

Press Release

Railways as bridge-builders: 150 years of private-sector wagon leasing in Europe

- **Festive event under the patronage of Dr. Ludwig and Dr. Tschentscher**
- **VTG celebrates in Vienna under the motto “Re:think RAIL. Re:think FUTURE.”**
- **Exhibition showcases the strengths of rail as a mode of transport**

Hamburg, May 12, 2022. Today, VTG AG celebrated 150 years of private-sector wagon leasing in Europe in the Vienna City Hall. At the ceremony under the joint patronage of the Mayor and Governor of Vienna, Dr. Michael Ludwig, and the First Mayor of the Free and Hanseatic City of Hamburg, Dr. Peter Tschentscher, the European dimension of rail freight transport and its importance for a successful transport transition were highlighted.

“Having safe and attractive freight transport by rail will be absolutely essential if we are to get as much freight traffic as possible off the roads and onto the rails throughout Europe. For Europe’s cities, in particular, it is important to advance freight transport by rail wherever possible. The Hamburg-based VTG Group has now been active in this sector throughout Europe for 150 years, including via an Austrian subsidiary whose roots go back to a company founded in 1872. I congratulate you on this anniversary,” Ludwig said during the event.

“Rail has a key role to play for a transport policy that will help achieve the Paris climate targets. The Hamburg-Austria link is a model for climate-friendly and high-performance rail freight transport in Europe. Ninety-eight percent of the container shipments between the Port of Hamburg and Austria’s economic centers are carried out by train. As the largest private-sector wagon leasing company in Europe, VTG is a strong pillar of international rail freight traffic. I warmly congratulate VTG AG and its employees on the 150th anniversary of private wagon hire in Europe and wish them all the best for the future,” said Tschentscher.

After Hannes Kotratschek, Managing Director of VTG Rail Europe GmbH, delivered a welcoming address, the patrons and Dr. Johannes Hahn, European Commissioner for Budget and Administration, spoke. In addition, Dr. Heiko Fischer, the current President of the UIP and former CEO of VTG AG, and Sven Wellbrock, Chief Operating Officer Europe & Chief Safety Officer of VTG AG, discussed the industry’s future prospects.

Hahn underlined: “The rail transport sector is playing a key role in the transformation towards a greener, more digital and more resilient Europe. Every investment in rail is an investment in the future that will help connect Europe in a lasting way in terms of both people and businesses.”

“European wagon hire is a timeless business model and a backbone of the economy throughout Europe,” Fischer said. “Private wagon owners are interlinking the continent while also driving both innovation and digitalization.”

Over the past 150 years, private-sector wagon leasing has played a significant role in the harmonization of the European Economic Area and has always been a reliable partner for both businesses and political leaders, contributing investments and innovations to the ongoing evolution of the rail system.

“Today, we are looking back on a special success story that began on 24 February 1872 with the founding of the Erste Eisenbahnwagen-Leihgesellschaft AG (EEL) in Vienna. Its successor, the Österreichische Eisenbahn-Verkehrs-Anstalt Gesellschaft mbH (OEVA), is the oldest existing wagon hire company in Europe and has been part of the VTG family for several years under its current name, VTG Austria Gesellschaft mbH,” Kotratschek said.

“Our history obligates us to shape the future. As Europe’s largest private-sector wagon leasing company with decades of experience, we view it as our responsibility to advance the continent’s rail system, to boost its efficiency, and to develop new technologies so that the ecological benefits of this mode of transport can be fully leveraged,” Wellbrock said.

VTG celebrates under the motto “Re:think RAIL. Re:think FUTURE.”

Numerous innovations and solutions for rail were presented at “Re:think RAIL. Re:think FUTURE.”, VTG’s multi-day event in Vienna, including digital applications, sustainable refrigerated shipments, transport concepts for LNG and hydrogen, and new technologies for combined transport. At an exhibition, customers were able to learn more about the award-winning roadrailLink (r2L) transport and handling technology for loading non-craneable semi-trailers onto the rails as well as about digital fleet management using VTG’s online platform traigo, which has won multiple awards.

For an illustrated timeline of the 150-year history, please visit www.vtg-changemakers.com/en/.

About VTG:

Headquartered in Hamburg, VTG Aktiengesellschaft is a global asset owner and logistics company with a strong focus on rail. Besides hiring out rail freight wagons and tank containers, it also provides multimodal logistical services and integrated digital solutions. The company’s fleet includes around 88,500 rail freight wagons – mostly tank wagons, intermodal wagons, standard freight wagons and sliding-wall wagons – as well as about 5,000 tank containers.

This diversified service portfolio gives VTG’s customers a robust platform for international freight transportation, based on which the company develops made-to-measure logistical solutions for any and every industry. Over many years, VTG has accumulated granular expertise across the entire transport chain – expertise that is now flanked by smart technology. The Group likewise combines a wealth of experience with a specialized knowledge of the transportation of liquid and sensitive goods in particular. Its customers include a plethora of leading companies representing the chemicals, petroleum, automotive and paper industries, agriculture and virtually every other sector besides.

VTG posted revenue of EUR 1,221 million and an operating profit (EBITDA) of EUR 472 million in the 2021 financial year. The Hamburg-based company’s subsidiaries and affiliates give it a sizable footprint in Europe, North America, Russia and Asia. Effective December 31, 2021, VTG employed around 2,150 people worldwide.

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