

The silk rail-road

YHF has set up a train solution between China and Europe. Using Unit 45 reefer containers they are even ready to carry meat or wine. With telemetric monitoring and EDI custom clearance, the good old railroad arrives in modern times.

Every fourteen days all year round, regardless external climatic conditions, within reefer containers, goods can be moved from Europe to China and vice versa safely. This is what YHF Hatrans logistics, a Sino-Polish joint venture, is offering with its »Chengdu Air Express« cargo train. Fourteen days, is the exact duration the trains need to accomplish the entire distance of 9826 kilometers between Chengdu, Sichuan in Central China and the Polish city of Lodz or vice versa, the company says. The Chengdu Air Express train started April 26, 2013 and is since then loading one train a week, each Saturday, composed with a minimum 41 wagons of 40-foot containers and departs in Chengdu to take the southern route (Silk road) via Kazakhstan, Russia, Belorussia, to Poland. Regular loading back, from Lodz to Chengdu, is targeted to start mid October 2013. YHF's train solution is supported and promoted by the provincial government of Sichuan.



The train the Sino-Polish YHF sends from Chengdu to Lodz takes a route similar to the ancient silk road.

Exclusive partnership with Unit 45 reefers

According to Sofiane Rachedi, chairman of the YHF group, and Benoit Foucart, new General Manager of YHF Europe, the trains will be operated all year round, especially as YHF is proposing Unit 45 Reefer containers on which temperature can be regulated from -25°C to +25°C regardless of outside weather conditions.

The partnership between Unit 45 and YHF is dubbed exclusive, the two companies want to offer road users what they call »a sole and strategic advantage in winter«, plus an opportunity to carry goods such as meat or wine all year round. Unit 45 has developed and tested with YHF a new type of refrigerated container for China to Europe train cargo transportation during August 2013, ensuring that frozen goods could be carried even in summer safely, says YHF.

This 45 foot container, able to carry real 40 foot cargo, has been developed for the use of multimodal operation where rail is featured. It incorporates a special designed large diesel tank which is more than sufficient for a 10 000 kilometer journey and to carry goods up to 20 days from China to Europe and vice versa. For security only, YHF is also refilling the tank during the journey, the company adds.

On top, an advance track and trace system is put in place to control and re-

Unit45 reefers, here a picture from Intermodal Europe 2011, are used by YHF for temperature controlled transports.



cord the temperature (as well as return air, discharge air, alarms, operating mode, fuel level, hour meter, battery voltage), as well as any door opening with real time alerts. »The cold chain is fully safe«, YHF promises.

Export cooperation planned

This is only one innovation among others, the company claims. Security and safety is monitored by GPS. This guarantees visibility and recording of all transport data from beginning to end. Furthermore, EDI Custom Clearance enables, when a train arrives at a border, the clearance procedures to be done in a very short time. On train departure shipment data is sent electronically to the customs authorities. »This is well perceived by freight forwarders and customers«, says YHF, as it guarantees predictability on the short transit time of the cargo trains. Exporters and importers of wine, meat and fish will meet in September in Chengdu to develop additional

cooperation for exporting meat and wine from Europe to China, using YHF train solutions, the company announces. The exchange of food from China to Europe and the reverse is key, especially between Poland and the Central China region, which are enclaves in the middle of their Region, they say.

Same costs as ocean shipments, but shorter

With regard to costs, cargo train shipments between the two locations are said to be quite similar as ocean shipments, but up to 30 days shorter. Compared to air shipment, it is about five days longer, but four to six times cheaper.

Poland is located right in the center of Europe and is becoming a natural gateway between Western Europe and Russia. Railway and truck transports from Lodz to Moscow take two days, which is the same time they need for running from there to France, the Netherlands,

or Northern Italy. Lodz and Poland are well equipped and hub and distribution costs in Poland are between 35 and 40 percent less than in the Netherlands when the new Polish VAT regulations enable the same deferred VAT model as in the Netherlands, YHF says. They are convinced: »YHF Train Cargo Shipments are a real alternative to air and sea freight and safely operate all year round.«

Growing Hub

For the past few years, Poland is leading the growth for logistic hubs in EMEA, says Colliers international. The country is expected to take a leading position in the next few years thanks to the support from growing consumption in Poland, Eastern Europe, and Russia/CIS countries, while becoming the leading location for new manufacturing plants. YHF stresses that the warehouse it uses in Poland is equipped with bonded licenses with both the EU and Russia (CIS).

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