

Stobart, DB Schenker Rail and Eurotunnel innovate with a new weekly rail service for refrigerated freight between Spain and the UK

Stobart, DB Schenker Rail and Eurotunnel have organised the successful arrival of the first temperature-controlled train from Spain today (30 October 2009). The train arrived on time at Dagenham and was managed and hauled by DB Schenker for its complete journey from Spain to the UK.

The train carried fruit and vegetables (oranges, lemons, tomatoes) from their origin in Valencia, Spain, to Dagenham.

The new service will initially be run weekly. Stobart Rail has announced that they envisage raising the frequency to 5 trains per week by the end of 2010.

Operating such trains is not easy, involving transferring the containers from a Spanish to a standard gauge train at the Franco-Spanish frontier at Port Bou, and of course continuous monitoring of the environment inside each box. This Stobart-DB Schenker service is a shared user service, open to all customers on a pay as you go basis.

This new service from Spain is the second temperature controlled one through the Channel Tunnel; Norfolk Line and Freight Europe have been running regular temperature controlled services from Italy to the UK since July 2009, using four train operators - Crossrail (Italy and Switzerland), SNCF (France), Europorte 2 (Channel Tunnel) and Colas Rail (UK).

Norfolk line reported on 1 October that their service 'has set unprecedented reliabilities levels, achieving a 100% performance for on-time arrivals during the entire 3rd quarter of 2009.'

RFG Chairman Tony Berkeley commented, "These new services demonstrate that rail freight can operate competitively and reliably across long distances.

"The new rail freight market through France, Spain and the Channel Tunnel is starting to achieve there what we have had in the UK for some years - that a fair and open competitive rail freight market improves service quality and leads to growth. In the UK, rail freight has grown by 60% since privatisation, but there is still a long way to go to achieve a significant market share of international traffic across Europe, and in the UK we still have on the M20 in Kent enough trucks to fill 200 trains every day. "These new services are a good step in the right direction. We urge customers and shippers to try them, so that volumes and frequencies can build up in this very important market"

Jacques Gounon, Chairman and Chief Executive of Eurotunnel, stated: "The launch of this new service is perfectly in line with our initiatives to re-launch rail freight with open access, in particular via the introduction of new multimodal services. Eurotunnel

is the only operator to offer its customers such a wide range of solutions under the best conditions for crossing the Channel.”

Source:

<http://www.multimodal.org.uk/html/n20091030.837036.htm>

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