

## Press release 08/2022

### Ceremonial signing of the Elbe-Spree network transport contract & presentation of the Siemens Desiro HC

**Magdeburg/Brandenburg an der Havel, June 30, 2022** – Today Ostdeutsche Eisenbahn GmbH (ODEG), together with representatives from the states of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Berlin, Brandenburg and Saxony-Anhalt and the transport authorities VBB-Verkehrsverbund Berlin-Brandenburg GmbH, Nahverkehrsservice Sachsen-Anhalt GmbH, and Verkehrsgesellschaft Mecklenburg-Vorpommern mbH, signed the transport contract for the Elbe-Spree network in Brandenburg an der Havel. As part of the ceremony, one of the new six-car Desiro HC trains was presented in Magdeburg and Brandenburg an der Havel by train manufacturer Siemens Mobility GmbH.

#### **The states will offer more service, trains and quality on their rail network.**

The large number of guests from politics and the media showed how great the public interest is in having high-quality mobility and a strong rail infrastructure. The new Elbe-Spree rail network marks a commitment by the four states to provide these services. The high service frequency, many modern trains, and improved infrastructure will ensure decisive improvements for both commuters and travelers throughout the region. The interstate connections will, among other things, increase the attractiveness of having separate places of residence and work, especially in fast growing cities and smaller communities outside of the main metropolitan areas.



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### The VBB handled the tender procedure on behalf of the four states

The Verkehrsverbund Berlin-Brandenburg (VBB) was in charge of the Europe-wide tender procedure on behalf of the states of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Berlin, Brandenburg and Saxony-Anhalt. The Elbe-Spree network is an extension of the existing S-Bahn network, whose transport contracts expire at the end of this year. In order to continue meeting the growing demand for local rail passenger transport in the future, the new rail network will expand by around five million train kilometers, providing around 25 percent more capacity than in the past. As of December 2022, some 28 million train kilometers will be operated throughout the entire Elbe-Spree network, and the capacities required by this volume of traffic will be ensured by increasing service frequency, providing longer trains, and building longer platforms. The expansion of the network will be carried out in two stages: The first will center on the network infrastructure, excluding the current construction of the Dresdner Bahn in Berlin. Following commissioning of this stage, most likely beginning in 2025, further improvements for passengers in the network will be provided.

The ODEG also participated in the tender and was awarded lots 1 and 4 at the beginning of 2019. When operations begin on December 11 this year, the current 13 million train kilometers will increase to more than 18 million, increasing operations by 50 percent. The term of the new contract signed today is twelve years. This new network expansion will create a total of 250 new and secure jobs for the largest private railway in eastern Germany. With the 2022/23 timetable change, the ODEG trains on the RE1 route will operate with the highest frequency: three times an hour during rush hours between (Magdeburg) – Brandenburg an der Havel and Frankfurt (Oder) – Eisenhüttenstadt – (Cottbus). All in all, this will mean an absolute win for the region in terms of mobility, climate protection and jobs. Compared to the current scheduling of two trains per hour on the RE1, capacity on the line during rush hours will be increased by up to 70 percent.

### A silent e-volution – the Siemens Desiro HC train

At the signing event, manufacturer Siemens Mobility presented its six-car, electric, single and double-decker train from its Desiro HC series and explained its many technical innovations and benefits for future passengers. The HC designation behind Desiro stands for “High Capacity”. With its expanded

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capacity, the train will easily handle increasing passenger volumes in metropolitan areas like Berlin, Magdeburg, Cottbus and Schwerin. One sustainable aspect of the train is that it is configured with two powered single-deck end cars and four double-decker unpowered middle cars, saving valuable energy resources. The train features specially coated windows for improved network reception. An additional plus is WiFi availability and power sockets throughout the train, numerous TFT monitors, real-time occupancy displays networked with the VBB app, a special passenger safety comfort system, wider car doors, entrances adaptable to different platform heights, and extra space for parking bicycles, wheelchairs and buggies. Additional information about the train can be found [here](#).

### Quotes:

#### **Guido Beermann, Minister for Infrastructure and Regional Planning, State of Brandenburg**

“The realization of the Elbe-Spree rail network marks another milestone on the way to climate-friendly mobility – and the mobility transition. By expanding service offerings as of this December, we will be able to provide five million more train kilometers a year in capacity. This will bring many improvements in service, especially in rural areas. In addition, passengers on the new network routes will benefit from the modern trains and higher service frequency. There will be more space, improved accessibility and free WiFi in the new trains. This is exactly what is needed to make rail transport a truly attractive alternative for the public.”

#### **Dr. Lydia Hüskens, Minister for Infrastructure and Digital Affairs, Second Deputy Prime Minister, State of Saxony-Anhalt**

“When the new ODEG trains enter service as of December 2022, I expect a further boost in quality on the connections with the capital,” said Saxony-Anhalt’s Minister for Infrastructure and Digital Affairs, Dr. Lydia Hüskens. “This way, we can provide good arguments for choosing the train when heading for the capital. We want to give our people in the state of Saxony-Anhalt a choice between well-developed means of transport, which requires that we have a well-developed infrastructure and high-quality mobility offers. The new trains are proof of this.”

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### **Dr. Meike Niedbal, State Secretary for Mobility, Senate Department for the Environment, Mobility, Consumer and Climate Protection, State of Berlin**

“The commitment of the federal states to better connect the regions has paid off: The new Elbe-Spree network offers more train kilometers, higher service frequency, and longer trains with more space for passengers as well as bicycles, wheelchairs and buggies. This is a leap in quality that can be a decisive factor for commuters when deciding to do their daily travel by train rather than by car. We need this significant increase in the range and quality of rail transport in order to effectively promote the mobility revolution. I am pleased that this was so successful for the Elbe-Spree network.”

### **Ines Jesse, State Secretary in the Ministry for Economics, Infrastructure, Tourism and Labor, State of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania**

“The signing of the transport contract will significantly strengthen regional rail transport across the states. Commuters and travelers alike will benefit from this. Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania will have a direct connection to Berlin Airport, which will make arrivals and departures much easier, especially during the busy holidays. In addition, connections to the Baltic Sea will be further improved. We will be setting new standards with the Elbe-Spree network transport contract. Attractive public transport is essential for ensuring the success of the mobility transition.”

### **Dr. Elmar Zeiler, Head of Commuter and Regional Trains, Siemens Mobility GmbH**

“We are really looking forward to using our state-of-the-art and proven Desiro HC trains on the Elbe-Spree network,” said Elmar Zeiler, Head of Commuter and Regional Trains at Siemens Mobility. “Passengers will benefit from the train’s generous spaciousness and high level of comfort. In addition, the Desiro HC for the ODEG features increased passenger capacity thanks to its sustainability-focused combination of single and double-decker cars. The trains will provide reliable, comfortable and safe local transport on the heavily traveled routes to and around the capital.”

### **Dr. Alexander West, Department Head, Transport Contract Controlling at VBB**

“I would like to sincerely thank the VBB award team, and all the other departments involved in the award. There has never before been such a tender in Germany, with a total of 28 million train kilometers, an additional service offering of more than 30 percent, and a true cornucopia of innovations. I would particularly like to emphasize the high quality standards we were able to set for the benefit of the passengers, and the concrete improvements to the offer, which are clearly evident in the form of

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additional seats and connections. And thanks to the successful competition, this attractive package also remains affordable for the participating states.”

### **Steffen Scheller, Mayor, Brandenburg a. d. Havel**

“I am very pleased that the signing of the Elbe-Spree network transport contract is taking place here in Brandenburg an der Havel. The takeover of the RE1 at the end of the year will not only increase capacity on the line, but also provide the long-awaited increase in service frequency, which will nearly match that of the S-Bahn. In recent years, the city of Brandenburg has experienced a strong influx, particularly of young people and families who want to live close to water and nature yet cannot and don't want to forgo good connections with the Berlin metropolitan area. Conversely, the connections will also strengthen our businesses and universities in Brandenburg an der Havel over the long term and make them more attractive. Around 22,000 people already commute daily from the city of Brandenburg and neighboring districts, but also from the state capital Potsdam and Berlin. Brandenburg's main railway station serves as a hub for an important mobility axis. Increased service frequency will provide greater flexibility and may make it easier for convinced car drivers to switch to rail, which would benefit climate protection over the long term.”

### **Stefan Neubert, CEO, ODEG – Ostdeutsche Eisenbahn GmbH**

“The signing of the transport contract for the Elbe-Spree network marks the beginning of a new era in our successful company history. We have been working intensively on the Elbe-Spree network project for more than two-and-a-half year and are professionally preparing for the upcoming start of operations with increased traffic. Today we proudly presented our new state-of-the-art Desiro HC train, which will inaugurate a new dimension of travel. The entire ODEG team looks forward to transporting our passengers to their destinations comfortably, safely and reliably with these new trains.”

You can find further information at:

[odeg-nes.de](http://odeg-nes.de)  
[vbb.de/fahrinformation/zug-um-zug-mehr-schiene](http://vbb.de/fahrinformation/zug-um-zug-mehr-schiene)

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### **About ODEG**

One of the biggest German railway success stories began with the founding of ODEG in 2002. As a subsidiary of BeNEX and Prignitzer Eisenbahn GmbH, ODEG has developed into the largest private railway companies operating in eastern Germany. The company operates a total of 13 lines on behalf of the federal states of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, Brandenburg, Berlin, Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt. ODEG uses the infrastructure of Deutsche Bahn AG for a fee. The company's vehicle fleet, consisting of 50 trains, currently includes 16 KISS, 7 Desiro MLs, 6 Desiro Classics, 6 GTW 2/6, 14 RegioShuttle RS1s, and 1 FLIRT. Maintenance of the fleet is handled by a 100-percent subsidiary, Ostdeutsche Instandhaltungsgesellschaft mbH (ODIG). Additional information about the company is available at [odeg.de](http://odeg.de).

