

# Press release

## Technology revolutionizing European rail freight transport presented in Budapest

*Budapest, 21 September 2023 – A train equipped with a digital automatic coupling (DAC) has arrived in Hungary as part of a test tour covering six European countries. DAC, a future-oriented technology for the railway sector, was presented to the authorities, leading representatives of Hungarian railway companies and experts at a professional forum organized by Rail Cargo Hungaria (RCH). The results of domestic tests will be also taken into account when finalizing the technology.*

The German company DB Systemtechnik, which has been actively involved in all phases of the development, is coordinating the European test tour. The aim of the uniform introduction of DAC is to create the preconditions for the automation and digitalization of rail freight transport in Europe. The ÖBB Rail Cargo Group (RCG) is a member of the consortium (DAC4EU) established by six European railway companies, which is coordinating the development of the new coupler and the final selection of the appropriate type.

### Technology introduction may start in 2028

At present the freight wagons are manually coupled, checked on the spot through passing by the wagons after they have been set in the train, and the brakes are tested as well. This is a time and cost consuming process that is physically demanding for the wagon employees, and it is also extremely dangerous.

According to the European Union's DAC implementation program, from 2028, freight wagons equipped with the new technology will be coupled by the digital automatic coupler, which will provide air, power and data connections. This could affect up to 450,000 freight wagons and 17,000 locomotives in the European Union.

The introduction of the DAC will strengthen the competitiveness of European rail freight transport by allowing automation in train operations, reducing technological processes and the length of stops, increasing the speed of cargo transport, freeing up capacity, supporting the shift of additional transport volumes to rail and reducing the risk of accidents.

### A key role in revolutionizing rail freight transport

*Imre Kovács*, Member of the Board of Directors of Rail Cargo Group and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Rail Cargo Hungaria, pointed out at the event that the introduction of the

technology can compensate for the lack of shunting manpower in the process of coupling and uncoupling freight wagons, and at the same time save costs. He stressed that the innovation is a unique opportunity to revolutionize rail freight transport in Europe and will play a key role in transforming the operation of railway undertakings. DAC will provide additional capacity to shift traffic to rail, thereby strengthening climate protection efforts.

*László Veszprémi*, Head of the Railway Authority Department of the Ministry of Construction and Transport, said that this innovation opens up new horizons in rail freight transport, providing faster and more flexible services by increasing transport capacity, while keeping emissions to a minimum. DAC is a first step towards smart railway. The Railway Authority is constantly monitoring technological innovations in the industry and supporting the sub-sector to ensure the safety of rail freight transport.

*Dr László Mosóczi*, CEO of MÁV-START Zrt., emphasized inter alia at the professional forum on technology, "The European Union's Green Deal program aims to increase the share of rail in freight transport in the short term. Hungary and MÁV support this goal and are committed to achieving climate policy goals at a high level. Innovations such as the digital automatic coupler, which makes the coupling of rail wagons faster and safer, will help to make rail freight transport more competitive. We are pleased to welcome the test train equipped with DAC on the MÁV network and to support its operation. Our experts will contribute with their suggestions to the finalization of the technology, taking into account the results of the domestic tests."

*Mark Topal-Gökceli*, CTO of ÖBB-Holding AG, EDDP (European DAC Delivery Program) Program Manager, stressed at the event that "Digital automation of the digital automatic coupling is essential in order that we can increase the competitiveness of rail freight transport in Europe. The successful introduction of DAC would significantly increase operational efficiency, capacity and quality of service of the European rail freight companies. Until a comprehensive introduction of DAC, the aim for the coming years is to prepare the technology for series production and to create the necessary framework conditions for the transition."

### ***The European DAC4EU Consortium***

*The DAC4EU consortium – led by DB AG, with ÖBB Rail Cargo Group, DB Cargo and SBB Cargo as rail freight operators, and Ermewa, GATX Rail Europe and VTG as freight wagon operators – aims at equipping trains throughout Europe with the digital automatic coupling. The consortium started its operations in June 2020. It is planned to equip trains throughout Europe with this new technology from 2028 onward, and thus to contribute to rail freight transport playing a significant role in the future key role of rail freight transport in the European mobility system.*

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