
ÖBB Rail Cargo Group and Bundesforste set digital standards in railway logistics

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As the sustainable logistics backbone of the European economy – for a Europe worth living in, the ÖBB Rail Cargo Group is investing in the future-proofing of rail freight transport.

The goal is to fundamentally transform the rail system. As well as higher efficiency and flexibility, above all, access to the rail system should be simplified to make it easily accessible for new groups of customers – all of this with climate protection at the forefront of thinking.

“I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Österreichische Bundesforste (German for Austrian Federal Forests) for years of fair and respectful collaboration. We are proud to have designed and digitalised the railway logistics process together in a way that looks to the future. With it, we are pioneers and are bringing timber logistics into the 21st century,” emphasises Clemens Först, CEO of ÖBB Rail Cargo Group.

All in all, in Austria alone, around 1.1 million tonnes of CO₂ and approx. 4 million truck journeys are avoided due to rail freight transport by the ÖBB Rail Cargo Group each year.

Already today, digital processes and modern techniques are fixed components of a harmonious and sustainable forestry sector. Together with the ÖBB Rail Cargo Group (RCG), the Austrian Federal Forests have now also digitalised the entire rail logistics process for timber transport – from electronic consignment notes and empty wagon orders to future transport status messages and ETA forecasts (information about the estimated time of arrival).

“The Austrian Federal Forests take on a lead role across Europe with the digital offensive as the whole process chain is now fully digitalised from operational planning to timber harvest through to logistics and billing. With ÖBB Rail Cargo Group, we have a high-performance logistics partner on board who ensures environmentally friendly transport,” says the CEO of the Austrian Federal Forests, Rudolf Freidhager.

Networked data transfer and the elimination of media discontinuities in rail logistics have sustainably optimised and simplified processes. Internal and external processes

have been accelerated and at the same time rendered more effective and transparent.

“Not only do we know at the touch of a button where the timber transport is at any given moment, we are also able to seamlessly track where every single tree harvested in our forests comes from and where it is being delivered,” says Freidhager.

Sustainable logistics and climate-friendly transport

In the last few years, the Austrian Federal Forests have transported an average of around 300,000 cubic metres of harvested timber by rail, which corresponds to around a quarter of all timber transport of the company’s business. The long-term goal is to transfer timber transport from road to rail wherever sensible and possible. The loading of the timber took place primarily in the region of the Vienna Woods, in Styria and in central Salzkammergut. In the year 2021 alone, the Austrian Federal Forests were able to save 2,817 tonnes of CO₂ (CO₂ equivalents) through environmentally friendly transport by rail with the ÖBB Rail Cargo Group in comparison to truck transport. This corresponds to approximately 9,800 truck journeys avoided in just one year.

About Österreichische Bundesforste (ÖBf)

The Österreichische Bundesforste (German for “Austrian Federal Forests”) manage every tenth square metre of Austria’s land area. 15 percent of the domestic forest and 70 of the larger lakes are managed by the Austrian Federal Forests in the spirit of sustainability. The management of the natural areas is organised in twelve forest enterprises and two national park enterprises. The core business of the Austrian Federal Forests is forestry and the associated hunting and fishing activities. The business areas of real estate, services and renewable energy are becoming increasingly important for the company’s success. Since its spin-off in 1997, the Austrian Federal Forests have been a joint-stock company in the sole ownership of the Republic of Austria.

Rail Cargo Group: the freight transport division of the ÖBB

As a leading rail logistics company in Europe, we are shaping the industry. 365 days a year – 24 hours a day. Across Europe and beyond into Asia. We connect people, businesses and markets – from the first to the last mile. We are present in 18 countries – in 15 of them with our own employees. It’s thanks to our 5.755 logistics professionals from 34 nations that 460,000 trains a year, respectively 1,260 a day,

reach their destinations safe and sound. With our efficient end-to-end logistics services, we transport 95 million net tonnes of freight each year. A modal share of 28.2 % of the total freight market in Austria makes us top of the league in Europe. Operational management of the Rail Cargo Group lies with Rail Cargo Austria AG.

(ÖBB)