

China-Europe freight trains with the Belt and Road Initiative— Envision of an Interconnected Eurasia

DONG Chunjiao

Professor, School of Traffic and Transportation, Beijing Jiaotong University

The Belt and Road initiative—a modern equivalent of Silk Road that comprises more than physical connections, aims to create the world's largest platform for economic cooperation, including policy coordination, trade and financing collaboration, and social and cultural cooperation. In 2014, China announced directing \$40 billion for the Belt and Road Infrastructure Fund to invest in developing infrastructure access, and cross-border connectivity to European Greater Zone (GEZ) countries and other states along the route. As two regular routes that emerged from booming high-tech zones in the Chinese cities of Chongqing and Chengdu rapidly grew into a 39 route interconnected transport network linking Asia and Europe, China-Europe rail freight transport becomes the efficient integration in the international logistic supply chain. Meanwhile, China-Europe freight trains have been recognized as a market niche, the high value-added products niche, representing up to 40% of the total cargo turnover China-European Union, which open new opportunities for rail service providers to attract an additional estimated market share of 12% from air & sea transport. Cheaper than air and faster than sea freight, the new Silk Road is building up strong momentum with freight forwarders across Eurasia. Dr. Dong is going to talk about China-Europe freight train development under the Belt and Road initiative and address issues such as main characteristics of China-Europe freight trains, main corridors, operation modes, and product organization. In addition, she will present the current stages and challenges that influence the operation of China-Europe freight trains and introduce the application of new tools to improve the efficiency and effectiveness. An example of Sichuan International Train Program will be presented at the end to further illustrate the international freight train application and challenges.