Railtalk Magazine Xtra

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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 238Xtra

In the news this month, and it's a case of what seems like a good idea might not be as revised EU ticketing rules would be insufficient to benefit international rail passengers.....

The European Commission proposed three regulations on May 13th to simplify booking and protect passengers' rights over missed connections. With the lengthy process of trilogue negotiations and rail sector consultation now underway, Transport & Environment has published a report entitled 'Advancing EU rail passenger rights', analysing how the Commission's proposals would play out in practice. T&E points out that the legislation as proposed would only improve booking options for two out of the 30 most frequently flown cross-border routes in the EU where a rail connection is viable: Barcelona – Paris and Madrid – Porto. There, the relevant rail operators would have to start to sell a through ticket, while on the other most frequently flown routes, they are not obliged to do so.

This is because the proposed legislation applies geographic limits to individual rail services, rather than covering the passenger's journey from start to finish. Operators are only mandated to sell tickets for cross-border services arriving in or departing from the country where they hold market dominance (over 50%). When a change of trains is required, say for a Paris – Roma journey with a change in Milano, the incumbent operator is not required to sell a through ticket. Currently, Trenitalia does sell Paris – Roma tickets, but SNCF Voyageurs does not, and the current EU proposal would not mandate SNCF to do so, T&E points out. While the legislation requires rail operators to share their ticketing data and inventory with independent retailers on fair, reasonable, and non-discriminatory terms, T&E calls for a change in the rules for incumbent operators' sales channels, some of which hold market shares of up to 90%. 'Without creating a requirement for major rail companies to sell their competitors' tickets for the rail equivalent journeys for the most frequently driven and flown routes in the EU, passengers will not be able to book popular trips such as Paris – Roma or Barcelona – Milano', says the campaign group.

One platform over one transaction

Because passenger rights in the proposal are tied strictly to a single transaction, it risks creating a landscape of unequal rights for passengers, depending on how their ticket was booked. The T&E report illustrates this issue with the Barcelona to Milano route. Booking the journey in one transaction on a third-party retail platform grants a single ticket and full legal protection. However, booking the exact same trains on the websites of the relevant state operators requires two separate transactions. This technicality strips the passenger of legal protection during disruption.

In the foreword of the T&E report, Robin Loos from the European consumer organisation BEUC says that 'making access to rights conditional on a single purchase does not reflect the reality faced by many passengers'. He criticised this rigid definition during the recent European Passenger Federation conference in Maastricht in a discussion on ticketing with T&E and booking platform Trainline. He proposed an alternative 'one platform' approach instead of the Commission's 'one transaction' rule. As an example, he asked Trainline whether it would be possible for the company to sell the French leg of a cross-border journey upfront 'because it's the cheapest ticket you can get', and for the retailer to alert the customer 'when the Spanish leg of my trip is available to buy, and I will make you one single ticket'. T&E also supports this approach, their report calling on EU institutions to extend the definition of a through ticket to journeys booked via a single retailer, rather than strictly limiting the definition to a single transaction. 'Otherwise, there is a risk that these new regulations will create unharmonised, unequal rights for passengers.'

The cost of missing connections

Missing a connection remains a common reality for European travellers. A joint questionnaire by T&E and French consumer advocacy group Que Choisir Ensemble found that 44% of rail passengers on multi-operator journeys have missed a connecting train at least once. Without guaranteed rights, travellers face the risk of having to foot the bill for a new ticket to complete their journey. On the 12 routes where passenger rights are not guaranteed, T&E estimates the average additional ticket cost from a missed connection increases the journey price by a factor of 1.6, equivalent to an additional €86. That is excluding accommodation costs when the last train of the day has been missed, which would be required in 50% of cases studied by T&E.

Until next month... **David**

This Page

ONCF No. 410 passes Oulad Ayyad hauling train No. 301 to Oujda. *Laurence Sly*

Front Cover

On June 14th, No. HL303 brings the ECS for the days steam tram workings to Biesme-sous-Thuin out of the shed at Thuin Ouest at the Musée du Tram Vicinal.

Andy Pratt

Florida Gulf & Atlantic Railroad Nos. 4448 and 107 skirt Escambia Bay while making their way from Milton to Pensacola. *Laurence Sly*

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Algeria

On May 10th, No. 060-DP-03 is seen on arrival at Algiers Agha station with the overnight service from Annaba. *Mark Torkington*

Algeria

On May 9th, No. 040-DJ-13 stands at Sidi Amar terminus in the suburbs of Annaba with one of the regular trains back to the city. *Mark Torkington*

On May 12th, No. 060-DS-01 pauses at El Harrache in the Algiers suburbs with an express train from Algiers to Oran. *Mark Torkington*

Australia

NSW Trains have repainted a complete XPT set in the original 1981 paint scheme to celebrate the approaching end of their careers. Power cars Nos. XP2006 and XP2009 and 6 carriages look fantastic as they work train No. NT33 Sydney to Casino service over a bridge near Pembrooke on the NSW North Coast line on May 7th. *Mark Bennett*

Preserved veteran ALCO RS3 No. 4001 approaches Maitland on the evening of April 19th on one of the final workings of Maitland steam fest. An Aurizon coal train and the trailing Distributed Power loco are passing on the left. *Mark Bennett*

Class 1144.255 is seen near Trattenbach with train No. REX 3607 from Linz to Kleinreifling. These push-pull trainsets called ‘CityShuttle’ have recently been banned from this line. *Thomas Niederl*

OBB Class 1293.100 working train No. GAG48442 is seen passing Ramingdorf-Haidershofen on June 6th. *Thomas Niederl*

Austria

OBB Class 1144.097 and 1144.286 with train No. DG54950 pass Lahrndorf on June 6th.
Thomas Niederl

Austria

Class 185.582 with train No. LGAG61003 passes Reichraming on June 26th. *Thomas Niederl*

OBB Class 2016.011 is seen with a freight train on the former Narrow Gauge line from Wieselburg to Gresten. Due to the high volume of freight, the line was converted to standard gauge in the 1990s. The photo is taken near Randegg-Franzenreith. Sadly, the passenger service was discontinued since the conversion to standard gauge. *Thomas Niederl*

OBB Class 1063.019 is bringing a load of round timber from Hieflau to Selzthal and is seen here next Gesäuse Eingang, a former passing loop. *Thomas Niederl*

Every Friday their is a additional express train No.1100 fro Graz to Linz. The weekend trains are the last remaining long distance trains with loco and carriages on this line and is seen here near the passing loop Pießling-Vorderstoder. *Thomas Niederl*

Austria

The Class 4020 EMUs were primarily used on the S-Bahn Network around Vienna. The trains are mostly being replaced by EMU Talent and Desiro Mainline. There are only a small number left in service, mostly on the all station services between Vienna and Tulln. The plans are to replace them this summer because new Stadler EMU double deck trains will then be in service and there will be lots of Desiro ML spare. We see in this photo Class 4020.288 with its driving trailer No. 6020 leading at Zeiselmauer-Kömigstetten. *Thomas Niederl*

Austria

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Austria

Multimodal circular logistics for Befesa

Wherever industrial residues are generated, logistics solutions need to be reliable, flexible and resource-efficient. For Befesa, ÖBB Rail Cargo Group (RCG) is moving salt slag from Sweden to Germany by rail – and is also using return flows.

Befesa is an international recycling and environmental services company. It processes industrial residues from the steel and aluminium industries, recovering valuable materials from them. One example is salt slag, which is generated during aluminium production and further processed in Germany.

End-to-end – from Sweden to Germany
The transport chain starts in Älmhult, southern Sweden, where MOBILER containers are positioned at the IKEA terminal ready for loading. From there, they are taken to Stena Aluminium, filled with salt slag and then transported to Germany by rail as single wagons. Part of the volume – up to 4,000 tonnes a year – travels via Maxi Terminal Hamm and onwards to Lünen, where the containers are transhipped before being delivered to Befesa's Lünen site. Most of the volume, up to 11,000 tonnes per year, is bound for Befesa Salzschlacke GmbH in Hannover. There, the containers are transferred using MOBILER trucks, with the unloading point just around 370 metres away.

Round trips instead of empty runs
The logistics operation does not end with delivery. Around one third of the MOBILER containers are reloaded with REKAL salt and returned. This makes effective use of return flows and reduces empty runs. MOBILER flat wagons and MOBILER halftainers are used for the transports. They enable a flexible switch between rail and road – even where there is no industrial siding directly at the site.

Fewer trucks on the road
RCG handles 90 per cent of the end-to-end package for Befesa – from rail transport within the single wagonload network through to the provision of MOBILER equipment. By shifting the transports to rail, around 600 lorry journeys for salt slag and a further 240 lorry journeys for REKAL salt are replaced every year. The collaboration with Befesa therefore shows how industrial circular logistics can be organised efficiently and more sustainably.

Modernised terminal in Přerov strengthens intermodal logistics

ÖBB Rail Cargo Group (RCG) has opened the modernized container terminal in Přerov-Horní Moštěnice. By doubling the terminal area and increasing capacity, the Czech site is further strengthening its role as a logistics hub in Central Europe.

As part of the revitalization project, RCG has strategically expanded the container terminal to eliminate existing bottlenecks. Specifically, the terminal area was increased by around 17,100 m^2, nearly doubling to a total of around 36,000 m^2. In addition, enlarged handling areas, improved rail connections and modern transshipment technology enable more efficient operations and higher train frequencies. With capacity increasing from 1,300 to 3,000 TEU — Twenty-foot Equivalent Units — customers in combined transport also benefit from greater flexibility.

Přerov as a key logistics hub
The modernized terminal ensures faster and more reliable processes, as well as significantly increased handling capacities for containers and semi-trailers. This further strengthens Přerov's position as a distribution center in Central Moravia and as a key node in the international network. Additional connections to the ports of Koper and Rijeka are also planned, along with closer integration into intermodal and Eurasian transport flows.

Strengthening climate-friendly rail transport
With this expansion, RCG is continuing to drive the modal shift to rail. Expanded combined transport services help reduce CO_2 emissions and ease the burden on road infrastructure. The modernized terminal therefore reinforces the role of rail as a sustainable and future-ready logistics solution in Europe.

High-speed train in tow

How the ÖBB Rail Cargo Group (RCG) brought an Italian high-speed train to Austria

Before a train can enter regular passenger service, it has to prove what it can do: on the line, under real conditions and in accordance with the requirements of the relevant infrastructure. This is exactly why RCG brought an Italian high-speed train operated by Trenitalia, part of Italy's state railway, to Austria. The Frecciarossa 1000 trainset is being tested on Austrian infrastructure – an important step on the way to approval for passenger service.

From Italy to Austria
The train's journey began in Osmannoro, Italy. From there, the trainset was transported with a towing coupling via Tarvisio and on to Vienna-Kledering. Coupling wagons were used to ensure that the high-speed trainset could be safely integrated into the transport operation. These were also needed in Austria for several more days after delivery for the subsequent test runs. For RCG, this meant that the transport did not end with the train's arrival, but also included the provision and coordination of the required equipment.

Special transport by rail
Transports of this kind are far from standard operations. Vehicle, route, technical requirements and time windows all have to be precisely coordinated. Especially on an international route such as the one via Tarvisio, experience, planning reliability and close coordination between all parties involved are essential. RCG organised the entire transport as an end-to-end logistics solution: from transport planning, including all the necessary approvals in Italy, through to delivery in Austria.

Ready for the next step
In Austria, the trainset is now being used for test runs on the local infrastructure. These include checks such as speed and running behaviour – an important step on the way to approval for passenger service. For RCG, the focus was on providing the right transport solution: getting the vehicle safely to where it was needed for the next stage in the approval process. In doing so, RCG demonstrates that rail freight can do far more than traditional freight transport – including reliably bringing complex vehicles onto the rail network.

No. HL303 awaits departure time at Thuin Ouest with the 13:30 departure to Biesme-sous-Thuin on June 14th. The 138 year old loco is the oldest working steam loco in Belgium, and is steamed every 2nd Sunday of the month from May to October. *Andy Pratt*

Czech Republic

Two members of Class 810 DMUs are seen here at Bzenec. The left one is heading as train No. Os4169 to Veseli nad Moravou, the right one is on its very short journey to Moravsky Pisek. *Thomas Niederl*

Czech Republic

The station at Nemotice is equipped with semaphore signalling. Here driving trailer No. 80-29.220 with DMU Class 854.201 departs Nemotice towards Veseli as train No. Os4115. *Thomas Niederl*

Czech Republic

Kocour and EffiShunter: locomotives separated by 43 years met on the track

On the regional line Pečky – Bečváry/Kouřim, an exceptional meeting of two generations of locomotives of the 742 series took place on the last day of April. The traditional "Kocour" (742.333) from 1983 and the modernized EffiShunter 1000M (742.800) headed together to the Bošice railway station. The meeting of locomotives separated by 43 years is captured in this photo. It was created on the occasion of the modernization of the hundredth EffiShunter 1000M, which CZ LOKO delivered to ČD Cargo.

"I greatly appreciate our long-term successful cooperation with ČD Cargo, which has lasted for seventeen years. During that time, the company has taken delivery of more than 75% of all modernized EffiShunters 1000M from us, and more will follow soon. I am therefore pleased that the first and the jubilee 1000th unit were delivered to ČD Cargo, " said Josef Gulyás, CEO and Vice Chairman of the Board of Directors of CZ LOKO.

The anniversary EffiShunter follows the legendary "Kocoury"

The anniversary locomotive is unique not only for its name, but also for its retro paintwork, which refers to the original 742 series ("Cats"). The photo shows a symbolic meeting of the drivers and the handover of freight cars, which are taken over from the "Cat" by the modern EffiShunter 1000M.

" The modernized EffiShunter 1000M machines from CZ LOKO follow on from the proven 742 series locomotives from ČKD Praha and at the same time meet current requirements for efficiency, safety and reliability of operation. For us, the 742.800 locomotive represents a combination of Czech railway tradition with modern new generation technologies, " said Michal Roh, Director of Sales Support at ČD Cargo.

The EffiShunter 1000M with the round designation 742.800 is the first representative of the new number series of modernized machines 742.8xx, which follows on from the previously delivered units of the 742.7xx series. CZ LOKO completed this unit as part of the third series of deliveries for ČD Cargo, including the modernization of 40 machines. The remaining locomotives will be gradually delivered until 2027.

EffiShunter 1000M: a reliable machine for medium-duty use

The EffiShunter 1000M is a diesel locomotive for medium-heavy shunting and line service. It is a completely modernized machine, based on the original 740 and 742 series locomotives. However, the EffiShunter 1000M differs from them at first glance with improved hoods and a raised driver's cab with excellent visibility.

The interior of the locomotive has also undergone a fundamental change, led by the powerful Caterpillar CAT 3508C combustion engine, which ensures high reliability and low operating costs. Of course, there is a fully digital control system, on-line monitoring and the possibility of equipping it with ETCS security. EffiShunter 1000M is approved for operation in the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Hungary.

CZ LOKO: a traditional Czech company is expanding throughout Europe

CZ LOKO has been engaged in the production and modernization of locomotives since 1995, and is one of the most important players in this field in Central Europe. It is based in Česká Třebová - the place where railway workshops were established as early as 1849. It is here and at the Jihlava plant that modern locomotives and other rolling stock bearing the CZ LOKO brand are produced today.

The company also specializes in long-term servicing of locomotives and other rolling stock through its subsidiary CZ LOKO Services. It places particular emphasis on reliability, easy maintenance, and long service life of the machines.

Over the years, the traditional Czech manufacturer has become an export-oriented company operating in more than twenty European countries. Today, CZ LOKO locomotives are used in Slovakia, Italy, Hungary, Slovenia, Croatia, Turkey and the Scandinavian countries, for example.

In addition to production, the company has also been investing in the development of innovative technologies for modern railways for a long time. It focuses primarily on solutions that increase operational safety, efficiency and environmental friendliness of rail transport. Significant projects include, for example, the first Czech locomotive equipped with an alcohol immobilizer, which the company presented at the Rail Business Days 2025 trade fair.

ČD Cargo: freight carrier with a modern fleet

ČD Cargo is the largest rail freight carrier in the Czech Republic and one of the most important rail freight companies in Central Europe. The company was established in 2007 by separating freight transport from České dráhy and today provides transport of a wide range of commodities – minerals, industrial products, intermodal units or extraordinary or military shipments. It operates not only in the Czech Republic, but also in other European countries through branches and subsidiaries.

The company has long focused on optimizing operating costs, including by modernizing its locomotive fleet. The conversion of the 742 series locomotives, which until recently dominated in independent traction performance, to the more modern 742.71 series, is a necessary step to maintain the operability of ČD Cargo diesel locomotives. Along with lower costs, the modernization also brings highe

Since 2018, the company has been gradually taking over modernized EffiShunters 1000M from CZ LOKO. After the first series of fifty machines, other orders followed and modernizations continue to this day. The anniversary locomotive 742.800 symbolically connects the tradition of the legendary "Cats" with a new generation of modern shunting and line locomotives designed for the next decades of operation.

Czech Republic

The station at Nemotice is equipped with semaphore signalling. Here driving trailer No. 80-29.226 with DMU Class 854.204 are seen near Nemotice with train No. Os4115. *Thomas Niederl*

Czech Republic

Class 854.201 with train No. Os4116 heads towards Brno and is seen near the halt of Brankovice. *Thomas Niederl*

Czech Republic

Class 854.201 arrives with train No. Os4113 at Nesovice, heading to Uherske Hradiste.
Thomas Niederl

Czech Republic

A RECORD YEAR FOR ŠKODA GROUP: NEW ORDERS WORTH ALMOST € 1.8 BILLION

Škoda Group has completed one of the most significant years in its modern history. The year 2025 confirmed the Group's return to long-term growth, stable business performance and strengthened customer confidence in key European markets. The Group secured new orders worth approximately € 1.8 billion, representing the highest annual increase in orders in its history. EBITDA more than doubled compared with 2024, reaching € 143 million.

"2025 was partly a year of stabilisation, but for the first time it was clearly a year of growth. The preceding period focused on strengthening customer confidence, streamlining production and returning to disciplined project management. Last year was the first in which these measures were fully reflected in the Group's results and, at the same time, the second most successful in terms of business performance since 2019," comments Petr Novotný, CEO of Škoda Group.

Railway production played a significant role in the growth in orders, particularly in the area of battery-powered and hybrid trains, which respond to current market needs and the gradual electrification of railway lines. Battery-powered trains were among the most significant orders of 2025 and confirmed the Group's technological readiness to offer solutions for modern and sustainable regional transport, not only in the Czech Republic but also abroad. "We see the interest in battery-powered trains as a clear signal from the market. This is a technology that enables a rapid increase in the share of zero-emission transport, even where the infrastructure is not yet fully in place. We see significant potential in it, and its further development will be one of our key priorities in the coming years," adds Petr Novotný.

"We are very pleased with the results achieved, which reflect disciplined financial management, operational efficiency and the strong performance of our business. We are entering the next period with optimism and a clear focus on sustainable growth," comments Jaroslav Zoch, CFO and member of the Board of Directors of Škoda Group.

Trains

At the end of 2025, Škoda Group secured a contract to supply up to 16 battery-powered trains to Latvia, worth approximately € 165 million, and also won a contract to supply up to 36 battery-powered trains to Slovakia, worth € 330 million. Alongside conventional battery-powered trains, other segments of railway manufacturing also performed well in 2025, including hybrid battery-diesel trains for the operator RegioJet. In total, the Group now has orders for more than 100 battery-powered trains. It also secured a contract to manufacture electric trains with a top speed of up to 200 km/h, which Škoda Group will supply to the operator Arriva for service on the route between Prague and western Bohemia. In 2025, Škoda Group secured a contract for urban commuter for the Swedish operator Saltsjobanan, comprising up to 31 vehicles worth more than € 230 million.

Trams

In terms of the portfolio, the tram business also strengthened significantly last year, both on the domestic Czech market and, in particular, on Western European markets. In 2025, the first 20 trams were successfully delivered to Prague, just 24 months after the contract was signed. The 52T tram for Prague is the most modern tram on the market, and its exceptional nature is further demonstrated by the Red Dot Design Award. On the German market, Škoda Group has so far sold 300 trams to 11 cities, winning further tenders thanks to its proprietary technical solutions and its emphasis on quality and passenger comfort.

"Trams are one of the pillars of our growth today. Thanks to our modular approach and in-house technologies, we are able to offer solutions that stand up to the most demanding European tenders," says Petr Novotný.

Trolleybus exports are at a high level

Aside from rail transport, Škoda Group has also been successful with trolleybuses, specifically in Germany, where it will supply up to 61 trolleybuses to Esslingen. A further 70 Czech-made trolleybuses will be delivered to Tallinn in Estonia and up to 75 to Sofia in Bulgaria. Škoda Group has also secured contracts in the Czech Republic, specifically in Teplice, Jihlava, Chomutov and Ústí nad Labem. However, in 2025, export orders dominated, totalling more than 200 vehicles.

Service

Last year, Škoda Group also strengthened its position in the area of service and long-term contracts for the modernisation, repair and maintenance of rail vehicles. In 2025 the revenues in service reached € 297 million. These will be carried out primarily in Šumperk, where Škoda Group has its largest service facility for rail vehicles, and at the Martinov plant in Ostrava. These contracts provide long-term, predictable revenue and complement the Group's production programme. In addition, Škoda Group has service facilities in regions where it is actively involved, such as the Baltic states, the Balkans and Germany.

Digital & Technology

Škoda Group regularly invests over € 9 million a year in CAPEX in Digital division. In 2025, Škoda Group's Belgian affiliate, The Signalling Company, also succeeded in certifying its own railway signalling system – ETCS. This is a revolutionary product that propels Škoda Group to the forefront of the global market in this segment. Furthermore, compared to competing solutions, the system is smaller, lighter and easier to install, so the Group sees great potential here not only for new vehicles but also for retrofitting older ones. ETCS is a standardised European signalling system that will soon be mandatory for all trains across Europe.

In addition, Škoda Group is, of course, continuing to strengthen its position in digital technologies, where the most popular are anti-collision system that prevents tram accidents, and an advanced automatic train operation system (ATO) that reduces electricity consumption by up to 15 per cent. It is also intensively developing its own digital products in the fields of telematics and cyber security.

Components

In the components sector, Škoda Group strengthened its position by securing new orders worth € 367 million. Investments in research and development of the components division amounted to € 7 million. At the same time, Škoda Group received its first order for its own battery system for rail vehicles and commenced development of a battery pack designed for battery electric multiple trains (BEMUs). In line with its long-term strategy, it also continued its expansion into non-European markets by establishing a joint venture with the Indian company TATA, focused on the production of components for rail vehicles, primarily for the rapidly growing Indian market.

Investments in expanding production

Following last year's wave of production capacity expansion, Škoda Group has reached a stage where it can increase production without the need for further major investment. "In recent years, we have invested a total of € 107 million in expanding production. Thanks to this, we have been able to increase production capacity by up to 100 railway carriages per year," explains Petr Novotný.

Outlook for 2026

According to the Group's management, 2026 will be a year of further growth and strengthening of its technological position. The focus will remain on rail vehicles, particularly electric, battery-powered and hybrid trains for regional and commuter transport. Škoda Group will continue to build on its strong position in the domestic Czech-Slovak market, which it regards as a key source of references and innovation, whilst systematically strengthening exports to Central Europe – particularly Germany and Poland – and to other European regions, such as Romania, Serbia and France. In addition to Europe, the group is also focusing on selected non-European markets, primarily Central Asia, the United States and India, where it is developing long-term cooperation with local partners. "Our aim is sustainable growth based on technical expertise, the ability to deliver complex projects and long-term customer trust," concludes Petr Novotný.

Czech Republic

Class 854.023 working train No. Sp1764 is seen at Nevojice. *Thomas Niederl*

Czech Republic

Driving trailer No. 80-29.306 and Class 854.209 with train No. Os4112 are seen near to Nevojice.
Thomas Niederl

Czech Republic

Rail System's Class 749.262 stands at Černý Kříž on June 20th, waiting for a path forward over the single line to Nové Údolí with the Rychlík Šumava excursion train from České Budějovice. *Andy Pratt*

Czech Republic

Having recently arrived from České Budějovice, Rail System's Class 749.262 has propelled the Rychlík Šumava excursion train into the loop at Nové Údolí before running round and stabling for 4½ hours before it's return at 16:30. The train runs on selected Saturdays through the summer and a return ticket costs 416 CzK (approx £15). *Andy Pratt*

SNCB AM96 unit No. 487 stands at Maubeuge station, over the French border, waiting to work train No. S63 19869, the 11:45 to Charleroi Central on June 14th. *Andy Pratt*

Press Class 140.069 is seen near Sunstedt working a rake of Falkenberg to Beddingen empty Shimmns on April 23rd. *Erik de Zeeuw*

On April 26th, HVLE Class 159.003 passes Frellstedt with a westbound sand hopper train.
Erik de Zeeuw

Germany

New intermodal solution for transport to Switzerland

DB Cargo BTT rapidly establishes a flexible alternative for container transport

The containers are ready, the transport schedules are in place – yet suddenly key components are missing from the system.

This was precisely the situation that emerged towards the end of 2025. It soon became clear that key market conditions were set to change fundamentally – with immediate implications for existing intermodal transport chains: the container wagons previously used for transport to Switzerland were no longer available. This created an urgent need for action for many freight forwarders. Stable supply chains are indispensable, particularly in the chemical industry, as production processes must not be disrupted. What was needed were short-term solutions that would take effect immediately – and integrate seamlessly into existing transport structures.

DB Cargo BTT delivers precisely this solution. The unit of DB Cargo Liquids & Bulk specialising in dangerous goods and combined transport has developed a viable alternative for container transport to Switzerland within just three months. With a clear concept, its own equipment and high operational flexibility, it has been ensuring stable transport services since the start of the year – exactly where the market needed new solutions at short notice.

Wagon pool as the key to the solution
One factor was crucial in ensuring that the new concept could quickly become a reality: the availability of the right equipment. Whilst short-term capacity was no longer available on the market to the usual extent, DB Cargo BTT was able to draw on two- and four-axle container wagons – comprising DB Cargo BTT's own equipment as well as additional wagons from the DB Cargo network. This wagon pool makes all the difference: services can be organised at short notice and reliably secured.

Container wagons were specifically repositioned and consolidated in the Basel area. An additional buffer track ensures that wagons are available at all times – even when transport requirements arise at short notice.

"Our advantage clearly lies in our own fleet of container wagons. This enables us to react quickly and offer our customers reliable solutions even in a volatile environment."
Marco Borgwardt, Head of Sales and Solution Design Multi-Modal at DB Cargo BTT

From Basel directly to the siding
Operationally, too, the solution follows a clear principle: short distances, quick transfers, and smooth processes. The containers arrive in Basel via intermodal transport, single-wagon transport or by lorry. DB Cargo BTT provides the necessary on-site transhipment facilities – from rail to rail and from road to rail. Full flexibility, with no additional interfaces and no unnecessary delays.

Container wagons are ready for transport to Switzerland.
From there, the containers are transported onwards on the provided wagons to various private sidings in Switzerland – for example to Schweizerhalle, Monthey or Visp.In principle, any location connected to the rail network can be reached.

The efficiency of the new concept is clear: DB Cargo BTT moves around 100 containers by rail between Germany and Switzerland every month. The structure is deliberately designed to grow flexibly as demand increases.

Added value for freight forwarders and chemical industry customers
For many market players, the solution opens up new opportunities – particularly for freight forwarders who wish to continue offering sustainable rail transport to Switzerland. They can utilise the provided wagon capacity and infrastructure instead of having to set up their own costly solutions.

At the same time, the solution enables transport to remain on rail, avoiding a shift to road.This is a decisive advantage, particularly for the chemical industry: rail is considered a more sustainable and safer mode of transport, especially when transporting sensitive and dangerous goods. Furthermore, existing supply chains remain stable and production processes remain predictable.

Stability in a dynamic environment
What began as a rapid response to changing conditions is now a viable solution for the market. DB Cargo BTT demonstrates how stable and efficient transport operations can be established even under significant time pressure – with the right equipment, clear processes and operational strength.

For customers, one thing matters above all else: container transport to Switzerland remains possible, predictable and by rail. And this ensures that supply chains remain stable – even in a dynamic market environment.

Germany

New flexible car carrier wagons for the Automotive RailNet

DB Cargo Automotive expands its fleet with modern 560.4 wagons

DB Cargo Automotive is continuing to modernise its wagon fleet and has put new Laaeffrs 560.4 car carrier wagons into operation. The first 60 wagons were delivered this spring and introduced into DB Cargo's industry-specific Automotive RailNet for use by multiple customers. The aim is to meet the changing requirements of the automotive industry with flexible and high-performance equipment.

A proven concept, systematically enhanced

The 560.4 design is based on the already established 560 wagon family, which has proven itself in the market for many years. The latest generation builds on its key strengths. As with some earlier designs, the 560.4 can also transport cars weighing up to 3.2 tonnes each – an important prerequisite for transporting heavy electric vehicles. Thanks to flexible loading decks and the so-called flat wagon position, particularly high vehicles such as vans or large SUVs can also be loaded safely and efficiently. For customers, this means flexibility when loading, efficient use of wagon capacity and an optimum fit with manufacturers' modern vehicle portfolios.

"The automotive industry is undergoing profound change: vehicles are becoming larger and heavier. We identified these requirements at an early stage and are consistently investing in flexible car carrier wagons," explains Kai Birnstein, Head of Sales Automotive at DB Cargo Logistics. "Even in challenging times, we are continuously modernising our fleet."

International procurement

One distinctive aspect of the project for DB Cargo is the procurement of car carrier wagons from outside Europe. In close partnership with CRRC – the world's largest rail vehicle manufacturer – extensive preparations were agreed and successfully carried out. The successful European approval of the enhanced wagons at the start of the year marks an important milestone for the project partners. It is the result of close collaboration between DB Cargo Automotive, DB Cargo's Assets & Maintenance unit and the manufacturer CRRC.

"Through continuous collaboration and the sharing of technical expertise, we successfully qualified the manufacturer. On this basis, the car carrier wagons were developed, produced and approved in line with clearly defined requirements and quality standards. This allows us to expand our sourcing network and benefit from significantly larger production capacities," says Tomasz Jakub Paczesny, Head of Vehicle Projects, Assets & Maintenance, at DB Cargo.

The wagons were transported by ship to the seaport of Brake (Unterweser), where they were lifted from the vessels with great precision. "Both during the preliminary coordination and the unloading process, the Port of Brake demonstrated a high level of professionalism," emphasises Tobias Sander, Project Manager at DB Cargo Logistics. At the port, the wagons were unpacked, placed on the rails, coupled and inspected before being put into regular service.

Drawing on experience from operations and maintenance Maintenance and life-cycle costs were also incorporated into the development process. "For the new-build wagons, we consistently drew on experience from maintenance and operations and ensured they were built to the latest standards," emphasises Thomas Mayer, Head of Maintenance & Engineering at DB Cargo Logistics.

For example, strength optimisations were made and maintainability improved. This increases wagon availability and reduces operating costs in the long term – added value for customers and operators alike.

Outlook: gradual expansion of the fleet

The delivery of the first 60 wagons marks an important first step. Further car carrier wagons of this design are set to follow. In this way, DB Cargo Automotive is gradually optimising its fleet and strengthening its role as a reliable and innovative partner to the automotive industry.

Germany

Poland–Sweden rail ferry back in service

DB Cargo FLS organises regular services for railcars up to 120 metres long to Sweden

DB Cargo Full Load Solutions Nordics (TRANSA Spedition GmbH) has been transporting rails between southern Poland and Sweden for a year, thereby supplying railway infrastructure projects and supporting the expansion of rail transport across the country.

Services generally run once a week, with a key component of these transports being the rail ferry, which departs daily in the early afternoon from Świnoujście in north-western Poland and arrives in the evening in Ystad on the Baltic coast of southern Sweden. With around 540 metres of track capacity, the ferry can accommodate almost an entire freight train. Collection takes place at the factory, from where the long rails are transported by train to their destination without any further transhipment. This makes the transport particularly efficient and sustainable, reduces additional shunting movements and shortens journey times.

The biggest challenge in transporting rails up to 120 metres long is timing and load security. To ensure that the track works for which the long rails are required, can be carried out during the scheduled closure, careful planning and monitoring of the transport with delivery to the nearest hour is necessary. Due to the length of the rails, they must be loaded onto several wagons simultaneously; DB Cargo FLS ensures the load is securely held in place using appropriate fixtures.

Today's solution builds on a familiar concept. Following the closure of the ferry service around ten years ago, the challenge lay in bringing the partners involved back together and establishing a viable operational transport system.

Together with Väte Rail, the shipping company Unity Line and the ports involved, a robust process has been established. Close coordination between all parties involved across the interfaces ensures that even shipments with high requirements can be handled in a stable and reliable manner.
The ferry service is already being used to transport coils and scrap metal from Denmark and Sweden and is suitable for almost all types of freight. In doing so, the DB Cargo FLS team is establishing another international link for reliable transport throughout Europe.

Siemens secures long-term service contract for 61 battery-powered trains in Westphalia

Rock Rail is relying on Siemens Mobility's comprehensive Railigent X operations and maintenance concept in its work with the Westfalen-Lippe Local Transport Authority (NWL) to further develop regional rail transport in the Network North Westphalia (NNW). At the heart of the project is a full-service contract for 61 battery-electric Mireo Plus B trains, with a term of up to 30 years.

As part of this long-term service package, Siemens Mobility will take full responsibility for the maintenance of the fleet, thereby ensuring almost 100 per cent availability. The aim is to achieve particularly reliable, efficient and sustainable operations on the Network North Westphalia, where the state-of-the-art battery-powered trains will enter service from December 2029.

Elmar Zeiler, CEO of Customer Service at Siemens Mobility: "Long-term service contracts are a key factor in ensuring reliable and sustainable rail transport. This contract underscores precisely this importance: with our full-service approach, we are taking on complete maintenance of the Mireo Plus B fleet on the Network North Westphalia, thereby ensuring virtually uninterrupted availability over many years. In doing so, we are laying the foundations for efficient, cost-effective operations whilst also making an important contribution to the decarbonization of rail transport in Westphalia."

Mike Kean, Chief Operating Officer: "Reaching financial close on NWL marks another important milestone for Rock Rail and reflects the continued momentum of our business in Germany. The project demonstrates how innovative financing structures, specialist rolling stock expertise and long-term private capital can help deliver cleaner, more efficient transport solutions. We are proud to be working with Siemens Mobility, John Laing and NWL to bring this important fleet into service for passengers across the region."

Christiane Auffermann, Managing Director of NWL: "An attractive rail service needs more than just modern trains. For us, it is crucial that passengers on the Northern Westphalia network continue to benefit from a reliable and efficient service in the future. We are setting the course for this with our long-term service concept. At the same time, the planned investments in regional service and maintenance infrastructure send an important signal for the sustainable development of Westphalia-Lippe as a railway hub."

Customer Services: the key to availability and cost-effectiveness
Under the long-term service contract, Siemens Mobility plays a central role throughout the entire lifecycle of the trains. The Customer Services division ensures that the trains can be operated continuously, reliably and cost-effectively. To this end, the company combines preventive, corrective and predictive maintenance, as well as digital analysis with solutions such as Railigent X, to enable condition-based maintenance even before the trains enter the workshop. This reduces downtime, optimises maintenance processes and sustainably lowers operating costs.

Sustainable technology for the mobility transition
The new Mireo Plus B trains are battery-powered multiple units (BEMUs) that draw their power from overhead lines and cover non-electrified sections of track with zero emissions. Intelligent energy management systems and energy recovery during braking ensure high efficiency and low operating costs. In addition to sustainable propulsion technology, the trains offer a high level of passenger comfort – including Wi-Fi, numerous charging points, accessible boarding and spacious multi-purpose areas.

Germany

Siemens launches digitalized Vectron X locomotive and opens new Rail Service Center in Munich-Allach

Siemens Mobility has unveiled the next generation of highly digitalized locomotives for freight and passenger transport – the Vectron X – to customers and international media at its newly opened Rail Service Center in Munich-Allach.

The new locomotive is based on the market-leading Vectron platform, which has proven itself in daily operation with nearly 3,000 units sold. Vectron X combines this proven technology with app-based functionalities, open interfaces for third-party providers, and a central Smart Screen in the cab. This allows the locomotive to continuously evolve with future customer requirements and be flexibly adapted to different operational needs.

For operators, Vectron X enhances ease of operation and transparency. Data-driven applications, targeted maintenance, and app-based features help optimize operating costs and improve how efficiently each vehicle is deployed.

With its open, software-based architecture, Vectron X is part of Siemens Xcelerator – Siemens' open digital business platform. It seamlessly connects rolling stock, operations, services, and infrastructure, enabling the integration of partner solutions via standardized interfaces.

"With the Vectron X locomotive, we continue to evolve as a European market leader and, as part of the Siemens Xcelerator portfolio, creating a scalable digital platform that grows with the requirements of our customers. Standardized interfaces and software-based functionalities enable more efficient operations throughout the entire lifecycle," said Michael Peter, CEO of Siemens Mobility. "Together with our expanding service offering and the new Rail Service Center in Munich-Allach, we are creating a fully digitalized end-to-end portfolio that seamlessly connects operations and maintenance and enables highly efficient deployment of our locomotives in both freight and passenger transport."

"The Vectron X perfectly connects the real and digital worlds by bringing digital functions directly into the locomotive. Smart Screen, app-based applications, TrainPlay, and near real-time connectivity simplify operation and make locomotive operations more transparent and significantly more efficient. Vectron X combines proven Vectron performance with intelligent software, creating clear added value for operators, locomotive drivers, and maintenance teams," said Andre Rodenbeck, CEO Rolling Stock at Siemens Mobility.

App Store and digitalized driver's cab

In the driver's cab, the Vectron X relies on a digital operating concept. It complements the proven Vectron driver's cab, with which locomotive drivers across Europe are already familiar. A central 11.6-inch Smart Screen consolidates key applications and information directly in the cockpit, ranging from operational data and route information to third-party applications available via an App Store. Additionally, selected customer- and operator-specific applications that drivers currently use on smartphones or tablets – such as for mission planning, operational coordination, or customer-specific information – will be displayed directly on the Smart Screen or mirrored via TrainPlay. This simplifies handling and supports more efficient workflows.

With this approach, Siemens Mobility is bringing a CarPlay-like solution to rail for the first time, transforming the driver's cab into a digital workspace that provides easier access to information and significantly streamlines processes.

Remote control functionalities

Siemens Mobility is also bringing new digital functions to the rails for vehicle preparation. Remote Start allows the locomotive to be activated from a distance, significantly accelerating readiness for service and increasing operational flexibility.

Near real-time connectivity and predictive maintenance

A key feature of Vectron X is its comprehensive connectivity. The locomotive can transmit operational data in near real-time and securely connect to digital systems. This forms the basis for early detection of irregularities, more targeted maintenance measures, and a significant reduction in unplanned failures. This helps to stabilize operations and further improve availability. Advanced diagnostics, analytics, and condition monitoring functions also provide greater transparency regarding the locomotive's condition. Operators can better assess the technical health of individual systems. Maintenance is able to shift from reactive to proactive, substantially increasing vehicle availability.

New Rail Service Center: Expanding European service network

Alongside the Vectron X launch, Siemens Mobility has opened a newly modernized Rail Service Center in Munich-Allach. With the new facility, the company triples the capacity at the site from around 25 to up to 80 overhauls and accident repairs per year. As one of the largest industrial employers in the region, Siemens Mobility has invested around 250 million euros in expanding the site in Allach where it employs approximately 2,500 people.

"The new Rail Service Center Munich-Allach is our competence center for the maintenance of Vectron locomotives – from overhauls to accident repairs – and another important milestone in expanding our European service network," says Elmar Zeiler, CEO Customer Services at Siemens Mobility. "With significantly increased capacity and fully digitalized workshop processes, we are creating the basis for faster and more predictable workshop visits."

Customers benefit from significantly shorter turnaround times and high locomotive availability. Solutions such as Railigent X enable condition-based maintenance before a vehicle reaches the workshop: anomalies are detected earlier, spare parts are scheduled faster, and repairs are prepared more precisely.

This is complemented by consistently digital workshop processes that integrate paperless workflows, digital documentation, and optimized parts logistics.

On May 29th, DB Class 111.110 stands at Regensburg with a RE2 service to Munchen Hbf.
Class47

Germany

App instead of car – how DB Regio is responding to new mobility needs

From now on, passengers can find, book, and pay for dott scooters and bicycles nationwide directly in the DB Navigator app. The Navigator is being consistently developed into the central access point for connected travel, marking another step towards seamlessly integrated mobility across all modes of transport. As the first nationwide sharing partner, dott is fully integrated. Around 80,000 vehicles are now directly bookable. Further partnerships are planned.

“Especially in cities, connected mobility services on smartphones are now replacing private cars for many young people,” explains Harmen van Zijderveld, CEO of DB Regio AG . According to calculations by the data portal Statista, the percentage of 17- to 20-year-olds in Germany with a valid driver’s license has fallen steadily over the past 10 years to its current level of 41 percent. The reason: new mobility services and high car ownership costs.

“In everyday life, the Deutschlandticket, scooters, and rental bikes can be perfectly combined. We will make this even easier in the future by bundling all offers in the DB Navigator app. Because even in the digital world, the simpler, the better,” said van Zijderveld. “This offers people who simply cannot afford a car, especially in times of high fuel prices and enormous costs for a driver’s license, an affordable and reliable alternative.”

Marco Zahn, Country Manager Germany, dott: “Connecting mobility options are a crucial lever for attracting more people to public transport in the long term. Only when the entire travel chain functions smoothly will switching to public transport be attractive. With our low-threshold services, we aim to reduce dependence on private cars without compromising on good mobility.”

The new features in the DB Navigator at a glance:

- In the future, the DB customer account – the central login of Deutsche Bahn – will allow users to access various mobility services with a single sign-on.
- Sharing vehicles can now be booked and paid for directly and nationwide in the DB Navigator – all in one app.
- All you need to book is a DB customer account – the central login of Deutsche Bahn.
- Everyday mobility becomes easily accessible via real-time map views showing nearby stops as well as the locations of electric scooters and rental bikes.
- Introduction with added value: To kick things off, customers will receive a 20% discount on dot bookings in the DB Navigator until August 31st, 2026.

Hamburg-Berlin railway line: More comfort and safety for train stations in the region

A facelift for 28 train stations along the Hamburg-Berlin railway line: During the ten-month corridor renovation, DB InfraGO has made a total of 28 stations more attractive. New and modernized platforms, comfortable seating, energy-saving LED lighting, and improved wayfinding through new signage and train indicators: All of this contributes to a more comfortable journey for passengers.

Furthermore, there’s an added safety benefit: 20 train stations in the region now benefit from modern video technology. DB InfraGO has equipped the train indicators typical of small stations with cameras for this purpose. Thanks to new network technology, simpler power supply, and data transmission, this solution is significantly cheaper and more robust than conventional systems.

Deutsche Bahn (DB) has a total of around 11,000 cameras in operation at train stations throughout Germany. It operates cameras wherever they are needed in coordination with the Federal Police. Video technology improves the subjective sense of security for many travellers. Furthermore, it is an essential component of DB’s comprehensive security network. The installation of video surveillance is part of DB’s immediate action program for greater security and cleanliness at train stations and is financed from DB’s own funds.

Currently, some finishing work is still underway at a few train stations, work which could not be completed on time at the beginning of the year due to weather-related restrictions. As a result, the elevators at Müssen, Nauen, Falkensee, and Albrechtshof stations are not yet operational. DB InfraGO is working diligently to complete all remaining work gradually and to ensure accessibility in the foreseeable future. DB asks for the understanding of passengers at the affected stations.

DB InfraGO will continue to conduct acceptance tests on the railway line until the end of June. The acceptance testing of the new signalling and interlocking technology is ongoing in the section between Hagenow Land and Berlin-Spandau. As a result, long-distance trains are temporarily running at reduced speeds. Due to the particularly high train frequency on the line, the first few days since the recommissioning have shown that the acceptance tests are causing delays to accumulate throughout the day for both long-distance and regional services. DB regrets these initial difficulties. The DB InfraGO teams are doing everything they can to minimize the current delays as quickly as possible.

With the station clock having just turned 12.15, Class 218.403 arrives at Schwandorf 6 mins late on June 19th, with train No. RE2 4861, the 10:34 Hof Hbf - München Hbf. The outside temperature had already climbed to 32'c by midday on this day. *Andy Pratt*

Germany

First EU pilot project for new cross-border rail connections: a direct train journey from Prague via Berlin to Copenhagen

The first EU pilot project for new cross-border rail connections has successfully launched: Since June 14th, Prague, Berlin, and Copenhagen have been directly linked by rail with two daily round-trip trains and one seasonal overnight service. The new service is operated by Deutsche Bahn (DB) in cooperation with Czech Railways (ČD) and Danish State Railways (DSB).

This service marks the realization of the first completely new cross-border direct connection among a total of ten pilot projects supported by the European Commission. Prague – Berlin – Copenhagen is thus one of the selected projects with which the EU Commission aims to overcome obstacles in international rail transport, improve market conditions, and develop attractive, sustainable mobility in Europe. The tri-national connection allows passengers to travel from Prague to Copenhagen via Berlin in an environmentally friendly manner and without changing trains. Three European capitals are now directly linked by rail.

Michael Peterson, DB Board Member for Long-Distance Passenger Transport : “Europe is growing even closer together by rail. With this new direct connection, we are continuing our strategy to expand cross-border services. Thanks to the support from Brussels, the booming international rail traffic is receiving a further boost.”

Patrick Schnieder, Federal Minister of Transport: “Three capital cities, three countries, one continuous connection – this is a strong signal for climate-friendly mobility, for comfortable travel and for efficient rail transport in the heart of Europe. I thank the Czech, Danish and of course also the German railway for putting the idea of a united Europe into practice here on the railway and bringing it to life.”

Apostolos Tzitzikostas, EU Commissioner for Sustainable Transport and Tourism: “Today in Berlin, we are celebrating an important milestone for high-speed transport in Europe. This new connection is a concrete example of what a better connected, more resilient, and more competitive Europe can offer its citizens. By improving connections between three major capital cities along the Trans-European Transport Network, we are bringing Europeans closer together and strengthening cross-border mobility. Since 2023, the European Commission has supported this initiative as part of its Action Plan to promote European long-distance transport. With the Connecting Europe Facility, we will continue to invest in key infrastructure projects along the route. By removing bottlenecks and reducing travel times, we will contribute to a stronger, better-connected European Union.”

Ute Bonde, Senator for Mobility, Transport, Climate Protection and the Environment: “Berlin is not only the German capital – Berlin is also a vibrant heart of the European rail network. The fact that we are now directly connecting Prague, Berlin and Copenhagen by rail sends a powerful signal: for climate-friendly travel, for a Europe that is growing together, and for Berlin as a hub of international rail traffic. Anyone boarding a train in our city today can travel without changing trains all the way to the Öresund or to the Bohemian metropolis. That is Europe.”

Michal Krapinec , CEO of České dráhy : “Railways are bringing Europe closer together than ever before. The direct connection between Prague, Berlin and Copenhagen shows how railway companies can jointly create attractive and sustainable travel options. I am very pleased that our most modern ComfortJet trains are operating on this route.”

Flemming Jensen, CEO of Danske Statsbaner: “It is a great pleasure to see how we, as cross-border rail operators, can contribute to bringing Europeans closer together. We look forward to working together on further routes to meet the growing demand for rail travel.”

Since June 14th, the new route has been served by two daily round-trip trains year-round – with regular travel times of approximately seven hours between Copenhagen and Berlin and eleven hours between Copenhagen and Prague. Trains towards Copenhagen travel via Hamburg, Schleswig, Kolding and Odense, among other stops, while those towards Prague travel via Dresden, Bad Schandau, Děčín and Ústí nad Labem, among other stops.

Trains depart from Berlin Central Station at 10:34 and 14:34, arriving at Copenhagen Central Station at 18:16 and 22:16 respectively. In the opposite direction, trains depart Copenhagen Central Station at 06:22 and 10:22, arriving at Berlin Central Station at 13:23 and 17:24, respectively. In addition, there is a seasonal night service, which runs until the end of August between Copenhagen and Prague via Hamburg, Berlin, and Dresden.

ČD ComfortJet trains will be used on these services. These new trains can travel at a top speed of 230 km/h and have 555 seats, 99 of which are in first class. They offer a premium travel experience, including an onboard restaurant, windows that allow mobile phone reception, Wi-Fi, a children’s cinema, and adjustable seats. There is space for twelve bicycles on board. A lift is available for wheelchair users.

Deutsche Bahn (DB) is participating in three of the pilot projects for new cross-border long-distance rail connections supported by the European Commission: In addition to Prague – Berlin – Copenhagen, another project is the new direct connection from Munich to Milan and Rome, which will begin operation in the 2027 timetable. The third is the new direct connection Berlin – Hamburg – Copenhagen – Oslo with the ICE L, starting in mid-2028.

Germany

DB is accelerating repairs at train stations with mobile teams of tradespeople

Deutsche Bahn (DB) will significantly accelerate repairs at its train stations in the future: New mobile teams of technicians are deployed nationwide and will repair damage directly on site. The goal is a cleaner, safer, and more attractive appearance of the stations for travellers and visitors.

Katja Hüske, Board Member for Passenger Stations at DB InfraGO AG : “Our train stations are our calling card. With the new mobile teams, small and large repairs such as damaged glass panes, graffiti or defective equipment can be bundled and carried out quickly in the future.”

Following the principle of “44 teams of tradespeople: flexibly on the move for better train stations,” they travel to specific stations and carry out all necessary work there. With this, Deutsche Bahn is taking the next step: The mobile teams of tradespeople not only fix minor defects but also undertake more extensive repairs, thus improving the overall condition of train stations – especially in rural areas.

A total of around 200 new colleagues are working in the new maintenance teams. These teams are stationed at 44 locations throughout Germany. Each team covers its own region. The mobile teams complement the existing structure of approximately 400 station and building inspectors, ensuring greater speed, increased visibility for passengers, and improved quality on-site. The concept was previously successfully tested in a pilot project, including in Lower Saxony. Recruitment is well advanced and should be completed as soon as possible. A few regions are still looking for new all-rounders.
The mobile maintenance teams are part of DB’s immediate action program for greater safety and cleanliness at train stations. With additional investments in personnel and technology, DB is improving the appearance of its stations and strengthening passengers’ sense of security. DB is spending over €50 million extra on this in 2026.

New operational concepts, protective equipment, AI – safety update for regional transport

Harmen van Zijderveld : “Fear has no place on our trains. We cannot change societal developments, but we can ensure that our trains are places of safety and respect in public spaces – for employees and passengers.”

Ralf Damde: “In 2025, there were over 3,000 attacks on employees at Deutsche Bahn alone. The fatal attack on our colleague Serkan Çalar during ticket inspection is an expression of this unbridled violence. We are all called upon to confront it.”

DB Regio employs a variety of security measures designed for prevention, rapid assistance in the event of an incident, and support for law enforcement:

Groundbreaking pilot projects
In nationwide regional transport, physical assaults decreased by seven percent in 2025 compared to 2024. However, the picture varies regionally. In the central region, encompassing Hesse, Rhineland-Palatinate, Saarland, and northern Baden, physical assaults increased by 15 percent during the same period. Thanks to an agreement with public transport authorities and associations, and in close consultation with employee representatives, Deutsche Bahn (DB) is testing new security concepts in this region to quickly improve safety for passengers and employees. These include so-called one-to-one support, where customer service representatives are accompanied by another person with security expertise, as well as double staffing in customer service. “Both approaches have shown that conflict- and emotionally charged situations can be handled more effectively and are ready for deployment beyond the region,” said van Zijderveld. The next step is to integrate the concepts from the pilot phase into the transport contracts with the public transport authorities that commission the services, thus securing their long-term implementation. Damde emphasizes: “The ‘tandem patrol’ pilot project implemented in the RMV area has demonstrated that deploying security personnel alongside our customer service representatives is a step in the right direction. The project must not end at the end of June; rather, it must be integrated into the standard organizational structure and run under the leadership of the transport companies.”

Starting in July, a trial of stab-proof vests will be introduced to expand personal protective equipment. DB Regio has also expanded its mandatory de-escalation training nationwide to include the module “Self-Assertion on Trains,” which is available as an optional course for employees in the Central region and has been very well received.

Bodycams are having an effect
Body cameras have proven to be an effective preventative measure. “Of over 500 incidents where body cameras had to be activated, only one resulted in a serious assault,” said van Zijderveld. Wearing a body camera is voluntary for DB Regio employees. In addition to the compelling facts, the company aims to convince even more colleagues of the benefits of body cameras through mandatory training. As a result, the number of employees equipped with body cameras has increased significantly to 1,750 since February. All employees are expected to be trained by August. Regarding availability, van Zijderveld clarifies: “Everyone who wants a bodycam will receive one.” Currently, work is underway to enable audio recording in addition to video, which will significantly improve both the preventative effect and the investigation of crimes. “We are confident that we will be able to launch this in the fall.”
Damde adds: “Audio recording is a must alongside video recording; the bodycam must be linked to the priority call system; the priority call system and the security app must be extended to federal and state police forces as well as security services. Interested passengers can install the security app themselves as an act of civic courage.”

AI use under review
In addition to introducing audio recording when body cameras are activated and linking the priority call system (an alarm system activated by a button on the wristband) with the body cameras, the use of artificial intelligence (AI) is also currently being examined. In the future, the recordings from the cameras on the trains could be transmitted to the traffic control center in real time. The AI would then analyze the recordings and report conflicts, such as arguments among passengers or disturbances. This would significantly increase the response time, and emergency services could be alerted quickly if necessary. Van Zijderveld: “A pilot project in Bremen demonstrates that the use of AI is technically and legally feasible. We want to build on that. For our employees, this would be an enormous support with a significant preventative effect.”
“The use of AI is still in its early stages and prone to errors. However, anything that protects our colleagues is a viable option,” said Damde.

Germany

FLIRT3 fleet for Bayerische Regiobahn to be equipped with ETCS for ROX concession

Alpha Trains is among the first private rolling stock leasing companies in Germany to invest in retrofitting the forward-looking European Train Control System (ETCS) to an existing regional train fleet. Bayerische Oberlandbahn GmbH, the former and future lessee of the seven three-car and 28 six-car Stadler FLIRT3 multiple units, operates under the BRB (Bayerische Regiobahn) brand. In July 2025, BRB won the tender from PTA Bayerische Eisenbahngesellschaft mbH (BEG) for the "Rosenheimer Kreuz" (ROX) concession. As owner and lessor, Alpha Trains has commissioned the ETCS retrofit, along with a full redesign and second major overhaul of the six-car units.

Partnership-Based Engineering Competence

Investment in ETCS is a key technical prerequisite for the long-term operation of the 35 multiple units on the ROX concession routes. Alpha Trains is relying on a strong network of partners to carry out the project. Talbot Services GmbH in Aachen is responsible for carrying out the work and managing the project. InterEngineer Systems GmbH is responsible for the technical implementation of this project – from concept development to planning and engineering to verification. With its extensive expertise, InterEngineer is also handling the re-approval process for the converted vehicles, ensuring that all technical and regulatory requirements are met efficiently and reliably.

Siemens Mobility GmbH is supplying the on-board ETCS components. The collaboration between Talbot, InterEngineer, Siemens, and the Alpha Trains team brings together technological expertise, many years of industry experience, and innovative strength.

Dirk Reuters, CEO of Talbot Services GmbH comments: "We are very pleased to be implementing this technically and logistically challenging project for our customer Alpha Trains. The ETCS retrofitting of the vehicles, carried out together with our partners InterEngineer and Siemens Mobility, is an important step towards preparing existing fleets for digital rail transport."

Alexander Milosavljević, Managing Director of InterEngineer Systems GmbH adds: "The OEM-independent selection and integration of the most suitable onboard unit is a major step towards greater openness and competition in the railway sector. With this project, we are creating a model that demonstrates how technical compatibility and economic efficiency can go hand in hand. It sends a clear signal to all operators and vehicle owners and serves as a blueprint for upcoming ETCS retrofits."

Guido Rumpel, Head of Rail Infrastructure Germany at Siemens Mobility: "Retrofitting the Alpha Trains fleet with our ETCS Level 2 technology ensures interoperability for our customers, as our advanced onboard units comply with the latest European Baseline 4 specifications. I am particularly pleased with the intensive and, for us, very valuable cooperation with the general contractor Talbot and the system integrator InterEngineer, which makes this project groundbreaking."

Planning: Retrofitting Parallel to Revision

Close collaboration with partners and Alpha Trains' many years of experience in complex refurbishment projects make a unique approach possible for this project: the ETCS retrofit and redesign will be carried out alongside the second major overhaul and general inspection. This requires the timely ordering and delivery of the ETCS components for series production.

By combining maintenance and modernisation measures, BRB benefits from significantly reduced downtime and optimised vehicle availability - ensuring smooth and reliable operation for passengers.

Future-Proof Fleet for a Key Transport Corridor

The new ROX transport contract and the corresponding leasing agreement between Alpha Trains and BRB will run from December 2029 to December 2043. By retrofitting the fleet with ETCS, Alpha Trains is ensuring that these proven and familiar trains will continue to meet the future digital control requirements on the heavily used routes of the ROX network, including its cross-border routes to Salzburg and Kufstein.

Bernhard Holzer, Managing Director of Alpha Trains Europa GmbH emphasizes the importance of this investment: "We see ourselves not only as a lessor, but also as a technical partner to our customers. The ETCS retrofit is a strategic investment in the longevity of our fleet and the digitalisation of railways. As one of the first private lessors in the German regional rail sector to take this step for an existing fleet, we are setting a new benchmark. By combining the retrofit with the heavy maintenance programme, we are offering our long-standing partner BRB a highly efficient solution that minimises operational costs."

The Rosenheimer Kreuz Network: A Lifeline for Millions of Passengers

Carrying around 17 million passengers annually and covering approximately 4.9 million train kilometres per year, the Rosenheimer Kreuz (ROX) network is one of Bavaria's most important regional transport axes. It includes the Munich–Rosenheim–Salzburg (RE 5), Munich–Rosenheim–Kufstein (RB 54), and Munich–Holzkirchen–Rosenheim (RB 58) lines.

In addition to technical upgrades, the trains will undergo a comprehensive redesign for the new contract, including the replacement of all seat cushions and covers.

Arnulf Schuchmann, Chairman of the Management Board of Bayerische Oberlandbahn GmbH and Bayerische Regiobahn GmbH: "We are delighted to have Alpha Trains as our leasing partner, a competent and innovative company that can reliably plan and implement such a complex and innovative project – ETCS retrofitting, redesign and general inspection – from a single source. For the first time, twelve-year-old local trains are being retrofitted with ETCS, creating a blueprint that can be used as a guide for future modernisation projects."

ETCS: A Cornerstone of Europe's Digital Rail System

The European Train Control System (ETCS) is the standardised digital train control technology for Europe, replacing more than 20 national systems and enabling seamless cross-border interoperability - such as on the routes to Salzburg and Kufstein. ETCS not only enhances safety but also increases line capacity and long-term operational efficiency. Alpha Trains' investment therefore represents an important contribution to the modernisation and digital transformation of Europe's rail transport - and to strengthening rail as a sustainable, climate-friendly mode of transport.

Photo: FLIRT3 fleet for Bayerische Regiobahn to be equipped with ETCS for ROX concession

ONCF No. 412 passes Oulad Ayyad hauling train No. 204 11:35 Oujda - Tanger.
Laurence Sly

ONCF No. 405 approaches El Aioun hauling train No. 103 06:40 Casa Voyageurs - Oujda.
Laurence Sly

ONCF No. 417 passes Oulad Ayyad hauling train No. 101 06:10 Casa Voyageurs - Nador.
Laurence Sly

ONCF No. 405 departs Taourirt hauling late running train No. 301, 07:30 Tanger - Oujda.
Laurence Sly

ONCF No. 410 approaches Sidi Harazem hauling train No. 103, 06:40 Casa Voyageurs - Oujda. *Laurence Sly*

ONCF No. 427 passes Ait Jaber hauling a freight train from Fes to Nador. *Laurence Sly*

RTB CARGO Class 193.498 heads a Rotterdam to Venlo container service through Sevenum on May 22nd. *Erik de Zeeuw*

Stavanger Central Station on May 14th, with Go-Ahead Nordic EMU No. 72015/72115, on a Egersund local service.
Bryan Roberts

Norway

Stavanger Central Station on May 14th, with Go-Ahead Nordic EMU No. 73008 having arrived with a service from Oslo.
Bryan Roberts

On May 17th, Go Ahead Nordic No. 73116 is seen stabled in the station holding area at Stavanger prior to operating a service to Oslo. *Michael Lynam*

Norway

On May 17th, EMU No.71015 is seen stabled in Stavanger station. *Michael Lynam*

Stavanger Central Station on May 14th, with Go-Ahead Nordic EMU No. 73101 preparing to depart to Oslo. *Bryan Roberts*

ZSSK Cargo Class 751.056 is pictured over the Polish border at Muszyna on June 28th during European Railtours' 'The Bardotka Bash' railtour. *Andy Pratt*

Romania

Class 430.107 and 410.840 are seen at Bucharest on May 21st. *Mark Armstrong*

On May 20th, tram No. 258 working a line No. 47 service heads through Bucharest. *Mark Armstrong*

Nostalgic tram No. 3381 with a Line No. 44 service is seen heading through Bucharest on May 20th. *Mark Armstrong*

Romania

On May 21st, TFC Nos. 614.082 and 614.077 are seen at Bucharest. *Mark Armstrong*

CFR Calatori Class 482.007 is seen at Bucharest on May 21st. *Mark Armstrong*

Regio Calatori unit No. 5014 stands at Bucharest on May 21st. *Mark Armstrong*

Romania

On May 21st, Class 410.3605 is seen stabled at Constanta. *Mark Armstrong*

An Orenstein & Koppel fireless loco is seen plinthed at Constanta on May 21st. *Mark Armstrong*

CFR Calatori No. 481.014 waits departure time at Constanta on May 21st. *Mark Armstrong*

Romania

Regio Calatori No. 425.581 is seen at Bucharest on May 23rd. *Mark Armstrong*

On May 22nd, No. 783.207 is seen at Bucharest *Mark Armstrong*

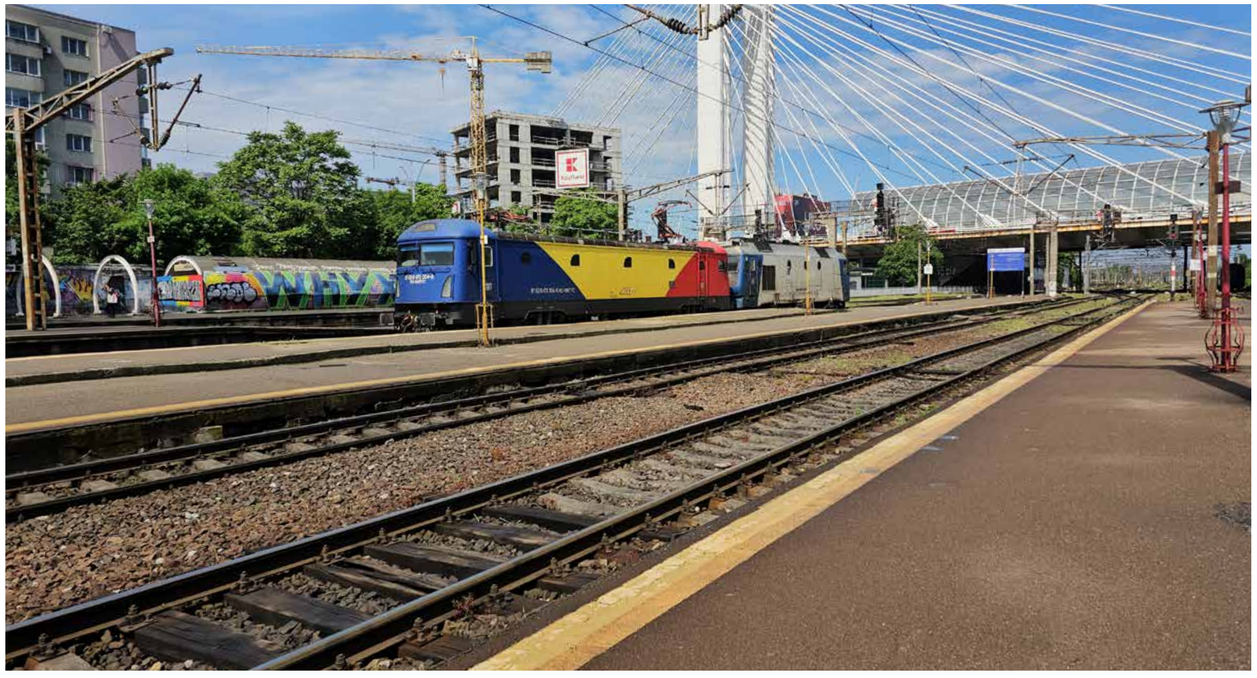
Former CFL units Nos. 102 and 103 are seen at Constanta on May 21st. *Mark Armstrong*

Romania

Nos. 410.001, 410.809 and 641.025 are seen at Bucharest on May 23rd. *Mark Armstrong*

On May 23rd, DSB unit No. 2907 is seen on test at Bucharest. *Mark Armstrong*

Nos. 473.004 and 641.025 are seen light engine at Bucharest on May 23rd. *Mark Armstrong*

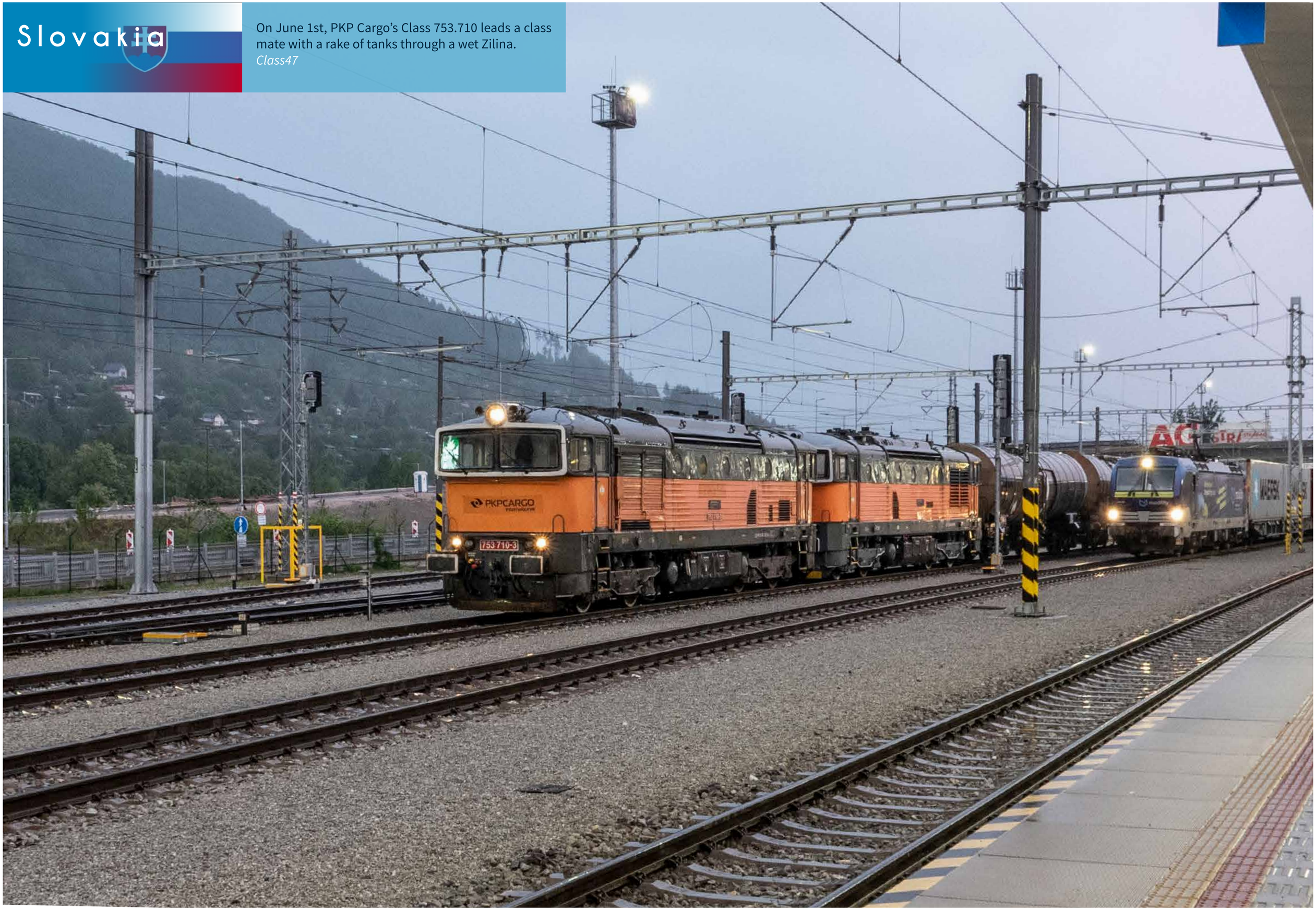


ZSSK Cargo Grumpy Class 751.056 stands at Tatranská Lomnica on June 28th with European Railtours' 'Bardotka Bash' charter. Out of sight on the rear is 752.052 which had just provided maximum thrash up the branch from Studený Potok. *Andy Pratt*

On May 29th, a pair of ZSSK Cargo Class 240s led by 240-061 pass through Bratislava hl.st. *Class47*

Slovakia

On June 1st, PKP Cargo's Class 753.710 leads a class mate with a rake of tanks through a wet Zilina.
Class47

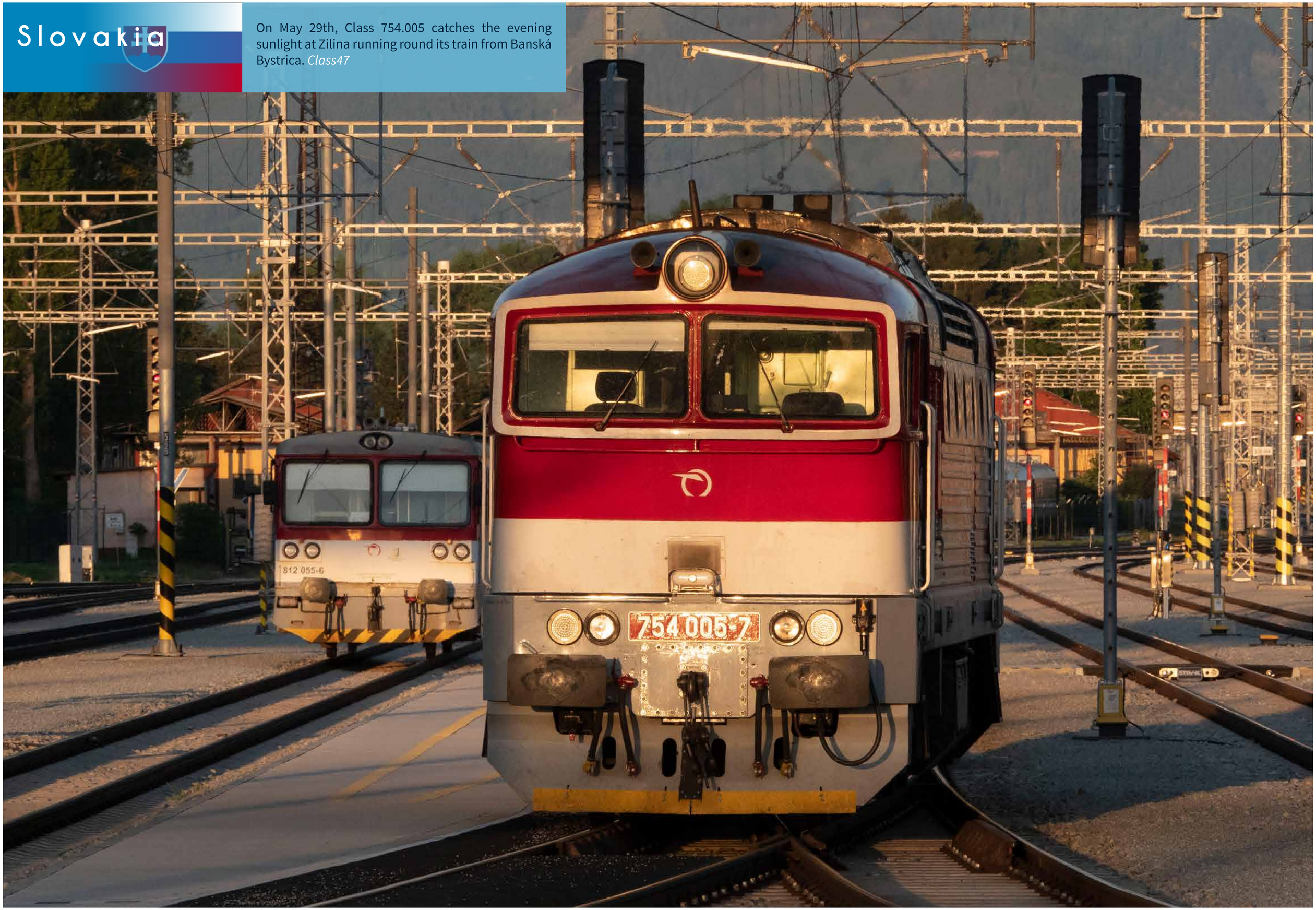


Slovakia

On May 29th at Leopoldov, replacing the Class 752s that used to be found in the area, are ZSSK Cargo Class 742 665, 742 658, 742 679, 742 673 and 742 674 all fairly recent rebuilds from the Class 742 fleet. *Class47*

Slovakia

On May 29th, Class 754.005 catches the evening sunlight at Zilina running round its train from Banská Bystrica. *Class47*



ZSSK Class 757.019 departs Prievidza on June 30th with train No. R746, the 10:16 to Bratislava Nové Mesto. *Andy Pratt*

ZSSK Class 754.032 departs Zvolen Mesto on July 1st with train No. Os7315, the 11:48 from Banska Bystrica, nearing it's journey end at Zvolen. Os. St. *Andy Pratt*

Tunisia

On May 7th, No. DN311 passes through Bir Bou Regba with a freight train towards Sousse.
Mark Torkington

Tunisia

On May 7th, No. DP137 pulls into Bir Bou Regba station with an express train from Tozeur to Tunis. *Mark Torkington*

U.S.A.

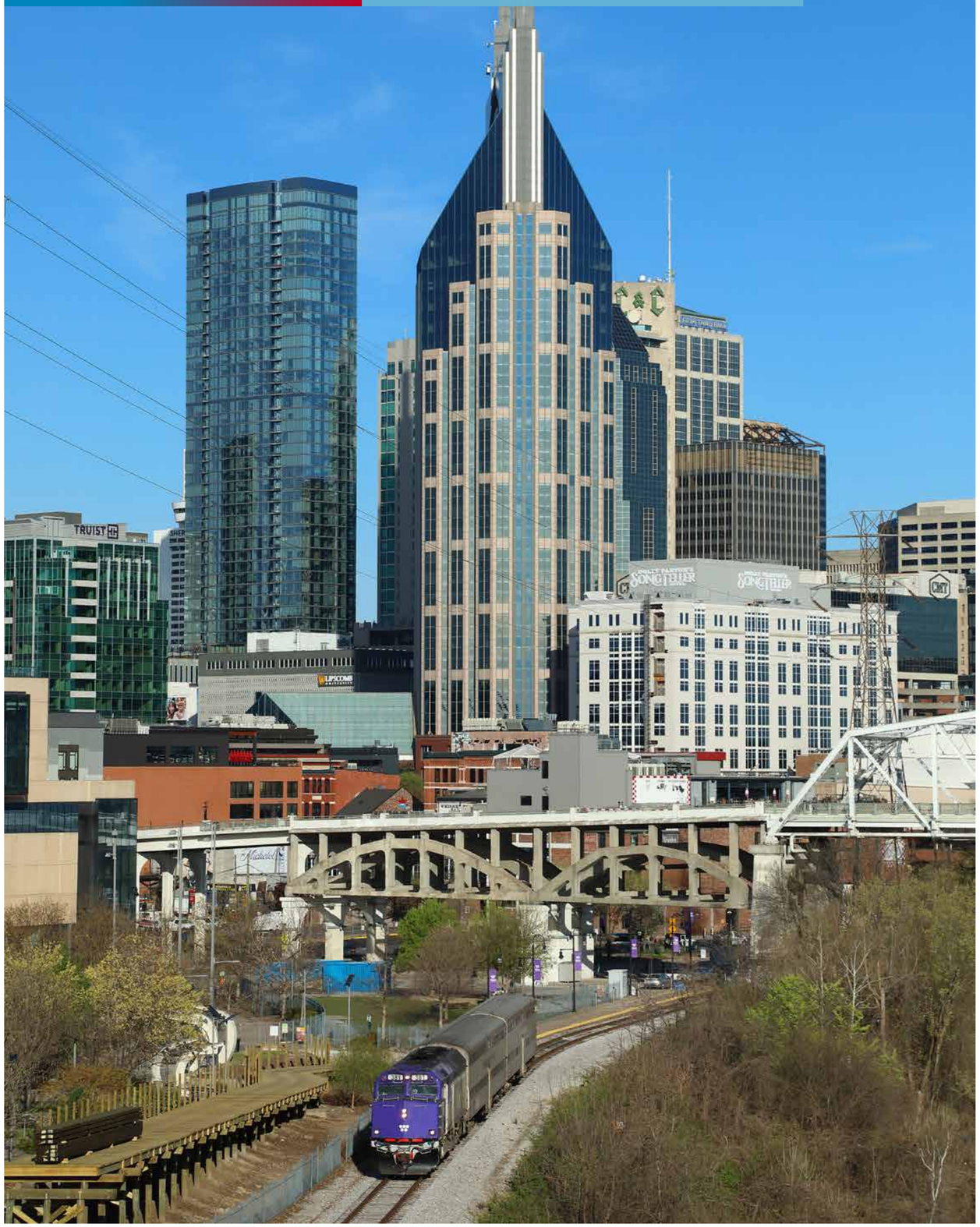
Nashville Eastern Railroad Nos. 868 and 5940 depart Nashville hauling a Tennessee Central Railway Museum train to Watertown.
Laurence Sly

Nashville Eastern Railroad Nos. 868 and 5940 approach Lebanon hauling a Tennessee Central Railway Museum train to Watertown.
Laurence Sly

Nashville Eastern Railroad Nos. 868 and 5940 approach Watertown hauling a Tennessee Central Railway Museum train to Watertown.
Laurence Sly

U.S.A.

We Go Star No. 381 departs Nashville with the 08:25 to Lebanon. *Laurence Sly*



We Go Star Nos. 381, 122 and 121 are seen stabled for the weekend in the yard at Lebanon. *Laurence Sly*

We Go Star Nos. 381, 122 and 121 are seen stabled for the weekend in the yard at Lebanon. *Laurence Sly*

U.S.A.

Autauga Northern Railroad Nos. 3886, 3826 and 3513 are seen tied down with their train in the yard at Prattville. *Laurence Sly*

Florida Gulf & Atlantic Railroad Nos. 107 and 4448 depart Pensacola for Milton. *Laurence Sly*

Saturday afternoon at the CSX yard in Montgomery AL. *Laurence Sly*

CSX Nos. 779, 3272 and a third unidentified GE pass Nashville hauling a double stack container train. *Laurence Sly*

On the Florida Gulf & Atlantic Railroad, after interchanging with the CSX, Nos. 107 and 4448 depart Pensacola for Milton. *Laurence Sly*

Egypt

Alstom-led consortium signed €690 million contracts to modernise Egypt's strategic rail corridors

Alstom, leading a consortium with Rowad Modern Engineering and Concrete Plus, has signed four landmark contracts with Egyptian National Railways (ENR) to modernise Egypt's strategic railway corridors, covering the 6th of October–Alexandria corridor and Belbes–10th of Ramadan (B10) line.

The combined value of the contracts is approximately €690 million, with Alstom's share representing around €300 million1. As four of Egypt's most significant rail modernisation projects, the contracts support Egypt Vision 2030 by strengthening national logistics and improving connectivity between new dry ports, industrial zones, and major seaports.

The 6th of October–Alexandria corridor, valued at €550 million, of which Alstom's share amounts to approximately €240 million, will be delivered across three major implementation lots. It will modernise the corridor with next-generation digital railway systems, upgraded telecommunications, reinforced power supply, and comprehensive civil and track rehabilitation. These enhancements will improve safety, increase capacity, enhance operational reliability, and reduce full route travel time by nearly 80 minutes.

The Belbes–10th of Ramadan (B10) project, valued at approximately €140 million, of which Alstom's share amounts to approximately €60 million, will introduce the same advanced railway technologies and modernisation scope. It will enhance connectivity to one of Egypt's largest industrial hubs, strengthening freight efficiency and supporting industrial growth across the eastern logistics corridor.

This contract will be reflected in the Group's order intake in the 1st quarter of the 2026/27 fiscal year.

By transforming freight operations between the 6th of October Dry Port and the Alexandria Seaport and enhancing rail connectivity to the 10th of Ramadan industrial zone, the projects will strengthen links between Egypt's major logistics hubs and maritime gateways.

They will help ease supply chain bottlenecks, support sustainable freight transport, and boost national and regional trade flows.

"The Africa, Middle East and Central Asia region has never been more committed to building smarter, more resilient rail networks, and Alstom is at the center of that transformation. These contracts demonstrate our capacity to deliver large-scale, complex signalling programmes, and our determination to be a long-term partner for its most critical mobility infrastructure", said Martin Vaujour, President, Africa, Middle East and Central Asia (AMECA) at Alstom.

As consortium leader, Alstom will be responsible for the end-to-end engineering, design, supply, testing, and commissioning of the new digital railway systems across both corridors. This includes ETCS Level 1 signalling, modern telecommunications, reinforced power infrastructure, and state-of-the-art operations control capabilities, enabling real-time, coordinated management across the network.

"These projects are redefining the future of rail in Egypt," said Ramy Salah, Managing Director of Alstom Egypt. "Our partnership with Egyptian National Railways, driven by world class expertise and Egyptian talents, is creating vital transport corridors that drive economic growth, connect key industrial and logistics centres, and unlock new opportunities for future generations."

In parallel, Rowad Modern Engineering and Concrete Plus will deliver the technical buildings, MEP works, and the full suite of civil and track upgrades to secure resilient, future-ready rail infrastructure. The projects also strongly support national industry development, achieving around 50% local content through Egyptian engineering talent and local sourcing.

U.K.

CAF opens a new maintenance depot in Manchester

CAF has opened its new service facilities at Lowry Park, Manchester, a city strategically located for CAF's rail services business in the United Kingdom, given its proximity to the operations of some of its key customers. The new facilities, covering an area of 5,000 m^2, represent an investment of 10 million pounds. Maintenance and overhaul work will be carried out there on various key components such as wheels and bogies, with plans to expand the scope of their activities in the near future, with the aim of supporting the next generation of rail services.

The increased capacity provided by the new facilities will ensure faster response times and greater fleet reliability, delivering safer and more efficient maintenance services, thereby contributing to the long-term performance of these fleets.

This investment reflects CAF's long-term commitment to the United Kingdom rail industry, where, in addition to its modern train manufacturing plant in Newport (Wales), it currently manages 14 maintenance contracts for various clients within its services business.

Sweden

ŠKODA GROUP WINS CONTRACT TO SUPPLY TRAMS FOR UPPSALA'S NEW TRAMWAY SYSTEM

Škoda Group, a leading European manufacturer of zero-emission mobility solutions, has been selected to supply new modern trams for Uppsala, Sweden, marking another important milestone in the Group's expansion in the Nordic region. The project includes an initial order of 20 bi-directional trams, with an option for a further 18 vehicles, bringing the potential fleet to a total of 38 trams. The contract also includes long-term maintenance and overhaul services, providing Region Uppsala with a comprehensive lifecycle solution for the future tram system. The value of the contract, including the delivery of option vehicles, long-term maintenance and overhaul services, high-value components and technical support, is up to EUR 270 million.

The new tramway in Uppsala will be an entirely new public transport system built from the ground up. Škoda Group's vehicles are planned to operate across the full network and form the backbone of a modern, sustainable and high-capacity urban transport system for the region. The project underlines Škoda Group's ability to deliver complete mobility solutions combining proven vehicle technology, passenger comfort, operational reliability and long-term service support.

"This contract is a strong confirmation of Škoda Group's position as a trusted partner for modern and efficient public transport in the Nordic region. Uppsala is building a new tram system with a clear vision for the future, and we are proud that our vehicles will become part of this important transformation. The new trams will combine proven technology for demanding Nordic conditions with a high level of comfort, accessibility and safety for passengers, drivers and the city environment," said Jan Christoph Harder, President Region West and North at Škoda Group.

Proven Nordic platform tailored for Uppsala

The Uppsala tram will be based on Škoda Group's proven Tampere tram platform, which has already demonstrated passenger-focused operation in demanding Nordic conditions. Building on this established solution significantly reduces technical risk while allowing the vehicle to be tailored to the specific needs of Uppsala. The tram will be 38 metres long, 100% low-floor and bi-directional, designed to deliver high capacity, full accessibility, operational flexibility and reliable performance.

The capacity of new tram is 186 passengers (for 2,5 passengers per square metre) and offer 80 fixed seats. The trams will feature three double-door and two single-door entrances on each side, supporting efficient passenger flow and easy boarding. Designed with users at the centre, the vehicle will offer spacious interiors, large windows, ergonomic layouts and adjustable lighting, creating a bright, modern and welcoming environment for everyday travel.

Comfort, accessibility and safety for passengers and drivers

Passengers will benefit from a range of modern features, including USB charging points, clear passenger information systems, flexible spaces for wheelchairs and prams, and enhanced visual and audible guidance for safer journeys. Combined with advanced climate control, durable materials and proven tram technology, the new fleet will provide a comfortable, safe and accessible travel experience for all passenger groups.

Modern tram with modern digital technologies

The new trams will feature the latest digital safety technologies. An advanced anti-collision system developed by Škoda Group will help prevent collisions with vehicles, pedestrians and obstacles, enhancing passenger and road-user safety while reducing maintenance costs. The trams will also be equipped with an intelligent speed limiter system that automatically adjusts the vehicle's speed in curves and other designated sections. Together, these technologies improve operational safety, reduce the likelihood of accidents and contribute to a more reliable and climate friendly public transport system.

Designed as a new icon for Uppsala, the tram will harmoniously connect the city's historic urban environment with its modern architectural development. Its friendly front design, clear exterior passenger information and state-of-the-art anti-collision system will support both a welcoming passenger experience and excellent pedestrian safety in the urban environment.
The final design will be further refined through extensive user involvement to ensure that it meets the needs of everyday travellers. The driver's cab will comply with the latest European standards for safety, usability, visibility and comfort for drivers of varying body sizes and working conditions. To create a fully functional workplace for drivers, the design will go beyond standard requirements

and will be developed in cooperation with drivers.

Long-term service and lifecycle support

The contract goes beyond the delivery of vehicles. It includes a 12-year maintenance agreement and a 12-year overhaul agreement, both with an option for one additional year. The overhaul programme will cover the vehicles as well as critical high-value components, helping to maximise reliability, availability and asset performance throughout the fleet's operational life. Together with a robust warranty programme, the contractual framework provides Region Uppsala with long-term technical support and a partnership focused on operational excellence and efficient lifecycle management.

New trams for Uppsala: a key project for future zero-emission urban mobility

The new tramway is a key part of Uppsala's long-term urban and transport development. The planned network will include around 17 kilometres of double track and 22 stops, connecting important development areas, university and hospital districts, transport hubs and Uppsala Central Station. The project is being developed jointly by Uppsala Municipality and Region Uppsala and is designed to support the city's growth by providing a high-capacity, accessible and efficient public transport system for residents, students, commuters and visitors.

Škoda Group strengthens its position in Northern Europe

The Uppsala contract further strengthens Škoda Group's footprint in Northern Europe. The Group is firmly established in the region, including through its production site in Otanmäki, Finland, and its growing presence in Sweden. In Finland, Škoda Group, through Škoda Transtech, develops and produces trams for Helsinki and Tampere and manufactures double-deck sleeping cars for the national railway operator VR Group, including a new generation of cars with modernised interiors. The Group is also trial testing and developing the Smart Depot project in Tampere, using autonomous tram movements in depot operations. In Sweden, Škoda Group is modernising the tram fleet in Gothenburg, where it is upgrading 80 M31 vehicles, and has also won a contract to supply up to 31 new vehicles for the Saltsjöbanan light rail line in Stockholm.

These projects demonstrate Škoda Group's long-term commitment to the Nordic region, where sustainable mobility, digitalisation, high technical standards and reliable operation in demanding climatic conditions are key priorities. Škoda Group's strong ties with the Nordic region are also reflected in the appointment of Jan Christoph Harder, President Region West and North at Škoda Group, as a member of the Board of Directors of the Nordic Chamber of Commerce in the Czech Republic.

Switzerland

Stadler unveils final livery design for SBB Cargo Switzerland's EURO DuFour locomotives

Less than two years after contract signature, Stadler and SBB have unveiled the final livery design of the new EURO DuFour locomotives for SBB Cargo Switzerland during an event held at Stadler's facility in Valencia, Spain.

The locomotive is set to become the future flagship of rail freight operations in Switzerland. The Stadler's locomotive is presented in the iconic SBB red, reflecting the strong identity of Swiss railways and highlighting SBB Cargo Switzerland's clear commitment to strengthening and modernising rail freight transport. At the same time, the design incorporates visual elements from the wider SBB fleet. SBB Cargo Switzerland ordered 36 state-of-the-art mainline locomotives, 22 of which are battery-equipped locomotives. Options are available for further 93 vehicles.

"SBB is committed to strong freight services. That's what the new freight locomotive stands for," says Alexander Muhm, Head of Freight Services at SBB. "The locomotive features state-of-the-art technology: It's energy-saving while also being very efficient and ready for future innovations. This procurement is an important step towards providing future-proof freight services."

As the launch customer for the EURO DuFour platform, SBB Cargo Switzerland will be the first operator to benefit from Stadler's latest generation of Bo'Bo' locomotives, which combine high performance, energy efficiency and operational flexibility with advanced digital capabilities for the next era of sustainable rail freight.

"The unveiling of the EURO DuFour in SBB's distinctive red marks a key milestone in this project. It represents far more than a design—it symbolises the future of rail freight in Switzerland. At the same time, this locomotive marks Stadler's strategic entry into the electric Bo'Bo' mainline locomotive segment, the most widely used category in European freight transport," said Iñigo Parra, Executive Vice President Division Spain.

Belgium

Lineas and Novelis strengthen strategic rail freight partnership with the deployment of new EURO9000 locomotives

On June 15th, Lineas and Novelis celebrated a new milestone in their rail freight collaboration with the deployment of advanced EURO9000 locomotives supporting strategic freight flows in Germany.

This new milestone reflects the commitment of both companies to reliable, efficient and more sustainable industrial logistics across Europe. The milestone was marked during a joint meeting in Göttingen bringing together teams from Lineas and Novelis, in the presence of Manfred Burk, recently appointed Country Manager of Lineas Germany.

Novelis, as a leading sustainable aluminium solutions provider and the world leader in aluminium rolling and recycling, plays a key role in supplying low-carbon aluminium solutions to industries such as automotive, beverage packaging and aerospace.

With circularity and sustainability at the core of Novelis' strategy, reliable and lower-emission rail transport solutions play an important role in the company's supply chain across Europe.

The event provided an opportunity to showcase one of two EURO9000 locomotives used by Lineas for these traffics in Germany. The EURO9000 locomotives combine electric and diesel traction, allowing complete trains to operate both on electrified and non-electrified lines. Equipped with both electric power and two onboard diesel engines of 950kW each, the locomotives can dynamically switch from electric to diesel mode while driving. This provides major operational flexibility on partially electrified routes while contributing to lower emissions and reduced energy costs.

Compared with previous operations, the deployment of the EURO9000 locomotives allows a significantly larger share of the journey to be performed under electric traction. This results in lower fuel consumption, reduced greenhouse gas emissions and increased operational flexibility. Based on current traffic volumes, the new locomotives are expected to reduce CO_2e emissions by approximately 1,762 tonnes per year. In addition, the enhanced traction capabilities contribute to improved operational reliability and network performance.

The deployment of these locomotives further enhances Lineas' ability to support industrial customers with reliable, flexible and cross-border rail freight solutions across key European corridors. Germany is a strategic market for Lineas, which continues to expand its international activities while pursuing its ambition to become Europe's most reliable freight railway undertaking. This ambition is reflected in the company's customer promise: Count on us.

Roland Leder, Vice President Supply Chain Novelis Europe, said: "At Novelis, sustainability and operational reliability go hand in hand. Expanding rail-based logistics is a key lever to reduce emissions across our European supply chain. We are pleased to continue this long-standing partnership with Lineas. The deployment of hybrid locomotives is a step forward, helping us increase the share of low-emission transport and contributing to our 'Novelis 3x30' ambition to be the lowest–emission flat rolled products provider."

Luc Pirenne, Chief Commercial Officer at Lineas, added: "Our partnership with Novelis demonstrates how innovation in rail freight can deliver both operational and environmental benefits. The introduction of the EURO9000 locomotives allows us to offer even more efficient, flexible and sustainable transport solutions while continuing to support Novelis' industrial supply chain with the reliability our customers expect."

Spain

Strategic expansion of the EURO6000 fleet to strengthen rail freight in Spain and the Mediterranean Corridor

Stadler and Alpha Trains, Europe's leading private lessor of locomotives and trains, have signed a new agreement for 25 additional Stadler EURO6000 multi-system electric locomotives. This order underlines the long-standing and successful partnership between Alpha Trains and Stadler Valencia, with more than 150 locomotives ordered since 2007.

The 25 new locomotives, scheduled for delivery in 2028, are a strategic response to the evolving needs of the Iberian and European rail markets. This addition brings the total number of 92 EURO6000 in the Alpha Trains' fleet.

The order consists of a mix of configurations:

• The Iberian gauge units will play a key role in the further development of the Iberian rail freight market. As a central player in the region, Alpha Trains continues to invest in modern, high-performance assets to streamline domestic logistics.

• The EURO6000s with standard UIC gauge are designed for the mediterranean corridor and are the only locomotives capable of providing a seamless connection from Spain to France, Belgium and Luxembourg. The route is a key component of the Trans-European Transport Network (TEN-T) and plays a vital role in promoting modal shift and sustainable logistics across Europe.

With six axles and a power output of 6MW, the EURO6000 locomotives can haul, in single-locomotive operation, heavy trains of more than 2,000 tons on steep gradients while maintaining an adequate commercial speed. Its multi-system capability and proven reliability make it ideal for long-distance, cross-border operations on both conventional and newly developed infrastructure.

"This order is more than just an expansion of our fleet; it is a commitment to the strategic development of rail freight in Spain and on the Mediterranean Corridor," says Vincent Pouyet,Managing Director Locomotives at Alpha Trains Locomotives. "With our EURO6000 locomotives, we are providing the market with the only proven solution capable of connecting Spain directly to Northern Europe. This drastically increases efficiency for our customers."

"This contract reinforces the strategic role of rail freight in connecting Europe," said Iñigo Parra,CEO of Stadler Valencia. "By delivering EURO6000 electric locomotives for deployment along the corridor from Spain to the North Sea, we are enabling a new era of high-capacity, low-emission logistics across borders. It's about building the backbone of a resilient, future-ready supply chain for Europe."

With this investment, Alpha Trains and Stadler reaffirm their commitment to supporting greener transport solutions and strengthening Europe's rail infrastructure.

Romania

An in train display on a service from Bucharest to Constanta shows a First Great Western HST at Dawlish! *Mark Armstrong*

Australia

Alstom accelerates digital rail transformation in Queensland with first mainline ETCS contract for "The Wave" program, supporting Brisbane 2032 Olympics

Alstom, global pure rail leader, strengthens its position in Australia by securing the first €69m (AUD $114M) tranche of a €214M (AUD $354M) contract by the Queensland Government for Stage 1 of The Wave project in Queensland, Australia. Alstom will design, supply, test and commission its globally proven ONVIA Control ETCS Level 2 trackside signaling system for Sector 1 North, along the new Sunshine Coast line, as part of a major network upgrade.

This contract forms part of Queensland's broader ETCS Program, which will deliver a safer, more efficient and higher-capacity rail system. The program lays the foundation for the State's sectorisation strategy, representing a significant step in preparing rail infrastructure for the Brisbane 2032 Olympics and Paralympic Games.

"As Queensland prepares to host the 2032 Olympics and Paralympic games, Alstom is proud to bring its global digitalsignallingleadershiptosupportthetransformation of the State's rail network. This project brings together Alstom's globally proven ETCS technology with our strong local presence in Queensland to support a safer, more efficient and future-ready transport system," said Guillaume Tritter, Managing Director of Alstom Australia and New Zealand.

Commenting on the win, Ling Fang, Asia-Pacific Region President said, "Alstom's ETCS Level 2 system is a globally proven, interoperable platform deployed across thousands of kilometres of railway in more than 35 countries, enabling operators to maximise capacity, safety and network efficiency through continuous digital train control. Advanced versions of this technology are being delivered by Alstom across the region including in the Philippines and India. "

The Sector 1 North project is a critical investment in the future of rail transport across South East Queensland, enabling increased network capacity and improved reliability in one of the region's busiest corridors. It will be deployed across brownfield and greenfield sections of The Wave and along the North Coast Line to the Sunshine Coast, requiring complex integration while maintaining uninterrupted passenger services. The project will be delivered collaboratively for the Queensland Government by Alstom as the ETCS contractor, in partnership with Queensland Rail as the network operator and multiple civil contractors delivering infrastructure works. Strong partnership and interface management across our civil and digital radio system partners will be essential to the project's success. Alstom's ETCS Level 2 system is a mature radio-based platform successfully delivered across thousands of kilometres of railway in over 35 countries. The technology enables continuous train control, ensuring trains operate safely at the highest possible network efficiency.

Alstom's strong local footprint in Australia will deliver a range of benefits to the State. This includes the establishment of the Queensland Mobility Supply Chain Centre of Excellence, expected to generate economic, social, education and environmental outcomes. The project will also support local job creation, underpinned by apprenticeships, traineeships, cadetships and local partnerships with Queensland schools and universities, helping to build local career pathways and future rail capability skills.

Italy

Where historic walls meet modern mobility

Bergamo stands for a beautiful historic old town, Venetian walls and northern Italian culinary culture – and for thoughtfully designed mobility.

A city of timeless charm choosing rail to shape its future Anyone strolling through the narrow streets of the Città Alta, gazing out across Lombardy and catching the scent of espresso in the air does not automatically think of timetables or increased service frequency. And yet that is exactly what makes Bergamo so compelling: on the one hand, a city shaped by history and stone-built heritage, also said to be the birthplace of stracciatella; on the other, a region that is consciously placing its future on rail.

Between the Seriana and Brembana valleys, the surrounding communities and the vibrant city centre, a mobility system is currently taking shape that is attracting attention far beyond the city itself. The first tram line, T1 towards Albino, demonstrated how a disused railway corridor can be transformed into a high-capacity, comfortable and popular means of transport.

Bergamo's new T2 line to Villa d'Almè adds a second axis to this story, one with an equally distinctive character. Where trains of the former Ferrovia della Valle Brembana once ran, a modern tram connection is now being built, linking five municipalities – Bergamo, Ponteranica, Sorisole, Almè and Villa d'Almè – over a route of 11.5 kilometres and connecting the daily lives of more than 240,000 people more directly to the city.

In its first section, T2 uses T1's existing urban corridor: from Bergamo FS station via Borgo Palazzo and San Fermo, both lines will in future run on the same track. This creates a shared backbone section that brings together rail, bus, tram and the future airport connection to Orio al Serio – a genuine mobility hub that is far more than just a stop. From the new Bronzetti interchange stop, T2 branches off towards the Brembana Valley. From there, it follows the former railway alignment almost in its entirety, a corridor that lay unused for decades and is now returning as a green, rail-based lifeline. Seventeen stops are planned along the route: nine in Bergamo itself, and two each in Ponteranica, Sorisole, Almè and Villa d'Almè.

A defining feature of the project is its consistent focus on a dedicated, protected right-of-way. Around 95 per cent of the route will run on a segregated track bed, with 23 crossings for cars, pedestrians and cyclists. This not only ensures reliable punctuality but also reduces conflicts within the overall transport system – a key factor in everyday attractiveness. Technically, T2 includes several notable engineering structures: a new tunnel at Pontesecco, upgraded bridges over the Morla, Quisa, Rigos and Rino waterways, as well as the refurbishment of the historic Ramera tunnel, which will remain the only single-track section and thus preserve a visible piece of transport history within the modern operation.

Alongside the tracks, an almost ten-kilometre cycle route is being created from San Fermo to Villa d'Almè. It will link the new tram stops with the existing cycling network, run alongside the Parco dei Colli, and brings to life in a very tangible way what is conceptually known as 'intermodal connectivity': reaching the stop on foot or by bike and then continuing by tram. Bergamo is also thinking ahead operationally: ten new vehicles, each 33 metres long and with capacity for up to 281 passengers, will strengthen the existing Sirio fleet on Line T1. Together, the system will then have 24 vehicles available for use across both lines – an important foundation for a peak frequency of six to seven minutes and robust operational reserves in the background.

From the Archives

France

SNCF Infra liveried No. 22277 stands at the head of a line of locos in the yard at Dijon Perrigny depot on May 13th 2017.
John Sloane

From the Archives

Italy

FS Class E656.519 heads out of Bordighera past the yacht harbour as it heads a Cerbere to Rome train on August 28th 1987.
John Sloane

From the Archives

Spain

Talgo loco No. 352.002 and a Ferrobus await departure at Valencia on August 2nd 1982. *John Sloane*

From the Archives

Spain

A group of the Spanish version of the German V200's lurk in one of the roundhouses at Madrid Cerro Negro shed on August 4th 1982. *John Sloane*