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## DHL and Rail Cargo Group extend “Belt and Road” network

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DHL Global Forwarding and Rail Cargo Group (RCG), the freight division of the Austrian Federal Railways, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to develop an intermodal rail network between Austria and China, tapping into rising trade along China’s Silk Road Economic Belt between Europe and Asia.

“We are delighted with this new direct connection between Austria and China. Austria’s economic relations with China are growing steadily and at the same time Vienna is an important hub for trade flows to and from Eastern and Southern Europe,” explains Christoph Wahl, Managing Director DHL Global Forwarding Austria.

The partnership kicked off with the inaugural 600-meter container’s journey from Chengdu’s Qingbaijiang Railway Station to the Vienna South Freight Centre. At the end of April, representatives of DHL Global Forwarding, Austrian President Alexander van der Bellen, representatives of RCG and delegates from China welcomed the first direct train from China. The latest route in DHL’s Asia-Europe-Asia multimodal network connects Chengdu to Vienna in just 15 days, spanning 9,800 kilometers and crossing six countries – China, Kazakhstan, Russia, Ukraine, Slovakia and Austria.

Under the MOU, DHL Global Forwarding and RCG will work together to boost rail freight capacity and jointly develop alternative routes to existing China-Europe connections, building on RCG’s infrastructure and expertise on the trans-Kazakh routes of the Silk Road Economic Belt. DHL Global Forwarding will also provide door-to-door services including pre- and on-carriage trucking between Qingbaijiang and other parts of China; and between Vienna South Freight Centre, other European rail stations in its network, and customers’ final destinations for delivery.

With Chengdu’s economy poised to grow even further with plans for a one-trillion yuan industrial cluster focused on biomedicine, automotive equipment, intelligent manufacturing and e-commerce services by 2022, the route will also sustain growth in high-value exports between China and Austria. Rail containers on DHL’s multimodal network come with a range of options such as remotely-monitored temperature control, real-time tracking, fully-managed customs clearance and consolidation, and enhanced security – all of which will become available to customers shipping goods

along the Chengdu-Vienna route.

“DHL Global Forwarding already offers an extensive portfolio of intermodal connections between Asia and Europe. However, in order to further increase the efficiency in our network and thus ultimately for our customers, we are continuously working on expanding the railway connections,” says Felix Heger, Head of China Rail and Ocean Freight Europe at DHL Global Forwarding.

“This direct connection offers fast, efficient and sustainable multimodal capacity supporting high-growth sectors that will bring immense benefits to both countries and continents,” said Thomas Kargl, Member of the Board of Directors of Rail Cargo Group. “The Chinese market holds enormous growth potential for Europe, and we intend for this route to support trade volumes that grew nearly 16% last year – and show no sign of slowing or decreasing in the future. DHL’s world-class forwarding services, tailored to a broad range of freight types and requirements, will draw out the best in our rail infrastructure connecting Austria to China and the world.”