

# Record number of China-Europe freight trains services meet demand as sea and air freight capacity reduced

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To help with reduced shipping capacity due to the pandemic, over the last two months, the China-Europe freight train service has experienced a record peak in services.

As of 6th May 2020, the number of China-Europe freight trains originating in Xi'an reached 1,000 in 2020, 78 days earlier than the same period last year.

Cargo throughout totalled 1.923 million tons, an increase of 41.7% over the same period last year.

The 1,000th train of 2020 embarked from Xi'anXinzhu Station and headed west to Uzbekistan in May, a landmark journey in connecting China with its European trade partners.

In response to COVID-19, Xi'an opened up a dedicated channel for the trains to help maintain normal operations and support enterprises getting back to business. Xi'an recognised the need to optimise the transportation declaration and approval procedures and also intensify the schedule by reducing the intervals between trains.

The starting point of the Silk Road is Xi'an, an ancient capital of China, which has become known as the 'Window of the Silk Road', enabling China to connect with the rest of the world and becoming the home in

China for the freight trains.

In this critical period of global co-operation in the fight against COVID-19, the position of Xi'an as the centre of the China-Europe freight train service is pivotal.

Since the launch of the China-Europe freight trains in 2013, an increasing number of countries and enterprises are using the service. The China-Europe freight trains, which start off in Xi'an, can travel through more than 40 countries and regions, enabling close economic and trade ties between China and Europe.

In fact, as of April 2020, there is a new route from Xi'an to Barcelona. This train first set off on 8th April 2020 and took 18 days to arrive in Barcelona. The new route from Xi'an to Barcelona and the regular daily services to Horgos have extended the coverage of the trains from Xi'an to Western Europe.

As an example of the adoption of how freight train services are being embraced by businesses across Europe, on 26th April 2020, a freight train loaded with LONGI Green Energy's photovoltaic products set out from Xi'an Xinzhu Station on its way to Tilburg in the Netherlands for GVT Intermodal.

The products had previously been shipped by sea from Tianjin Port in China but in light of the pandemic, GVT Intermodal transported the products directly on the China-Europe freight trains, saving time and warehouse costs.

For LONGI Green Energy and GVT Intermodal, the freight train allowed them to continue business operations and reduce the impact of COVID-19.

Roland Verbraak, General Manager at GVT Group of Logistics comments on the importance of the China-Europe freight train services. He said: "We first started using the China-Europe freight train services just over three years ago, and as of last year, we have been sending 5 trains per week.

"By train, we are able to receive goods in 15 days, whereas air-freight takes 10-20 days due to capacity, and is also four times more expensive. Because of this, freight-trains are becoming more popular.

"During the current COVID-19 pandemic, we are still achieving 5-6 trains per week from China to Europe. The freight-trains have enabled us to continue operating as close to business as usual as possible during the pandemic.

"I have no doubt that the future is bright for freight trains from China to Europe as many other businesses start to recognise the benefits."

Mr. Xinhuang, Director of Xi'an Xinzhu Station of China Railway Xi'an Group said: "We are delighted to be able to be a solution to many enterprises during this stressful time. The China-Europe freight train service has clear benefits and has become the main means of transporting goods between China and Europe.

"We have been able to maintain operations as usual during the pandemic and have in fact extended our train services by reducing interval times and reaching new destinations such as Barcelona." It's great that

the China-Europe freight train service can encourage businesses around the world to connect, trade and join hands in the fight against COVID-19.”