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TRAKO 2023

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15. MIĘDZYNARODOWE TARGI KOLEJOWE
TRAKO [19–22.09.2023]
GDAŃSK – AMBEREXPO

15th TRAKO 2023 – THE KEY EUROPEAN EXHIBITION FOR THE RAILWAY INDUSTRY

Author (2) Hermann Schmidtendorf



dr Jürgen Murach

TRAKO in Gdańsk – Europe's most important trade fair for rail transport systems takes place under this name every second year, alternating with **INNOTRANS in Berlin**. The **Association of German Railway Engineers (VDEI)** represents around 4,400 members from Germany. This is concentrated professional competence in this sector, which is so important for mobility and climate policy. We are therefore pleased that our Polish partner association **SITK – Stowarzyszenie Inżynierów i Techników Komunikacji RP** – invited us to TRAKO. Together we will be present at the SITK booth. We want to intensify cooperation with the Polish partner association and talk to exhibitors from Poland and neighboring countries.

This year TRAKO will be even more important than in previous years. Exhibitors and visitors from the Ukraine, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania will certainly be present in greater numbers than before to present their offers and exchange ideas with the other visitors from Europe. Even closer European cooperation in the field of rail technology – that too is an important response to Russia's criminal war in Ukraine.

We encourage all representatives of the railway industry, railway operators, orderers of public transport, employees of the industry – visit TRAKO! It is worth it ...

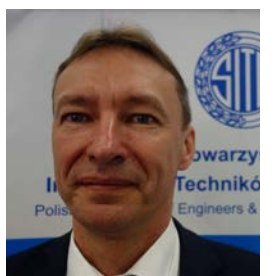
Sincerely, dr Jürgen Murach, Vice President VDEI, Berlin

The **Stowarzyszenie Inżynierów i Techników Komunikacji RP (SITK)** has more than 5,100 members. We belong to the Association of Scientific and Technical Associations and closely cooperate with the Polish Chamber of Civil Engineers. In addition, SITK is the owner of three trade journals. An important part of our work is dedicated to the rail systems, the railway. That is why we are traditional partners of the TRAKO trade fair in Gdańsk and invite everyone interested to visit this fair!

In the last few months we saw the very important value of our association, our partner railways, saw how important friendship is. Over 3 million Ukrainian refugees crossed Poland's borders fleeing Putin's war. This created new challenges of previously unimaginable proportions for the Polish and Ukrainian railways. This situation also poses new challenges for the railway infrastructures of the countries bordering Russia and Belarus. European cooperation in the rail sector must be intensified, infrastructure must be expanded. TRAKO offers an excellent platform for this.

The cooperation between SITK Szczecin and VDEI Berlin-Brandenburg already provides good examples of cross-border cooperation. We want to expand this to our mutual advantage, also by inviting our German friends to TRAKO.

Sincerely, Prof. Jacek Paś, President of SITK, Warsaw



Prof. Jacek Paś



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„ALPINE RAIL OPTIMISATION“, Vienna Oct 19, 2023

A CONFERENCE ON DIGITAL SOLUTIONS AND BIG DATA

On May 31st and June 1st this year we held the traditional conference “IoT and Big Data in Rail” in Cologne. The event now is five years old, it was established back in 2018. It started as a very niche subject area. Everyone is speaking about digitalisation. However, it's a buzzword, whereas this particular conference very much focuses on how rail operators and infrastructure managers are utilising the Internet of Things to harness data. And what we have seen over the last five years at this event is how there are many technology companies who produce digital solutions, such as sensors that are able to collect this data.

But what we also found is, the biggest struggle is how this data is being shared and utilised amongst the operators and infrastructure managers themselves. So there's the debate of who owns the data, who can access that data. And that seems to be an ongoing story, to find that sort of solution to this challenge. The rail industry is quite slow moving and is still restricted by regimented rules and standards. But hopefully through an event like this, it allows people to exchange ideas and innovations to hopefully bring down those barriers where data can be freely exchanged more accessibly.

Every country who has a rail operator or an infrastructure manager is at a different stage in their development. We have seen companies such as Deutsche Bahn in Germany who are very advanced in their development. But then we have had other railways, such as the Estonian railways also speak, who highlighted how they are sort of at the start of their journey. So every operator is at a different stage. Obviously, a lot of that depends on finance and how much investment they can get to purchase these digital solutions to help them develop their operations. So our event doesn't only talk about all of the operators and the infrastructure managers who have all of these great success stories. We also like to cover those examples where people are at the start of their development to

show obviously an overall picture of the rail industry as a whole.

This year on the 19th of October we shall be the host of another special conference in Vienna, Austria. The cyclic Alpine digitisation conference is, of course, a splendid idea because the Austrian railway company is celebrating its 100th birthday now. This event very much focuses the same sort of similar topics and themes as the event in Cologne where it's exploring the use of IoT and big data in rail. But however, as the name of the event suggests, it is very much focused on the Austrian, German, Swiss, Italian and French marketplace.

And it's more of a case of seeing what investment there is in the region as well. There is a tremendous amount of investment being made in terms of digitalising their operations. So the first part of the event will explore that particular topic and then we'll hear case studies from the operators and infrastructure managers. This key event will attract Heads of Procurement and Digitalisation from divisions of ÖBB, DB, SBB, FS Group, SNCF, BLS and Wiener Linien who will meet to discuss their investment plans about how they are looking to optimise the latest digital technologies to increase capacity, improve reliability, enhance availability and drive down maintenance costs. Please view the programme here - <https://alpinerailoptimisation.com/pdfs/event-programme.pdf>

You are invited!

Ben Holliday, Managing Director Rotaia Media



NEWS

SUCCESS FOR FREIGHT TRAIN WITH DIGITAL AUTOMATIC COUPLING

A digital freight train completed its test runs in Europe “with flying colours”, the organizers of these runs reported on May 3, 2023 to Members of the European Parliament. In about a year and a half, the test train covered a total of 10,000 kilometers in seven European countries. It was equipped with various prototypes of the digital automatic coupling DAC. 25 different marshalling yards were approached. Operation was tested in the lowlands, in the Alps and under extreme weather conditions from minus 25 to plus 40 degrees. The aim of the test drives was to check the functionality of the DAC in different situations and different conditions and to identify possible weak points. The result: the DAC has proven its practical suitability.

The German Federal Ministry for Digital and Transport (BMDV) has now made an additional seven million euros

available for a further test phase. The funding for the extension of the DAC project makes it possible for the test train, which consists of 18 cars and 40 DAC prototypes, to be used in other European countries. These trips will provide new test results, with which the various manufacturers of the clutches can complete their ongoing development work and present solutions ready for series production.

The new standard for freight trains in Europe should be ready for series production over the next few months. The organizer of the DAC4EU project is a consortium that includes the Swiss and Austrian freight railways SBB Cargo and Rail Cargo Austria, Deutsche Bahn and its subsidiary DB Cargo, and the wagon keepers Ermewa, GATX Rail Europe and VTG. hfs



The DAC train shunting.

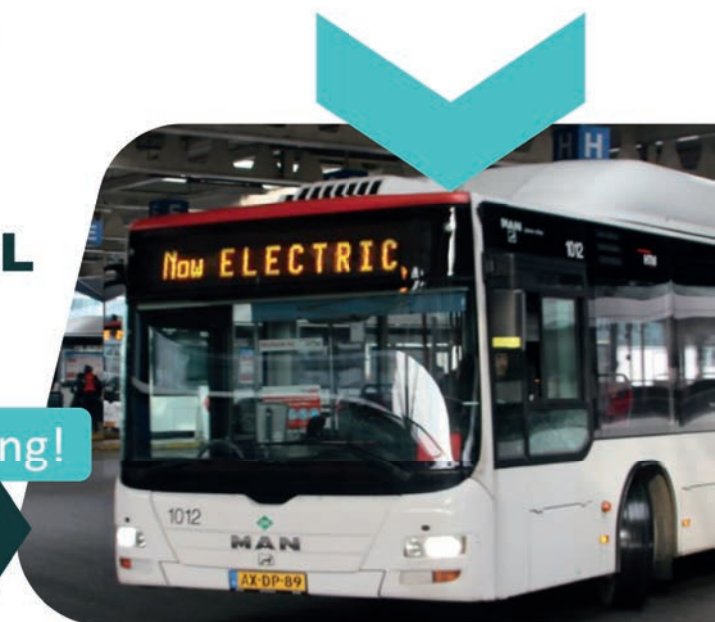
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175 years of Siemens: “The hydrogen train – symbol for sustainability”

Dr Roland Busch (physics studies at the Friedrich-Alexander University of Erlangen-Nuremberg and the University of Grenoble, doctorate in 1993 at the Friedrich-Alexander University) has been CEO of Siemens AG based in Munich since February 2021. He has held various management positions at Siemens since 1994. The first hydrogen train from Siemens Mireo Plus H will be used in regular passenger service by Deutsche Bahn from 2024 as part of the H2goesRail joint funding project. rail & mobility editor-in-chief Hermann Schmidtendorf asked the questions.



CARGO FREIGHT JOURNAL: What is special about the Mireo Plus H hydrogen multiple unit?

Dr. Roland Busch: For me, the hydrogen train is a symbol of sustainability, of Siemens' sustainable portfolio, of the fact that we are able to use technology to make an entire mobility sector green, i.e. to present green mobility. That is what we owe to ourselves, but also to our environment and society. And technology is the solution to that. The Mireo hydrogen train shows it once again quite clearly.

CARGO FREIGHT JOURNAL: And the propagation of this move is really starting now?

The goal, of course, is to scale that up. This is the first train. We already have three in the pipeline, with more to come. Of course, not only the hydrogen train is decisive, but also the hydrogen operating system, i.e. the generation, the conversion of green electricity to hydrogen, the transport and consumption to be scaled up. This is the first step, and there are many more to come.

The Mireo Plus H: with hydrogen to green mobility.

LTG Cargo Polska:

LTG CARGO POLSKA CONNECTS POLAND'S EUROTHERMINAL SŁAWKÓW WITH KAUNAS



rowski, Director of Intermodal Development at LTG Cargo Polska, comments: “We decided to connect to Euroterminal Sławków because of access to a broad-gauge track. This gives the possibility of transporting goods such as grain, fuel, methanol to and from Ukraine. The terminal in Kaunas, on the other hand, has regular connections with the port of Klaipeda and other places in the Baltic States. The Amber Train connects Kaunas with the Muuga terminal in Estonia and will also be included in the network of international intermodal services.”

The distance between the direct end points of the rail connection is 740 kilometers. Cetnerowski is certain that the train connection will contribute to shifting road freight to rail: “The economy, the inhabitants of the cities located on this route and the natural environment will benefit from it.”

In recent months, LTG Cargo has expanded its network of international intermodal connections via Poland to various terminals in the European Union. The logistician is diversifying its activities after the introduction of EU sanctions reduced the movement of goods between Lithuania and Russia. There is a subsidiary in the Ukraine, and train services to Trieste have also been launched.

hfs

LTG Cargo Polska, the Polish subsidiary of the Lithuanian state rail freight carrier **LTG Cargo**, has recently started offering a regular connection with two pairs of trains per week between Poland and Lithuania. On February 16, 2023, the first train left Euroterminal **Sławków** bound for Intermodal Terminal in **Kaunas**.

The train transports 20, 30, 40 and 45 foot containers as well as tank containers. The new service quickly became popular among customers who need to transport various categories of goods between Poland and the Baltic States from sectors such as chemical, food and machine industries.

Why these start and end points? Maciej Cetne-

EU passenger rights: „Creating a common European railway area“

? **CARGO FREIGHT JOURNAL:** Professor Liberacki, you were the rapporteur in the European Parliament when Parliament passed the amendment to passenger rights for rail passengers in April 2021. The amendment came into force on June 7, 2023, with the exception of the rules on transporting bicycles, which will apply from June 7, 2025. Would you say the new regulations are better than the previous ones?

Prof. Bogusław Liberacki: The rights of travelers are now unified. What matters now is that we put them into practice. This means: We are responsible for the quality of the service, for offering access to the network, connections, connecting trains, including financial responsibility. If the connecting train departs earlier than the one that brought the passenger, there is financial compensation. Travel rights for services for people with disabilities are important, as is taking bicycles with you. Because if you're going away for the weekend, you might want to take your bike with you, right?

From these points of view, we should present the changes. And here we underline that the same rights should apply to all travelers - regardless of whether they buy tickets from carriers such as Deutsche Bahn or PKP, or from regional carriers, or even from ticket sellers such as travel companies or ticket offices. They too must take responsibility. And that responsibility must be shared on both sides of the

border. The standard form must be used for claims for compensation.

? What else is important to you in the work of the European Parliament?

We are very concerned about cross-border rail passenger services. The aim is to increase the share of rail in cross-border traffic in order to reduce car traffic. At the same time, it is an answer to the great challenge we are facing, namely the climate, the environment, lower energy consumption and the saving of fuels that we lack anyway, i.e. oil and gas. So far, many railway plans of the states ended at the respective state border. But the state border is not a border in the sense of the European Union. So there is no reason to limit yourself to your own territory.

? What are we missing in this regard?

What is important? To provide a convenient service in the directions and at the frequency people need, a common and single European railway area. We know there is European airspace, right? We know that there are no restrictions on car, truck and passenger traffic. There is a European area for road transport, there is a European area for inland navigation, for combined transport. But what about rail transport? We still have these limits that are completely detrimental to our interests. And the debate in the European Parliament will serve this purpose. The second is the implementation of the transport corridors. The same applies here: each country builds railway lines, modernises and buys rolling stock, but always on its own territory. The closer to the border, the weaker the infrastructure there. So let's look at how we can ensure these corridors are completely free to flow.

There are too many restrictions. The traction current is different, so we need two-system locomotives. We have restrictions like different traffic rules in each country. So we have to find solutions for simplifications here too. You have to decide which investments should be given priority. And not just from ►

THE NEW PASSENGER RIGHTS AT EUROPE'S RAILWAYS

In 2021, Regulation (EU) 2021/782 passed a new version of the passenger rights regulation. This has been in effect since June 7, 2023 and replaced Regulation (EC) No. 1371/2007. [LINK: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/DE/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R0782&from=DE](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/DE/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32021R0782&from=DE) The new regulation also introduces the existence of force majeure for railway companies. This has an impact on the compensation amounts to be paid. Meals and accommodation for up to three nights must still be provided in any case.

- If the **delay** is at least 60 minutes, 25 percent of the fare will be refunded, if the delay is more than 120 minutes, 50 percent of the fare will be refunded.
- No compensation has to be paid in **exceptional circumstances** such as storms or other natural disasters. However, the ordinance makes it clear: "In contrast to normal seasonal weather conditions, such as autumn storms or regular urban flooding due to the tides or snowmelt, such events should constitute exceptional natural disasters." Train strikes are therefore not "force majeure" – but they are sabotage such as cable theft, people on the track.
- Gregor Kolbe from the Federation of German Consumer Organizations (vzbv) assumes that courts will have to further clarify the concept of extraordinary weather conditions. However, a railway spokeswoman is quoted by the Tagesspiegel as saying that DB wants to do as far as possible without court hearings in the future. Even if the legal entitlement ceases to exist, the railways will look at each individual case and, if necessary, accommodate the passengers with vouchers.
- Railway companies should "provide **an appropriate number of bicycle parking spaces** when new vehicles are purchased or existing vehicles are extensively upgraded", details should be clarified by national laws.

the point of view of urgency for a country. So, if we combine this concept of cross-border transport, the assessment of the state of construction of the transport corridors of the trans-European rail network, we also jointly determine the urgency priorities that are required in the examination. Especially on the

Polish-German border, we should leave the old-fashioned idea that everyone is restricted in their own borders and wants to be a king in their own village.

? Unfortunately, the German Federal Minister of Transport has always come from Bavaria ►

Photos (2): Hermann Schmidtendorf



*Professor of Economics (SGPiS Warszawa)
Bogusław Liberacki has been a Member of the European Parliament since July 2004, a member of the Social Democratic S&D Group. Between 2017 and 2019 Vice-President of the European Parliament. From 1993 to 1997 Minister of Transport of Poland.*



The new passenger rights make things easier for wheelchair users - you only have to register any necessary assistance 24 hours before the planned journey instead of the previous 48 hours.

in recent years. He was not very interested in transport issues such as German-Polish rail connections. Generally asked: How can you ensure that Europe's transport ministers are more involved in the interests of the whole, including cross-border connections?

I remember the times when I was Transport Minister of Poland and Matthias Wissmann Transport Minister of Germany. Back then we managed to look for these points of contact and to get closer to each other. The first essential is that the transport ministers meet. You have to know, trust and like each other. We managed to establish such connections back then. That's the challenge, that's the job.

We can certainly offer some justifications in the form of the war in Ukraine. But this war in Ukraine should

give us an incentive to calm down our systems. Because after this war, we must prepare for the fact that this part of Europe, and then even the extension to Ukraine, will have more and more efficient transport systems. We want to deepen our integration. The best way to deepen integration is through infrastructural cohesion. People will opt in by simply buying tickets. We just have to offer a reasonable service and show that it's permanent, not seasonal, that it's not just for show. I know that from the Polish side because my constituency includes West Pomeranian and Lubusz Voivodeship. We come to each other. Let's use it. Let's show that we can create a unified space on a cross-border scale with rail.

! Thank you very much for the interview!

The interview was conducted by Hermann Schmidtendorf.

LAND TRANSPORT *
POLISH-GERMAN RAILWAY SUMMIT
Interview

German-Polish rail connections: forging new concepts

? **CARGO FREIGHT JOURNAL:** State Secretary Bittel, what do you think was the most important event in the railway sector, including the Polish-German one, in the past period?

Andrzej Bittel: The most important issue is help for Ukraine, help for war refugees and implementation of related tasks. In fact, during these most difficult months, there were hundreds of thousands of people at the border who needed to be transported to safe places. It was also a great effort by the Polish, Ukrainian and German railway workers. This cooperation was really very good and fast.

? And with the standard topics?

Of course, there were also questions about the implementation of ongoing activities, which we usually carry out in constant good cooperation. I would like to emphasise that thanks to the ministers, thanks to the chairman of Deutsche Bahn, we have really great cooperation. As was said at the meeting today, let's not look through the prism of the border, but see what connects us. This is indeed the right direction.

The activities that are carried out within the framework of the realization of the connection Berlin – Szczecin and the almost completed bridge in Kostrzyn should be emphasised here. There are also concrete, very measurable effects of this cooperation, such as the

electrification of the Zgorzelec/Görlitz section.

? Wouldn't it make sense to fully electrify the Berlin – Kostrzyn line on the German side over the new bridge and beyond? This would provide an additional backup route to Poland, because the route via Frankfurt/Oder and Berlin is already quite busy.

I believe that such new concepts must be forged. We in Poland are implementing a railway investment program that currently amounts to the equivalent of around EUR 16.44 billion. We are preparing for the next EU perspective. We want to focus heavily on the modernisation of the railways in Poland, on the construction of new railway lines within the framework of the CPK Central Communications Airport concept.

Of course we cannot decide for our German partners. But I believe that as part of aligning plans, we should combine different investments so they can work better together. Because if it works better, our efficiency will increase.

? Thank you for the interview!



Andrzej Bittel in front of a Prussian saloon carriage in the DB Academy in Potsdam.

A lawyer (University of Warsaw) and a graduate of postgraduate studies (Management in Public Administration, Wyższa Szkoła Przedsiębiorczości i Management im. Leon Koźmiński; European Local Government Law, Polish Academy of Sciences) Andrzej Bittel has been Deputy Minister for Infrastructure and Construction since 2016 and Deputy Minister since 2018 for infrastructure as well as responsible designated expert for the railway system. Bittel began his political career in the local self-government in Warsaw. In 2007-2010 he worked in the Central Anti-Corruption Bureau.

Credits: Hermann Schmidtendorf

nexxiot and Knorr-Bremse: quality, reliability, long-term focus

? **CARGO FREIGHT JOURNAL:** Mr. Kalmund, at the beginning of May 2023, the leading European freight wagon rental company Ermewa informed that it is now expanding its telematics portfolio to include the sensor and data technology of your company nexxiot. This affects over 45,000 freight wagons. I found that remarkable. Sometimes the services of a partner company are used without naming them. In this case, Ermewa refers to you as a good reference. How did this match come about?

Stefan Kalmund: Thank you for this exciting question. Three factors immediately come to mind. Firstly, the Ermewa company understands the requirements in the technology sector very well. So we have already found a very experienced conversation partner. Secondly, the entire selection process has been thought through over the years and examined which topics are really important in order to create added value for customers.

There is also the third essential question: Will the technology partner I choose still exist in a few years? That's not a given. This is perhaps the biggest risk in the decision a board or CEO makes. If I work with a company like nexxiot or with any other company, will I still be able to innovate with them in three or four years? And I believe that our partnership with Knorr-Bremse, which joined the company nexxiot

last year, was a key success factor for this decision.

? I found it remarkable that Knorr-Bremse's annual report also pointed out that there is now obviously an expansion of the future viability of the business area for this large company.

Yes. You can look at it from two sides. Knorr-Bremse undoubtedly has much more experience than any other company can possibly have. This means that they understand the rail business very well, but needed a technology partner who is perhaps faster, more unconventional and can therefore quickly digitise individual components in the rail industry. So I think we were a logical partner again after a very long selection process. And now let's look at it from our perspective.

Why does this partnership make so much sense for us? On the one hand, of course, because it allows us to expand the offering for our customers in the long term. We have been provided with a lot of capital. This is often the bottleneck factor for technology companies. Most people have to look for new financing again and again, every few years or every few months. We don't have to. So we are equipped with a large capital base and have also gained a partner who in turn exudes quality, reliability and long-termism, which is what our customers want.

? Do you also receive new topics through this partnership that you should also develop? Or will you just stick with what you've already done up until now?

In our traditional business, we have always carried out retrofitting, that is, retrofitting the current inventory, which has not changed for many years, and thereby making it smarter or more intelligent with technology. Here, for the first time, we are looking five or eight years forward in the freight sector. What needs will rail industry customers have in five or eight years? The products for this are already ▶

being developed to ensure that we then move on to the next generation of products. Let's take brakes or other topics that are necessary there, keyword digital freight train. The second new topic that has been added: The technology that we have developed, namely the digitisation of goods that are difficult to digitise, whether they are entire freight wagons or individual components, can now also be transferred to other areas of Knorr-Bremse, such as Example doors, air conditioning systems. And of course our business also expands.

? This was also highlighted in the annual report.

Yes! If you follow the core messages of the new CEO Marc Llistosella of Knorr-Bremse, then at the end two companies are mentioned as major investments and strategic partners: One company is active in the truck sector, the other is us. In this respect, we are of course very honoured. But this also comes with a lot of responsibility to then provide exactly these services or these technologies.

? Then let's go to the topics you're offering today. What do you think is particularly important?

We have three business areas across the entire nexxiot company. One concerns the freight traffic on rail, then we have exactly the same for intermodal and shipping transport, and the third business area concerns the digitalisation of train systems for

Knorr-Bremse. All three areas are major growth topics, each with different challenges in the industry. Let's stay in the railway area for now. Rising energy prices - I have to be able to operate my fleets, my individual assets, economically. The keywords often mentioned are predictive maintenance or conditional based monitoring. Behind this lies the desire that in the future I no longer want to carry out revisions according to certain cycles every two, four or six years, but rather do it more intelligently because I have underlying data that supports this. Let's take, for example, a train that always traveled on the flat plain. There is probably different wear and tear than on a train that was constantly traveling in the mountains and had to brake frequently. And there are similar topics for the other business areas.

? Of course, the respective railway supervisory authorities have to play a role in changing the maintenance cycles. If we previously had certain annual deadlines from which I was not allowed to deviate, the new system would not work. What does the admission level look like?

This is exactly the big competitive disadvantage: the railways have the highest requirements, even though rail is supposed to catch up with road. That doesn't make it any easier, but we have to break that down. For example, last year we introduced a sensor, the kingpin sensor. This is intended to ensure that the moment trucks are loaded onto a pocket wagon, they are properly locked together so that ▶



Credits (2): nexxiot

The economist (studied in England and the USA) Stefan Kalmund has been CEO of nexxiot since January 2020. Before that, he worked in the investment industry for 20 years, focusing on technology companies.

no accidents can happen - or, conversely, that they are unlocked the moment the crane lifts the truck. So there are many smart ways to support technology.

? These famous pocket wagons had apparently caused serious problems in Denmark with the railway administration of the Storebælt Bridge, the Great Belt Bridge, on the way from Denmark to Sweden. After an accident with a pocket wagon, they were suddenly, figuratively speaking, viewed as lepers, although the accident may simply have been caused by inadequate wind measurement. But the verdict said that the train operators and their pocket wagons were guilty. I didn't find that very convincing?

First of all, the invention of the pocket wagon is brilliant. I can load shipping containers from the entire intermodal area, and overall the modular concept - I can just put different transport modes on top. If you look at the number of new freight cars built, pocket wagons are certainly one of the areas in which the most new ones are being built at the moment. They are indispensable, they are necessary. Otherwise we would have even more trucks on the road. But we have to get them off the street, and the pocket wagon is a natural answer.

The question remains, how can I support this technologically? I can do it through technology and sensors. There are different levels of maturity. In the first stage, the regulators and the railway operators still practice together. Can I support it through technology? That doesn't yet replace people, nor is it meant to replace them, but I can at least signal whether there's a problem or not. Do I have to intervene?

The situation is similar with the automatic brake test, which is also a very central topic. The question is, do I always walk along the train manually, or can I trust the technology at some point? And also: Can the authorities trust the technology so that I can radically shorten the duration of the brake test and communicate the condition of the brakes to the train driver at any time? If we want to be competitive as a rail industry, we have to access such innovative technologies.

? And your sensors? Are they now accepted by the Danish authorities? Does this mean that the handling of rail traffic on the Great Belt Bridge is finally back to normal?

I think something like this will never be finally solved because there are simply different interests. But there are at least very intensive discussions taking place between operators, car rental companies, authorities and technology manufacturers to find out what is important and how should it be measured? What do you perhaps need to turn on or off? Something worked for a very long time. Then an accident happens, people want to react, and now a new technology has emerged from that.

? This is all understandable. But experts said before the accident, the wind was measured on the side of the bridge with the weaker wind load. As a result, there was no wind warning with speed limit for the train that had an accident. Afterwards, of course, an authority does not want to be complicit. But that's probably not just a question of wagon construction, is it?

Something like that is also strongly linked to the credibility of those involved. Take the big rail accident that happened in America in early February 2023 in East Palestine, Ohio. There was a big explosion there. Nobody wants to have to testify before the US Congress or see their own company name on the front page of the newspaper in a negative context. When you see that hundreds of millions of dollars will ultimately have to be paid in damages and clean-up work, prevention through technology would have been significantly cheaper - regardless of what it would have looked like. But sometimes all it takes is a misfortune to shake everyone up, and only then are decision-makers ready to think about things that have been impossible to change for decades.

? Then we hope that your technological solution for pocket car transport satisfies all interests and that this positive effect can also work fully in Scandinavia. Because that would have an important function. ►



Real-time signals around the world: a surveillance logger from nexxiot.

And we need Scandinavia as a very important key for many transport routes that have to work in Europe.

? Let's move on. You have a number of other important issues in the railway sector. There are different solutions from providers of monitoring systems regarding the type of equipment on freight wagons. Some providers use space satellites for data transmission, others believe that this is unsafe and that transmission could be disrupted. What is the best transfer method for you? The devices should also have batteries, but they will eventually run out... How do you solve all this?

You're already putting your finger right in the wounds. What topics are we dealing with today? Point number one: Everything I screw on a freight car has to function reliably for many years. And a combination of „how often do I send and how long can I send“ is reliable. I don't even have a chance to replace a device or recharge the battery after three years. That's why everything you fix to the wagon has to work for eight or ten years or longer. We are currently equipping a large part of the Hapag-Lloyd fleet with devices. Once the shipping containers are on their way, I no longer have a chance to add new

equipment. So reliability is a basic requirement out in the field.

The second, and this is the big hurdle for many companies: How do I finance this entire investment in my fleet? Because it is actually an infrastructure investment. If something broke on a container or freight wagon, no one would question whether it needed to be repaired or replaced. And if cars are too old, the fleet will be renewed at some point. Here, on the other hand, they are trying to get refinancing either with public money because I deal with some innovation topics, or to make the customers pay for it. And that's why initial equipment often takes significantly longer than in other industries. So far it has mainly been companies like VTG, Deutsche Bahn, SBB and now Ermewa that have understood that I first have to make a basic investment in my infrastructure in order to then be able to think about what quality standards I need I would like to vouch for my customers in the future.

! Let's hope for a heightened awareness! Thank you very much for this conversation!

The interview was conducted by Hermann Schmidtendorf.

From Schaltbau to Shell: SBRS – charging solutions for electric vehicles in all situations

A conversation with the managing director of the company for battery charging technology SBRS GmbH, who describes his work to us as follows: "For me, working here is not just a job, but a calling!"



CARGO FREIGHT JOURNAL: Mr. Stahl, the name of your company consists of four letters - SBRS. Usually letters have some deeper meaning. How is that in your case?

Andreas Stahl: The SBRS stood at the origins of its history for Schaltbau Refurbishment and Systems. We were spun off from Pintsch Bamag in 2017 and had the title Schaltbau Refurbishment for the first few years because our focus was the railway industry. Over the years, we have developed into a company that has increasingly served the area of charging infrastructure, and in 2019 we decided to change the name Schaltbau Refurbishment to this short abbreviation SBRS: Schaltbau Refurbishment and Systems.

Today, since November 1st, 2022, the name has a different meaning and is called Shell Business Recharge Solutions. Because we have now become members of the large Shell family. This is an accolade for us because Shell is a large energy company. The world is changing, the energy industry is changing, and Shell's taking on this task means we are on the right track with what we have done over the years.

CARGO FREIGHT JOURNAL: This actually seems to have happened at the right time, as you have now developed a fairly

extensive portfolio. You supply power charging solutions for all types of commercial vehicles, especially electric buses, electric trucks, ships, and also Porsche cars?

Yes, we have a very broad portfolio. This ranges from an 80 kW mobile device to a newly developed MCS charging system that works with 750 kW in the Megawatt Charging One protocol. The devices differ greatly from each other. On the one hand, we have air-cooled devices. Air-cooled devices are generally based on car technology. You have a shorter service life, which is based on the typical application conditions of the car.

With buses we often have a completely different situation. A bus has a large battery, and with a bus availability is the be-all and end-all. If a charger like this doesn't work, your bus stops, your logistics operation stops, and that's why we have developed a specific technology, these are the cabinets we see behind us. These are liquid-cooled chargers that are characterised by extremely high efficiency, have a service life of thirty years, and such a charger serves up to 60 charging cycles per day. A car charger only has three, four, five charging cycles per day with a relatively small battery.

Another difference is that from a sustainability ►

perspective, when developing these liquid-cooled devices, we thought about designing devices that are from Europe for Europe. This means that we can actually procure all the components that are included in Europe: power semiconductors from Germany, from Nuremberg. The circuit board production is in the immediate vicinity of us, in Kamp-Lintfort. Some of the chokes and the entire assemblies come from Italy. So, we take Europe as a shopping center and build in Europe for Europe.

CARGO FREIGHT JOURNAL: I find it interesting that it's not uncommon for you to come to the bus company's depots through a bus supplier. How does such a close relationship of trust come about?

Especially in the first few years of the "serialisation" of battery-electric vehicles, there was still some uncertainty regarding the standardisation of communication interfaces. Past research projects had shown that the so-called "black Peter syndrome" often occurred - who is to blame if something doesn't work in communication? There were always such irritations between vehicle and charging infrastructure manufacturers. This led to the transport compa-

nies formulating their tenders as general contractor tenders, especially at the beginning. Due to their long history in the railway industry, Schaltbau and therefore SBRS have a reputation for being a reliable problem solver, someone you can simply rely on. Then, as now, we were ready to enter end customer contracts "back to back" and, together with the bus manufacturers, we pursued the goal of making the history of battery-operated vehicles a success.

The good reputation in the railway industry was our key to success! This was also the case with a prestigious order in Brussels that the Polish bus manufacturer Solaris won. The company didn't even want to take part in the tender because they didn't know who to entrust the equipment part to. But at that time Solaris still had rail vehicles in its portfolio - trams. And the key people in the company remembered that we had always done a good job there as a supplier. So in the Brussels project, they brought SBRS on board and the project became a success.

CARGO FREIGHT JOURNAL: Many thanks for this exciting information!

The interview was conducted by Hermann Schmidtendorf.

The boss in the middle of his charging stations: Andreas Stahl worked in sales at PINTSCH BAMAG GmbH from 1984 to 2016, most recently as Senior Sales Representative. He has been Managing Director of SBRS GmbH and SBRS Consulting GmbH since July 2022.



Photo: Hermann Schmidtendorf

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TRAKO 2023 – A FESTIVAL FOR EUROPE'S RAILWAY INDUSTRY



The Union of European Railway Engineering Associations (UEEIV) is the umbrella organisation for railway engineering associations in Europe and represents the interests of railway engineers and the railway industry as a whole at a continental level. The UEEIV was founded to promote cooperation and information exchange among European railway engineering associations. **In Poland, where the TRAKO fair is taking place, SITK is the national member association of the UEEIV.** Poland has developed a lot in the transport sector in recent years. The long-term plans also have a positive impact on the neighbouring countries. Our Polish engineering colleagues played their part in this. That is why we are all the more pleased to be able to expand our joint cooperation with SITK at TRAKO.

The UEEIV aims to promote international activities by networking national associations and organizing regular meetings and online discussions on current topics. Special attention is given to connecting young professionals to nurture the next generation. An essential aspect of the newly restructured UEEIV is the promotion of knowledge exchange and networking among international railway experts. The certification of professionals in the railway sector is also being expanded, including new certifications such as the Railway Systems Engineer. For many years, railway engineers with extensive knowledge have been able to obtain EURAIL-ING certification.

The UEEIV is committed to addressing the challenges in the railway sector, including generational shifts, digitalisation, interoperability, environmental protection, and safety and availability. The motto „Connect, Share, Certify“ reflects these goals, emphasising the connection of railway engineers across Europe, knowledge sharing, and certification.

The UEEIV has already planned various events to achieve these goals, including Railway Talks and webinars where experts from different European countries share their knowledge and engage in discussions. English has been designated as the standard language for European-wide activities to facilitate communication among participants from different countries. The UEEIV plays a crucial role in promoting collaboration and knowledge exchange in the European railway industry and contributes to successfully addressing industry challenges.

TRAKO has evolved into a valuable platform where professionals in the railway industry exchange the latest developments, technologies, and best practices. This fair provides not only an opportunity for networking and knowledge sharing but also underscores the importance of innovation and collaboration in the sector.

The UEEIV values the TRAKO fair as an outstanding opportunity to strengthen cooperation among European railway experts and collectively find solutions to the current challenges in the industry. We are confident that TRAKO will contribute to shaping a positive future for the European railway network and improving standards in environmental protection, digitalization, and safety. Together, we will shape the future of railways in Europe and steer the industry towards a positive future.

Contact: <https://ueeiv.eu/osk@osk-consult.de>

Yours sincerely, Olaf Scholtz-Knobloch, President of the Union of European Railway Engineers' Associations (UEEIV)



Photo: Hermann Schmidendorf

To Zero:

ENGINE OUT, BATTERY IN – A SECOND LIFE FOR DIESEL BUSES

CARGO FREIGHT JOURNAL met Andreas Pfeffer in northern Germany in front of a coach with the inscription “Diesel out”. The engineer used to deal with diesel optimisation, now he throws the diesel engine out of existing vehicles and puts them on electric drive. Our editors wanted to know details, also about the developer’s motivation. Did he go from Saul to Paul?

I studied combustion engineering, so from Saul to Paul, that fits. Everything has its time. In 2007 I got to know the first battery-electric vehicles and it was clear that combustion technology was coming to an end. And if the end is foreseeable, then you have to turn to the new in good time.

An **IVECO** bus just passed here, it’s a newer model. We look forward to these vehicles. We started our conversions with a **MAN** bus. There are a lot of them in circulation at the moment. This is a 2010 model, and that’s where we come in. We see that vehicles are coming to the end of their lives because they no longer have acceptable exhaust emissions here in the cities with their Euro 4 or Euro 5 engines. Then selling them to Prague or Budapest makes no sense because the same emission regulations apply there as here. It therefore makes a lot of sense to electrify these vehicles.

We do exactly the same as a MAN or a **Daimler**. These are exactly the same vehicles that are battery-electric from the factory, only that we don’t take a new vehicle, but a good used one. You can clearly see that there are no signs of corrosion on this vehicle. It’s just good again for the next 10, 15, even 20 years. Passengers don’t ask, is this a 2019 vehicle or is it from 2010? They get in and are happy when there is WiFi and a USB charging socket in the vehicle. These are the criteria of the passengers and we can cover that. And we save around 100,000 kilograms of CO₂ per year. That is exactly what electro mobility is aiming for. Those are the issues.

Over there we raise the dikes, here we save the CO₂. This is exactly where it has to go, that with our stream, before we take the oil from the sheikh, we prefer to take the stream from the dike. We use the wind power that we generate here sensibly, pump-

ping it directly into the buses. But we can also get out of the bus and go to the inn over there, where a pizza will be baked with it. These are all the possibilities that this form of energy storage in the battery allows us to do. And they make a lot of sense in the bus, because there they cover 200 kilometers every day with exactly these daily mileages. The bus makes its rounds every day, and here the battery works day in and day out for the next eight years.

Pioneering wheel hub engines

In order to turn a diesel bus into an electric bus, the core components have to be removed. It’s debatable whether to keep the old axle in, but we went with the axle in a really forward-thinking way. We installed wheel hub engines. That means we don’t have a single gear left in this axis. The advantage is: We have an extremely high level of efficiency. We drive with 0.8 kilowatt hours per kilometer. That doesn’t mean much to most people now. But that’s a benchmark at the point.

The other is where the tank, gearbox, motor were, that’s where we could put the batteries because we no longer have a motor that sits in front of the axle to turn the axle. So that gives us all that space in the back for batteries. That’s why we don’t have batteries on the roof.

Amazingly quiet when driving

That’s one of the key features of this bus, that we have all of this vehicle’s 210 kilowatt hours in the engine and transmission compartment. The other thing is that you can now hear how quietly it drives. We know that competitor products for this axle make significantly more noise. The axle then howls in the underfloor at 80 decibels; our – we hear nothing. Also the compressor, which is necessary for the brake system in commercial vehicles: where you normally hear the compressor, you can hear it clearly, it sounds like a single-cylinder engine, here you don’t hear it, it’s quiet, it’s in the back.

We’re on this bus right now. I can have a good conversation on the bus because it’s really quiet. We no longer have a combustion engine, and our axle is also something special. The motors are located directly in the wheels. That means we can do without a spring and gear reduction. The magnets are very far out and the coil is in the middle. They bring a murderous torque of almost 20,000 Newton metres to the

tires. That’s significant. That means we can also manage any incline. This makes the axle quiet, having no gears in it, but also gives a very high level of efficiency.

That means we need very few kilowatt hours per kilometer driven. In the background you can see the windmills. One turn of the windmill lets us travel more than ten kilometres with this bus. The whole design leads to avoid noise, avoid friction, avoid heat, simply leads to overall high efficiency of the vehicle. And that’s why you get by with very little energy per kilometer driven.

For the winter: a CO₂-neutral bio-heating system

A fact that you definitely have to talk about when it comes to electro mobility: we have 210 kilowatt hours of battery storage on board here, which is not even the equivalent of 30 litres of diesel. And when you have so little energy on board, you have to think: How do I cover this one cold day here in the north in winter of minus 20 degrees Celsius?

Just for heating, it makes no sense to lug around twice the amount of batteries all year round. The batteries are also still very expensive. So it’s very smart, and that’s what we’re doing: We either install a bio-diesel heater or a bio-ethanol heater in these vehicles, so that we’re still CO₂-neutral and have enough energy on board for those few, very cold days have in order not to have any losses in driving comfort. I think we really need to start changing course. We have to get away from fossil fuels, and we are currently trying to show the feasibility in these vehicles, that we can assume that we can completely avoid CO₂ emissions, that we can completely avoid fossil fuels. And this bus is a really good example of that.

We educate and train our employees ourselves. We developed this bus ourselves. This means that the necessary know-how is very specific. It is important for us that we train our employees on this high-voltage technology. This is connected to work security. The other issue is this axle, which has the motors directly in the wheel hubs. We don’t find these employees on the market, we train them ourselves from scratch.

Dipl.-Ing. Andreas Pfeffer
www.to-zero.de | mail@to-zero.de

Credits: Hermann Schmidendorf



The graduate engineer (mechanical engineering, business administration, TU Hamburg-Harburg University of Applied Sciences, FH Kiel) Andreas Pfeffer was Managing Director of I SEE Electric Trucks GmbH and I SEE Electric Busses GmbH until May 2022. Since then he has been Managing Director of to zero electric vehicles GmbH, Hamburg. Before that he worked for several companies in the automotive industry.

Enthusiastic about sustainability: Andreas Pfeffer in front of a converted diesel bus.

iLint: Hydrogen, trains and maintenance from a single source

We spoke to Jens Sprotte, hydrogen train expert at Alstom.

CARGO FREIGHT JOURNAL: Mr. Sprotte, since the first presentation of a Coradia iLint hydrogen train in Wiesbaden in 2018, you have become a leading “face” of this multiple unit. At that time it was still a prototype. There are already two fleets in operation today and the vehicle type is ready for series production. Do you enjoy talking about this train?

Jens Sprotte: TYes! I’m happy to talk about the hydrogen train. Alstom believed in hydrogen early on. Since 2012, we have been looking at the question of what could replace the diesel engine. Almost a year ago we set a world record: a Coradia iLint drove 1,175 kilometers across Germany without refueling with hydrogen.

? How many hydrogen trains are already in use, and what do the future prospects look like, also with a view to abroad?

27 trains were ordered by the Rhein-Main transport association RMV for use by the Start railway company. 14 vehicles with fuel cell drives belong to the Landesnahverkehrsgesellschaft Niedersachsen



The qualified economist Jens Sprotte (Ostfalia - University of Applied Sciences) has been Vice President Marketing and Strategy at Alstom Region D-A-CH (Germany/Austria/Switzerland) since 2021 and has worked for Alstom since 2003.



It started out as the first hydrogen train in the world and is already in everyday use today: the Coradia iLint, here traveling on the Alstom test track in Salzgitter.

Credits: Franz Sonk

mbH LNVG, and the vehicles are operated there by the Elbe-Weser transport company (evb). Successful trials have taken place in Austria, the Netherlands, Sweden and now France, among others. In Italy, the operator FNM placed an order for 14 hydrogen-powered Coradia Stream trains at the end of 2020. This year, France also joined the group of “founding countries” with an order from SNCF for 12 hydrogen hybrid trains for four French regions: Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes, Burgundy-Franche-Comté, Grand Est and Occitania. These trains receive their drive energy from the overhead line and hydrogen from the fuel cell.

? Does the hydrogen train also help to secure jobs in Europe?

In the automotive sector, there are fears that suppliers from the USA and China could, so to speak, take some of the sausage out of European producers’ bread when it comes to selling battery-powered cars. Of course, our products secure jobs in Europe! When it comes to Coradia iLint, we consciously speak of “Innovation ‘Made in Germany’”. And Alstom has numerous locations across Europe, including in Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Poland, Austria, Norway and Spain. Our global strategy includes being present locally as a reliable, long-term partner for our customers.

? Thank you very much for the conversation!

The interview was conducted by Hermann Schmidtendorf.

Alstom: WITH HYDROGEN FOR EMISSION-FREE MANEUVERING

Since 2013, the Alstom factory in Stendal has been building **three-axle shunting diesel locomotives** of the UIC series 90 80 1002 under the **factory designation H3** in a hybrid version. They belong to the **family of Prima locomotives** based on the Alstom H3 platform, which are available with a 1,000 kW diesel engine or two diesel engines with an output of 350 kW each. In the 750 kW hybrid version, a 350 kW motor is coupled with a battery. By 2022, 58 of these hybrid locomotives had been built.

The locomotive with the serial number 00032, built in 2019, has now been made available by the Peine-Salzgitter transport company (VPS) so that it can be equipped with a **retrofit kit for hydrogen operation** at the Alstom Salzgitter site as part of a joint project. Partners are WTZ Roßlau gGmbH, TU Braunschweig and the associated partners Fraunhofer IST and Robert Bosch Elektronik GmbH. The project is supported by the city of Salzgitter with funding totaling around 1.5 million euros from structural aid from the state of Lower Saxony. In the future, emission-free shunting operations in rail freight transport should be possible.

Alstom assumes that **diesel shunting locomotives are extremely solidly built and therefore have an average life expectancy of 50 to 70 years.** The decarbonisation of an exis-

ting locomotive with a hydrogen combustion engine is to be implemented for the first time on a VPS vehicle and tested on the railway company’s factory premises. The hydrogen is injected into the cylinders of the existing diesel engine, compressed and ignited using a retrofitted spark plug. By converting the existing diesel engine to hydrogen, a cost-effective conversion solution is to be created. Many components from the existing locomotive can continue to be used. Components such as valves and the pressure tanks are taken from the iLint passenger train.

Retrofitting for hydrogen operation is an option for around 4,000 existing shunting locomotives across Europe. Alstom hopes to be able to convert a quarter of this when the project is ready for the market and can be implemented from 2024. *hfs*

Really “Prima” = fantastic: This “Prima” H3 locomotive is being tested at Alstom Salzgitter as a converted hydrogen locomotive.



Photo: Alstom

HSL: Flexible spot freight trains across Europe

A conversation with the CEO of HSL Netherlands about quality in freight transport and synergies through eight country representatives.



Latest "draft horse" at HSL: One of five EURO9000 locomotives, exhibited at the HSL anniversary celebration in Hamburg.

CARGO FREIGHT JOURNAL: Mr. Schallach, in May 2023 at the Munich transport logistics trade fair you received a new safety certificate from the European Union Railway Agency for HSL Netherlands for the next five years. Congratulations! How do you work with your European partners in your group of companies?

Sven Schallach: With the HSL Logistics Group we have branches in eight countries: Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Austria, Switzerland, Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany. That's why we say this is our G8 meeting. We have specially arranged a so-called G8 meeting in sales, where all sales people meet and discuss the company's strategy. From this, the operational G 8 meeting emerged, at which the operational employees can exchange information accordingly. And we recently started the G8 meeting of safety managers in the Netherlands. There, all Safety Managers work together to promote the safety concept.

? That probably integrates the people – are you proud to be part of a larger community promoting the railways?

Each individual can of course be proud of what we have achieved in the last 20 years. We had our twentieth anniversary at the end of June 2023, which we celebrated accordingly in Hamburg, at our "headquarters". It's always better together when you

sit at a table in person and can discuss and exchange ideas; language problems also become smaller.

? Keyword language: I'm assuming that at the meeting of your G 8 group, the people taking part speak English among themselves, because everyone can do it somehow. But when you send trains across borders, the train crew in each country must be able to speak the local language. Do you see that as a hindrance to cross-border freight traffic?

I consider this to be a disability throughout. I am a big supporter of Europe and am convinced that in order to get more traffic on the rails, we have to speak a uniform language, whatever that will be.

? At least you have multi-system locomotives that are approved for power and safety systems in several countries?

HSL Logistik has more than 50 locomotives. Brand new are the EURO9000 locomotives - the six-axle locomotives leased from Stadler. We will receive five of these machines, which can and will then operate in the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Switzerland and Austria. We are very proud to have such a strong locomotive. Because the customer wants to drive heavier and heavier trains. Where ten years ago we were able to make ends meet with 2,000 tons, today the customer sometimes ►

demands 3,000 tons or an even higher tonnage, and you can do that very well with a EURO9000. In addition, the EURO9000 can of course run on diesel and electric traction. And that gives us a lot of advantages with regard to the so-called last mile, that you don't always have to change the locomotive.

? Can you say something about the routes you travel?

As HSL, we drive 95 percent in the spot area. If we now define it so that a customer comes back every week, just on different traffic days, then we are even at 100 percent. We hardly have any regular services along the lines of, 'the same train leaves every Monday at ten o'clock'. We have now built a corridor between East and West to run one train every day. It is of secondary importance to see which train is ultimately behind it. However, the customer now has the opportunity to book the train months in advance. We are traveling in eight countries, we are very present on all routes. Our race tracks, if you want to put it like that, refer to the Czech Republic and the Netherlands, Belgium, and east-west, west-east. We are definitely capable of implementing a train within 24 hours. And that is actually our strength. We have the staff who are passionate about the company and getting the trains safely from A to B.

? It is difficult to get employees everywhere in Europe today. How do you do that, you also use Instagram?

Yes, we expect a lot from our employees. However, we also give a lot in the form of the so-called work life balance. We are on Instagram with

our mascot, HaSel, which is a giraffe. We have our own YouTube channel under HSL, and we give the locomotive drivers the opportunity to work internationally. We now have national train drivers who we train internationally at our expense in the hope that they will of course stay with us. Apart from the monetary security that we give our employees, it is also important that they are heard. We as management can be contacted directly. Our doors are open and no one needs to be afraid to express their own opinion. On the contrary, we even expect employees to share their own opinions.

? Driving trains through Germany will be difficult next year because of scheduled massive construction work. Do you already have an overview of your relations and whether you have to expect any detours or delays?

First and foremost, it is of course a shame that the infrastructure was left lying there for years and no investment was made at all. That was a wrong political decision, and the infrastructure manager DB Netz itself can't do anything about it. Ultimately, elected federal governments are responsible for this. We already face construction work on our "race tracks" through the Elbe Valley. All you can say is, this is a catastrophe. However, we also have very good key account managers at DB Netz with whom we are in close contact.

! Mr. Schallach, good luck with your transports and thank you very much for the interview!

The interview was conducted by Hermann Schmidtendorf.

Photo: Hermann Schmidtendorf



Sven Schallach has been working for the HSL Logistik Group since 2011, currently CEO at HSL Netherlands and Sales Director at HSL Logistik GmbH.

HUPAC Group: Hubs as gateways to the world – “We need more doors for intermodality!”

A CFJ conversation with the CEO of the Hupac Group and Managing Director of Hupac Intermodal

CARGO FREIGHT JOURNAL: Some months ago your company opened a huge hub near Warsaw?

Michail Stahlhut: Brwinów is really close to my heart. This is a new little kid in our network. We believe that we can create more intermodality in Europe. There are economic areas in southern Poland and Katowice, there is an economic area in Warsaw, in Poznań. We have several economic areas in the east that also need to be networked and that we can connect well. That means it's not enough if we think from Duisburg to Warsaw. We may have to think from Warsaw to Barcelona. We have to think from Warsaw to Bari because that is the chance.

Thinking as a German along the A 2 autobahn, along the autobahn from the Rhine-Ruhr area to Warsaw, is certainly very easy. But there can also be a lot of trucks driving there, so you are in a tough competitive situation with the road. However, if we continue to extend that, if we think about moving further to southern Europe, I think we will create maximum energetic added value. And thinking again in the direction of CO2, we manage rail transport lengths of well over 1000 kilometers. And they're really, really fun. We also believe in the location around Warsaw. We are currently in the process of trying to build the short sea connection to Warsaw, beyond Duisburg. We use the Duisburg location as a nucleus. ►



The “new little kid in the HUPAC network”: Terminal Brwinów near Warsaw.



Credits: Hermann Schmidtendorf

Michail Stahlhut (Dipl.-Ing. TU Hamburg-Harburg, Strategic IQ Harvard Business School Executive Education) held management positions at DB Cargo, Eichholz, OHE and Arriva after his time as a career officer in the German Armed Forces. From 2010 to 2018 he was CEO of SBB Cargo International. He has been Managing Director of Hupac Intermodal SA since 2018 and also CEO of the Hupac Group since 2020.

We have just become more active in Cologne North as the operational manager of the location. We believe that the Rhine-Ruhr area can also be linked to the East, the South and the North. Above all, we also believe that the very long distances across the continent, such as Warsaw-Barcelona, are a mega-opportunity to build that up. Or if you think further to Portugal. That is of course a real challenge, because then you have system barriers in the form of the other, the Iberian gauge.

? Do you also think that significant traffic could run from the more defined north via Warsaw when the Rail Baltica from the Baltic States to Poland will soon be operational?

I was just talking to someone about this. I believe that everything that creates permeability, regardless of the limit - if I have a system with a track width, it's easiest for me to start with it - that's advantageous. And then I have a power system. As an engineer, I am happy when I have many pantographs on the locomotive. But as a payer of the system, I'm not happy about that because the locomotive will be very expensive. If I only have one security system like the European ETCS system at Rail Baltica, then that is advantageous. And if I then of course connect the Baltic states with one security system and one track gauge, that would be brilliant! This is how we connect Europe. We, who are slightly older, are preparing a networked Europe for the younger generation. That is our task.

? How do you see the position of the German port city of Duisburg for logistics?

Duisburg is extremely important for development on the north-south and east-west axes. I am a child of the Ruhr area. Now I'm even speaking for my own homeland! Anyone who looks at the infrastructure knows that this hub, this location, is necessary in order to have transshipment capacity in strong economic regions. The strongest economic regions calculated in GDP (Gross Domestic Product) are the Rhine-Ruhr area and northern Italy, Lombardy and Piedmont. These are economic regions with 500 billion GDP. That means if we don't invest in more terminals, we would all be stupid. We counted around 20 terminals in the Rhine-Ruhr area. And they are already full today, we need more.

I believe 120 percent that this system has a future. For this we need doors into the system, i.e. the terminals – no matter where they are, whether in Warsaw, Istanbul, Barcelona, Duisburg, Cologne or Milan. We need more doors, and we will always be there at these doors, always trying to create this intermodality.

! Mr. Stahlhut, thank you very much for the exciting conversation!

The interview was conducted by Hermann Schmidtendorf.