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Reducing noise in rail freight transport

Dear ladies and gentlemen,

Our aim is to be a strong, sustainable partner with your best interests at the heart of all we do. This is why we are continuously improving our range of products and services, expanding our traction network, making investments in innovative, modern wagon materials, and in enhancing the quality of the service we provide.

Rail freight transport stands for sustainable transport. Our CO₂ emissions, for example, are 21 times lower than those caused by road freight transport. In addition, it is of great importance to us that we make improvements when it comes to the issue of noise pollution. Rolling noise is produced when the wheels of freight wagons come into contact with railway tracks. This is the biggest source of noise pollution in rail freight transport. The smoother the surface each component is, the less rolling noise is produced. This is what makes brake pads extremely important. While the grey cast iron brake pads that are used across Europe today roughen the wheel surfaces, using quiet brakes, as they are known, keeps the wheel surface smoother. This leads to a reduction in the sound pressure level by around 9 dBA, which, to the human ear and the environment, equates to reducing noise levels by half.

We have gradually been equipping our freight wagons with low-noise brake systems since March 2018, and are making freight transport quiet in a sustainable way. **As much as 60 % of the Austrian wagon fleet was retrofitted by August 2019, which means that 60 % of the fleet is already quiet!** All of the wagons are going to be retrofitted by the end of 2021 at the latest. With a total investment of around 20 mill. Euro, this is making a resounding difference and is a real relief for the population.

Moreover, the ÖBB has invested more than 20 million Euro per year in efforts to reduce noise pollution over the past ten years. That equates to around 900 kilometres of noise barriers that run along the Austrian rail network. By the way, noise abatement measures are already standard along all new routes and all routes under expansion. The ÖBB is working closely with the federal states and local communities to improve existing train routes. **Things**

are also happening on a European level: in June 2019, the European Commission and its member states decided that **rail freight wagons with quiet brakes** will be the only wagons permitted on main transport routes **from the end of 2024**. That equates to a blanket ban on “loud” freight wagons with loud brake pads in many countries, Austria included. As early as January 2020, (Switzerland) and December 2020 (Germany), Rail Cargo Group’s customers will be provided with transport services into and across Switzerland to / into Germany that exclusively use low-noise freight wagons.

This affects all transport services, including transit services. If you use wagons from other railway vehicle owners (known as privately owned wagons or wagons owned by other railway undertakings) for your transport services along these routes, please be aware that only wagons with the correct wagon class displayed on the vehicle may be loaded for services running to Germany and Switzerland.

Please also ensure you are using the correct braking equipment. If the correct braking equipment is not in place, none of the Rail Cargo Group subsidiaries will not be able to accept or carry out any transport services to or through these countries. The subsidiaries of the Rail Cargo Group are not required to and do not carry out inspections of the freight wagons (of the braking equipment in particular). Any possible setbacks that result from the wagon in question being taken out of action are to be borne by you. A lump sum of € 1.500,00 per freight wagon that has not been adapted to meet noise level requirements will be charged to cover any resulting overhead expenses, (e.g. for handling or uncoupling the freight wagon). We expressly reserve the right to claim further damages. Rail Cargo Group and its subsidiaries also reserve the right to compensation.

Should a freight wagon that has not been adapted to meet noise level requirements be implemented by an affiliate company of the Rail Cargo Group or one of its sub-companies, the affiliate will transfer fines incurred and or other costs (e.g. costs of legal proceedings) to the customer, contract partner, the consigning RU or the wagon provider.

Your understanding and your support are greatly appreciated to ensure everything runs smoothly in our joint efforts to make rail freight transport quieter. Should you require any further information, please feel free to contact your customer service advisor at any time.

We appreciate your confidence in us and look forward to our continued cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Rail Cargo Group