

Logwin organises intermodal exceptional load from Poland to Germany

Grevenmacher (Luxembourg)/Heinsberg – 16 metres long, a good 5 metres wide, over 4 metres high – and that twice over: The Logwin business segment Road + Rail has successfully executed the transport of two halves of a thermal reactor by flat-bed truck and barge over 1,000 kilometres from Niemodlin in Poland to Heinsberg near Aachen in Germany. The abnormal load, weighing some 75 tonnes, was transported on behalf of Dürr Systems, one of the world's leading suppliers of products and systems for the automotive industry. The consignee was Dürr's customer, Toho Tenax Europe GmbH in Heinsberg. The manufacturer of carbon fibre is expanding its production plant and will use the thermal reactor in the treatment of exhaust air.

The size of the reactor parts is considerable even by exceptional load standards, making end-to-end road transportation impossible. The reactor therefore had to cover part of the journey by barge. There are two main factors favouring inland waterway transport: first, oversize loads meet with fewer obstacles and second, there are no time restrictions as there are with road haulage. The three-week project kicked off on June 30, 2008. Logwin loaded both reactor parts onto two low-loader trailers at the production location in Niemodlin. "The floors of the low-loader trailers were removed for the lower part of the reactor so that it could rest on the sidemembers and the underside had space in the centre of the frame" explains Holger Philipowski, Manager for Eastern European Transportation at the Logwin branch in Dietzenbach. The exceptional load set off in a convoy for the port of Opole 25 kilometres away in the middle of the night, accompanied by a safety vehicle and a police car.

Downstream to Germany

Transport from Opole continued by motorised barge. In Wrocław extreme low water forced the transport to rest as locks only regulate the water level of the Oder up to there, and the Oder does not carry sufficient water after long dry periods. In summer, transport by inland waterways must take this into account. "While all of Germany was wishing for fine summer weather at the beginning of the long holidays, our staff in Poland were hoping for heavy rainfall in the region of the Upper Oder" reports Holger Philipowski. We tried everything we possibly could, even using a different type of boat with less draught. We were still not able to continue transportation."

After twelve days, the Polish inland waterways authorities opened up storage reservoirs along the Oder. The transport was able to continue its journey on the wave that this caused. At this point the barge still had a long journey across Germany ahead of it: this took it from the Oder along the Oder-Spree Canal and the Havel through Eastern Germany to the Mittelland Canal, from there to the Dortmund-Ems Canal and finally reaching the Rhine.

On the road again

The barge finally reached its destination port of Krefeld on July 24, after a 9-day water journey. Owing to the delay on the waterways there was no time to lose in continuing transport by road. Nevertheless, special care had to be taken when unloading the ship: "The lower part of the reactor had to be loaded onto the trailer in a very specific position because the limited space at the customer's construction site made it impossible for the reactor to be turned again later," explains Holger Philipowski.

Due to the size and weight it was only possible to continue the journey on the autobahn. As a maximum height of 4.45 metres could not be exceeded, the reactor had to be placed between the low-loader's sidemembers. This increased the width of the load to 5.60 metres. Shortly before its final destination the abnormal load had to negotiate three roundabouts. Road signs had to be dismantled in order for it to pass without damaging them. Unloading with a mobile crane went smoothly thanks to careful prior planning. After more than three weeks and almost 1,000 kilometres the thermal reactor had finally reached its destination. "There were several factors that were key for the success of the project", says Holger Philipowski. "In addition to systematic transport planning together with the customer, these include exact coordination between the interfaces in the transport chain and fast reactions to unexpected events". For example, Logwin had to arrange for two 250-tonne mobile cranes at short notice for unloading at Krefeld. The port crane had broken down shortly before the ship's arrival. Using an alternative port would have involved delays of at least a week as there was insufficient transshipment capacity available.

The Logwin business segment Road + Rail benefited in this large project from its many years experience in organising project transport that frequently demands the intelligent coupling and control of truck, rail and barge. Logwin has been active on the Eastern European market for several decades. "We were able to bring to bear our special know-how of regional affairs and administrative process to optimum effect in the successful way we transported the abnormal load from Poland to Germany", reflects Philipowski.

About Logwin AG

As an external partner, Logwin AG, Grevenmacher (Luxembourg), develops a comprehensive range of logistics and service solutions for trade and industry. In 2007, the group generated sales of 2.0 billion euros and currently employs approximately 8,600 staff in 44 countries. Logwin operates in main markets worldwide and has over 400 locations across all continents. With its three business segments Solutions (customer-orientated contract logistics solutions), Air + Ocean (global air and ocean freight forwarding activities) and Road + Rail (land and special transportation activities in Central, Western and Eastern Europe), Logwin AG is one of the market leaders.

The business segment Road + Rail is the specialist within the Logwin Group for efficient transport logistics. Its networks in the core markets of Germany, Austria and Switzerland connect Western and Eastern Europe with regular, scheduled transports. This gives Road + Rail customers access to comprehensive forwarding, storage and value added services in road and rail transport. In addition to access to its network, Road + Rail also provides dedicated transport concepts for individual and special shipments such as regional transport, block trains or tank and silo logistics. The 3,300 Road + Rail employees at 140 locations in 25 European countries generate annual sales of around 750 million euros.

Logwin AG is listed on the Prime Standard of Deutsche Boerse. The majority shareholder is DELTON AG, Bad Homburg.

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