

IFB develops its rail network to Eastern Europe significantly

Antwerp, February 11 2010 – IFB, independent subsidiary of SNCB Logistics and specialised in intermodal transport, invests further in the development of its European rail network. After the new connections towards France, Spain and Italy, and thanks to a partnership with Intercontainer (ICF), IFB today opens a new network to the whole of Eastern Europe for its customers.

Antwerp–Cologne–Vienna–Sopron: gateway to Germany, Austria and South-Eastern Europe

In collaboration with ICF, IFB starts as of March 2010 a completely new connection with departure from **Antwerp** (terminals Mainhub and Combinant), towards final destination **Sopron Hub** (Hungary) with stops in **Cologne** and **Vienna** and further antennas in **Austria**. At this moment, IFB operates three connections per week (departure on Monday, Wednesday and Friday), but it has the intention to increase as soon as possible the frequency to a daily departure. The stops in Cologne and Vienna offer the possibility to serve the customers in Germany and Austria and to connect to the ICF network towards Scandinavia.

Genk – Sopron: direct rail towards the Balkans and South-Eastern Europe

Next to the aforementioned new rail connection from Antwerp to Sopron, the IFB rail connection between **Genk** (Belgium) and **Oradea** (Romania) also has a stop in **Sopron** since February 2, where units can be (dis-)connected to serve the regions of Vienna, Bratislava and Budapest or be transferred to linked rail connections towards the whole Balkan area. As the three weekly departures (from Genk on Tuesday, Friday and Saturday) are already maximally booked, the frequency is already increased to four departures per week.

Sopron – South-Eastern Europe/Turkey: the South European network

Thanks to a close collaboration with ICF and as of February 2010, IFB indeed has access to the ICF **Hub in Sopron** (Hungary). This hub means an important boost for the whole West-East axe and permits IFB to serve the whole Balkan region. The hub in Sopron gives IFB customers access to the complete network of ICF, that reaches to Budapest and Sékesfehérvár and other terminals in Hungary, Bulgaria (Poduyane, Ruse, Stara Zagora), Greece (Thessaloniki, Inoi, Athens), Macedonia (Skopje), Austria (Vienna, Graz, Villach), Romania (Arad, Oradea, Curtici, Bucharest) and Turkey (Halkali).

Paul Wouters, General Manager IFB: *“The last couple of months we had a lot of demand for connections towards South-East Europe, Turkey, the Balkans, Scandinavia and the whole of Eastern-Europe. This qualitative network that represents a direct access to more than 20 destinations in Middle and South Eastern-Europe and Scandinavia means an important competitive advantage for IFB. The extra benefit is that our clients don’t even have to organize themselves differently as the departures are done from our terminals in Antwerp and Genk.”*

Geert Pauwels, CEO IFB and Head of the SNCB Freight Division: *“With ICF we have found a reliable partner for intermodal transport, with whom we can develop our service offering from the Benelux to a true European network. We offer added value to each other and this permits us to achieve a real win-win partnership. We are looking into the possibilities to evolve from a commercial collaboration to a more general partnership.”*



Bart van der Cruysse, Managing Director of Intercontainer-Interfrigo SA: *„With IFB, we have a partner with a strong commitment who completes our network optimally. I am convinced that this cooperation is the beginning to a successful partnership, and that other projects will follow. Our common target is to shift more transports from road to rail.”*

Konstantinos Papadopoulos, Director Business Unit East at Intercontainer-Interfrigo SA: *“We see a great interest for intermodal transport on the corridor Belgium – South East Europe. Particularly in Austria, but also in long distance traffic with Greece and Turkey, we consider an important volume of cargo from Belgium. The economic development of the markets and the cooperation with IFB allows starting operating these new intermodal connections now”.*

About IFB Inter Ferry Boats:

Inter Ferry Boats nv/sa is member of the SNCB Logistics and a full (100%) independent subsidiary of NMBS/SNCB. The company is based in Antwerp and has for more than ten years been providing reliable multimodal solutions for transporting containers, chemicals, automotive products, paper and wood and consumer goods at home and abroad by rail, freighter or truck. IFB provides rail transport, but also manages various terminals in Belgium, Germany and France for freight handling. It has amongst others developed the successful National Rail Container Network (Narcon), a daily link via rail, terminal and truck between the quays in Antwerp and Zeebrugge and the hinterland. Rail Force is a division of IFB that provides transport specifically for the chemical and automotive industries. H&S Container Line is also a subsidiary of the IFB Group and a specialist in inland navigation between North Sea ports and the economic centres of the Rhine Area.

More information on www.interferryboats.be – www.railforce.be - www.nmbslogistics.be

About ICF Intercontainer-Interfrigo SA:

ICF Intercontainer-Interfrigo SA, established in 1967, focuses on unaccompanied rail/road transport services by using their own shuttles, block trains and hubs. Core markets are the corridors “Western Europe – South East Europe/Turkey”, “Western Europe – Switzerland” and “Western Europe – CIS”. Main customers are logistics companies, freight forwarders, shipping lines and shipping agencies. ICF also provides services for Supply Chain projects on an increasing basis. With its Head Office in Basel, Switzerland, ICF operates 13 representative offices at the most important interfaces of the European intermodal network and is shareholder of ten specialised intermodal operators. ICF is operating approx. 2’000 container cars for the 150 shuttle and block trains which travel every week throughout Europe, mainly in long haul traffic.

www.icfonline.com

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