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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 237Xtra

In the news this month, are we going a bit too far with station platform safety? ....

Platform safety remains one of the most persistent challenges across the railway network. The industry has made substantial investment in signalling, staff training, and operational controls, yet the interface between train and passenger — the Platform Train Interface (PTI) — continues to account for a significant proportion of serious harm. The UK Rail Safety and Standards Board (RSSB) has described the PTI as accounting for around half of passenger fatality risk on the UK mainline network, with approximately 1,500 PTI incidents recorded annually. Railway staff working near the track benefit from rigorous training and certification, supported by signalling systems engineered to mitigate risk at every stage. Passengers, by contrast — who may stand close to trains operating on routes with line speeds of up to 125mph (200km/h) — rely primarily on announcements, static signage, and tactile paving. For passengers with hearing impairments, reduced mobility, or limited situational awareness, even these cues may be insufficient.

Platform edge screen doors are frequently cited as a solution, and their effectiveness in controlled metro environments is well established. However, their adoption across the broader UK network faces substantial barriers. Retrofitting existing stations with platform screen doors can involve very high capital costs — comparable European and North American programmes have cited figures ranging from around €2.6 million per station for half-height installations to over €10 million where historic infrastructure complicates the work — along with significant civil and signalling integration, and compatibility challenges with mixed rolling stock. The variability of door positions across the UK network makes full-height platform barriers impractical at many legacy stations. A more adaptable, lower-cost intervention therefore merits serious consideration.

A Visual Safety Language at Platform Level

This proposal centres on a straightforward but potentially significant idea: an in-ground linear lighting strip installed approximately one metre back from the platform edge, operating as a dynamic visual cue that communicates real-time safety information directly to passengers. The concept draws on the same intuitive logic as road traffic signals — a language of colour that requires no literacy, no hearing, and minimal prior knowledge to interpret. It is intended to complement, rather than replace, the tactile warning strips already used at many stations.

The lighting would operate on a clear, consistent colour sequence tied to train approach and departure:

- *Yellow — platform clear; safe to stand at the edge or board*
- *Orange — train approaching; stand clear of the edge*
- *Red — train imminent; do not cross the line*
- *Flashing red — train passing at speed; remain well clear*

For stopping services, the sequence would reverse as the train comes to rest, returning to yellow once it is safe to board. The visual language is designed to become familiar to regular travellers whilst remaining immediately legible to occasional users and visitors. Its ground-level position places it within the natural sightline of passengers looking towards the track, including those who may not be watching overhead displays or listening to announcements. The flashing red state would require careful validation. UK accessibility guidance raises concerns around flashing lights for passengers with photosensitive conditions, meaning that flash frequency, intensity, and duty cycle would need to be tested as part of any formal trial. This should be treated as a design parameter rather than a barrier to the concept itself.

Cost, Scalability, and Maintenance

One of the most compelling aspects of this approach is its potential scalability. Whilst no installed cost data yet exists for a system of this specific type, the likely capital cost sits in a fundamentally different category from full platform screen doors, which require mechanical barrier systems, precision train stopping arrangements, and substantial civil and signalling integration.

Until next month... **David**

This Page

On May 4th, MAV Class 182.684 is seen in the yard at Budapest. *Andy*

Front Cover

ONCF No. DH414 approaches Sidi Harizem hauling train No. 204, 11:35 Oujda - Tanger. *Laurence Sly*

H-Start Class 448.438 is seen stabled at Budapest on May 4th. *Andy*

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Journey's end for ÖBB Vectron No. 1293.176. Having completed its marathon 15 hour overnight journey from Bruxelles Midi with Nightjet train No. 469, the loco propels the ECS out of Wien Hauptbahnhof on May 5th. *Andy Pratt*

Austria

Regiojet Class 388.219 pauses at Wien Hauptbahnhof on May 5th while working train No. RJ1032, the 07:45 Budapest Déli - Praha-Zahradní Město. *Andy Pratt*

Austria

On May 8th, OBB Class 1144.264 arrives at Linz Hbf with a terminating service. *Andy*

Austria

On May 8th, Wiener Lokalbahnen Vectron Class 193.223 speeds through Hörsching with a container train. *Andy*

Austria

Benelux – a strong hub in the RCG network

ÖBB Rail Cargo Group (RCG) is strengthening its presence in the Benelux region, connecting the North Sea ports with key European markets – with local expertise, own traction and regular TransFER connections.

With its own presence in Rotterdam, RCG is directly represented at one of the most important logistics hubs in the Benelux region. The region plays a central role in international flows of goods: from here, RCG offers access to rail transport to and from North Sea ports such as Rotterdam, Antwerp and Zeebrugge, as well as the hubs of Geleen and Moerdijk, and into the European hinterland with key economic regions in Western, Central, Southern and Southeastern Europe.

Direct connections to key port locations
Rotterdam is one of the largest seaports in the world and a major hub in European freight transport. With its own location, RCG leverages this position and its proximity to key logistics and industrial centres. Customers benefit from regional expertise, local points of contact and efficient transport solutions to and from the North Sea ports. The service portfolio ranges from block train production, single wagonload transport and intermodal solutions to first and last mile trucking and comprehensive forwarding services – all from a single source.

Comprehensive network between seaports and hinterland
RCG offers regular TransFER connections for conventional wagonload traffic between Germany, Austria, the Netherlands and Belgium – with fixed timetables and high-frequency departures. These include the TransFER Duisburg–Rotterdam and TransFER Duisburg–Antwerp, each with three round trips per week. The portfolio is complemented by the TransFER Linz–Antwerp with six round trips per week. RCG is also strongly positioned in intermodal transport in the Benelux region: containers, swap bodies and semi-trailers – craneable or non-craneable – are transported weekly via the TransFER Budapest–Zeebrugge and five times per week via the TransFER Liège–Curtici. This gives customers direct access to local expertise in the Benelux region combined with a comprehensive European network – for efficient, reliable and climate-friendly rail transport.

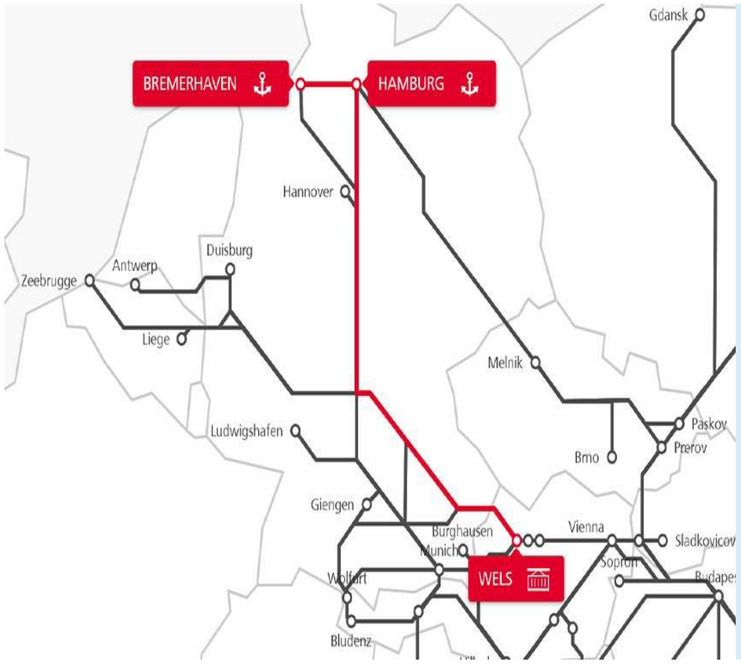
New spot capacity for TransFER Duisburg–Curtici

Transport capacity bookable at short notice is creating additional flexibility for freight forwarders and logistics companies on a key European corridor.

Short-term transport requirements, fluctuating volumes and limited capacity present many freight forwarders and logistics companies with operational challenges – and the need for flexible solutions is growing accordingly. Against this backdrop, RCG is adding spot capacity to its TransFER Duisburg–Curtici, enabling bookings as required.

Bookings for short-term requirements
Limited spot capacity for intermodal transport units such as containers and trailers can now be booked in both directions between Duisburg and Curtici. These allocations are offered depending on availability and capacity utilisation. In the event of bottlenecks, peaks in demand or additional volumes, this provides greater flexibility and fast access to rail transport with fixed timetables and competitive spot rates.

Strong connection between the Ruhr region and South-Eastern Europe
The TransFER Duisburg–Curtici connects Germany and Romania non-stop and offers a reliable solution for intermodal transport units. With three departures per week, a fixed timetable and attractive transit times, the service provides a stable basis for transport between the Ruhr region and South-Eastern Europe. Curtici plays an important role as a freight transport hub in western Romania, while Duisburg is one of the world's largest inland ports and, as a logistics hub, is directly connected to the entire European rail network.



New: TransFER Wels–Hamburg/Bremerhaven

ÖBB Rail Cargo Group (RCG) is expanding its TransFER network with a direct intermodal service between Wels and the northern German ports of Hamburg and Bremerhaven.

The new TransFER Wels–Hamburg/Bremerhaven offers a plannable, safe and sustainable connection between Austria and two key European seaports. Standard containers can now be transported reliably from Austria to northern Germany and back. The service offers attractive transit times and high capacities for 20- to 45-foot containers. Alongside the existing TransFER Vienna–Hamburg/Bremerhaven and TransFER Linz–Hamburg/Bremerhaven connections, RCG is adding another TransFER service from Wels to these major North Sea ports.

From the North Sea to the Alpine region
As key logistics hubs in northern Europe, Hamburg and Bremerhaven play a vital role in international container traffic. Hamburg is one of Europe's leading rail ports, while Bremerhaven, with one of the largest contiguous container terminals, provides important capacity for global cargo flows. The new TransFER Wels–Hamburg/Bremerhaven ties in precisely with this infrastructure by connecting ship and rail. The Wels location gives the central Upper Austrian region direct access to the northern German seaports and strengthens the region's links to international cargo flows. Customers benefit from end-to-end transport chains, fewer interfaces and efficient handling along the entire logistics chain. The service operates once a week as a round trip. The number of round trips can be increased depending on demand.

More flexibility for global supply chains
In addition to the main leg by rail, RCG can also manage and handle first- and last-mile via truck on request. Supplementary freight forwarding services such as customs clearance, trucking and other services are also available. For customers, this means greater flexibility thanks to fixed timetables, attractive transit times and a reliable connection between Austria and international cargo flows via Hamburg and Bremerhaven.

Czech Republic

On May 5th, CD Class 754.075 is seen stabled at Brno hl.n. waiting departure time with a service to Ceske Budejovice. *Andy*

Czech Republic

On May 6th, Hanzalik liveried Class 749.263 stands at Prachatice with a railtour working.
Andy

Czech Republic

The Ministry of Transport of the Czech Republic and Leo Express have signed a contract for the operation of line Ex36

Following its successful win of a Government tender, Leo Express has now signed a public service contract with the Ministry of Transport of the Czech Republic for the operation of line Ex36.

The operator's trains will therefore begin service on December 13th 2026 on the route Prague, Plzeň, Holýšov, Domažlice, and further towards Germany. Leo Express will continue its efforts to cooperate with the operator on the Bavarian side in order to ensure that the connection is maintained along the entire Prague – Munich route, as is currently the case. Modernised international RIC express coaches will be deployed, equipped with air conditioning, Wi-Fi, an audiovisual system, and onboard refreshments. The coaches intended for this line were purchased as operational vehicles; however, further modernisation is currently taking place in workshops, as well as detailed inspections of individual systems in service.

"On the Prague – Plzeň – Regensburg – Munich route, we will bring a new level of service. The deployed modern trains, capable of speeds of up to 200 km/h, are equipped with Wi-Fi, air conditioning, power sockets, spaces for passengers with reduced mobility, as well as areas for bicycles and prams. They will be pulled by modern multi-system Vectron locomotives. Of course, onboard catering will also be available, including cold and hot drinks and meals at least on the Czech section. Through the expansion of our network, we will also offer passengers in Prague the possibility of transferring to other Leo Express connections to Warsaw, Kraków, Prešov, or Bratislava," explains Peter Köhler, CEO of Leo Express.

On the 439-kilometre Prague – Munich route, Leo Express will operate a total of 7 daily services from December 2026, running on a two-hour interval, plus one Prague – Plzeň – Prague service. Leo Express submitted the lowest bid in the tender, amounting to CZK 427 million for five years, excluding infrastructure costs. The connection, which continues beyond the border to Munich, is operated in cooperation with a German carrier contracted with the state of Bavaria. "We aim to further develop cooperation with German partners in order to improve the product not only in domestic transport relations but also towards Regensburg and Munich," adds Peter Köhler.

Wide range of accepted tickets

In addition to the Leo Express fare system, the Czech Ministry's SJT/One Ticket tariff will also be valid on the line. Leo Express will seek to ensure continued ticket sales for these services through the České dráhy (Czech Railways) distribution network and is prepared to cooperate with ČD to ensure the smoothest possible transition for customers to the new operator's ervices.

Integrated tariffs of the Pilsen Region as well as InterRail, Eurail, and international CIV tickets will also be accepted on board.

Czech Republic

On May 7th, CD Class 362.130 waits departure time at Ceske Budejovice with a service to Praha hl.n. *Andy*

Czech Republic

On May 7th, CD Class 210.052 shunts stock at Ceske Budejovice. *Andy*

Czech Republic

KŽC's Class 810.060 stands at Benešov nad Ploučnicí on May 30th while working train No. Os2400 Kamenický Motoraček, the 07:39 Děčín hl.n. - Kamenický Šenov. *Andy Pratt*

Czech Republic

KŽC's Class 749.253 and 749.006 meet at Jedlová on May 30th. 749.253 is working train No. R1275, the 09:00 Praha hl.n. - Mikulašovice Dolni Nadrazi while 749.006 is working Os91511, the 12:04 to Česká Kamenice, one of the day's special workings to celebrate 140 years of the railway between Česká Kamenice and Kamenicky Šenov. *Andy Pratt*

France

TGV-M has been granted marketing authorisation by the ERA and is taking the final steps before welcoming its first passengers

Yann Audic / TGV INOUI

On May 29th, it was announced that TGV-M has obtained its marketing authorisation, issued by the European Railways Agency (ERA). The assessment confirmed the TGV-M's compliance with safety and interoperability requirements. The quality of the preparatory work and the cooperation of all stakeholders contributed to the smooth progress of the evaluation, marking one of the final milestones towards the train's commercial service.

SNCF Voyageurs and Alstom welcome this decision and are delighted that the type-approval testing programme, which has been underway since 2023, has enabled them, thanks to the intense efforts of their teams, to submit a complete application in December 2025, which has been reviewed by the European authority.

A gradual increase in deliveries in the second half of 2026

The production schedule drawn up jointly by SNCF Voyageurs and Alstom provides for the delivery of trains intended for service from the start of summer, with a gradual ramp-up in the second half of 2026: delivery of the first two trainsets from June, rising to six trains by the end of August, and 13 trains by the end of the year.

Final adjustments under real-world conditions on the French railway network before welcoming passengers

As with any revolutionary new rolling stock introduced into service, a phase of fine-tuning and adjustments under real-world conditions is necessary between delivery and the arrival of the first passengers. This involves all stakeholders, including operations teams and train crew.

SNCF Voyageurs and Alstom have decided to strengthen the commissioning process by scheduling several weeks of pre-commercial running of the first trains on the French national network. This exceptional phase will involve hundreds of team members from both companies to verify every detail of the on-board experience, support the operational teams in familiarising themselves with the train, and finalise all the last-minute adjustments before welcoming the first passengers.

Welcoming the first passengers on this new TGV INOUI in September

TGV-M, which will be known as TGV INOUI, will welcome its first passengers at the start of the new school year in early September, following this pre-commercial trial run. This trial run prior to commercial service will enable the first six TGV INOUI trainsets to be integrated into the timeline during a suitable operational window.

"This authorisation marks the culmination of a long-term industrial project and the final stage that now allows us to focus on the launch for our customers. Our priority is to ensure the successful commercial commissioning of this revolutionary TGV, that's why we are bolstering the process with a pre-commercial test run this summer, to ensure the new TGV INOUI fully delivers on its promises from the moment it welcomes its first passengers in September. SNCF Voyageurs will be the first rail operator to put the new TGV-M into commercial service; it will transform the high-speed experience we offer for decades to come. It is a strategic asset for attracting more passengers and gaining market share in France and across Europe," said Christophe Fanichet, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of SNCF Voyageurs

"Obtaining marketing authorisation from the ERA is a significant achievement. It reflects the quality of the application and the commitment of the teams involved since the testing phase. We are continuing this momentum, alongside SNCF Voyageurs, to support the gradual integration of the TGV-M and its ramp-up," said Martin Sion, Chief Executive Officer of Alstom

A new generation of very high-speed trains

TGV-M is the result of an innovation partnership between SNCF Voyageurs and Alstom, heralding a new generation of very high-speed trains and setting a new benchmark for rail transport: TGV-M marks a new phase of development for SNCF Voyageurs and its TGV INOUI offering in the high-speed market.

The figures behind a revolutionary train

- Over 4,000 people worked on the project
- 100% French design
- A very high-speed train built from 97% recyclable materials
- A 100% connected train (optimised on-board wireless network, capable of integrating all future technical advances)
- 740 seats in its maximum configuration, representing a 20% increase in capacity
- 160 trains, ordered by SNCF Voyageurs (130 trains) and by its subsidiary Eurostar (30 trains, plus 20 optional trains)
- 32% reduction in CO_2 emissions
- Nearly 1 million kilometres of testing
- Over 400 innovation patents filed
- Over 1,000 documents make up the type-certification dossier (test reports, expert opinions, drawings, etc.)
- 30% lower maintenance costs
- 20% energy savings thanks to its nose featuring a black ellipse and its more aerodynamic shape for improved airflow
- 90 drivers were involved in the design of the new driver's cab
- Passenger seats that are 90% recyclable thanks to their materials
- Seats tested by 125 customers of different body types
- 20% more storage space

Photo: TGV INOUI (© SNCF Voyageurs 2026-Yann Audic)

France

At SNCF Hendaye station on May 7th, a TGV INOUI unit forms the back unit of 09:33 to Paris Gare Montparnasse. *Kevin McCormick*

France

Euskotren unit No. 916 arrives at Hendaye on May 7th. *Kevin McCormick*

Alstom Citadis 402 tram No. 1846 is seen at Bordeaux Airport on May 7th.
Kevin McCormick

Germany

Reliable connections to South-Eastern Europe with DB Cargo Full Load Solutions

Rail-based multimodal connections for stable supply chains between Central and South-Eastern Europe, extending as far as Turkey

The South-Eastern Europe region is a key transit route between Western and Central Europe and Turkey, as well as the Middle East. As a gateway to the Black Sea ports and Asia, the corridor is of central importance for international goods flows.

DB Cargo Full Load Solutions (TRANSA Spedition GmbH) offers a comprehensive range of services for the South-East Europe corridor featuring specially developed shuttles: high-capacity rail transport, complemented by flexible road haulage services, ensures reliable and sustainable supply chains right to the borders of Europe and beyond – for everything from agricultural products and consumer goods to bulk and heavy goods.

Turkey Shuttle: Direct service with predictable transit times
The Turkey Shuttle offers a direct rail connection from Schwandorf, where the train is formed. With a fixed weekly departure and an average transit time of around six days, this creates a stable transport link. Compared to maritime transport, the solution offers shorter transit times, greater reliability and around a third fewer CO_2e emissions.

Where required, the transport service is supplemented by integrated services such as pre- and post-carriage by truck, customs clearance, security options and continuous monitoring along the route. The system is designed for various types of goods, including standard palletised goods, beverages, household appliances and paper.

PowerRailer: Block train concept for high volumes and a wide range of applications
The PowerRailer is a block train system established across Europe that connects Central, Northern and Eastern Europe with South-Eastern Europe. Regular departures and fixed timetables provide planning reliability even for high transport volumes. The use of conventional wagons with high load capacity is ideal for the efficient transport of heavy goods. At the same time, the system remains flexible for other types of goods, including consumer goods. The integration of multimodal logistics centres and additional transhipment facilities enables end-to-end door-to-door transport from a single source, complemented by services such as shipment tracking, temporary storage and partial consignment management.

Slovenia Shuttle: Frequency and flexible connections
The Slovenia Shuttle expands the network with a high-frequency direct connection between southern Germany and Slovenia. With four departures per week between Munich/Rosenheim and Ljubljana or Jesenice, the system offers a high degree of flexibility for a variety of transport requirements.

Further destinations in Slovenia, as well as Serbia and Croatia, can be connected via connecting services. The range of goods transported extends from traditional bulk goods to sensitive shipments, including dangerous goods. Fixed timetables ensure reliable scheduling here too.

Three connections, one principle: planning reliability for demanding supply chains
With the Turkey Shuttle, the PowerRailer and the Slovenia Shuttle, DB Cargo Full Load Solutions is systematically expanding its services to and from South-East Europe. All three shuttle solutions follow a single principle: the targeted integration of rail and road into an integrated transport chain for greater planning reliability, transparent processes and robust organisation from a single source. In addition to rail-based multimodal solutions, intermodal services for trailer transport to Turkey are also available. This allows additional transport requirements to be met flexibly and existing supply chains to be expanded.

Germany

La Dolce Vita and Back with the DB Cargo FLS Italy Shuttle
Multimodal transport solution between Northwest Europe and Italy

The Italian market is of central importance to numerous industrial and commercial enterprises. Accordingly, the demands for stable, predictable, and resilient supply chains between the economic regions of Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands as well as Italy are high. The Italy Shuttle from DB Cargo Full Load Solutions (TRANSA Spedition GmbH) provides a high-frequency, multimodal solution for this purpose that integrates road and rail.

Multimodal concept for reliable transit times
The transport concept is based on an efficient combination of modes of transport: the pre- and post-haul is handled flexibly by truck, while the main leg of the journey is carried out by rail. This allows typical restrictions of road transport—such as traffic jams or driving and rest periods—to be specifically circumvented. Full and less-than-truckload (FTL/LTL) shipments of up to 25 tons reach their destination reliably within six to eight days, depending on the destination.

Case Study: Building materials logistics in intermodal transport
A practical example illustrates the operational implementation: Tiles from Italy are transported to Germany and other destinations for a German home improvement retail chain. In the pre-leg, truck transport consolidates the goods from three manufacturing sites and delivers them to the terminal in Dinazzano—ranging from general cargo to full truckloads.

There, the goods are transshipped onto Tamns wagons. With fixed departure times, the main leg of rail freight transport to the Limburg terminal is carried out regularly and predictably.

At the destination terminal, the goods are unloaded and reloaded onto trucks for the final leg of the journey. To meet fixed delivery windows, intermediate storage can be arranged at Limburg . The final distribution to various receiving locations is then carried out flexibly and on schedule. This coordinated process ensures high delivery reliability, even with complex distribution requirements along the route between Italy and Northwest Europe.

Operational predictability and emission reduction
Due to the high proportion of the route covered by rail, the Italy Shuttle reduces CO_2e emissions by up to 80 percent compared to pure road transport. At the same time, the transport chain remains flexible and scalable. In addition to standard palletized goods, building materials, bulk goods, household appliances, and big bags can also be transported reliably.

Daily departures in both directions improve planning reliability and strengthen stable transport chains between Italy and the economic regions in Germany, Belgium, and the Netherlands, as well as the Nordic countries. DB Cargo FLS's multimodal offering thus makes a significant contribution to resource conservation and resilient logistics along this route.

Infrastructure as a stability factor: Dinazzano clay storage facility
In addition to transport services, the logistics infrastructure along the route is being continuously developed. A current example is the new clay storage facility at the Dinazzano terminal in the Sassuolo ceramics district, one of Europe's most important tile production clusters. The project was initiated in 2025 with the aim of stabilizing the supply chain operationally and making it more flexible in response to market demands.
The warehouse makes it possible to offset seasonal fluctuations, respond quickly to customer needs, and mitigate disruptions in the transport process. The facility covers an area of approximately 2,000 square meters and has a capacity of up to 12,000 tons. It has a modular design and is set to be further expanded in the coming months.

Industry dialogue and further development
The consistent drive to further develop transport services to Italy was also evident at the customer event "Clay Day 2026," organized by DB Cargo FLS Italia. The event offered around 70 customers and stakeholders from the region a platform for professional exchange and insights into the local infrastructure. In particular, the new clay storage facility highlighted the integrated approach combining transport and warehousing logistics in multimodal transport.

Germany

Padborg: Key hub for rail freight transport between Scandinavia and Germany

Up to 20 freight trains a day: operational, technical and logistical processes interlock in Padborg

Padborg is a key hub in Nordic rail freight transport – and one of the most important interfaces between Scandinavia and Germany. Up to 20 freight trains are processed in both directions at the border every day. The site thus plays a vital role in ensuring stable and efficient connections between Scandinavia and Central Europe.

Several operational processes interlock when crossing the border. A key step is the change of power supply system: the locomotive enters a de-energised section where the transition from the German to the Danish power supply system – and vice versa – takes place. This transition is a prerequisite for continuing the journey on the respective network.

In addition, technical and safety-related measures are carried out. These include adjusting the brakes and conducting a full brake test. A visual inspection and check of the carriages also takes place. Operational communication is also adapted: the switch between German and Danish as the operating language is part of the procedure for cross-border traffic. The procedures follow a clearly timed, standardised process that synchronises technical system separation and operational requirements. Another key process is the locomotive changeover. Services running north are generally switched to EG locomotives, which are designed to meet the requirements of the Danish and Swedish networks. Their performance is particularly crucial for demanding sections of track, such as the gradient in the Great Belt Tunnel. For services running south, the switch is made to BR locomotives.

The operations in Padborg illustrate the close interdependence of infrastructure, operations and personnel in international rail freight transport. Although the site is geographically compact, it is of great operational importance and is therefore a critical component for stable cross-border transport in European rail freight. Operational implementation is carried out by DB Cargo Scandinavia within the European network of DB Cargo.

New freight train line in the Rhine Valley: Deutsche Bahn strengthens European transport artery

Deutsche Bahn is building two new tracks for increased freight traffic between Offenburg and Müllheim in the Markgräflerland region

Freight trains will bypass Freiburg, freeing up space for additional local and long-distance services on the Rhine Valley Railway

Groundbreaking ceremony for the first section between Riegel and March

Deutsche Bahn (DB) is building a new freight line between Offenburg, Freiburg, and Müllheim in the Markgräflerland region, running alongside the A5 motorway. It forms part of the Karlsruhe-Basel connection and the important Rotterdam-Genoa European freight corridor. Together with the existing Rhine Valley Railway, four tracks will be available instead of two, allowing for significantly more trains.

DB is shifting freight traffic to the new line. This frees up capacity for additional local and long-distance services and ensures more reliable operations on the Rhine Valley Railway. At the same time, approximately 50,000 fewer freight trains per year will pass through Freiburg and the surrounding communities, noticeably reducing noise.

DB, the federal government and the state government gave the starting signal for the construction work with a symbolic groundbreaking ceremony near the municipality of Reute.

Dr. Philipp Nagl, CEO of DB InfraGO: “The construction of the new freight line marks the beginning of a new chapter in the expansion of the Rhine Valley Railway, one of Europe’s most important transport arteries. We are creating more space for the growing freight traffic, strengthening passenger services, and noticeably reducing railway noise for local residents. This is a win for the environment, our passengers, and the region.”

Patrick Schnieder, Federal Minister of Transport: “With today’s groundbreaking ceremony, we are visibly advancing one of Europe’s most important rail projects. The new freight line in the Rhine Valley strengthens the European freight corridor Rotterdam – Genoa, creates more capacity for rail freight transport, and frees up space on the Rhine Valley Railway for additional local transport connections. At the same time, we are noticeably reducing noise pollution in Freiburg and the surrounding communities. This is modern transport infrastructure: efficient for the economy and climate protection, reliable for passengers, and with tangible benefits for the people living there.”

Nicole Razavi, Minister of Transport for the state of Baden-Württemberg: “The crucial expansion of the Rhine Valley Railway is taking a major step forward with today’s groundbreaking ceremony. I am delighted to be able to witness the launch of this project, which is of great importance to our state, right at the beginning of my term as Minister of Transport. The construction of two additional tracks, which will be used exclusively for freight traffic during regular operations, will raise freight transport in the Rhine Valley to a new level. It will create new capacity for a strong economy in the region, in Germany, and in Europe, and will also relieve pressure on the roads.”

The new freight line is over 90 kilometres long in total. Deutsche Bahn (DB) will first build the eleven-kilometre section between Riegel and March. DB anticipates a construction period of approximately six years for this section.

DB can only set a date for the commissioning of the entire line once the necessary planning permission has been granted for all sections.

Germany

PIC network expanded: DHL and DB Cargo tailor routes to specific needs

Twelve additional train services per week strengthen north-south transport links between Hamburg, Nuremberg and Kornwestheim

From May 2026, DHL Freight and DB Cargo will expand their existing cooperation in rail freight transport. As part of this, the Parcel Intercity (PIC) will be further developed in a targeted manner. This is based on specific customer requirements, on the basis of which existing services have been reviewed and adapted. A total of twelve additional train services per week will be integrated into the existing offering, further strengthening north-south services.

At the heart of the adjustment is the reorganisation of the previous night service. The Hamburg–Kornwestheim connection will be replaced in its current role by the Hamburg–Nuremberg service. Nuremberg will thus once again be directly connected to Hamburg overnight. As an E+1 service (delivery on the next working day after dispatch) with a maximum speed of up to 140 km/h, consignments will be loaded on the day of dispatch and delivered on the following working day following the main rail route and sorting.

The Hamburg–Kornwestheim route will remain part of the network and will continue to run via a supplementary new service. From May 4th 2026, this will start with 5 trains per week in each direction (Tuesday to Saturday).

From June 6th 2026, the service will be expanded to include weekend services, so that there will be a total of six trains per direction per week (Tuesday to Sunday). The transit time will in future be run as E+2 service (delivery on the second working day after dispatch) to ensure stable and predictable handling under the given infrastructural conditions.

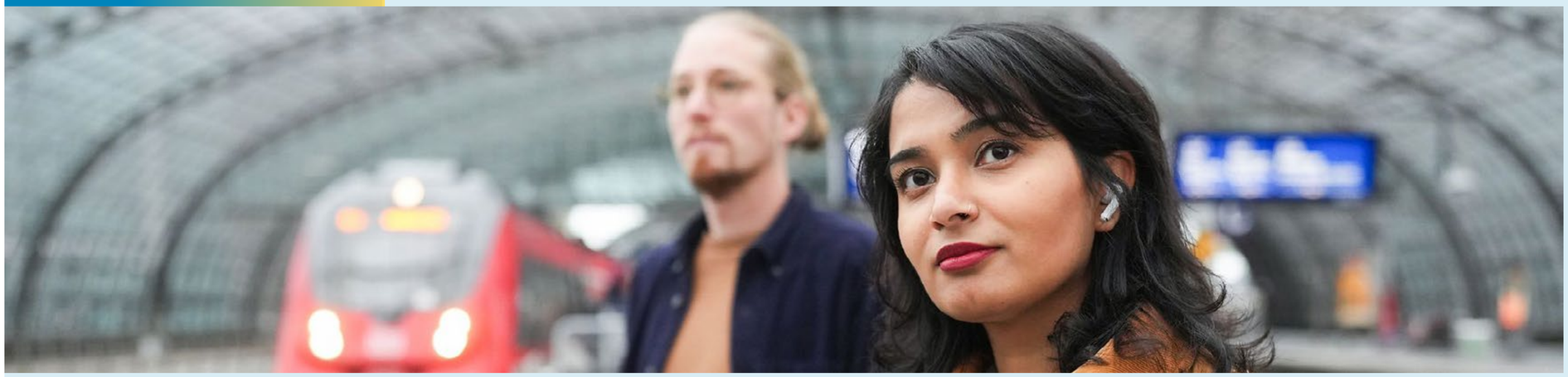
At the same time, this offers an advantage over road transport, particularly by circumventing the ban on lorry traffic at weekends.

The expansion of services specifically complements the existing rail network and creates additional capacity for the main flow of parcels and other freight. These adjustments demonstrate how existing structures can be further developed based on specific requirements.

The Lokführer of Class 218.403 looks back to ensure all is in order as he takes power departing Marktredwitz on May 29th with train No. RE4854, the 08:28 Landshut Hbf - Hof Hbf. *Andy Pratt*

Germany

Real-time data and integrated booking - DB and Google expand cooperation



Google Maps integrates DB ticket purchase buttons
DB Regio provides real-time data for improved route planning

In uncertain times with high fuel prices, DB Regio offers a stable, affordable, and reliable mobility service throughout Germany, used by 3.8 million people every weekday on our S-Bahn trains alone.

For everyone who has to weigh up different modes of transport in their daily lives, we're now making it even easier and more attractive to compare and switch between them using Google Maps search. Anyone planning their journeys with Google Maps will not only receive more reliable data but can also book the right ticket directly within the DB network.

Harmen van Zijderveld, CEO of DB Regio AG: "Being able to book the right ticket for the desired route without any digital detours is a real game-changer. Because, just like in the real world, the simpler, the better. Furthermore, our trains will be displayed in real time in the future, which significantly increases the accuracy of journey planning. With this, we aim to specifically attract passengers to public transport who haven't yet decided on a particular mode of transport before starting their journey."

Timo Rang, Partner Manager Google Maps: "We are delighted about the partnership with DB Regio. Direct access to precise real-time data on Google Maps makes using buses and trains considerably more convenient and thus strengthens local and regional public transport in Germany. This is an important joint step towards making climate-friendly mobility even more accessible and attractive for everyone."

DB Regio AG is thus building on a cooperation between Google and DB Fernverkehr AG that has been in place since August 2020. At launch, real-time data can be provided for more than half of the regional rail services.

Rail connects Europe: new direct connection from Berlin via Copenhagen to Oslo is coming

ICE L trains will run towards Northern Europe from the end of 2027 • New direct connection in cooperation with Norwegian Vy and Danish DSB from summer 2028

It will be one of the longest rail connections through Europe: Deutsche Bahn (DB), in cooperation with the Norwegian Vy and the Danish DSB, will offer a new daily direct connection between Berlin and Oslo via Hamburg, Copenhagen, Malmö and Gothenburg from summer 2028.

Dr. Michael Peterson, DB Board Member for Long-Distance Passenger Transport: "Anyone who wants to experience Europe should take the train! In view of high fuel prices, long-distance trains remain a good alternative to cars or planes. With the new international service from Berlin via Copenhagen to Oslo, we are also connecting Northern Europe even more closely – and bringing three capital cities together by rail."

Two daily train pairs (round trip) are planned. The train used will be the ICE L, the newest train in the DB fleet.

The journey time for the entire route from Berlin to Oslo will be approximately 14-15 hours. The ICE L will already be operating between Hamburg and Copenhagen from December 2027.

The new direct connection Hamburg–Copenhagen–Oslo is one of ten pilot projects supported by the EU Commission for new cross-border long-distance transport connections.

Hungary

H-Start Class 448.438 is seen shunting stock at Budapest Keleti on May 4th. *Andy*

Hungary

MAV Class 182.564 is seen with a short train at Budpest Keleti on May 4th. *Andy*

ONCF No. DH428 approaches Matmata hauling train No. 103, 06:40 Casa Voyageurs - Oujda. *Laurence Sly*

ONCF No. DH420 departs Sidi Harazem hauling train No. 204. *Laurence Sly*

ONCF No. DH371 approaches Goutitr with train No. 202 07:50 Oujda - Casa Voyageurs.
Laurence Sly

ONCF No. DH410 approaches Taourirt hauling train No. 101, 06:10 Casa Voyageurs - Oujda. The line on the right is the branch from Nador. *Laurence Sly*

ONCF No. DH420 departs Taourirt hauling train No. 206, 13:30 Oujda - Casa Voyageurs.
Laurence Sly

On May 22nd, GTS Rail Class 193.491 is seen in Hegelsom heading a Milano Smistamento to Rotterdam Botlek intermodal. *Erik de Zeeuw*

On May 17th, steam loco No. 150.139 is seen plinthed at Cluj Napoca station.
Mark Armstrong

Romania

Former Abellio DMU No. 648.029 is seen at Cluj on May 18th. *Mark Armstrong*

On May 18th, what can only be described as 'a van on rails', heads through Cluj. *Mark Armstrong*

RO-GFR No. 60.1546 gets attention from people on the platform at Cluj as it passes through on May 18th. *Mark Armstrong*

Romania

On May 18th, RO-SNTFC No. 410.188 heads light engine through Cluj. *Mark Armstrong*

Steam loco No. 150.279 is seen plinthed at Cluj on May 19th. *Mark Armstrong*

Diesel loco No. 810.808 heads through Cluj on May 18th. *Mark Armstrong*

Romania

On May 20th, RE-IR101.014 is seen at Brasov. *Mark Armstrong*

CFR electric loco No. 410.402 heads through Brasov on May 20th. *Mark Armstrong*

RO-SNTFC No. 800.537 heads through Cluj on May 19th. *Mark Armstrong*

Romania

Former CFL EMU No. 105 is seen at Buchrest on May 20th. *Mark Armstrong*

Another plinthed steam loco, this time No. 150.1114 at Brasov on May 20th. *Mark Armstrong*

At Brasov on May 20th, DMU No. 6709 waits its next duty. *Mark Armstrong*

On May 17th, CFR No. 640.950 runs through Cluj Napoca station.
Mark Armstrong

Romania

On May 17th, Class 410.298 arrives into Cluj Napoca station. *Mark Armstrong*

On April 29tth, a Civia 463 unit prepares to depart Oviedo for the short trip to Llamaquique.
Kevin McCormick

Spain

A narrow gauge unit 435 Class EMU arrives into Oviedo on April 29th. *Kevin McCormick*

Two 436 Class narrow gauge units await their next turn at Oviedo on April 29th.
Kevin McCormick

A variety of standard and narrow gauge stock is seen at Oviedo station on April 29th.
Kevin McCormick

Spain

On May 2nd, two pictures of the Santander funicular. *Kevin McCormick*

Spain

On April 29th, narrow gauge EMU No. 3629 is seen at Infiesto. *Kevin McCormick*

On May 1st, a Class 435 DMU arrives at Llanes from Santander. It will shortly run back to Santander, once the Class 529 unit arrives for through passengers to switch from.
Kevin McCormick

A Class 529 DMU is seen at Llanes on April 29th.
Kevin McCormick

Spain

On May 4th, Bilbao Metro EMU No. 515 is seen arriving into Leioa, heading to Bilbao centre.
Kevin McCormick

Spain

Bilbao Metro EMU No. 506 arrives at Leioa (suburb of Bilbao), heading to Plentzia on May 4th. *Kevin McCormick*

The very impressive front to Bilbao Abando terminus. *Kevin McCormick*

Bilbao tram No. 406 is seen departing Arriaga station on May 4th. *Kevin McCormick*

Spain

On May 5th, a couple of Euskotren units are seen at San Sebastian/Donostia- Amara.
Kevin McCormick

Spain

Two narrow gauge Euskotren units are seen at Casco Viejo / Zazpikaleak on May 5th. *Kevin McCormick*

Half way point on the San Sebastian/Donostia - Funicular on May 6th. *Kevin McCormick*

Bilbao tram No. 402 is seen departing Uribitarte station on May 4th. *Kevin McCormick*

Spain

Spot the funicular at Bilbao on May 4th.
Kevin McCormick

A view of the Bilbao funicular on May 4th.
Kevin McCormick

U.S.A.

Georgia Florida Railway No. 4009 passes Doerun hauling working No. GF89 from Albany to Moultrie. *Laurence Sly*

Georgia Florida Railway No. 4009 passes Moultrie hauling working No. GF89 from Albany to Moultrie. *Laurence Sly*

Georgia Florida Railway No. 4009 passes Brideboro hauling working No. GF89 from Albany to Moultrie. *Laurence Sly*

U.S.A.

Alabama & Tennessee River Railroad Nos. 9651 and 7204 work Tucker Milling in Guntersville.
Laurence Sly

Alabama & Tennessee River Railroad Nos. 408 and 8733 run Locust Street in Gadsden hauling a train from Ragland Milling in Guntersville.
Laurence Sly

Alabama & Tennessee River Railroad Nos. 9651 and 7204 depart Guntersville for Gadsden.
Laurence Sly

U.S.A.

Florida Gulf & Atlantic Railroad Nos. 107 and 104 pass Madison hauling TA-East to Lee. *Laurence Sly*

Florida Gulf & Atlantic Railroad Nos. 105 and 106 pass Aucilla hauling TA-East to Tallahassee. *Laurence Sly*

Florida Gulf & Atlantic Railroad Nos. 107 and 104 depart Tallahassee for Lee. *Laurence Sly*

U.S.A.

Georgia Central Railroad Nos. 549, 541 and 533 pass Dudley hauling train No. L781 to Macon. *Laurence Sly*

Georgia Central Railroad Nos. 549, 541 and 533 pass Jeffersonville hauling train No. L781 to Macon. *Laurence Sly*

Georgia Central Railroad Nos. 549, 541 and 533 pass Montrose hauling train No. L781 to Macon. *Laurence Sly*

U.S.A.

CaterParrott Railnet No. 7002 passes The Rock while hauling CaterParrott Railnet train No. 8 from Thomaston to Barnesville. *Laurence Sly*

CaterParrott Railnet No. 7002 approaches The Rock hauling train No. 7 to Thomaston. *Laurence Sly*

CaterParrott Railnet No. 7002 returns from the NS interchange with a single hopper car for Thomaston. *Laurence Sly*

India

Siemens hands over first locomotives to Indian Railways for commercial operations

Siemens Mobility has officially handed over the first of 1,200 electric freight locomotives for commercial operations under its €3 billion project with Indian Railways and jointly opened the fleet's first maintenance depot in Visakhapatnam, India.

Siemens Mobility, a global technology leader in electric locomotives, had received the order from Indian Railways in January 2023, marking the single largest locomotive order in the company's history and single largest order in the history of Siemens India.

"The handover of the first D9 locomotives and the opening of the new maintenance depot in Visakhapatnam are major milestones in this landmark project and our long-term partnership with Indian Railways," said Michael Peter, CEO of Siemens Mobility. "With our leading technology, we are supporting the country's goal of shifting more freight to rail, boosting logistics efficiency, and significantly reducing CO_2 emissions for decades to come. Together, we are bringing one of the world's most powerful and energy-efficient freight locomotives into service – manufactured and maintained in India."

The state-of-the-art D9 locomotives are Indian Railways' first rolling stock successfully tested to the European standard EN 14363 and are designed for freight operations across the network at speeds of up to 120 km/h. During normal operation, the locomotive with axle load of 22.5 tonnes shall haul loads of up to 5,800 tonnes on the defined gradients. With 9,000 hp, they are India's most powerful six-axle electric freight locomotives. They also feature advanced digital systems such as Railigent X for predictive maintenance and data-driven performance optimization, and integrate enhanced safety for energy-efficient, high-reliability operations across the Indian Railways network.

The project is delivered under a lifecycle partnership model covering design, manufacturing, commissioning and 35 years of full-service maintenance. Maintenance will be provided through a network of four depot locations – Visakhapatnam, Raipur, Kharagpur and Pune. Siemens Mobility will provide full service for the new D9 locomotive fleet, including spare parts and materials management, maintenance planning, as well as documentation and reporting. Siemens Mobility will also use digital services, enabled by Railigent X, to support condition monitoring, predictive maintenance and data-driven performance optimization, helping to maximize fleet availability over the lifecycle.

India has one of the world's largest rail transport and logistics networks used daily by 24 million passengers on more than 22,000 trains. Additionally, the Government of India plans to increase the share of railways for freight transport to 40-45 percent from the current approximately 27 percent. India is one of the few countries in the world with an almost fully electrified rail network.

Siemens Mobility has been supporting Indian Railways with the latest technologies for many decades and offers a full range of intelligent and efficient technologies for passenger and freight transportation, including rail infrastructure and rolling stock. With its world class solutions, the company helps transform rail in India while supporting the country's climate ambitions and logistics efficiency goals.

Montenegro

Stadler delivers FLIRT trains to Montenegro for the first time

On May 27th, Stadler and Željeznički prevoz Crne Gore (ŽPCG) signed a contract for the delivery of three four-car FLIRT electric multiple units. The new trains will make a significant contribution to the modernization of passenger rail transport in Montenegro, sustainably enhancing comfort, safety and the overall attractiveness of public transport. The new FLIRT trains are based on Stadler's proven vehicle platform, which is already successfully operating in numerous European countries, including Serbia and Slovenia. The trains for Montenegro will be largely identical to the FLIRT vehicles currently in service in Serbia, enabling modern electric multiple units to operate in cross-border traffic between the two countries for the first time.

With this investment, Montenegro is taking another important step towards modern, sustainable and European mobility. The trains will be specifically adapted to the requirements of the Montenegrin rail network and will feature a distinctive exterior design inspired by Montenegro's national colours and identity.

More attractive rail travel in Montenegro

"The signing of this contract marks a historic moment for the future of rail transport in Montenegro. The new Stadler trains will provide our passengers with significantly higher levels of comfort, safety and reliability, while making rail travel far more attractive for both residents and tourists. This project represents an important milestone on our journey towards a modern European railway system," says Dragana Lukšić, CEO of Željeznički prevoz Crne Gore.

The project is being financed with the support of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD).

"We are delighted to welcome Montenegro as the 50th country worldwide to join the Stadler family. Today, our vehicles stand for reliability, innovation and sustainable mobility across five continents. This project is another important milestone for Stadler and highlights the growing importance of modern rail solutions in Southeast Europe," says Ansgar Brockmeyer, Executive Vice President Sales & Marketing and Deputy Group CEO of Stadler.

A major step for the region

With more than 12,000 vehicles sold and operations in 50 countries, Stadler is one of the world's leading manufacturers of rail vehicles and mobility solutions. "These new trains will not only modernize public transport, but also serve as a visible symbol of progress, European integration and regional connectivity. We would like to thank ŽPCG, the Government of Montenegro, the EBRD and all project partners for their excellent cooperation and for the trust they have placed in us," says Željko Davidović, Director of Sales Central and Eastern Europe at Stadler.

Poland

Next FLIRT trains enter service in the Mazovia Region

Deliveries of newest FLIRT trains for Koleje Mazowieckie are progressing rapidly: since the beginning of May, the operator has already received 23 new units. Under the record-breaking contract covering a total of 75 vehicles, additional trains are being gradually introduced into service, strengthening the regional carrier's fleet in the Mazovia region. By the end of this year, 53 new FLIRT trains are scheduled to be delivered to the operator.

Latest FLIRT trains for Mazovia presented in Warsaw

During a press conference at Warszawa Główna station, the two latest vehicles delivered under the first implementation agreement for Koleje Mazowieckie were presented on May 25th. The modern trainsets are already operating on selected routes, with additional units soon to be introduced into regional passenger service.

"The new vehicles will provide our passengers with even greater comfort and travel safety. Their environmental aspect is also important. Thanks to their lightweight construction and energy recuperation system, FLIRT trains consume less electricity, which translates into both reduced environmental impact and lower operating costs," said Czesław Sulima, Member of the Management Board and Operations Director of Koleje Mazowieckie.

Record pace and strong partnership

All 75 FLIRT trains for Koleje Mazowieckie are being manufactured at the Stadler Polska plant in Siedlce. The efficient execution of the project and the high delivery pace are the result of close and collaborative cooperation between the manufacturer and the operator.

"Delivering a project of this scale within such a short timeframe requires excellent cooperation between the teams involved on both sides. Every week we hand over additional vehicles, while production of the next units is already underway. Since the beginning of May, we have delivered 23 new trains to Koleje Mazowieckie — a record pace made possible thanks to tremendous commitment and very good cooperation with the customer. I would like to thank Koleje Mazowieckie for their openness, efficient communication, and partnership approach in implementing this project," emphasized Radosław Banach, CEO of Stadler Polska.

Travel comfort, safety and energy efficiency

The new FLIRT trains are already contributing to improved comfort, accessibility, and quality of regional travel across Mazovia.

The five-car trainsets can carry up to 582 passengers, including 261 seated passengers, and reach speeds of up to 160 km/h. They feature spacious entrance areas, a high proportion of low-floor space, and full accessibility for passengers with disabilities, travelers with strollers, and cyclists. The trains are equipped with air conditioning, wireless Wi-Fi internet access, a modern passenger information system, and advanced safety systems, including ETCS Level 2, CCTV monitoring, AED defibrillators, and emergency intercoms.

The contract covers not only the delivery of the vehicles, but also their maintenance, staff training, and repair packages.

Ireland

Premiere: Eight Stadler trains for Ireland

Stadler is building trains for the island of Ireland for the first time. Ireland's railway company Iarnród Éireann (IÉ) and Translink NI Railways (NIR) have ordered eight FLIRT Intercity trains from Stadler, including maintenance services. Commencing 2030, the trains will operate services connecting the capitals Dublin and Belfast. The new trains will reduce journey times, increase service frequency on this iconic route and enhance passenger comfort.

The approximately 180-kilometre-long Enterprise railway line connects the Irish capital Dublin with the Northern Irish capital Belfast. The vehicles currently in use will reach the end of their service life in the next few years, resulting in Ireland's railway company Iarnród Éireann (IÉ) and Translink NI Railways (NIR) commissioning Stadler to build eight FLIRT IC trains. The new rolling stock is expected to enter service on the cross-border Intercity route from 2030. In addition to the construction of the vehicles, the contract includes a maintenance contract for a period of 15 years. Stadler will provide maintenance support to ensure high availability and reliability of the fleet. The scope of services includes technical support, the supply of spare parts, engineering services, technical supervision of maintenance, and staff training.

One extra service per day in each direction
The new trains will reduce the journey time between the two capitals to less than two hours, which will both increase competitiveness and enable IÉ and NIR to introduce an additional train per day in each direction. With the new trains, there will then be 16 trains running in both directions every day, enabling the two operators to meet the growing demand. Passengers will enjoy greater comfort thanks to spacious seating areas, Wi-Fi on board, improved catering and a bright, open and modern design. The 200-metre-long trains have 407 seats. They are also completely barrier-free, with step-free access at all exterior passenger doors, reserved seats for people with reduced mobility and wheelchair-accessible toilets.

A multi talent for maximum flexibility
The new FLIRT trains are equipped with a diesel-electric and battery driven technology enabling both flexible and efficient seamless operation across different power and grid systems. In non-electrified Northern Ireland, the trains run in the Belfast area using the built-in battery. The diesel engine then takes the vehicles across the border into the Republic of Ireland to the city of Drogheda. From there, the trains are powered by overhead lines and continue to Dublin using electric drive. The switch between the different drive types is completely seamless and unnoticeable to passengers. This makes operation flexible, efficient and environmentally friendly. The new trains are also designed to transition to dual electric and battery operation between the two countries. The vehicles will then run from Dublin to Drogheda using a 1500 V DC traction system and from Drogheda to Belfast using a 25 kV AC system. If necessary, the battery can still be used to bridge any non-electrified sections of the line. The FLIRT trains are thus paving the way for the two countries' agreed net-zero strategy for the Dublin–Belfast line.

Daniel Baer, Executive Vice President Service of Stadler said: "With this order, Stadler trains will be operating on the island of Ireland for the first time. The Enterprise connection is a symbol of the close cooperation between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. We are proud to contribute to the modernisation and increased reliability of rail transport on this iconic route with our FLIRT trains and comprehensive service packages."

Ralf Warwel, Sales Director United Kingdom and Ireland of Stadler said: "The new FLIRT trains stand for high levels of comfort and maximum flexibility in cross-border operations. They are perfectly tailored to the specific requirements of the Enterprise line. We would like to thank Iarnród Éireann and Translink NI Railways for their trust and look forward to working closely together on this pioneering project."

Chris Conway, Group Chief Executive of Translink said: "Today is about turning long term ambition into delivery. We would like to thank our funders for this investment which will transform the Enterprise experience, delivering a modern, high quality journey that puts accessibility, comfort and passengers at the heart of this vital cross border service. We look forward to working closely with Stadler to deliver this transformative project."

Mary Considine, Chief Executive of Iarnród Éireann said: "Iarnród Éireann and Translink are excited to be working with Stadler to be delivering a new chapter for Enterprise. We welcome Stadler supported by our funders, the new Stadler Enterprise fleet will allow ourselves and Translink to deliver a true flagship service for current and future customers, a seamless cross-border operation delivering the highest standards of customer service, and a new era in accessibility and sustainability for the Dublin / Belfast rail line."

Project supported by EU funding
This major £548m / €698m cross border investment for new fleet and associated infrastructure, is jointly funded by the Northern Ireland Executive, Department for Infrastructure and the Government of Ireland, Department of Transport, and supported with €165m through PEACEPLUS, a programme managed by the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB). PEACEPLUS is co-funded by the European Union, the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, the Government of Ireland, and the Northern Ireland Executive.

With the conclusion of the 15-year maintenance contract, Stadler is further strengthening its activities across the UK and Ireland. The Irish Enterprise project builds on Stadler's established contracts across England, Wales and Scotland. The new trains will join the existing fleet of 275 trains supported by 432 employees in the UK. With this contract, Stadler continues its growth in the region.

Egypt

A new era of smart and sustainable mobility in Egypt

On May 6th, Alstom, a global leader in smart and sustainable mobility, in partnership with Orascom Construction and Arab Contractors, announced the start of commercial service for the first portion of the East of Nile Monorail - Africa's first monorail system - marking a major milestone in the development of sustainable urban mobility in Egypt.

The Innovia monorail system delivers a fast, reliable and low-emission alternative to road transport across Greater Cairo. Stretching over 56 kilometres, with 22 stations, the East of Nile line connects East Cairo to the New Administrative Capital, significantly reducing travel time and improving connectivity between key residential, business and administrative districts. A total of 16 out of the 22 stations are now operational and serving customers commercially.

"Cairo is home to nearly 25 million people, making it one of Africa's largest and fastest growing megacities. The Innovia monorail system is a true game changer not only for Egypt, but for the wider African continent, delivering immediate capacity at scale while supporting a more sustainable future for urban transport", said Martin Vaujour, President for Africa, Middle East and Central Asia, Alstom.

With an ultimate capacity of up to 45,000 passengers per hour per direction, the Innovia monorail system is designed to ease urban congestion and respond to the city's rapid expansion. It integrates advanced, driverless technology to ensure high levels of safety, reliability and operational efficiency. Project mobility assessments demonstrate the monorail's clear and measurable impact on everyday travel: journey times between El Moshir Tantawi station (ST07) and Justice city station (ST22) are reduced from around 1 hour 20 minutes by road to approximately 40 minutes, nearly halving travel time and delivering a measurable improvement in daily commuting efficiency.

The project sets new benchmarks for the rail sector through advanced technologies that redefine system intelligence, operational resilience and long-term performance. The East of Nile line operates with fully driverless CBTC GoA4 signalling, enabling highly reliable service. It is also the first project of its kind in Africa to integrate platform screen doors, enhancing passenger safety and comfort.

While the Innovia monorail vehicles were manufactured at Alstom's production site in Derby, UK, the testing and commissioning were performed by local engineering capabilities, laying the foundations for long-term operational resilience and sustainability.

"The East of Nile Monorail marks a major milestone in Egypt's Vision 2030 journey toward smart, sustainable, and future ready urban mobility. With more than 98% of the workforce drawn from Egypt, this project showcases national engineering excellence and deep local know-how. Beyond transforming transportation, the monorail stands as a powerful symbol of local capabilities driving the delivery of world class, transformative infrastructure for the nation", said Ramy Salah El Din, Managing Director of Alstom Egypt.

Image:© Monorail 2024 - Caire Alstom

Bulgaria

ŠKODA GROUP HANDS OVER THE FIRST NEW METRO UNITS FOR SOFIA, BULGARIA

Škoda Group, a leading European manufacturer of solutions for zero-emission mobility, delivered the first five four-car metro trains to Sofia, Bulgaria, on Tuesday May 26th. Since that day, the new trains are being gradually introduced into regular passenger service and will operate across all four metro lines. They will help increase capacity, shorten intervals, and offer passengers greater comfort. The contract for the delivery of eight modern metro trains to operator Metropoliten EAD is worth over 65 million EUR.

“The handover of the first trains and their upcoming entry into passenger service are key milestones for the project. Our modern, fully accessible metro trains are essential for the Sofia Metro, which serves hundreds of thousands of passengers every day. We are proud that our vehicles will contribute to further increasing its comfort, capacity, and reliability. The project also confirms the Škoda Group’s strong position in the field of modern, zero-emission solutions for urban mobility,” said Olesea Lachi, Vice President South & East Europe at the Škoda Group.

“The Sofia Metro is the backbone of public transport in the Bulgarian capital, and the new trains will provide passengers not only with greater capacity but also a more modern and comfortable environment. For the Škoda Group, this is further proof that we are capable of delivering comprehensive solutions for major European cities—from design and production to the commissioning of the vehicles,” added Olesea Lachi.

The new trainsets are approximately 80 metres long, and each of them will offer capacity for more than 580 passengers, including approximately 120 seated passengers. Given the local warm climate and the fact that parts of the metro network operate above ground, the vehicles are equipped with high-performance air conditioning.

Barrier-free access and two spaces for wheelchair users are also provided as standard. The trains have been designed with an emphasis on safety, reliability and energy efficiency. They are equipped with a train protection system featuring automatic speed regulation, which ensures safe operation on the route and prevents trains from catching up with one another. The units are powered by three-phase asynchronous traction motors and use regenerative braking, returning electrical energy back to the power supply network. The design speed of the new trainsets is 90 km/h.

Production of the trainsets is taking place at Škoda Group’s plants in Pilsen and Ostrava. The project envisages the delivery of a total of eight four-car trains, which will be gradually put into operation in Sofia. The new units are designed for the standard gauge of 1,435 mm and a 750 V DC third-rail power supply.

Sofia Metro

The Sofia Metro opened in 1998 and is one of the youngest metro systems in Europe. It currently has four lines with a total network length of more than 52 kilometres and more than 50 stations. It carries approximately 400,000 passengers per day and is a key element of public transport in the metropolitan area of the Bulgarian capital, which has more than 1.3 million inhabitants.

Main technical parameters of the new Sofia Metro trainsets

Parameter	Specification
• Trainset length	Four-car unit, approx. 80 m
• Maximum design speed	90 km/h
• Power supply	750 V DC from third rail
• Gauge	1,435 mm
• Traction	Three-phase asynchronous motors with regenerative braking
• Air conditioning	High-performance air conditioning adapted to Sofia’s warm climate and partial above-ground operation
• Accessibility	Barrier-free boarding, two spaces for wheelchair users
• Safety systems	Automatic speed regulation and modern braking systems
• Capacity	More than 580 passengers, including approx. 120 seated passengers
• Boarding and alighting	Four double-leaf doors on each side of each car for rapid passenger exchange

Škoda Group strengthens its presence in Bulgaria

The delivery of metro trainsets for Sofia is by no means the first project through which Škoda Group has contributed to the modernisation of transport in Bulgaria. In the past, the Czech manufacturer has delivered, for example, 210 trolleybuses to five Bulgarian cities.

The company is currently producing 25 four-car electric multiple units for the Bulgarian Ministry of Transport and Communications, intended for suburban and regional operation on the Bulgarian railway network. The first two units, based on the successful RegioPanter platform, were officially presented in Sofia in March 2026 and began testing on Bulgarian infrastructure. The contract, worth more than half a billion euros, also includes 15 years of comprehensive servicing provided directly in Bulgaria.

Škoda Group has also recently won two contracts for the delivery of 75 new trolleybuses for Sofia. This further strengthens its role as an important partner in the modernisation of public transport in Bulgaria and across the wider South-East European region.

Italy

RTC Tests ELP Euro9000 on the Brenner Corridor Following Italian Approval

Following the successful Italian approval of the Euro9000, European Loc Pool (ELP), together with Rail Traction Company (RTC), has started the first test runs as part of the practical homologation process in Italy. The focus is on the performance capabilities of the multi-system locomotive in demanding Italian freight operations, as well as on new opportunities for more efficient and interoperable transport solutions on the Brenner corridor between Germany, Austria and Italy, and on the Domodossola route between Switzerland and Italy. With the approval for Italy, the Euro9000 expands its operational range onto one of Europe's most important freight transport corridors. Both the Brenner corridor and the Domodossola route are among the key connections between Northern and Southern Europe and place high demands on performance, flexibility and cross-border interoperability. RTC is among the first operators to test the Euro9000 in operational service following its approval for Italy.

"We believe that technical development must constantly continue," explains Martin Ausserdorfer, Managing Director of RTC. "The Euro9000 promises a significant improvement in operational efficiency, especially on the Brenner corridor."

A central aspect of the tests is the possibility of operating international services in the future without additional locomotive changes. With its multi-system capabilities, the Euro9000 enables operations in Germany, Austria, the Benelux region and Italy, thereby creating the basis for interoperable transport concepts along the entire corridor.

"In the future, there will be more and more interoperable operations," continues Ausserdorfer. "We need locomotives that can operate in Germany, Austria, the Benelux region and Italy and ideally run seamlessly across all networks."

Until now, comparable services on the Brenner corridor have partly been operated with double traction. The Euro9000 will now demonstrate whether heavy train loads can be transported efficiently with only one locomotive in the future.

"The ELP locomotive promises performance levels that previously required two locomotives in some cases," says Ausserdorfer. "That is exactly what we want to evaluate during the test runs."

In addition to technical performance, RTC also highlights the importance of having a reliable full-service leasing partner. High availability, fast response times and solution-oriented cooperation in daily operations are considered particularly crucial.

"The most important things are service, availability and the ability to solve problems quickly and efficiently," says Ausserdorfer. "Every day a locomotive cannot operate costs money."

"The Euro9000 was not only developed for heavy international freight operations, but also to efficiently cover the first and last mile. This is one of the locomotive's major advantages. Operators can manage services without additional shunting or diesel locomotives while simultaneously benefiting from the high performance on international corridors. Under 3 kV infrastructure, the Euro9000 shows its full strength: by additionally using the diesel engine as a boost, significantly more power becomes available. This allows even demanding operations to be handled efficiently and reliably. In this way, we create more efficiency, less complexity and a much more flexible train production," says Willem Goosen, CEO of European Loc Pool.

Should the test runs prove successful, RTC sees further potential for the long-term deployment of the Euro9000 in international freight transport. In the future, additional international connections and further European markets could also be developed. With the Italian approval and the ongoing test runs, ELP underlines the positioning of the Euro9000 as a high-performance multi-system locomotive for modern European freight corridors. The combination of high power output, multi-system capability and the additional diesel module enables flexible operations on both electrified and non-electrified routes and creates new opportunities for efficient international transport chains.

"With the Euro9000, we are now bringing our three years of operational experience from international markets into the Italian market as well. We are convinced that the locomotive will meet RTC's expectations. As a next-generation locomotive, the Euro9000 sets new standards in efficiency and flexibility, both for the Italian market and for European rail freight transport," says Willem Goosen.

About Rail Traction Company

Rail Traction Company was founded for the development of freight transport along the Brenner corridor, but the following years were characterised by significant milestones that often made RTC a pioneer in the search for new technical solutions. RTC has decades of experience in grain transportation and operates daily services to Italy from Romania, Hungary, Serbia, Croatia and Ukraine.

Over the years, thanks to the know-how acquired over time and the operational flexibility that has always distinguished the company, RTC has established itself as a reliable reference partner in a particularly complex market. This has recently enabled new partnerships with some of the most important freight forwarders in the grain sector. Since October 2016, RTC has been the first railway company in Italy to operate grain trains with a total weight of up to 2,200 tonnes and a payload of 1,600 tonnes, and more than 90% of its services have so far been carried out with this operational model.

About European Loc Pool AG

European Loc Pool (ELP) is a leading provider of innovative locomotive leasing and maintenance services headquartered in Frauenfeld, Switzerland. Its full-service leasing packages include modern six-axle hybrid locomotives that can be tailored to customers' specific needs. Since its foundation in May 2018, ELP has served more than 33 operators across five countries.

Poland

Breakthrough: Automatic Route Setting from AŽD Praha is comming to Polish railway infrastructure

Czech technology company AŽD will install an unique intelligent traffic management system TrafficSWing GTN (Graphical-Technological Layer) with ANP RJ (Automatic Route Setting) function in Poland for the railway infrastructure manager PKP PLK. The value of the contract is PLN 10,5 million (approximately CZK 60 million).

Automatic train route setting (ANP RJ) is a Czech intelligent technology of the AŽD company, which organizes and controls rail operation without human intervention at railway junctions and on entire branches of the railway network according to the actual position of the train. Such an advanced and operationally proven control system over the years is not yet offered by other suppliers operating on the Polish railway market.
This intelligent railway traffic control system will be installed on line No. 351 from Poznan to Szczecin, where AŽD has already delivered its own modern digital interlockings StationSWing ESA 44-PL, remotely controlled from the LCS dispatcher's workplaces located in Poznan and Stargard.

The ANP RJ control system enables efficient organization of railway traffic operation. The benefit lies in the possibility of automatic operation of the signalling system based on the operational daily train timetable and its current position. The system thus automatically sets the train routes on the correct, pre-planned tracks from the train timetable and at the right time.

"ANP RJ solves traffic management not from the safety point of view - this is solved by open-line, station and level crossing signalling systems - but from the point of view of the smoothness and efficiency of the railway vehicles movement," explains AŽD General Director Zdeněk Chrdle.

The TrafficSWing GTN operational application with the Automatic Route Setting (ANP RJ) function will provide PKP PLK dispatchers with a much higher quality and more accurate picture of the traffic situation than the current method of work based on the personal experience of each transport employee, the accuracy of estimation or personal calculation of minutes of train movement times. At the same time, the system will propose to the dispatcher a high-quality solution respecting the smoothness of rail traffic, and he will make a decision whether and which proposed solution to accept. Automatic Route Setting (ANP RJ) can tirelessly construct thousands of train routes every day and resolve all arising traffic conflicts in the controlled area.
"The Automatic Route Setting system has been used on the lines of the Railway Administration and AŽD in the Czech Republic since 2016 and is routinely operated on almost 1,000 km of lines at 125 traffic points. Thanks to these many years of experience, we greatly appreciate the opportunity to introduce this intelligent railway traffic management system also on Polish railways, where we are becoming a pioneer in the supply of this innovative technology," concludes Zdeněk Chrdle.

Switzerland

Alstom to modernise Lausanne's m2 metro with new CBTC system and fleet mid-life upgrade

On May 5th, Transports publics de la région lausannoise (tl) and Alstom signed a contract worth 295 million euros to modernise Lausanne's m2 metro line. The project will enable more frequent services and increased passenger capacity through the deployment of a new communications based train control (CBTC) system, combined with the mid-life modernisation of the existing train fleet.

The m2 metro is the backbone of public transport in the Lausanne region. The new signalling system will allow trains to operate closer together with greater precision, enabling more trains to run on the line, reducing waiting times and supporting growing passenger demand, while maintaining the highest levels of safety and reliability.

The Urbalis Fluence CBTC solution selected for the project uses a train centric architecture, with more intelligence onboard to maximise capacity and operational flexibility while limiting infrastructure changes and additional trackside equipment. It is well suited to modernising existing, fully automated metro lines, improving performance while making best use of current assets and enabling phased upgrades aligned with long term network strategies.

Alongside the signalling upgrade, the m2 fleet will undergo a major mid life modernisation at Alstom's site in Villeneuve in Switzerland, effectively extending the lifetime of the metro cars. The FlexCare Modernise programme will consist in renewing key onboard systems, notably the train control and monitoring system (TCMS), which will be fully integrated with the new CBTC signalling, as well as in enhancements to interior areas and a refresh of trains' exterior. Together, these upgrades will unlock higher capacity, improved reliability and a smoother passenger experience, demonstrating Alstom's capability to deliver complex mid-life modernisation programmes fully integrated with advanced digital signalling systems.

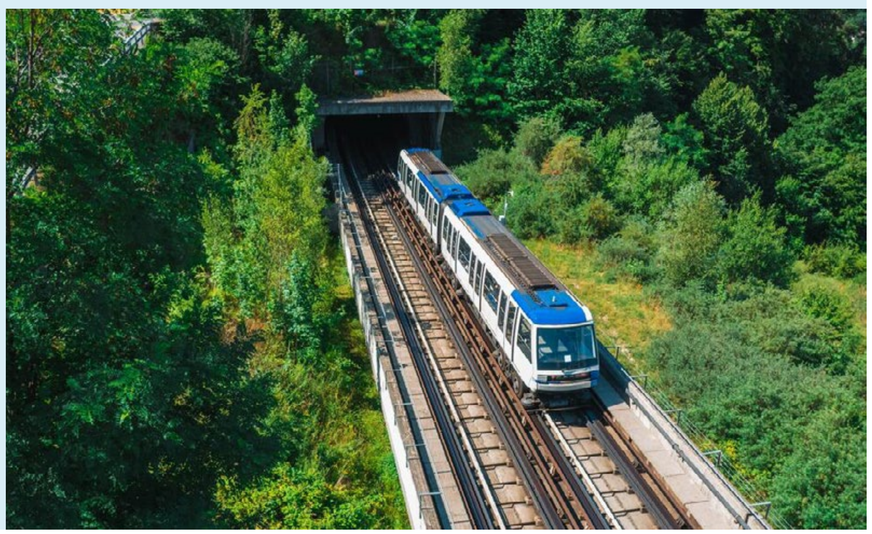
Patricia Solioz Mathys, CEO of tl, emphasises the importance of modernisation: "As Switzerland's only metro system, m2 is a real success story. The need to modernise the automation systems and increase capacity is crucial for the whole transport network in the Lausanne metropolitan area. We are delighted to be able to rely on Alstom's expertise and knowledge in carrying out these strategic operations."

"This modernisation will bring more frequent, more reliable journeys for passengers and help the city meet growing demand with shorter waits and a smoother ride. By pairing our new-generation, train-centric CBTC with a fully integrated mid-life upgrade of the fleet, we are boosting capacity while extending the performance of the existing trains for years to come. We are very happy to engage in this new project with tl and look forward to many years of continuous long-standing collaboration," said Marie Icardo, Managing Director of Alstom Switzerland.

The agreement also includes technical support and obsolescence management services, securing reliable operation of the m2 line through the transition period and beyond. The works will be carefully phased to minimise disruption to daily services. Most installation and testing activities will be carried out during short night time windows, ensuring that passenger services can be maintained throughout the programme. This reflects the brownfield nature of the project, integrating a new generation CBTC system into a fully operational metro line.

About tl
Transports publics de la région lausannoise (tl) design, organise and operate daily public transport services for some 360,000 passengers. Every day, more than 2,000 staff members help to keep the network running. As a key player in the region and a recognised partner of local authorities, the tl contributes to the economic and social development of the Olympic capital.

Photo: The project will enable more frequent services and increased passenger capacity. ©tl



Euromaint awarded maintenance contracts in Sweden and Norway worth eur 300 million

EuroMaint, CAF Group's Nordic rail maintenance subsidiary, has secured new long-term rail maintenance contracts in Sweden and Norway with a combined estimated value of EUR 300 million. These contracts cement EuroMaint's leading position as a key partner for passenger, freight and infrastructure rail operators across the Nordic countries, while reinforcing its position as a benchmark provider of mobility services and reliable and sustainable transport solutions.

Spanning regional passenger services, freight locomotives and infrastructure maintenance vehicles, these contracts highlight EuroMaint's extensive technical expertise, strong engineering and digital capabilities, and the vast local workshop network that will deliver the work. These agreements underscore EuroMaint's capacity to manage the full asset lifecycle, maximising fleet availability, boosting performance, and increasing long-term value.

Pågatågen: Long-term passenger fleet maintenance contract in Southern Sweden
Skånetrafiken, the Public Transport Authority for Sweden's Skåne region, has awarded the operator VR Sverige the contract to operate and maintain Pågatågen regional rail services from December 2027. Under the agreement entered into with VR Sverige, EuroMaint will be responsible for maintaining the X61 regional fleet of 99 units for a term of nine years.

Central to the maintenance scope is a focus on long-term planning, system reliability, and fleet availability, guaranteeing robust operations and enhanced performance as the fleet matures. Most maintenance activities will be carried out at the Raus depot in Helsingborg, further strengthening EuroMaint's presence in southern Sweden.

Extension of the locomotive maintenance agreement with Green Cargo
In the freight segment, logistics operator Green Cargo has renewed its multi-year contract with EuroMaint to maintain its Rc/Rd locomotive fleet, the backbone of one of Sweden's largest freight fleets. The agreement with the Swedish operator covers both locomotive maintenance services and the supply of key components. Drawing on EuroMaint's nationwide network of maintenance depots (from Luleå to Malmö) the contract will support increased fleet availability, greater operational flexibility and the optimisation of lifecycle costs; all of which contribute to efficient and environmentally sustainable rail freight transport.

Infrastructure maintenance vehicles in Norway
EuroMaint has further expanded its Norwegian footprint, securing a new contract to maintain rail vehicles used for railway infrastructure works. Bane NOR, the Norwegian national railway infrastructure manager, has awarded the contract for a minimum term of four years. The agreement ensures the safe, efficient, and reliable operation of critical assets essential to sustaining a resilient and secure rail infrastructure.

A strategic milestone for EuroMaint and CAF
CAF has carried out numerous projects in the strategically important and growing Scandinavian market, including the supply of units for the high-speed line linking Oslo city centre with its airport, the Helsinki metro, and tram fleets for cities such as Stockholm, Oslo and Lund. This is in addition to the contracts currently under execution for the supply of new regional train fleets for Swedish operators Transitio AB and SJ AB, as well as the recent award for the upgrade of the Helsinki Metro signalling network using CBTC technology.

In addition, EuroMaint is a leader in the railway services sector. With a workforce of more than 1,000 people, it operates maintenance contracts for some of the region's main train fleets and supplies railway components to multiple operators.

With these new contracts, EuroMaint continues to expand its Nordic service backlog, positioning itself as a key driver of the region's shift toward smart and sustainable mobility. This transformation is one in which CAF has played an active role, underpinned by the successful delivery of numerous projects across the region in recent years.

From the Archives

Belgium

SNCB No. 5216 and 5307 struggle to start a heavy freight out of Ronet Yard on October 25th 1990. *John Sloane*

From the Archives

France

SNCF No. 17010 passes Pont Cardinet station with an outer suburban service heading for Gare St. Lazarre on October 27th 1983. *John Sloane*

From the Archives

Luxembourg

CFL No. 3614 runs light past Luxembourg depot on October 28th 1986. *John Sloane*

From the Archives

Poland

PKP No. SP45-097 departs Wolstyn with a short passenger train on March 7th 1989.
John Sloane