

Progressive approach to the provision of transshipment services

in the form of the joint venture BULK TRANSSHIPMENT SLOVAKIA, a. s., at the transshipment border-crossing station (BCS) Čierna nad Tisou there are today conditions created for progressive sustainability, high competitiveness of transport along the longest transport routes of Slovakia's rail infrastructure and the efficient use of environmentally-friendly railway transport in Slovakia.

Over the past 13 years, BULK TRANSSHIPMENT SLOVAKIA, a. s. (BTS), in cooperation with its shareholders BUDAMAR LOGISTICS, a. s., and Železničná spoločnosť Cargo Slovakia, a. s. (ZSSK CARGO), has built five technologically advanced workplaces on the Schengen border which have contributed to increasing the quality of the transshipment services provided. Within the individual modernisation stages, the premises of the original workplaces, which had been unused for a long time, were revamped by building new facilities with the use of technologies that bring higher performance and, at the same time, ensure the ecological sustainability of transshipment.

BTS's most significant investments include automated workplaces of the two transshipment centres, which were put into operation in 2009 and 2017. They are intended for direct and indirect transshipment of bulk substrates from broad gauge wagons (1,520 mm) to standard gauge wagons (1,435 mm). The benefit of this technology and also its uniqueness is the combination of circular tipper technology with an automated belt conveyor system. By using this combination, the performance achieved represents four times the output of conventional transshipment with excavators involving the same number of employees, and the ecological burden on the environment was significantly reduced, too. Nowadays, the total annual transshipment capacity of the centres is around 5 to 5.5 million tonnes of bulk substrates, focusing on the transshipment of iron ore substrates, coal and coke.

The modernisation of two defrosting halls (Defrosting Halls II and III) in 2008 and 2017, respectively, significantly contributed to increasing the competitiveness of the transshipment yard and to its more ecological operation. Owing to these investments, trouble-free transshipment is ensured at the BCS Čierna nad Tisou in the winter. The defrosting capacity reaches 1.3 million tonnes of substrates in 90 days. Part of the added value of the transshipment services provided in the winter is the possibility of treating the transhipped substrate with a technological liquid. Preventing the substrate from freezing thus contributes to higher efficiency in the subsequent unloading of goods on the final customer's premises.

Since 2017, when a modern gantry crane with a capacity of 50 tonnes was built on the East ramp, BTS has also been engaged in the transshipment of piecemeal goods, such as slabs, coils, steel sheets, ore pieces, machinery parts and the like. At the East ramp - Portal workplace, additional, direct and indirect excavator transshipment of bulk substrates with the possibility of their temporary storage under a customs procedure is carried out at the same time.

Development activities are part of BTS's long-term strategy and are based on reflection of the requirements of business partners and their customers. Closely related to this is the currently

finalised investment project aimed at increasing the capacity of storage of bulk substrates. After the Storage Areas - Centre are approved for use, it will be possible to store 60 to 80 thousand tonnes of substrates in an area of 12,000 square meters, depending on the kind of commodity. At the border-crossing station Čierna nad Tisou, BTS will thus have customs warehouses available to its customers with a total capacity of 200,000 tonnes in an area of almost 35,000 square meters.

Since the beginning of 2020, BTS has accepted the opportunity to provide transshipment services also in the area of intermodal transport at the Dobrá Combined Transport Terminal. The first task was, in cooperation with ZSSK CARGO as the lessor, to put the terminal in a condition that would guarantee its safe operation and make its services more attractive. We accomplished this task. At the level of shareholders, activities continue to be undertaken to create the best possible business conditions for those interested in the given shipments. The most important thing is to get a part of the shipments along the New Silk Road. However, it is necessary to resolve and apply the state support scheme without delay.

Our company is aware that the basis for the sustainability of its growth is primarily qualified and loyal employees. In the field of operations, we focus on enhancing their expertise and developing qualifications for the activities performed. The company's significant investments regularly include the reconstruction of sanitary and operating facilities that afford our employees background as appropriate to their needs and the present times.

BTS's business also includes rail freight services. The workplace in Spišská Nová Ves focuses mainly on the rental of locomotives and the provision of technical support to tenants in the field of maintenance and repairs of locomotives. BTS currently has 32 locomotives with dependent and independent tractive power in its portfolio. Since 2011, we have, through the subsidiary INTER CARGO Sp. z o. o., been engaged in providing transport and forwarding services in Poland. For almost one and a half years, LOKORAIL, a. s., has been a subsidiary of BTS. With its services, this company provides support for ZSSK CARGO in the regular and irregular transport of goods, especially to the Czech Republic. The cooperation is focused on follow-up shipments, such as the regular Shuttle Slovakia train, which is a joint project of ZSSK CARGO and the DB Schenker Group. It helps to achieve the high quality of services, customer satisfaction and, last but not least, more efficient planning and deployment of ZSSK CARGO capacities.

BULK TRANSSHIPMENT SLOVAKIA, a. s., with the support of its shareholders - BUDAMAR LOGISTICS, a. s., and Železničná spoločnosť Cargo Slovakia, a. s., continues the trend of developing progressive procedures and making them contribute not only to the transshipment processes at the border-crossing station Čierna nad Tisou. The process of modernisation aimed at streamlining activities and creating a competitive advantage is a necessary element for the development of any activity in the company.

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