



## News Service

### **Deutsche Bahn develops the Eurasian Land Bridge as an alternative transport route between China and Europe**

#### **Ten years of success for DB on the rail link to the Far East**

(Berlin, October 2018) Everything from clothing, paper and consumer goods to electronics and parts for various industry segments has been transported on the Trans-Eurasian corridor between Germany and Asia in the last ten years. With an average journey time of 14 to 16 days, it's faster than ship transport and less expensive than air. And it's climate friendly, too.

Customers can book an entire train or send individual containers or packages on the journey to the Far East. The number of containers transported has seen a constant rise. Deutsche Bahn is making great strides toward its goal of transporting 100,000 standard containers a year by 2020. It expects to reach the 90,000 mark in 2018.

#### **New company offers new products and services**

It takes a lot of different stakeholders to manage transport service to China. A new sales unit has been established, called DB Cargo Eurasia, to consolidate all of the services that were previously provided by Trans Eurasia Logistics (TEL), and the business is being reorganized overall. The company is headquartered in Berlin and Frankfurt. A new office has also opened in Shanghai to offer new products and services to customers. This autumn, DB will begin testing an additional link between Kaliningrad and Rostock via the Baltic Sea.

DB Cargo Eurasia offers terminal-to-terminal and door-to-door services. As operator, it is responsible for the commercial and operational side and sells transport capacity and stowage space to logistics services providers. It cooperates closely with the global logistics provider and freight forwarder DB Schenker. DB Schenker connects its Chinese logistics network to its leading European land transport network via a number of frequent rail links for optimal customer solutions with full geographic coverage in China, Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Vietnam, Thailand and Western Europe. Trains depart at least once a week, and up to four to five times a week on certain lines, such as the those from Chongqing, Chengdu, Zhengzhou, Wuhan and Xi'an.

Chinese logistics platforms, which operate trains for terminal-to-terminal business, also play an important role. They include CDIRS (Chengdu International Rail Service), YXO (YuXinOu Chongqing), ZILP (Zhengzhou International Landport) and WAEL (WuhanAsiaEuropeLogistic). The Chinese, Mongolian, Kazakh, Russian, Belarusian, Polish and German railways are also involved in developing the Eurasian Land Bridge.



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Rail transport is attractive particularly because it offers much shorter travel times and makes it possible to transport containers quickly and securely to other destinations as soon as they arrive at their initial destination in the heart of Europe or China. Freight rates are up to 50% higher for rail than for ocean freight but the rail option is almost twice as fast as the ocean option from terminal to terminal,

The exchange of goods essentially takes place via two routes: The northern route uses the Trans-Siberian Railway and runs to the north of Mongolia, while the southern route runs through Kazakhstan, Belarus and Russia. Distances range from 10,000 to 12,000 kilometers.

Each train must undergo at least two changes of track gauge during this journey, which is the world's longest rail route. China uses the same track gauge as Europe, while Belarus, Russia, Mongolia and Kazakhstan use broad gauge. In Asia, the change between standard gauge (1,435 mm) and broad gauge (1,520 mm) takes place in Zhamyn Uud/Erlan at the Mongolian-Chinese border, in Zabaykalsk/Manzhouli at the Chinese-Russian border or in Dostyk/Alashankou at the Chinese-Kazakh border. Containers change to standard gauge on the European section of the route in Brest/Malaszewicze on the border between Belarus and Poland. Cranes transfer the containers to carrier cars with the correct gauge.

### **Trains are available for all customers, for containers or single boxes**

Given the different railway electrification systems, operating regulations and customs procedures in the different countries, good, close collaboration among the companies is needed to establish competitive services on the market. Moreover, teamwork greatly simplifies customs procedures and handling processes at borders. The railways have standardized freight formalities using end-to-end documents and electronic data exchange, for example by introducing the end-to-end consignment note. In addition to improving processes at border crossings, the companies hope to speed up the preparation of bids and provide transparent, end-to-end transport information to customers.

Deutsche Bahn initially operated trains for single customers in the automotive and electronics industry. It now offers and uses multi-customer trains. Trains are available to any customer, even if they just need to transport a single container or a single box. This improves the capacity utilization of trains and lets smaller customers transport their freight, too.

DB transports auto parts for various automotive manufacturers from Leipzig and Regensburg to Shenyang and Beijing via the trans-Siberian route. The parts are needed to manufacture vehicles for the Chinese car market. DB also sends transports in the other direction, from China to Europe. As a subcontractor of a Chinese logistics company, DB Cargo Logistics has managed transport of finished vehicles from Harbin to Ghent, Belgium, via Poland for over a year.

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### **DB connects China's and Europe's land transport networks**

DB Schenker also offers a link to air and ocean freight for rail transport. This enables electronic components from China to be transported to Brazil, for example. DB Schenker is also the only freight forwarder in China to consistently collaborate with all Chinese train operators so that it can offer the greatest possible flexibility.

Another of rail transport's advantages in addition to price and time is the ability to quickly and securely distribute containers at their destination after arrival to and from Europe and China. This is made possible because the rail logistics solution is connected to China's and Europe's land transport networks.

DB's contact with China has a long history. Deutsche Bahn has had business there since 1966. Its logistics subsidiary, DB Schenker, employs 6,200 people in China and has a dense network of offices in 67 cities in all of the important economic regions. It also includes 92 logistics sites with some 790,000 square meters of warehouse space in all.

DB was also involved in construction of the Shanghai Metro, the development of China's high-speed network, and construction of the Transrapid in Shanghai. DB has maintained a purchasing office in Shanghai since 2015. And DB Cargo Eurasia is also located there to promote rail business between China and Europe.

The first container was shipped on the Trans-Siberian Railway back in 1973. The first test train traveled from Beijing to Hamburg in 2008, and the first regular scheduled container train, loaded with computers, made the journey from Xiangtang to Hamburg in 2008. DB has offered regular service between China and Germany since 2011.