The first direct freight rail connection with France comes into operation at the Port of Barcelona

- **A new railway service, the first of its kind in Spain, connects the Port of Barcelona with the French cities of Toulouse and Lyon from today, without the need to change locomotives when crossing the border.**

- **This will also be the first 750-metre-long container train to run regularly on the Spanish rail network.**

A new direct freight rail service connects the Port of Barcelona with the French cities of Toulouse and Lyon as of today. The container service, created by the companies APM Terminals Railways Spain, Synergy and Naviland Cargo, located at the BEST railway terminal, will provide four weekly connections between the Port of Barcelona and these southern French cities four times a week; three to Toulouse and one to Lyon.

The new connection is truly direct, since it will be the first rail service from Spain to France that will not have to transship or change locomotives after crossing the Perthus tunnel. This historic milestone was made possible thanks to the unique situation of the Port of Barcelona - the only port in Spain with a European UIC gauge connection from the terminal to the border with France. The service will be operated by Captrain's Stadler Euro6000 locomotives, type-approved to operate in both countries.

Another historic milestone of this service is that it will be the first regular container service on the Spanish railway network provided by a 750-metre-long train, the maximum length allowed in Europe. This will provide a capacity of 108 TEUs per journey compared to the usual trains, which are between 450 and 500 metres long and can transport an average of 68 TEUs.

Overall, the new service represents a significant saving in emissions since rail transport generates ten times less emissions than truck transport, while also avoiding congestion on the road network. Likewise, the direct connection saves significant time and money for logistics companies since it speeds up goods transport and avoids the need to change locomotives or transship containers, which up to now was unavoidable when entering France.

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The Port of Barcelona thus reinforces its position as southern Europe's logistics hub, further improving transit times compared to Northern European ports thanks to its location closer to the Suez Canal.

Port of Barcelona President Lluís Salvadó underscored the various historical milestones achieved by this new service and thanked the companies that made it possible. He also recalled that the direct connection and the savings in time and emissions that it will entail were made possible thanks to the fact that "the Port of Barcelona is the only port in Spain connected to Europe using European gauge."

Guillermo Belcastro, CEO of Hutchison Ports BEST, described it as a "historic day for the logistics of southern Europe", considering that the new services will be "a game changer that will generate value in terms of operational, economic and environmental sustainability efficiency." Pablo García, General Manager of Synergy, emphasised that for his clients the services will mean "savings in transit time connecting to over 200 direct ports worldwide."

Xavier Moliné, General Manager of APMT Spain Railway, underlined that for now "the most important thing is for us all to work together to consolidate the rail sector. Our job has only just begun - we must keep working to bring many more trains on board." In a similar vein, Philippe Vacelet, Director of Sales and Prices of Naviland Cargo, noted the strategic relevance of this new rail service "because it connects Barcelona with our European markets." That is why, "we are very proud to have the first direct train running between Barcelona and Toulouse today."

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PHOTOS:

The opening ceremony of the new direct rail service to France was held this morning at the Port of Barcelona.

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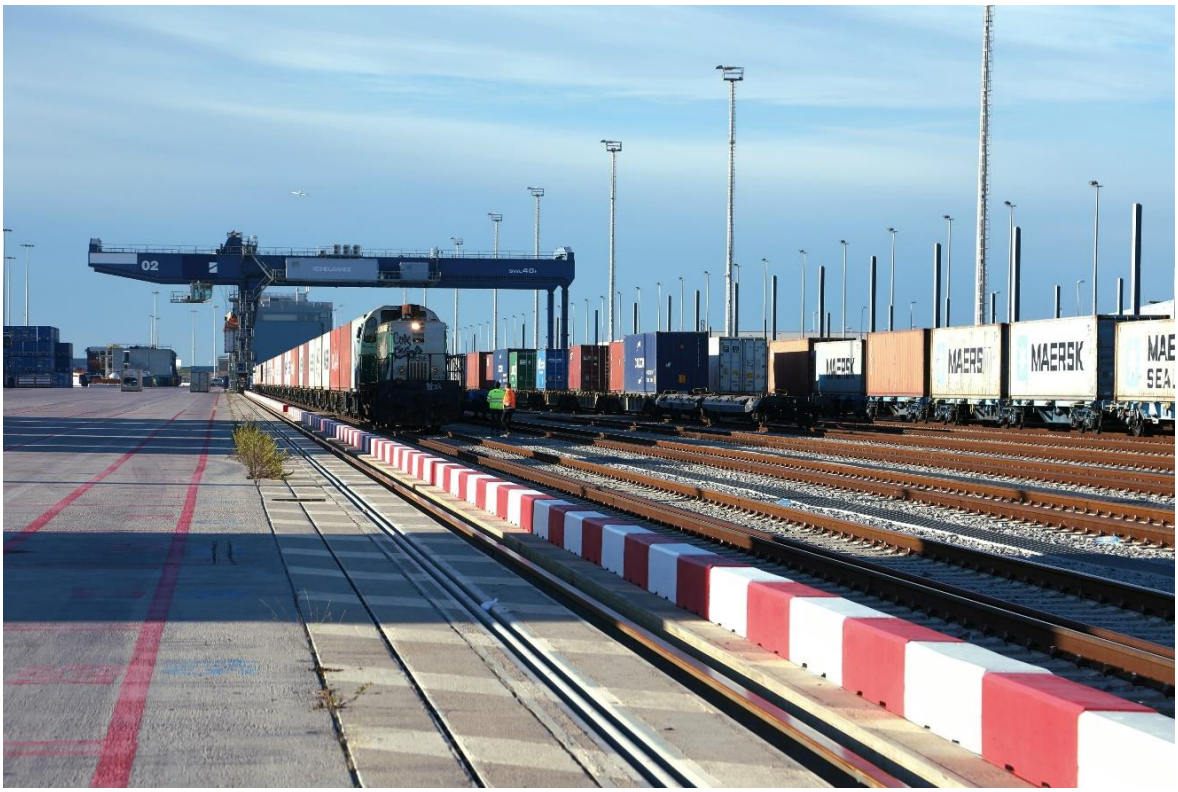
The train, about to leave the BEST terminal for France.



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