

# Combined transport

**Combined transport makes up a third of DB Cargo's total transport volume.**

In 1990, worldwide export volume stood at USD 3.5 trillion. By 2019, this figure had climbed to some USD 19 trillion. Taken as a whole, the EU is the largest trading entity by volume, while China is the largest exporter. Container transport plays a major part in the logistics needed to handle this flow of goods. Combined transport, a cornerstone of European rail freight traffic, involves rail haulage for the majority of the route combined with shorter legs by road transport, usually at the beginning and end of the journey. Shipping goods from overseas is a well-known example of combined transport. Freight is transported by container ship to major ports in Germany, Belgium or the Netherlands, where it is then distributed to the hinterland by rail.

The current challenges presented by the coronavirus pandemic have once again highlighted the advantages of rail transport, particularly its reliability and extremely high level of performance. This is especially true for cross-border transports. The lockdown period saw huge backlogs in road transport, with standstills at the borders and waiting times measured in days. By contrast, rail transport has proven its resilience in times of crisis. ▶

## DOWN TO THE MINUTE

As online retail continues to grow, parcel services are becoming ever more important. Customers expect to receive their order the very next day. That's why a major German courier, express and parcel (CEP) service provider is using the rail network to transport packages over long distances. In doing so, they're leveraging the advantages offered by combined transport. Fast overnight service plays a particularly important role in these shipments. Our trains run from Hamburg to Munich, reaching a top speed of 140 km/h. Delays? Not a chance. Our prioritised rail operations are on time down to the minute. After all, customer requirements for quality, punctuality and handling processes are extremely demanding in parcel service. Yet rail offers even more advantages. Trains can haul freight on weekends, too, as can the lorries covering the first and last mile. These services appeal to many different customers, which is why DB Cargo is working hard to bring transport solutions to market which will permanently shift more parcel consignments onto the rail network. As part of this plan, the company aims to add more transports on weekdays and weekends. Parcel volumes surge just before Christmas, and DB Cargo uses special trains to meet the demand. Last year, roughly 1 million packages were transported by rail on the weekend before Christmas alone. Employees at DB Cargo give their all during this time to make sure gifts are under the tree in time for Christmas.





**1** — *The Cologne Eifeltor DUS terminal is one of the most prominent transshipment terminals in Europe.*

**2** — *DB Cargo offers combined transport with industry-specific solutions.*

### 3 QUESTIONS FOR:

## Heinrich Klotz



**Heinrich Klotz has worked for Deutsche Verkehrs-Zeitung magazine since 1988, where he has been writing about combined rail and road transport since 1989.**

#### **How important is combined transport (CT) to manufacturing companies?**

— **KLOTZ** That really depends on where the company is located. If a company sends or receives a lot of freight through Switzerland, for instance, CT is absolutely essential for their business, because 7 out of every 10 tonnes of freight are transported by rail there. However, in other countries, manufacturers are only too willing to switch to road haulage to save a few euros. Even so, CT is critically important for all manufacturing companies from a strategic perspective. Companies which are integrating combined transport into their logistics processes today will already have a greener footprint, which consumers will increasingly demand for their products going forward. At the same time, those companies will have secured the rail transport capacity they need before others have the chance to do so.

#### **What role does combined transport play in the ongoing process of modernising rail freight transport?**

— **KLOTZ** It's impossible to overstate CT's importance. Combined transport is often a good alternative to single wagonload transport, which can be unprofitable. CT is the right tool to grow revenue using rail freight transport despite the freight structure effect – the current tendency for bulk cargo carriage to decline and the number of part loads to increase. Combined transport also integrates rail freight transport into complex supply chains that require DB to prove its logistics prowess. All this makes combined transport the segment to secure the future of rail freight transport.

#### **In your opinion, what is needed to make combined transport the obvious choice over road haulage?**

— **KLOTZ** Customers will always choose combined transport when its service, price and performance match their needs. Sometimes road haulage comes out on top – in many cases, it has to because combined transport can absorb only a fraction of the volume transported on the roads every day. I'd be satisfied if CT were always considered as a serious option by those making decisions about logistics. To reach that point, however, transport policy needs to create a level playing field so different modes of transport can compete fairly against one another. Unfortunately, this is not always the case right now.

# Combined transport: an overview

In our role as carrier, we provide customers with Europe-wide block train solutions from terminal to terminal from a single source. We are a lead logistics provider, which means we develop door-to-door solutions to ensure that multimodal logistics requirements are optimally met.

## UNIQUE ADVANTAGES OF COMBINED TRANSPORT

### The 44 tonne rule:

Lorries providing first and last mile service in combined transport are permitted to have a total weight of 44 tonnes, which is 4 tonnes more than those used for pure road haulage.

### Exemptions from vehicle bans:

In combined transport, lorries providing first and last mile service are not subject to vehicle bans during holiday periods or on Sundays and public holidays when travelling up to 200 kilometres.

### DOOR-TO-DOOR SOLUTIONS

## INTEGRATION INTO CUSTOMER PRODUCTION AND LOGISTICS PROCESSES

By providing custom-tailored solutions and optimising customer supply chains, we tightly integrate our services with our customers' processes.

- Contract logistics services and coordinated industry-specific solutions
- Implementation of rail-based Just-in-time and Just-in-sequence solutions
- Bespoke IT solutions for booking and managing shipments end to end as well as tracking them
- Direct wagon-loading synchronised with your production 365 days/year with no dispatching warehouse



## INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT CONTROL

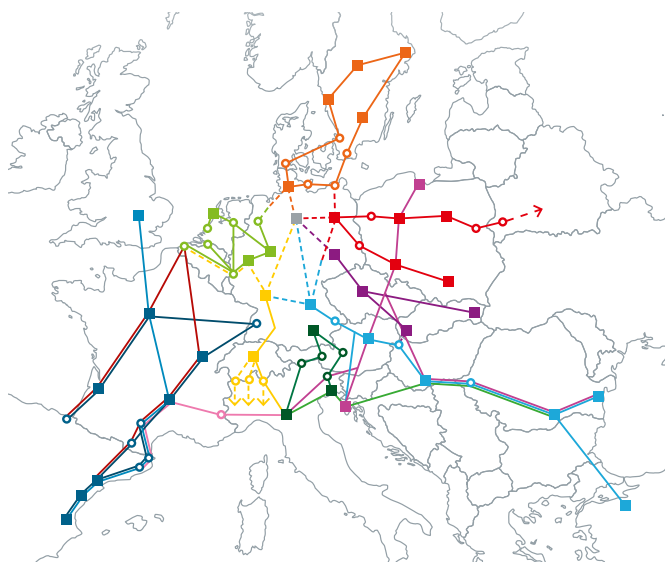
We handle implementation and management of the entire logistics chain, including first and last mile transport in our comprehensive Europe-wide network.

- ✓ Fast and reliable multimodal door-to-door transports
- ✓ Transparency and control with Track & Trace



▶ ALSO SEE THE SECTION ON ADDED VALUE STARTING ON P. 32.

## PROVIDING CARRIER SERVICES ALONG ALL OF EUROPE'S CORRIDORS



# > 1,500

trains per week

## MODERN WAGON FLEET WITH WAGON SERVICES

- ✓ Europe-wide dispatching
- ✓ In-house damaged wagon management and mobile maintenance
- ✓ Reliable, energy-efficient and cross-border traction
- ✓ Monitoring of train set movements and train set compositions

**1** — Trimodal transshipment yard: inland waterway vessels empty directly into tank wagons or lorries.

**2** — A modern filling station safely transships chemicals for safe transport by rail.

>> REPORT CONTINUED

## Trimodal transshipment terminal

**B**y building a direct private siding (► *read more in the section on private sidings starting on p. 14*), solvadis distribution in Gernsheim has upgraded from being a bimodal to a true trimodal tank farm service provider. The company has paved the way to load even block trains with a high degree of efficiency and safety. Solvadis now has the capability to directly switch between individual modes of transport, tranship goods and offer these services on the market as well. The company's liquid chemical products will be moved between modes of transport in a hermetic system, which will prevent them from coming into contact with the outside world.

Construction projects have not just expanded track capacity, but also the transshipment yard. The local port management company has expanded the port accordingly to offer maximum flexibility for inland waterway vessels, too. The company has already placed an order to expand its tank farm capacity by 5 x 2,500 m<sup>3</sup>. That's because solvadis wants to be able to flexibly respond to the needs of the market and better contribute to its customers' supply security. At the Gernsheim tank farm, inland waterway vessel and rail transports are usually combined by direct loading and transhipment, but preparations are increasingly being made to handle low water levels in the Rhine, which have become more common. The company is expanding its use of railways to protect its customers from foreseeable problems like this. ●



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