

# Just-in-se- quence plant deliveries

**With its integrated, flexible transport concept, DB Cargo Logistics helps carmarker Škoda develop new production capacities.**

**S**ocial shifts towards greater individualism represent a considerable challenge for the automotive industry. Flexibility is essential if the sector wants to meet customers' demands. Similarly, a service provider such as DB Cargo Logistics has to keep evolving so it can keep up. With its new models and highly flexible, integrated solutions, the rail freight operator is laying the foundation for a successful future. One example: its solution for Czech carmarker Škoda.

The company's Karoq SUV has been a real hit with motorists, and production has been hard pressed to keep up with demand. Škoda has two plants in the Czech Republic, and both are operating at maximum capacity. The company has now tapped into available production capacities elsewhere in the Volkswagen Group so it can step up the manufacturing and delivery of the popular car. As a result, the Volkswagen plant in Osnabrück has become a new production site for the Karoq.

## Transporting components from the Czech Republic to Germany

This new development requires components to be transported from the Czech Republic to Germany. Working with the logistics companies supplying

---

**“This is the first time we have been able to successfully make the railway the ‘just-in-time’ delivery link for the complex process of supplying production sites.”**

**GUNNAR GRAHLMANN**  
Key Account Manager, DB Cargo Logistics

---

the Osnabrück plant, DB Cargo Logistics and DB Schenker Czech Republic designed an integrated transportation solution that sees the movement of several hundred Karoq bodyshells from the Czech plant in Kvasiny to Osnabrück, where the manufacturing process can continue. Other suppliers' parts also need to make the journey

from the Czech Republic to Germany so that the bodyshells can be painted and the assembly process completed.

Gunnar Grahlmann, a key account manager at DB Cargo Logistics, says, “We are very proud to have won this contract. It represents a commitment that motivates us to work even harder. In winning this contract, we beat out our competitors in the road haulage sector and also bested other rail operators.” DB's subsidiary won for three specific reasons. The carmaker appreciates the sustainable aspects of the solution – after all, rail transport is the most environmentally friendly mode of trans-





**1** — *The Kvasiny plant in the Czech Republic saw production top 300,000 vehicles for the first time in 2018.*

**2** — *Every day, as many as 320 Karoq SUVs roll off the assembly lines of the Czech plants at Kvasiny and Mladá Boleslav.*

portation. Then there is the integrated nature of the concept: DB Cargo Logistics and DB Schenker can closely coordinate their activities as members of the same transport group. Finally, DB's logistics experts were able to address Škoda's specific demands relating to just-in-sequence transportation. "This represents the first time that we were able to make the rail network a 'just-in-sequence' delivery link for the complex task of supplying a production plant. Our solution and our personal involvement made it clear that we would do everything to ensure reliability and on-time delivery," says Grahlmann.

Another DB Cargo Logistics transport contract served as a reference: since early 2018, the company has been ferrying the bodyshells of the Škoda Fabia from the Czech plant at Mladá Boleslav to Osnabrück. The rail operator dispatches up to eight trains every week. The bodyshells are painted in Osnabrück and then sent back to the Czech Republic for final assembly. This transport works so well that Škoda picked DB Cargo Logistics to handle the transport of its Karoq components as well. Multi-system locomotives and sliding-wall wagons with GPS Since the end of 2018, the route taken by Škoda's high-priority trains follows the Elbe valley, running north from the Czech Republic to Germany. DB Cargo provides traction in the form of class 189 multi-system locomotives, thereby doing away with the need for changeovers. The car bodyshells are transported in large sliding-wall wagons: with a loading height of approximately 3.2 metres, they are ideal as they can house double-decker freight racks. DB Cargo has also had GPS transmitters installed in the wagons.

"This provides our customers and us with all of the relevant train-related data. At any moment, we know exactly where a given train is located," says Grahlmann. This is essential for managing transport, as the Karoq's production processes require an exceptional degree of predictability when it comes to logistics. The fact that the rail experts addressed the customer's specific demands relating to just-in-sequence transportation was another plus. The route is some 800 kilometres long. Starting in the Czech city of Pardubice, trains cross the German border at Děčín-Bad Schandau and need a total of 15 hours to complete the journey to Osnabrück. DB Cargo staff also have work to do at the train's destination, the VW plant: the rail freight company started a plant shunting service in Osnabrück a number of years ago. Grahlmann explains the advantage this brings: "It results in production processes that have no risky interface points, which is, of course, vital for ensuring the reliability and quality of the supply links. The larger DB network provides a crucial advantage for Škoda's transports: because DB Cargo and DB Schenker are both part of the DB Group, we have access to far more resources when designing solutions, and we can shape a solution completely around a customer's needs."

DB Cargo Logistics wants to ensure that the factors contributing to the success of this new contract can be transferred to other solutions, so it has started discussing the potential development of this link, and other links, with customers. The goal of these talks is to integrate customers' suggestions and take the portfolio of services at DB Cargo Logistics to the next level. The company is on the right path, because experience has shown that working together makes it possible to deliver even highly complex logistics services. ●



Gunnar Grahlmann, Key Account Manager, DB Cargo Logistics  
[gunnar.grahlmann@deutschebahn.com](mailto:gunnar.grahlmann@deutschebahn.com)