

Sweden

More railways

During 20 years of liberalisation, Sweden's railfreight market has attracted a number of players. Some of them are active in the busy intermodal market to the rest of Europe.

Sweden's national freight railway Green Cargo is not called «green» for nothing. The name and colour were chosen to emphasise the fact that railways are an environmentally sound method of transporting goods, according to Anders Segerfelt, the company's director for international relations. Green Cargo operates as a logistics provider offering door-to-door services. Railfreight accounts for about 80% of its activities, and it has eleven logistics centres with warehousing space, 150 trucks, a Scandinavian intermodal network, and partnerships with many other hauliers.

Over the years there has been a definite trend for foreign trade flows to grow faster than domestic ones, Segerfelt said. Swedish industry (such as Volvo, Ikea, StoraEnso and so on) needs efficient rail links to the European mainland, although there is a problem balancing the volumes. The southwest corridor is Green Cargo's most important route, and Germany is by far the most important trade partner, followed by Denmark. Germany is also a transit country for France, the Benelux states, Switzerland and Italy. So Green Cargo has a number of associates in this trade.

Investing in cross-border locomotives

DB Schenker Rail Scandinavia, a joint venture between DB Schenker and Green Cargo based in Copenhagen (Denmark), has grown fast in the last three years and is aiming to double its market share of 4–5% in the Germany–Denmark–Sweden trade. The enterprise has invested almost EUR 100 million in new cross-border locomotives to cut delays at borders. The Scandinavian company boasts of opening up a new intermodal transport corridor between the three countries, using the Oresund fixed link and overland route. DB Schenker Rail Scandinavia CEO Stig Kyster-Hansen said that it is important for all parties in the transport chain to take the opportunity of re-thinking strategies, especially with the current financial crisis. This is beginning to happen, he added, «truckers and forwarders are starting to come to us, and we are getting more and more trailers.»

Another player is CargoNet. Managing director Kent Carlsson believes it is essential to prepare for large increases in intermodal transport. CargoNet is owned by NSB (Norwegian railways, 55%) and Green Cargo (45%), operates 24 terminals in Norway/Sweden and runs 60 shuttles a day. The company's Scandinavian network is also linked with Hupac and Kombiverkehr to serve mainland Europe.

As for routes further south, TX Logistik (owned 51% by Trenitalia) set up companies in Sweden and Denmark a few years ago, and its TXCargostar intermodal north-south service with 70 trains a week runs through to Italy



Photo: Anitra Green

International traffic is growing the fastest at Green Cargo.

as well. The competitive situation on this route is a complex one, for services are also offered by Hupac and Intercontainer, as well as SBB Cargo in cooperation with Green Cargo and DB Schenker.

Looking ahead, the situation is likely to change again in 2018, when the Fehmarn Belt fixed link is scheduled to come into operation. As well as cutting transit times to north Germany for trains, it will mean some loss of business for the Baltic Sea ferries such as Scandlines, which carry thousands of trucks and trailers between Scandinavia and Germany every day.

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