
PostNL becomes that much more sustainable: mail via rail after 25 years

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PostNL aims to deliver emissions-free in city centres by 2030 and emit 80% less carbon than in 2017.

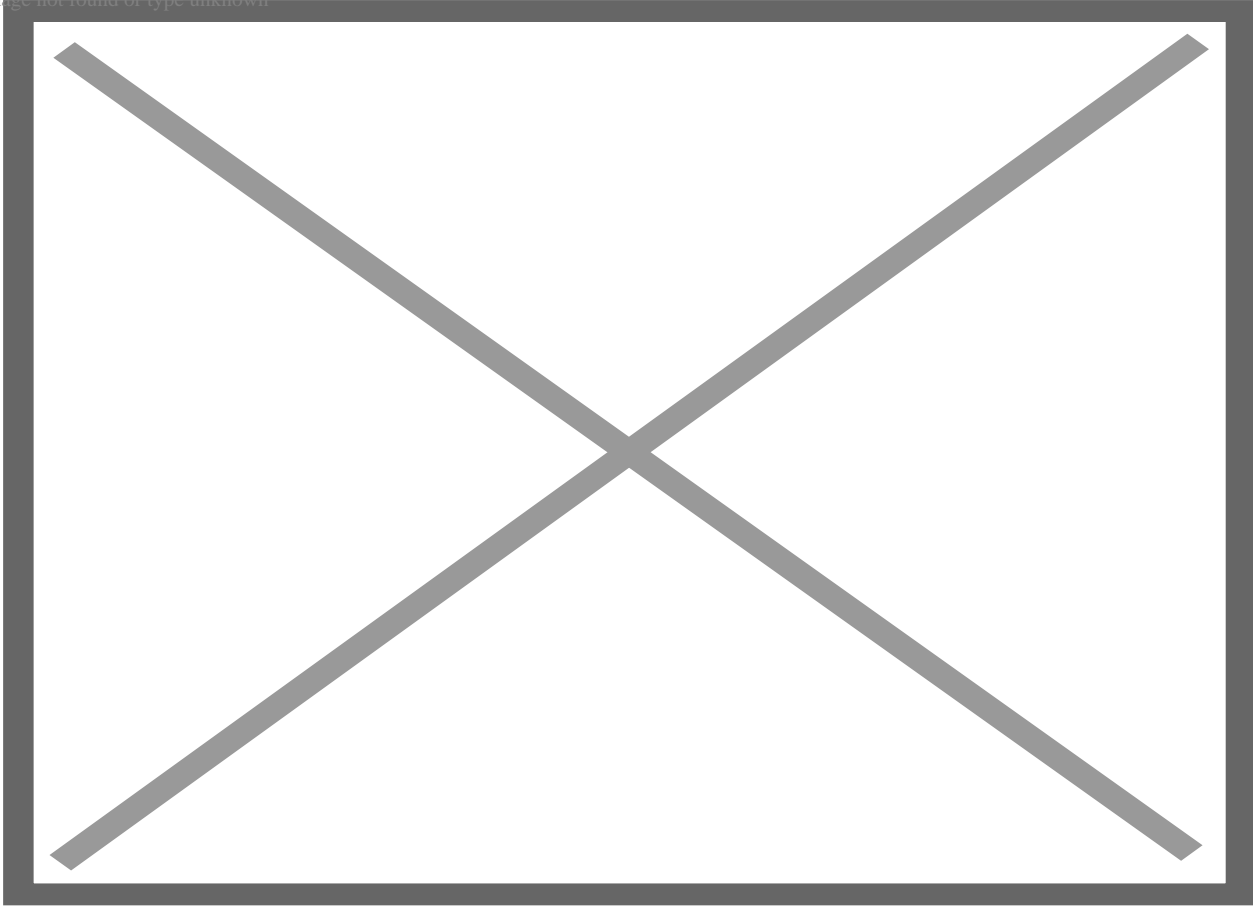
To achieve these goals, it's constantly on the lookout for opportunities to make every single kilometre as economical and green as it can be, both within and outside the Netherlands.

Trains are a sustainable alternative for long-distance transport by airplane or truck. And so PostNL is to return to shipping parcels and letters via rail after a gap of 25 years. A weekly trailer to Oslo will be the first of these journeys.

How sustainable is it?

A rail journey from Coevorden in the Netherlands to Oslo in Norway will enable PostNL to cut 70% of current carbon emissions on this route, i.e. 30 tonnes of carbon – yet another step towards achieving the ambitious sustainability goals of what's already one of the most sustainable logistics companies in the world.

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From train to truck and back again

In 1997 the last mail train ran across the Netherlands, with the railways having lost their lustre as trucks were much cheaper as well as easier to get to the distribution and sorting centres on the edge of towns. In 2022 as well, transport by train is still more expensive and more complicated, but PostNL's green ambitions are far-reaching and it's working together with its partners on solutions in terms of infrastructure and alternative fuels for greener transport.

Within its sector, PostNL takes a leading role: in 2021 it scaled up its consumption of alternative fuels for transport to 35%, from 8% in 2020, and it's seeking to achieve 90% by 2030. No less than 1,300 electrical vehicles, large and small, are already being used for deliveries, and this number is set to grow significantly in the years ahead. As a result, in 2021 PostNL managed to improve its carbon efficiency in grammes per kilometre by 18% compared with 2020.

The international route

PostNL outsources international transport to long-distance carriers. These send trucks with a trailer to the sorting centre for international mail and parcels, the IMEC in The

Hague. When fully loaded with mail and parcels for Norway, this will then make its way to the Coevorden rail station, where the trailer will be loaded onto the train to Oslo. Once in Oslo, the trailer will be taken off the train and delivered to Posten Norge AS, Norway's postal service.