

International and flexible

Since the autumn of 2019, DB Cargo Logistics has transported Ford vehicles from Romania all across Europe. Five national DB Cargo companies work closely together to make it happen.

Every week, more than a dozen block trains leave the Ford plant in Craiova, Romania, for destinations up to two thousand kilometres away. Located in the Wallachia region of southwestern Romania, Craiova has a rich history and is an important city for European automobile production. In addition to engines, Ford produces the EcoSport and Puma models there. Some of the vehicles go to Constanța, a city on the Black Sea. They are bound for destinations including the Iberian Peninsula. Some of the trains go to Venice to serve customers in Italy. But most of the wagons pass through Hungary and Austria to reach Neuss in Germany, Antwerp in Belgium and Vlissingen in the Netherlands, home of the big Ford hub for the British market.

A lot of extras

“There are a lot of ins and outs to this job,” says Thomas Pries, account manager for Ford in the finished vehicles unit at DB Cargo Logistics. For one, the

railway uses special freight wagons. They are often too low to transport other car manufacturers’ products, but they’re a perfect fit for Ford’s models from Craiova. The logistics company now has around 400 type 553 wagons in its fleet to transport hundreds of thousands of vehicles a year. “The trains to Northern Europe are almost 700 metres long,” says Alexia Flores, project manager at DB Cargo Logistics. Flores is responsible for designing and implementing the transports and looks after the customer Ford: “Finding the right routes wasn’t easy.”

DB also succeeded in utilising more of the wagons’ capacity. DB Cargo Logistics and its equipment specialists were able to work out a solution for loading each wagon with twelve rather than the previous eleven vehicles, boosting capacity by around 10%.

On top of this, DB Cargo was able to provide additional services, fully taking charge of loading the vehicles in addition to transporting them. In September of last year, DB Cargo Romania began managing finished vehicle logistics at the plant. This task



“With its five tracks, the plant in Craiova is spectacularly well-poised for rail.”

THOMAS PRIES
Account Manager,
DB Cargo Logistics



1 — Ford has been producing EcoSport vehicles in Craiova since 2017.

2 — Ford has once more invested heavily in its production facilities for the new Puma.



had previously fallen to Ford's employees. The company hired and trained a team of almost 30 people in Craiova to get the job done.

Highly flexible

A flexible transport concept now allows planning to factor in sales market fluctuations from the outset and adapts the trains to account for volatile cargo volumes when needed. For this reason, all trains to Northern Europe run through a central hub in Bochum. "Depending on our needs, we can switch between the three destinations

"Depending on our needs, we can switch between the three destinations of Antwerp, Neuss and Vlissingen."

ALEXIA FLORES
Senior Account Manager,
DB Cargo Logistics

AT A GLANCE

The trains to Northern Europe are almost 700 metres long and take five days for their journey across the continent.

One freight wagon is loaded with twelve Ford vehicles.

of Antwerp, Neuss and Vlissingen," says Flores. While the total number of trains to the hub remains largely constant on a weekly basis, the number of trains to specific destinations can vary. When the need arises, it is also possible to transport more than the quantities agreed upon.

It takes the wagons up to five days to travel halfway across Europe: "Right now, we leave 24 hours before the scheduled departure time to allow a buffer for the border crossing between Romania and Hungary," says Pries. To protect the freight during stops and traffic jams, DB Cargo Logistics has also hired its own security guards in Romania and Hungary. The automaker also sets store in having flexible departures and wagons that are constantly available – including having a few wagons in reserve. Space is available, because Ford has already laid the proper groundwork: "With its five tracks, the plant is spectacularly well-poised for rail," says Pries. ●



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