

Press release

This year's first direct Chinese container train arrived in Budapest

Budapest, 27 April 2020 – This year's first container train from China directly to Hungary, via Záhony, arrived at the Rail Cargo Terminal - BILK in Budapest. The train consisting of 40 wagons transported among others medical protective equipment, masks, gloves, disinfection wipes and other appliances.

The train handled by Rail Cargo Operator - Hungaria travelled more than ten thousand kilometres on the continental Silk Road. During the transport, the locomotives and locomotive drivers were changed several times and due to the different track gauges, the containers had to be handled on various occasions. The next similar train is already on its way to Budapest.

László Mosóczi, State Secretary for Transport Policy of the Ministry for Innovation and Technology welcomed the fact that next to the airlift – which is operating for several weeks now – the connection between China and Hungary was restored on mainland as well. In the course of increasing traffic volumes, compared to maritime transport, rail allows for a faster freight transportation in an eco-friendly way.

The State Secretary stated that the modernisation and capacity increase of the Hungarian section of the Budapest–Belgrade railway line is starting with planning and permitting, after the related loan agreement was recently signed. Hungary, as a transit country is also benefiting from the freight traffic between Asia and Europe, and by using its favourable conditions, the country can become the logistics centre of the region.

László Mosóczi added that all actors in the field of freight transportation, including the significant rail freight company in Hungary, Rail Cargo Hungaria are acting exemplarily in the state of emergency. Their contribution is essential for the continuous supply of the Hungarian population and the gradual restart of the economy.

Imre Kovács, Chairman of the Board of Rail Cargo Hungaria and Member of the Board of Rail Cargo Austria explained that he is experiencing a continuous rise in the field of container transport by rail. The effect of the factories resuming their operation in China can already be noticed: next to the start of continental transport, container vessels are arriving in the Adriatic ports, from where the trains of the Rail Cargo Group carry the Asian products to Hungary.

He added that fluctuations in traffic should be expected for the time being, and it may even take until autumn to balance the transports – in accordance with the restart of the European factories. Railway can reach the traffic volumes of last year's months by autumn or winter, but on an annual basis, in the region a 10-20% setback per country can be expected.

The Chairman of the Board highlighted that together with the ministry they are looking for solutions to stabilize the operations of the rail freight company.

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