with train No. RE4854, the 07:44 München Hbf - Hof Hbf. *Andy Pratt*

Alex branded Class 223.069 works a 2 coach ecs move from Schwandorf depot into Schwandorf station before waiting for a northbound path towards Hof on January 5th. *Andy Pratt*

MAV Class 418.312 has 8 minutes remaining before departure from Tapolca on January 19th with train No. 9703 to Budapest-Déli. The M41 will work as far as Balatonfüred where electric traction will take over for the remainder of the journey to the capital. *Andy Pratt*

GYSEV Vectron Class 471.002 stands at Sopron station having just arrived with train No. IC992, the 09:29 from Budapest-Kelenföld on January 19th. *Andy Pratt*

Hungary

MAV Class 431.109 stands at Budapest-Kelenföld station on January 19th with train No. 9703, the 15:34 Tapolca - Budapest-Déli. *Andy Pratt*

MAV 630.051 stands on the blocks on platform 2 at Budapest-Keleti on January 20th, just arrived with train No. IC519, the 05:24 from Nyiregyházai. *Andy Pratt*

Hungary

MAV Class 480.004 is ready to depart Szeged on January 20th with train No. IC735, the 13:44 to Budapest Nyugati. The twin towers of Szeged Cathedral can be seen behind the train. *Andy Pratt*

On January 20th, MAV Class 418.115 awaits departure from Szeged with train No. 7714, the 14:28 to Békéscsaba while 431.219 pauses between duties alongside. *Andy Pratt*

Hungary

MAV Class 630.046 stands on the blocks at Budapest Nyugati on January 20th. *Andy Pratt*

NS International wants to start a direct service to Vienna. Therefore the new ÖBB Nightjet carriages 'Dani' were transported on January 26th from Hannover-Wülfel via Amersfoort to Amsterdam Westhaven. The train is seen here passing some photographers at Melweg, Soest, heading from Amersfoort towards Amsterdam. *Andre Pronk*

Portugal

CP No. 1461 with train No. IR869, the 13:20 Porto São Bento to Pocinho waits at Caíde for the late running train No. IR866, the 11:10 Pocinho to Porto Campanhã headed by No. 1454 with 1436 dead in train to clear the single line. No. 1436 had failed earlier in the day before departure with train IR864 10:35 from Regua. The loco and stock were shunted into the formation of IR866 to get it back to Porto. *Andy Pratt*

CP Class 1400 No. 1454 arrives at Regua as the sun rises over the hills on January 31st with train No. IR862, the 07:08 Pocinho to Porto Campanhã. *Andy Pratt*

CP No. 1432 runs into Ermida on January 31st with train No. IR864, the 10:35 Régua - Porto São Bento. *Andy Pratt*

ZSSK Class 163.108 is ready to depart Prešov on a gloomy January 17th with train No. Os8509, the 08:19 to Čierna nad Tisou. *Andy Pratt*

Slovakia

On January 18th, workstained ZSSK Košice station pilot Class 110.034 takes a short break between shunts while 362.002 behind waits to depart with train No. EC187, the 11:42 to Budapest Keleti. The Slovak loco will work the train as far as Miskolc. *Andy Pratt*

Still sporting the green livery carried by DC electric locos, ZSSK Class 163.107 runs into Trebišov station in charge of train No. REX1912, the 14:00 Bánovce nad Ondavou to Košice on January 17th. *Andy Pratt*

ZSSK Class 163.108 waits to depart Košice station at the head of train No. Os8524 15:05 Čierna nad Tisou to Prešov service on January 16th. *Andy Pratt*

ZSSK Class 162.003 departs Michaľany on January 17th with train No. Os8818, the 11:05 Čierna nad Tisou - Prešov.
Andy Pratt

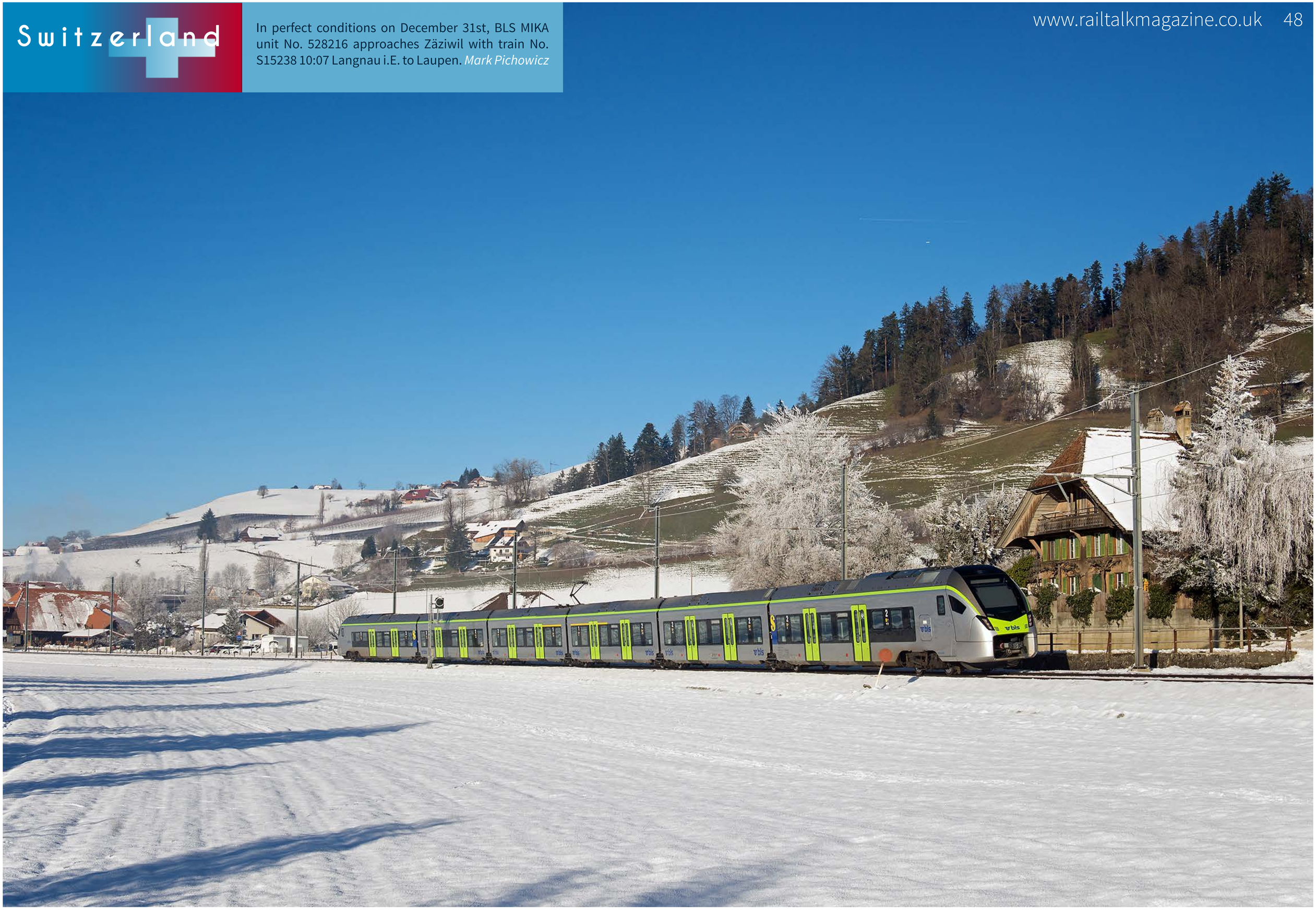
Slovakia

ZSSK Goggle Class 757.011 departs Košice with train No. R916, the 11:22 to Zvolen Os. St. on January 18th.
Andy Pratt

ZSSK Cargo twin locos Class 125.803 and 125.804 bring up the rear of an empty coal train passing through Trebišov en route back to Ukraine on January 17th. The train is running on the 1520mm (5ft) Russian gauge tracks that run from the Košice steelworks to the Ukraine border avoiding the need to re-gauge the wagons at the border. The Hermes wagons behind are on the 1435m (4ft 8½") standard gauge network. *Andy Pratt*

ZSSK Cargo Grumpy Class 751.056 has just worked a freight into Trebišov on January 17th. *Andy Pratt*

In perfect conditions on December 31st, BLS MIKA unit No. 528216 approaches Zäziwil with train No. S15238 10:07 Langnau i.E. to Laupen. *Mark Pichowicz*



U.S.A.

Dakota Missouri Valley Western Nos. 5500, 5523 and 5557 pass Underwood whilst hauling a grain train from Britton to Aberdeen. *Laurence Sly*

Dakota Missouri Valley Western No. 5500 passes Washburn whilst hauling a local working from Falkirk to Wilton. *Laurence Sly*

U.S.A.

Rapid City, Pierre & Eastern Railroad Nos. 3363, 3436 and 2765 arrive at Rapid City from Belle Fourche. *Laurence Sly*

Rapid City, Pierre & Eastern Railroad Nos. 2765, 3436 and 3363 pass St. Onge whilst hauling the Belle turn back to Belle Fourche from Rapid City. *Laurence Sly*

Rapid City, Pierre & Eastern Railroad Nos. 2765, 3436 and 3363 approach Sturgis whilst hauling the Belle turn back to Belle Fourche from Rapid City. *Laurence Sly*

After picking up a center beam car, Rapid City, Pierre & Eastern Railroad Nos. 3363, 3436 and 2765 depart Whitewood for Rapid City. *Laurence Sly*

BNSF Nos. 5870 and 4305 pass the Cordero Rojo mine whilst hauling an empty coal train. *Laurence Sly*

BNSF Nos. 5870 and 4305 approach Wright whilst hauling an empty coal train.
Laurence Sly

An empty coal train descends Logan Hill, with BNSF Nos. 9304 and 9004 as the distributed power units on the rear. *Laurence Sly*

Deseret Power Railway Nos. 1, 2 and 3 pass Midway whilst hauling a loaded coal train from Dinosaur to the power plant at Bonanza. *Laurence Sly*

Dakota Missouri Valley & Western Railroad Nos. 6911 and 6949 pass Claremont whilst hauling a grain train from Britton to Aberdeen. *Laurence Sly*

Dakota Missouri Valley & Western Railroad Nos. 5500, 5423 and 5557 approach Coleharbor whilst hauling a freight train from Max to Bismarck. *Laurence Sly*

Great Western Railway of Colorado No. 415 crosses the Cache la Poudre River as it departs Fort Collins for Windsor. *Laurence Sly*

Great Western Railway of Colorado No. 415 passes Timnath whilst hauling the Fort Collins job back to Windsor. *Laurence Sly*

U.S.A.

Great Western Railway of Colorado No. 415 approaches Windsor with the working from Fort Collins.
Laurence Sly

U.K.

First trains enter service from Alstom project to repaint Trenitalia c2c Class 357 fleet

Alstom is currently working with Trenitalia c2c to paint and repair the operator's entire Class 357 Electrostar fleet – and the first train is now back in passenger service. With an approximate 35.8 million journeys being made on c2c services every year, the work will extend the longevity and reliability of the Alstom-built Class 357 fleet, as well as enhancing the customer experience and maintaining the highest standards of service.

The project is being carried at Alstom's Ilford depot – a Centre of Excellence – and employs over 120 people working on a range of train classes. Each Electrostar will receive a complete external re-paint to protect them and ensure they have a successful future on the route.

c2c's Class 357 units were built at Alstom's Derby Litchurch Lane site between 1999 and 2002, and currently leased from Angel Trains and Porterbrook. The units are on lease until 2029 and run across the c2c route alongside the Class 720 Aventra fleet, which was also built by Alstom in Derby and came into service in 2023.

"We are very proud of the job we are doing with this repaint project. The trains were originally built at our Litchurch Lane site in Derby and we now maintain them at East Ham depot, therefore Alstom has all the knowledge to work on these units," said Peter Keighron, Portfolio Director for Commuter Fleets at Alstom.

He added: "The 357 units are the workhorse of the c2c fleet and this repaint will allow them to continue serving the millions of passengers they carry every year."

Each train takes approximately 20 days to complete, and the work involves stripping back the cars, including exterior fittings, undertaking minor repairs and restoration and comprehensively re-painting – a layer at a time – to prevent corrosion and rust. A waterborne hydro topcoat is used, which is an eco-friendly paint system with the lowest volatile organic compounds (VOCs) content.
This protects against wear and tear and will enable the trains to operate as successfully for the second half of their life, as they have done for the first. With advances in paint technology, the newly-renovated trains are finished as well – or better – than when they were first introduced.

"We are delighted with the progress of the 357 repaint project. We know that this work, led by our partners at Alstom, will both improve the longevity of our 357 fleet and will benefit our customers for years to come," said Jeff Baker, Head of Engineering at c2c.

The project will take 24 months to complete, and the first unit (357 207) is already operational on the c2c route. The second unit (357 005) will shortly be released onto the c2c route.
Alstom's Ilford depot opened in 1949 as an AC electric multiple unit (EMU) depot. Today, the site's capabilities include modernisation, refurbishment, vehicle painting, re-branding and overhaul. The depot also provides off-site labour deployment services to customers and other Alstom sites. The site has four main workshops with a capability for C4 (undercarriage) and C6 (body) classified overhauls, a logistics centre, paint facilities, and a ground lathe.

Ilford's combined modernisation, refurbishment and fleet maintenance capabilities include traction system replacement, European Train Control Systems (ETCS) installation, system upgrades, heavy corrosion repairs, structural modifications and asset life extension, steel and aluminium welding capability, minor collision repairs, and vehicle re-wiring. Alstom is the market leader in rail services, supporting customers over the entire asset lifecycle with the broadest portfolio of services solutions. Alstom's FlexCare Modernise™ portfolio enhances and extends the lifetime of rolling stock with Life, Smart and Green modernisation solutions. Alstom addresses a wide range of customer needs including minimising lifecycle costs, reducing environmental impact, and enhancing passenger comfort and train performance. Alstom has modernised over 40,000 vehicles around the world.

Spain

Alstom signs contract to modernise signalling and deliver Madrid's first driverless metro line

Alstom, global leader in smart and sustainable mobility, has signed a contract with Metro de Madrid to upgrade the signalling of line 6, making it Madrid's first driverless metro line. This 23.5 km circular line with 28 stations is renowned as one of the busiest in the city, serving nearly 400,000 commuters daily and connecting the entire metro network. The upgrade to fully automated operation signifies a notable advancement in Madrid's urban transportation, enhancing the daily travel experience for thousands of residents and visitors, and bringing modernisation, resilience and energy savings to the heart of the metro network.

The contract includes the design, engineering, installation, and commissioning of the new signalling system and electronic interlocks necessary to upgrade the current communications-based train control (CBTC), from Grade of Automation 2 (GoA2) semi-automatic operation to Grade of Automation 4(GoA4), enabling fully autonomous and driverless operation. The project will also implement a new Automatic Train Supervision (ATS) system to enhance train monitoring and control.
Alstom's new Urbalis CBTC signalling system will improve the safety, reliability, and capacity of the line. This technology will also allow increased frequencies and improved train efficiency, reducing their energy consumption. Alstom is the world leader in CBTC systems, with over 30 years of experience in implementing cutting-edge metro signalling systems. Alstom's CBTC technology is operating on 190 metro lines in 32 different countries, 67 of which are driverless lines, including the metros of São Paulo, Paris, Riyadh, Milan, and Shanghai, among others.

"We are grateful to Metro de Madrid for their trust in our team and in our Railway Signalling Excellence Centre in Madrid to execute this iconic project that will transform and modernise Madrid's metro system. This contract reinforces our commitment to enhance mobility for Madrid residents and visitors, by implementing state-of-the-art technology and continuous innovation. Together, we are paving the way for more sustainable and smart mobility solutions," stated Leopoldo Maestu, Alstom Managing Director for Spain and Portugal.

The project will be led by Alstom´s Railway Signalling Excellence Centre in Madrid. This site, that employs over 800 digital mobility experts, is a global reference in urban and mainline signalling and safety technologies. Alstom teams in Madrid have developed notable projects in Spain & Portugal, such as the signalling systems for several ADIF lines in Spain, various urban lines contracts for Metro de Porto, the APM for the T4 terminal in Madrid International Airport and a CBTC contract in Malaga. and also worldwide such as the Tren Maya in Mexico, and projects in Istanbul, São Paulo, Cairo´s monorail and high-speed trains in Saudi Arabia, just to mention some of the most recent international projects.

Alstom has been a strategic partner of Metro de Madrid for over 50 years, providing the first CBTC signalling system for lines 1 and 6, and supplying a significant portion of the interlocks in the metro network. Additionally, Alstom supplied 85% of the fleet traction systems, which were manufactured at its industrial centre in Trápaga (Bizkaia).

Alstom to supply traction components and maintenance services for Vande Bharat sleeper trains in India

Alstom, a global leader in smart and sustainable mobility, has been awarded a contract worth €144 million (approx. INR 1285 cr) to supply Mitrac traction components and other electrical equipment for 17 Vande Bharat Sleeper trainsets (408 cars). The systems will be supplied to Indian Railways' Integral Coach Factory (ICF) in Chennai.

The contract also includes preventive and corrective maintenance of the traction and major electric equipment, as well as support services, for a five-year period, after completion of warranty, at various railway depots. The equipment will be installed in 24-car sleeper trainsets on the Vande Bharat platform, designed to run at a maximum speed of 180 km/h, with a service speed of 160 km/h.

In view of the contract win, Olivier Loison, Managing Director, Alstom India said, "The Vande Bharat trains represent the modern face of rail-based mobility in India, and it is a matter of pride for us to yet again partner with Indian Railways in furthering their vision. Alstom has the widest components portfolio in the rail industry, which has been developed at the back of decades of experience in delivering rail solutions across the globe. Our strong manufacturing and engineering presence in India, will allow us to deliver the world-class products and optimise maintenance."

In India, Alstom has engineering and industrial presence for components with the sites of Bangalore, Savli (bogies), Coimbatore and Maneja (bogies and traction equipment). The contract execution will be done at the Maneja site, with a prototype delivery expected to begin by August 2026 followed by serial production, which is due to commence in 2027. The maintenance contract will consequentially start in 2029. Established in 1996, the Maneja site today runs more than 20 local and export projects with a total capacity of 900,000 manhours in two shift operation.

With the widest components portfolio in the industry, Alstom offers the best solution available to original equipment manufacturers, operators and asset owners, for increasingly safe and environmentally-friendly travel. Its range of state-of-the-art and proven systems and products includes bogies, motors, dampers, brake friction, switchgear, traction and auxiliary converters, transformers, green traction solutions, interiors and train control and information systems.

Alstom is also the market leader in rail services globally, supporting customers over the entire asset lifecycle with the broadest portfolio of services solutions. Alstom's FlexCare Sustain solutions cover parts, repairs, component overhauls and obsolescence management. Alstom provides 24/7 customer care through a worldwide network of repair and overhaul centres to sustain the safety and reliability of fleets for the long run.

Alstom is supporting the government's modernisation initiatives, with world class rolling stock, rail equipment and infrastructure, signalling and services. Fully aligned with the country's vision of Make-in-India and Atmanirbhar Bharat, Alstom remains deeply committed to strengthening its local sourcing and supply chain ecosystem.

Siemens Mobility and Sydney Metro showcase the design for Sydney Metro – Western Sydney Airport new metro train

Siemens Mobility, in collaboration with its Parklife Metro consortium partners, has revealed a realistic model of a train carriage for the Sydney Metro – Western Sydney Airport line. Presenting the mockup marks an important milestone in the turnkey project and offers a preview of the future travel experience once the state-of-the-art metro system is operational in Greater Western Sydney.

"The high-fidelity train mock-up for the Sydney Metro - Western Sydney Airport turnkey project has arrived in Australia and marks another milestone for us. We are excited about our turnkey project in Sydney stretching 23 kilometers from St. Mary's to the new airport and Bradfield City Center," says Léon Soulier, CEO Turnkey Business Unit at Siemens Mobility. "This new line will support 14,000 jobs during construction, fueling growth for both New South Wales and the national economy."

The mock-up presented shows the interior of the metro trains which will offer passengers a comfortable and pleasant travel experience: Large windows provide expansive views of Western Sydney. The trains offer flexible seating and standing options, as well as additional handrails and grips for secure holding during the journey. The Sydney Metro train features spacious interiors with large multifunctional areas for wheelchairs. The wide double doors ensure quick boarding and alighting of passengers.

The high-fidelity train mock-up is a detailed, life-sized physical model that has been created to closely resemble the actual look, feel, and functionality of the train carriage. The mock-up offered all involved parties, operator and manufacturer alike, the opportunity to evaluate and finalize aspects of the train like the interior lighting, emergency features, and passenger information display systems. It helped engineers and designers validate the final design choices, ensuring that the layout, materials, and ergonomics met the intended specifications. This realistic, full-size prototype carriage provided a valuable opportunity for thorough testing and customer feedback before the final trains commenced manufacturing.

As part of the mockup presentation, the upholstery design has been revealed to the public. These seats showcase unique artwork that pays homage to the Cumberland Plain, the area where the upcoming metro line will be located. The artwork incorporates elements such as Ngurra (country) and Badu (water), while the grey and blue patterns and colors of the general seats represent the night sky. Additionally, the priority seats in yellow depict daytime scenes of meeting places near waterholes adorned with fields of wattle flowers.

Turnkey project overview

Siemens Mobility has been awarded a turnkey contract to deliver a metro system for the Sydney Metro – Western Sydney Airport project in 2022, representing Australia's first turnkey rail project and public-private partnership. The project aims to establish a 23-kilometer-long metro line connecting the new Western Sydney International Airport with the Bradfield City Center.

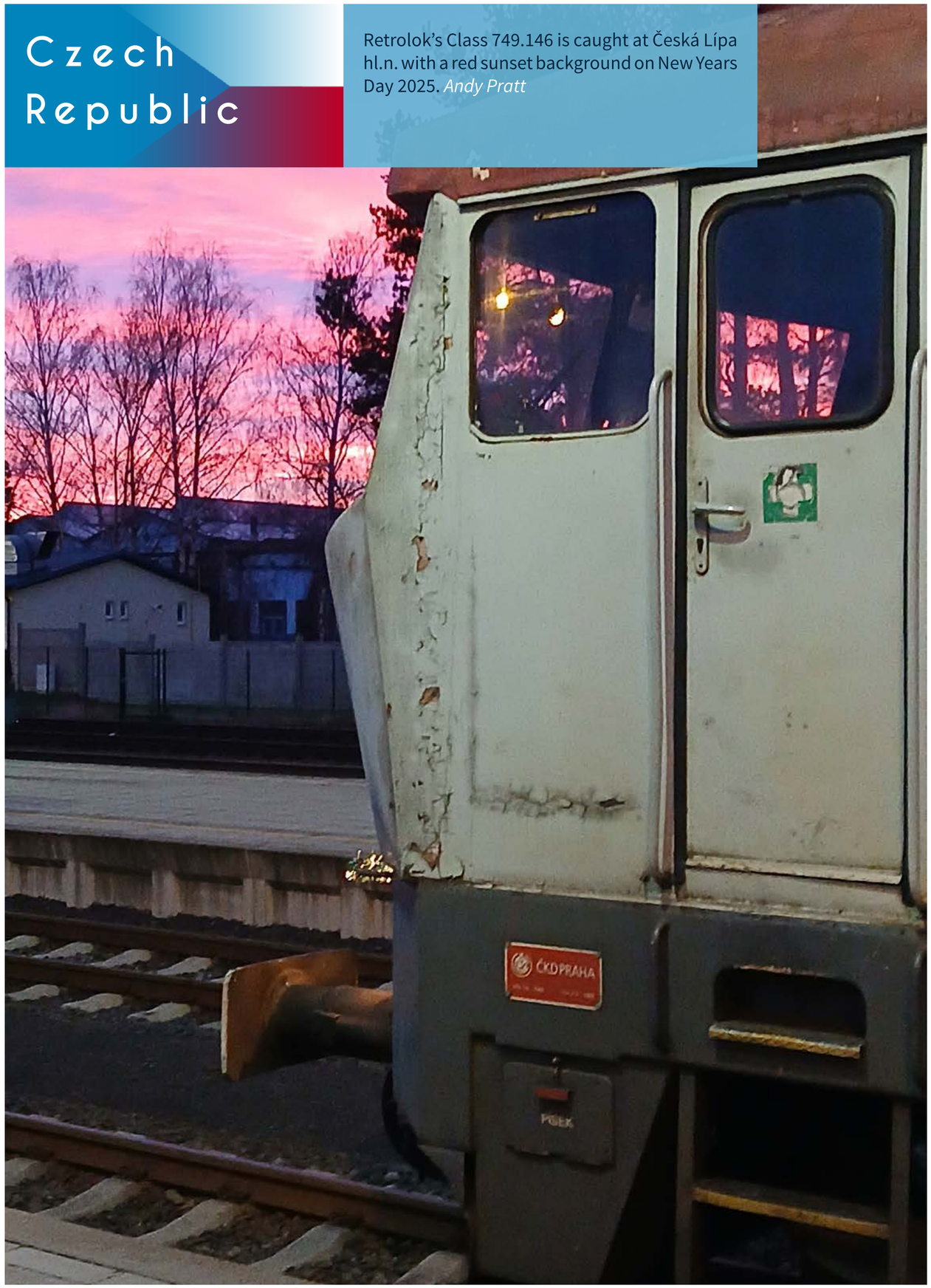
The contract includes the delivery and commissioning of twelve fully automated, driverless metro trains, as well as digital rail infrastructure such as signaling, electrification, telecoms, platform screen doors, and a depot. Siemens Mobility will also implement Railigent X, the Mobility Application Suite for digital services, to enhance operational reliability and availability. They will be responsible for a 15-year maintenance contract, utilizing digital asset management applications. Siemens Mobility is part of the Parklife Metro consortium, which includes partners with international infrastructure project experience. The Siemens Mobility portion of the contract is valued at 900 million euros.

Portugal

CP 1461 awaits departure time into the sunset at Pocinho on January 30th with train No. IR876 17:12 to Porto São Bento. *Andy Pratt*

Czech Republic

Retrolok's Class 749.146 is caught at Česká Lípa hl.n. with a red sunset background on New Years Day 2025. *Andy Pratt*



U.K.

Alstom to deliver major upgrade of Class 376 fleet with Southeastern and Eversholt Rail

Alstom, in collaboration with Southeastern and Eversholt Rail, is proud to announce a major refurbishment of the Class 376 Electrostar fleet. This transformative programme will enhance customer comfort, improve operational efficiency and refresh a fleet that has been a cornerstone of Southeastern's Metro services since its introduction in 2004.

Alstom will be specifically undertaking the engineering and providing all materials for both the interior refresh and installation of at-seat power throughout each train. Peter Broadley, Commercial Director UK and Ireland at Alstom, said: "We are proud to partner with Southeastern and Eversholt Rail on this transformative mid-life upgrade for the Class 376 fleet. By delivering a refreshed, modernised fleet with enhanced passenger amenities and operational efficiency, we're ensuring these Derby-built trains continue to provide reliable and comfortable journeys for Southeastern's customers.

This project is a testament to Alstom's commitment to innovation and excellence in supporting our operators and improving passenger experience across the UK rail network."

The work is getting underway at Southeastern's Ashford Maintenance Centre with the first units to receive the new blue livery and LED lighting scheduled to be in customer service from the spring.

Mark Johnson, Engineering Director at Southeastern, said: "I'm thrilled that we will be upgrading the Class 376s with our partners at Alstom and Eversholt Rail. The mid-life refresh will deliver better journeys for our customers and keep these trains in tip-top condition for years to come.

"This builds on the upgrades across our other fleets, and the newer trains we are bringing in, as well as the ongoing procurement of new trains to replace our older Networkers. It all adds up to great news for our passengers across South East London, East Sussex and Kent."

The interior refresh, which includes refurbished seats and a full re-paint, will start later in the summer at the Grove Park depot, with the first units due into customer service before the end of the year. The Class 376 Electrostar fleet was built at Alstom's Litchurch Lane Works in Derby, the only UK facility that designs, engineers, builds and tests trains for domestic and export markets.

Sweden

Railcare awarded a snow clearance contract with the Swedish Transport Administration worth SEK 355 million

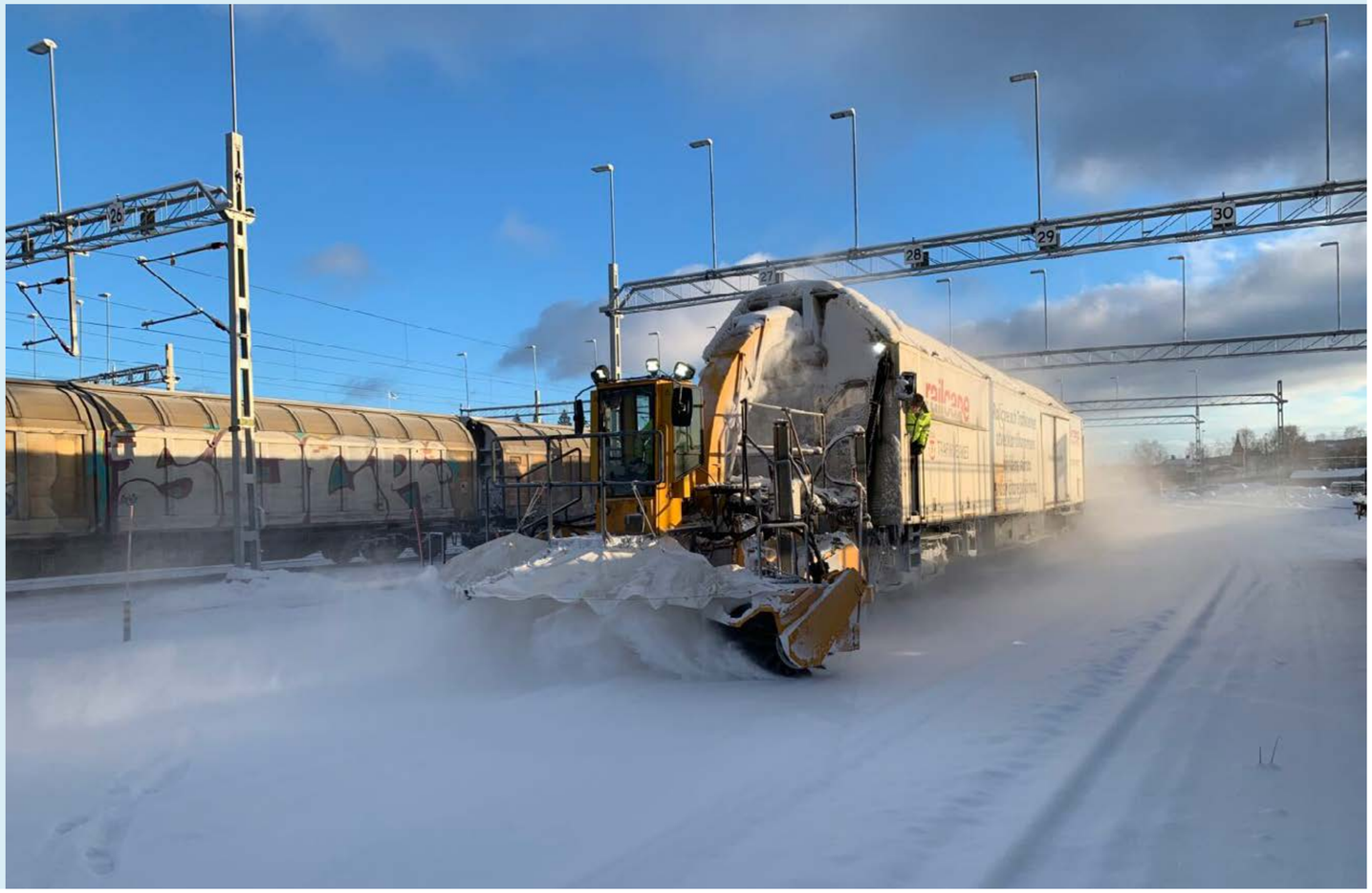
Railcare AB has been awarded a contract with the Swedish Transport Administration relating to snow clearance. The contract spans a period of four years with an option to extend for 1+1 years. The contract is worth just over SEK 59 million annually, generating a total value of SEK 355 million over the entire contract period, including options.

"We are delighted to have been awarded this important contract, not only because it contributes to Railcare's financial stability, but also because of the critical assignments we carry out – making railways more accessible, including in challenging weather conditions," commented Mattias Remahl, CEO of Railcare.

Under the new agreement, Railcare will operate as a national resource for snow clearance at specific locations around Sweden, designated by the Swedish Transport Administration. This means that in the period from mid-November to end of March, Railcare will carry out snow clearance by providing a total of six machines, including snow melters and snow ploughs, as well as machine operators and train drivers.

Railcare has been contracted by the Swedish Transport Administration to carry out snow clearance for a number of years. However, the new agreement entails some changes compared to previous years. For example, the contract now covers an additional half month, running until the end of March. Another change involves the use of HVO100 in all machines, and locomotives used under the assignment are required to have Stage V engines and ETCS installed.

"We are delighted that the Swedish Transport Administration continues to see significant value in the snow clearance services we deliver. Our collaboration has worked very well throughout the years, generating security for both parties," commented Daniel Bolin, Operations Manager at Railcare AB.



U.K.

Siemens Mobility secures infrastructure and service contracts for Britain's second high-speed rail line

Siemens Mobility has secured four contracts worth €670 million with HS2 Ltd for key infrastructure and long-term maintenance
Premiere: First time Automatic Train Operations over ETCS is applied to national high-speed rail system
HS2, one of Europe's largest infrastructure projects, will transform rail travel in Britain

Siemens Mobility has been awarded four significant contracts by HS2 Ltd and will join key contractors under the Rail Systems Alliance. Siemens Mobility will play a crucial role in the delivery and operation of the new 225-kilometre-long British high-speed railway that will connect London and the West Midlands. For the first time, Siemens Mobility will implement wayside Automatic Train Operations [ATO] over the European Train Control System [ETCS] Level 2 on a high-speed network, enabling semi-automatic train operations (Grade of Automation 2) for improved capacity, punctuality and energy efficiency.

Another contract focuses on an Engineering Management System that will enable real-time control and monitoring of railway equipment, ultimately enhancing reliability and efficiency. Siemens Mobility also formed a joint venture with Costain Ltd to deliver high voltage power supply systems along the HS2 route. Finally, Siemens Mobility will take charge of implementing Operational Telecommunications and Security Systems for the entire HS2 route. All awarded contracts are expected to commence in 2025 with a total order value of approximately 670 million Euros, including long-term maintenance agreement, and potentially including additional options.

"HS2 is set to transform rail travel by offering faster and more reliable passenger journeys and freeing up freight paths in the UK. We are very proud to provide our wayside ATO over ETCS solution, enabling semi-automated train operations for improved capacity, punctuality, and energy efficiency on high-speed travel for the first time. Furthermore, we will deliver cutting-edge electrification technology and maintenance support for this ground breaking project," said Michael Peter, CEO of Siemens Mobility. "HS2 will play a vital role in connecting the UK's two largest cities and driving growth and sustainability nationwide. With our 5,500 UK employees, Siemens Mobility is fully committed to delivering advanced transportation solutions designed and built in Britain."

Command, Control, Signalling & Traffic Management [CCS&TM]
Siemens Mobility will design, manufacture, supply, install, supervise, inspect, safety authorize, test, commission and maintain a state-of-the-art European Train Control System [ETCS] Level 2 signalling system and traffic management solution with wayside Automatic Train Operation at GoA2. Building on Siemens Mobility's successful signalling technology implemented in projects like Thameslink and the East Coast Digital Programme, this solution will eliminate the need for traditional signals along the tracks by providing digital signalling that feeds information directly to the train driver via a screen in their cab. This will improve operations and substantially simplify maintenance compared to conventional train control systems. Siemens Mobility will provide technical support services for the system for at least 15 years.

Engineering Management System
Siemens Mobility will design, manufacture, supply, install, integrate, test, commission and maintain an integrated Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition [SCADA] system that will enable real-time control and monitoring of railway equipment, ultimately enhancing reliability and efficiency, utilizing the company's technology and provision of maintenance and technical support. Siemens Mobility will leverage its 50 years of experience in delivering advanced SCADA systems from projects such as the Elizabeth line in London. Siemens Mobility will provide technical support services for the system for at least 15 years.

High voltage [HV] power supply systems
A Siemens Mobility and Costain joint venture will design, manufacture, supply, install, test, commission and maintain a high voltage power supply systems for the HS2 high-speed rail project. As part of the construction of HS2, traction and non-traction sub-stations will be built alongside the railway line. These sub-stations will play a critical role in facilitating the delivery of power from the National Grid to high-speed trains and other railway systems, ensuring their efficient and reliable operation. Siemens Mobility and Costain will provide maintenance services for the system for at least seven years.

Operational Telecommunications and Security Systems
Siemens Mobility will design, manufacture, supply, install, safety authorize, test, commission, and maintain an Operational Telecommunications and Security System along the HS2 route. This will provide Global System for Mobile Communications-Railway [GSM-R] secure, digital, wireless communications between drivers along the route. Passive provision will be made for an upgrade to the Future Railway Mobile Communication System [FRMCS]. The company will provide technical support services for the system for at least eight years.

HS2: Set to transform rail travel in Britain
HS2, the new high-speed railway currently being constructed, is set to transform Britain's transportation landscape. Spanning 225 kilometres, the line will connect London to Birmingham with a spur to Handsacre, connecting HS2 trains to other UK cities in the North West and beyond. As Britain's second purpose-built high-speed railway, HS2 follows in the footsteps of High Speed 1, which links London to the Channel Tunnel. HS2 will deliver faster and more efficient journeys, opening new possibilities for both business and leisure travel throughout the nation.

Siemens Mobility: Revolutionizing rail travel in the UK
With over 170 years of history in the UK, Siemens Mobility has been at the forefront to transform rail, travel, and transport. Employing approximately 5,500 people across over 30 sites, including manufacturing facilities in Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire; Chippenham, Wiltshire; and Goole, East Yorkshire, the company is deeply committed to supporting local economies. Siemens Mobility leads in digital signalling technology and provides cutting-edge service solutions. In October, the company opened its €277 million Rail Village in Goole, a state-of-the-art facility dedicated to manufacturing Piccadilly line trains and future UK fleets. As a trusted partner, Siemens Mobility continues to drive innovation, sustainability, and efficiency across the UK's transportation network.

Poland

AŽD confirms its quality on the Polish railway market

AŽD continued its success in Poland and concluded a contract with the construction company PPMT for the design and delivery of signalling and communication equipment for the railway line Somonino - Gdańsk Osowa. The value of the contract amounts to PLN 100 million (approx. CZK 588 million).

This contract is already the eighth contract of AŽD in Poland, where the company has long been a reliable partner in the modernization of railway infrastructure. AŽD participates in the project as a subcontractor to the construction company PPMT, with which it successfully completed the modernization of the Glincz - Kartuzy line last year. The current project, co-financed by the European Union, will be implemented over the next 36 months.AŽD will deliver a fully digital interlocking system StationSWing ESA 44-PL for two railway stations and a line section of 28 km. The project also includes the installation of 28 electromotive point machines, 105 signals and four level crossings. Part of the technology, such as telecommunications and passenger information systems, will be provided in cooperation with Polish partners. One of the key tasks of the project is the modification of the railway station Gdańsk Osowa, where AŽD will cooperate with Alstom.

New Zealand

First log delivery by rail from Ernslaw's Karioi forest to Napier Port

A new arrangement between Ernslaw One, KiwiRail and Napier Port will see a log train run daily on the Napier-Palmerston North line, five days a week directly to Napier Port. The 19 wagons, carrying 600 tonnes of logs, will remove 21 logging trucks off the road; and replaces the daily freight train that used to depart from Tangiwai Mill with WPI timber, lumber and pulp to Napier Port.

Following the closure of Tangiwai Mill in the Ruapehu District, Ernslaw One has found a solution to getting its logs out of Karioi Forest, to Napier Port.

Thanks to collaboration with KiwiRail, Napier Port, McCarthy Transport and Qube Ports, Ernslaw will be making its first log delivery by rail from Karioi Forest to Napier Port on January 27th.

The parties acknowledged the efforts of Andy Watson, Mayor of Rangitīkei District Council, who was instrumental in facilitating discussions in the region.

Steve Couper, SNI Regional Manager for Ernslaw One, says despite the Mill closing, the company wanted to continue production and keep its contractors in work.
"The move away from road cartage to rail has many advantages. It is a safety gain for the logging truck drivers, as well as for other road users and local residents." says Couper.

"We approached KiwiRail and Napier Port to negotiate a deal that would make it feasible, and after some pencil sharpening, we've been able to get this agreement in place and get these logs on to rail," continued Couper.

"There are wins in this for everyone," said Napier Port CEO Todd Dawson, "and it's a great example of how export NZ benefits when everyone in the supply chain works together on sensible, efficient solutions that are sustainable and commercially viable for all parties".

"Being flexible for customers is a Napier Port priority and we adjusted our landside logistics and port operations to receive Ernslaw's logs by rail; cargo we previously received processed as timber, lumber and pulp from WPI. We have increasing volumes of freight from the Central and Lower North Island, and rail is an important part of connecting these customers with the many international shipping services that call Napier Port.

"Today's announcement is positive for communities in both the Ruapehu District and Hawke's Bay, and with increasing volumes of logs coming by rail, we remind people in both regions to be careful around increased freight activity on the line." Mr Dawson said.

KiwiRail Executive General Manager Freight and Rolling Stock Operations Paul Ashton says the benefits to the region are huge. "Removing so many trucks from this road, which is complex to maintain due to its many bends and steep grades, will greatly reduce road deterioration," he says. "The more freight carried by rail on long journeys, the lower New Zealand's total transport emissions, and the lower the carbon footprint of KiwiRail's customers. This is a great result, and we appreciate the collaboration of all parties who have worked together to make this possible."

"McCarthy Transport are pleased to be operating the Tangiwai rail yard working alongside Ernslaw, Kiwi Rail, Qube and Napier Port. With the Napier-Taihape Road deteriorating due to the increase in heavy vehicles carting wood across since the WPI mill closures, the Tangiwai rail is a good solution to continue to move the same amount of volume. We are in full support of this and look forward to getting started," said Mike McCarthy, Managing Director, McCarthy's Transport.
"The Rangitīkei District Council was concerned about having additional logging trucks on the roads, impacting roading wear and tear, and initiated discussions with all parties involved to assist in reaching a solution," said Andy Watson, Mayor of Rangitīkei District Council.

Hungary

15 years in Szolnok: Stadler presents first doubledecker carriage produced in Hungary

As Stadler celebrates the fifteenth anniversary of its carbody plant in Szolnok, Hungary, Péter Szijjártó, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Peter Spuhler, Chairman of the Board of Stadler, unveiled the first aluminium doubledecker carbody ever made by the company in Hungary, and announced further development of the factory. Stadler's continuous investments in the plant have contributed significantly to the local economy, creating many jobs over the last 15 years.

On January 17th, Stadler celebrated the 15th anniversary of the opening of its car body plant in Szolnok, Hungary. The highlight of the occasion was the unveiling of the first ever aluminium double-decker carriage body to be produced by Stadler in Hungary, in an event presided over by Péter Szijjártó, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, and Peter Spuhler, CEO of Stadler. This achievement is a significant landmark in the history of the Hungarian rail industry. It highlights the importance and growth of the Szolnok plant over the last 15 years and has been made possible by a EUR 45 million development program announced in 2023. Peter Spuhler announced further development of the plant. The introduction of a special, so-called friction stir welding (FSW) technology will make production more sustainable with the need of less raw material, energy, and waste. The plant can start using the new technology at the end of this year.

Largest production site in Central and Eastern Europe
Opening in 2009, the factory was originally designed for up to 200 carbodies to be built there per year and for 200 members of staff to work at the facility. The original team of 100 people, who had been trained in Switzerland, produced 52 carbodies in the first year. Over the past 15 years, the factory has become the largest production site and one of the most modern facilities in the CEE region. The plant, which is now Stadler's largest production site for carbodies, will produce not only single-deck but also double-deck carbodies in parallel for the group, as a result of the last investment announced in 2023. The investments create170 jobs in total.

Stadler Szolnok has produced a total of 5,600 carbodies, exceeding the previous figure of 5,000 in September 2023, which had been a record for the factory. Trains with carbodies from Szolnok are operating in 14 different countries, including the US, Great Britain, Spain, Italy, Norway, Germany and the Netherlands. To date, Stadler has invested EUR 200 million in Szolnok, indicating the significance of the Hungarian factory in the performance of the group.

Strategic market
Peter Spuhler, Chairman of the Board of Stadler Rail Group said: "We are very proud of how our plant has developed over the last 15 years. Today, it is the largest carbody plant in the Stadler Group. Hungary is a strategic market for Stadler, and I am delighted that more and more Stadler trains are operating on the Hungarian rail network. This would not have been possible without the enormous commitment of our employees, so a big thank you to all of them, too."

As well as being a significant employer in Hungary, Stadler has also built 195 state-of-the art vehicles, which are in service in this country. MAV and GYSEV run a total of 143 FLIRT trains, 40 KISS units, and 12 Citylink tram-trains. Stadler vehicles in MAV's fleet cover a total of 35 million km per year. This equates to a third of MAV's total distance covered and means that half of MAV's passengers travel on Stadler trains every year. Stadler trains operating in Hungary boast enviable rates of availability and reliability, operating at more than 90 per cent every year.

Eurostar Reports Record Growth in 2024 with Ambitious Future Plans for Sustainable Travel

Eurostar has achieved significant growth in 2024, reporting a +5% increase in passenger numbers compared to 2023. A total of 19.5 million customers travelled with Eurostar, marking the highest annual number of passengers in the company's history—850,000 more than in 2023, Eurostar's most successful year yet. This record-breaking performance was driven by strong demand, particularly during the Paris 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games, highlighting Eurostar's growing popularity as a sustainable and efficient travel option.
"Eurostar continued its strong growth in 2024, breaking its own previous passenger records. I would like to thank our customers and recognise the efforts of our teams for this excellent result in the company's 30th year. Looking ahead, this is further proof of the huge demand for international rail and the great potential of sustainable travel. Eurostar is targeting growth to 30 million passengers and investing in up to 50 new trains as a direct result, with the aim of delivering a unique and exceptional service long into the future" said Gwendoline Cazenave, CEO of Eurostar.

"Once again, this year, Eurostar has demonstrated its ability to attract new customers, driven by an ever-present desire to travel by train, particularly internationally. With its many customer services, Eurostar proves that it is constantly thinking about how to meet their needs and offer ever more innovative and comfortable services and commercial offers" said Alain Krakovitch, Chairman of the Eurostar Group, Managing Director of TGV-INTERCITÉS of SNCF Voyageurs.

Routes that have seen the most growth on the Eurostar network are:
- London - Paris (+280k passengers)
- London - Brussels (+250k passengers)
- Paris - Brussels (+160k passengers)
- Paris – The Netherlands (+140k passengers)

In 2024, Eurostar continued to improve the customer experience, enhancing travel convenience with a series of new benefits and services.

New Initiatives and Services:
- Aftersales Policy: Eurostar introduced a new, flexible aftersales policy allowing customers to easily exchange tickets without a fee and refund tickets up to 7 days before departure. For Eurostar Premier customers, exchanges and refunds are available up to two days post-departure.
- Olympics and Paralympics Success: Eurostar welcomed 1.9 million customers during the Olympic and Paralympic Games, a 5% uplift compared to summer 2023, and successfully transported 7 teams and 2,000 athletes on more than 900 trains.
- Club Eurostar Growth: Eurostar's loyalty program, Club Eurostar, now has 3.96 million members, up 39% from the previous year, with 300 million points redeemed in 2024.
- Culinary Innovation: Eurostar introduced new onboard catering experiences with renowned chefs Jérémy Chan, Jessica Préalpato, and Honey Spencer, offering Eurostar Premier passengers a high-end culinary experience with sustainable, locally sourced ingredients.
- "Snap" for Spontaneous Travellers: Eurostar relaunched its Snap service, offering up to 50% off high-speed rail journeys for spontaneous travellers, confirming train details just 48 hours before departure.

Sustainability Commitments:
- Eurostar remains committed to sustainable travel with a pledge to use 100% renewable energy by 2030. All menus will feature fresh, seasonal ingredients sourced from countries Eurostar travels through, further reducing its environmental footprint.

Strategic Partnerships & Future Growth:
- SkyTeam Partnership: Eurostar entered into a memorandum of understanding with SkyTeam to offer integrated intermodal journeys combining air and rail travel.

This partnership marks Eurostar as the first non-airline member of SkyTeam, enhancing the convenience and sustainability of travel options for customers.

- Investment in New Trains: Following €2 billion in revenue in 2023, Eurostar is set to invest in up to 50 new trains, expanding its fleet by 30% and ensuring continued growth and improvement in passenger comfort and service. The first of these new trains are expected to be in service by 2030.

Eurostar's strong 2024 results and future investments demonstrate the company's ongoing commitment to sustainability, customer experience, and expansion in the growing international rail market. As part of its 30-year legacy, Eurostar is positioning itself for a bold, sustainable future in travel.

Northrail leases four Gravita 10 and four new low-emission DE 18 locomotives to ProTrain for use in Sweden

Northrail, the Hamburg-based leasing provider and manager of rail vehicles, has signed a long-term lease agreement with the Swedish rail transport company ProTrain Trafik AB. As part of the co-operation, four Gravita 10 mid-cab locomotives and four new DE 18 Stage V locomotives equipped with ETCS will be leased to ProTrain. The aim of the partnership is to make rail replacement transport in Sweden more sustainable and environmentally friendly.

On January 30th, Northrail GmbH (Northrail) concluded a long-term lease agreement with the Swedish rail transport company ProTrain Trafik AB (ProTrain). ProTrain will initially lease four Gravita 10 mid-cab locomotives.

The first of the four locomotives was handed over on December 30th, with the other three to follow on March 1st 2025.

In addition, ProTrain has leased four modern DE 18 locomotives with environmentally friendly Stage V engines and equipped with ETCS. The energy-efficient mid-cab locomotives are part of a purchase agreement for 10 DE 18 Stage V locomotives from the manufacturer Vossloh Rolling Stock GmbH, which Northrail arranged and structured together with its parent company Rive Private Investment in October 2024. In addition to the locomotives on firm order, the purchase agreement includes an option for further identical locomotives.

"With this collaboration, we are sending a clear signal for the future of rail transport: efficiency and sustainability go hand in hand. Our new DE 18 locomotives with Stage V engines make an important contribution to reducing emissions and emphasise our commitment to climate-friendly mobility," explains Michael Trentzsch, Chief Investment Officer and Chief Commercial Officer of Northrail AG.

ProTrain is also convinced by the cooperation: "The collaboration with Northrail marks an important turning point on our path to future-oriented and environmentally friendly mobility. The use of the modern DE 18 locomotives will not only optimise our operating processes, but also significantly reduce our ecological footprint, thus making an active contribution to the energy transition in Sweden," says Karl-Johan Börjeson, Chief Executive Officer of ProTrain.

Guinea

Wabtec Wins $248 Million Locomotive Order

On January 28th, Wabtec Corporation (NYSE: WAB) announced a US$248 million order for Evolution Series ES43ACmi locomotives and services from Winning Consortium Simandou (WCS, a Baowu & Winning joint venture) to support their rail operations at the high-grade iron ore project, located in the east of Guinea. The agreement follows a locomotive order a few months earlier from SimFer (a Rio Tinto joint venture) to serve its operations at Simandou. The combined orders for the project, valued at more than half a billion, represent one of Wabtec's largest international locomotive agreements in the past five years.

"As the world's largest untapped high grade iron ore deposit, Simandou represents a transformational economic opportunity for Guinea, and Wabtec's commitment extends beyond delivering advanced locomotive solutions to ensure the success of this critical initiative in partnership with WCS and SimFer," said Wabtec's Regional Vice President of Sub-Saharan Africa, Mpilo Dlamini. "We are also committed to the development of Guinea by fostering local employment, developing indigenous talent, and empowering local businesses to support the operation and maintenance of this vital rail network."

The ES43ACmi is a dual-cab locomotive with a 4,500HP Evolution Series engine. The locomotive provides exceptional fuel efficiency, and proven performance in harsh, high-temperature environments, like eastern Guinea. It is also capable of meeting UIC 3a and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Tier 3 emission standards. Wabtec will begin delivering locomotives for the Simandou project in 2025.

"This locomotive order with Wabtec is another important milestone for the Simandou project," said WCS CEO Mr. Zhang Cheng. "As work continues to build the TransGuinéen railway, we will have the equipment resources in place that support the high international standards that we've committed to deliver."

The 600-km TransGuinéen Railway is under construction to connect the Simandou mine and the Port of Morebaya. The Simandou mountain range, located in the southeast of the Republic of Guinea, contains the world's largest untapped reserve of high-grade iron ore. WCS is developing blocks #1 and #2 of the Simandou iron ore deposit, which currently account for more than 1.8 billion tonnes of estimated reserves.

U.S.A.

Hybrid Battery-Diesel Locomotives Approved for New York Subway System's Maintenance Operations

Wabtec's R255 Hybrid Battery-Diesel Work Locomotives for maintenance operations have been approved by New York's Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) for use across its subway network. The new additions to the maintenance fleet will reduce diesel emissions by using battery power while conducting work in the tunnels.

"These hybrid work locomotives will enable the MTA to realize its ambitious capital plan to improve subway operations by replacing an aging fleet and improving reliability," said Alan Hamilton, Vice President of Engineering for Wabtec. "It also supports a cleaner subway system for their commuters and employees, as well as a reduction in fuel consumption."
The MTA placed an order with Wabtec for the hybrid locomotives in 2020 to replace a fleet of diesel-only locomotives built in the 1960s and 70s. Wabtec built the locomotives at its design and development center in Erie, PA. The company delivered the initial hybrids in May and June 2024, which then underwent a series of tests on NYCT's subway. The comprehensive acceptance tests focused on safety, performance, interoperability, and reliability including a capstone performance test of two hybrid locomotives operating with a full train load of maintenance cars over the Manhattan Bridge.

"The success and strong performance in the testing are a testament to our collaborative effort with the MTA to design and build the hybrid locomotives," said Hamilton. "These locomotives are tailored to the unique needs of MTA's subway maintenance operations. The hybrids feature ruggedized battery pack technology designed for the demanding rail environment. This solution provides the MTA with the flexibility and features to conduct the maintenance work efficiently and sustainably."

The R255 hybrid locomotive can reduce – and under some circumstances eliminate – fuel emissions during subway construction, maintenance, and repairs, especially during extended periods at a work site. The approximately 500-kwh locomotives can work in "battery only" mode within confined work zones for up to eight hours. The batteries also can move work trains that must operate at job sites where third rail power is removed for safety. The locomotive is equipped with external and internal cameras, as well as a digital video recorder to capture images of the track, lineside assets, and signalling equipment across the network. It also features onboard monitoring and diagnostics systems to support preventative and condition-based maintenance of the fleet.

Chile

Wabtec Finalizes Locomotive Order with TRANSAP

On January 23rd, Wabtec Corporation (NYSE: WAB) announced that TRANSAP, a leading rail-based logistics company in Chile, ordered four of its advanced C30ACi locomotives. The order is part of TRANSAP's fleet renewal initiative to support the company's growth.

"This order is a critical step for TRANSAP as we position our locomotive fleet to meet growing needs of our customers and the country," said Eric Lobo, TRANSAP's Chief Executive. "The addition of these new locomotives aligns with our vision of providing efficient, safe, and sustainable rail service for our customers."

The new C30ACis are the first AC-traction locomotives to join TRANSAP's fleet. The company will use the locomotives to fulfill a strategic long-term contract with ARAUCO, one of the largest forestry companies worldwide. The fleet will help transport ARAUCO's freight across Chile's Empresa de los Ferrocarriles del Estado (EFE) rail network to key markets.

"TRANSAP is a logistics leader in the region and its rail operations help drive the economy in South America," said Danilo Miyasato, Wabtec's President and Regional Leader of Latin America. "The C30ACis are an ideal complement to TRANSAP's fleet and the region's challenging rail network. These locomotives will provide low operational costs, high availability, and proven reliability needed to efficiently meet customer needs."

The C30ACi locomotive is designed for higher pulling capacity to support lighter axle-load applications and incorporates all AC technology for heavy-haul operations. The AC individual-axle traction-control technology maximizes the tractive effort and improves the hauling capacity, enabling a C30ACi to do the work of two DC locomotives. The C30ACi also is designed to operate on any sharp curves or tight clearances that it may encounter along EFE's rail network.

Wabtec is expected to deliver the new locomotives in 2026.

Czech Republic

Stadler installs additional traction system on Leo Express trains

Following infrastructure upgrades to rail networks in the Czech Republic and Slovakia, Stadler will provide an additional traction system for trains operated by the private Central European transport company, Leo Express. This system will be designed and manufactured at Stadler's plant in Frauenfeld, Switzerland.

The Czech Republic and Slovakia are upgrading parts of their railway infrastructure, introducing the European standard 25kV/50Hz AC and replacing the current 3kV DC traction.

Leo Express, the Central European transportation company, will be adding additional traction components to its Stadler FLIRT trains. This is a result of a subsidy allocated by the Czech Ministry of Transport to the Leo Express, enabling them to upgrade the five-car FLIRTs with 25kV/50Hz traction.

This new system will supplement the 3kV traction, which these trains are already equipped with.

The dual traction systems will in future allow the trains to operate on both types of electrical infrastructure. It will mean also that they can run on all parts of the networks in Czech Republic and Slovakia, as well as on the networks they serve in Poland.

On January 23rd, Leo Express commissioned Stadler to install this traction on the FLIRT trains. Stadler will undertake the work at its plant in Frauenfeld in north-east Switzerland. Czech suppliers will be involved in the fulfilment of the order, too.

Adaptations to hardware and software required

As well as replacing the hardware, the 25kV system will be integrated into the Train Control and Management System (TCMS). The diagnostic system within it will be upgraded and a control element for switching between the two traction systems will be added. A weight assessment, a body strength test and a technical running and brake test will be carried out, as part of the process.

U.K.

Vossloh wins major order for HS2 high-speed line

Vossloh supplies rail fastening systems for the London - Birmingham line

Order volume of over €30 million with deliveries from 2025 to 2027

Vossloh has been awarded a significant order by PORR as part of the British high-speed rail project High Speed 2 (HS2). Vossloh will supply rail fastening systems for the slab track on the line between London and Birmingham for the end customer HS2 Ltd, the developer and future operator of the line. The order has a volume of over €30 million and covers the period from 2025 to 2027.

"With our technically high-quality system solution, we ensure that the high requirements for safety, reliability and durability are met on the demanding high-speed line," explains Oliver Schuster, CEO of Vossloh AG. "We are delighted that the customer is relying on our many years of expertise and that we are making an important contribution to the expansion of sustainable transport infrastructure in the UK."

HS2 is one of Europe's largest infrastructure projects and will be the second high-speed line in the UK after High Speed 1 (HS1), the link between London and the Channel Tunnel. In future, speeds of up to 360 km/h will be possible on the line, while freeing up space on the existing mainline for more freight and local services. The travel time between the two cities will be almost halved from 82 to 45 minutes.

The line is expected to be completed around 2033.

This project marks a milestone in the modernization of the British transport infrastructure and offers significant added value for the economy and society.

Lithuania

Stadler and LTG Cargo sign a contract for 17 Co'Co' electric locomotives

Stadler and LTG Cargo, the freight transport railway operator belonging to LTG Group, have signed a contract for the supply of seventeen Co'Co' electric locomotives. The agreement includes an option for 17 additional units, spare parts, and a 3-year maintenance period. It is Stadler's first locomotive contract for the Lithuanian market.

The Lithuanian freight operator LTG Cargo awarded Stadler the tender for the supply of seventeen electric 25 kV AC locomotives based on the EURODUAL 6-axle platform. The contract represents a new milestone for the company as it will introduce Stadler's successful EURODUAL locomotive platform to a new market with extreme weather conditions. The cargo locomotives are designed for temperatures as low as -40°C and include a winterization package for reliable operations in conditions with snow and ice.

The 1.520-meter gauge locomotive for Lithuania's cargo rail network provides 500 kN of maximum tractive effort, up to 6,15 MW at rail of tractive power, and can reach a maximum speed of 120 km/h. It also includes an electric brake with regenerative brake functionality to increase the locomotive's efficiency further. The Valencia-built vehicle is also equipped with an automatic coupler SA3s. This versatility enables the running of heavy haul freight operations aligned with current European trends such as the decarbonization of transport, digitalization, and thelengthening of freight trains.

Ergonomic and comfortable cabs

The two driver cabs, one on each end, are designed in accordance with the latest ergonomics standards and are in compliance with the European requirements for noise and comfort. The video surveillance equipment (CCTV) system consists of two rearview cameras per cab, allowing the driver to observe the rear from his central driving position, and a forward camera. The vehicle is designed to provide excellent outside visibility from both cab directions, maximizing safety for drivers. In addition, the locomotive is equipped with an onboard restroom.

Iñigo Parra, Executive Vice President Stadler Division Spain, said: "We are very proud of this new development of our EURODUAL family, which allows us to introduce our cargo locomotives in Lithuania for the first time. This new locomotive shares the same high performance with the rest of the family, promoting a modal shift to rail."

Eglė Šimė, CEO at LTG Cargo, said: "The purchase of electric locomotives marks the start of a new era of even more sustainable and reliable rail freight transport in Lithuania. The new electric locomotives will transport freight between Vilnius and Klaipėda - a corridor that carries half of all rail freight in Lithuania annually. Electric locomotives are about three times more efficient than diesel locomotives, so we can offer our customers greener and more competitive freight transport services".

From the Archives

Czech Republic

Class 679-1505 stands in front of a Class 354 and a 464 at Letohrad on December 5th 1976. *John Sloane*

From the Archives

Germany

On October 18th 1974 the Koln Gremberg shed staff look on as No. 322.152 manoeuvres 140.348 onto the roundhouse turntable.
John Sloane

From the Archives

Germany

Former DR Class 143.074 arrives at Berlin Freidrichstrasse on April 20th 2009. *John Sloane*

From the Archives

Germany

No. 44.0231 storms out of Saalfeld on November 9th 1980 as an 01.5 Pacific rides the shed turntable. *John Sloane*

From the Archives

Jugoslavia

Brand new Class 441's Nos. 441-018, 441-024, 441-503, 441-027, 441-020, and 441-012 seen stabled at Slavonski Brod on August 7th 1969 awaiting completion of electrification to Zagreb.
John Sloane

From the Archives

Poland

PKP Ty42.87 departs Wolstyn at the head of an eastbound local service on March 1st 1986. *John Sloane*

From the Archives

Rhodesia

Class 14th Beyer Peacock built Garratt awaits its nest turn of duty outside Bulawayo Loco Shed, Southern Rhodesia, now Zimbabwe. *Brian Dobbs*