

12 July 2013

Three "Class 66" Dutch locomotives converted for UK use given approval by the ORR

Today (12 July 2013), three Class 66 Dutch locomotives, which have been converted for use in the UK by GB Railfreight and Electro-Motive Diesel Limited, have been given authorisation to be placed into service by the Office of Rail Regulation.

This is the first time Class 66 locos, which were manufactured to European railway specification, have been successfully converted for UK use. GB Railfreight is in the process of converting two more locos from Germany to go into service later in the year.

The conversion of these locomotives is a significant development, as it is the first time locomotives have moved from the continent into the UK to support UK rail freight growth. In the past, over 70 UK class 66s moved to mainland Europe.

In the long-term, GB Railfreight is concerned new European legislation that comes into force at the end of 2014 [1] will make further construction of most currently available UK freight locomotives prohibitive on the basis of emissions.

There is a risk this will lead to the resurrection of older equipment out of necessity, which will have a negative impact on the environment and will do little to help support the growth of the freight industry.

John Smith, Managing Director of GB Railfreight, said:

"The successful acceptance of the locos has been thanks to the efforts of GB Railfreight's Ben Andrew, the ORR, Electro Motive and the Department for Transport, who have worked closely together to ensure that the project was successful.

"This is a significant development towards ensuring that there is a flow of freight locomotives available in the short-term to support the burgeoning freight industry.

"However, we also need to think long-term. We are at risk of Government legislation putting the industry in a position where, perversely, we are forced to resurrect old equipment.

"This is not what a growing and modernising industry should be about, and we will continue to raise this issue in order to ensure that we are best equipped to continue to serve the UK economy."

Duncan Scott, Managing Director of Electro-Motive Diesel Ltd., said:

“It is thanks to the hard work and dedication of our team of highly trained engineers that the loco conversions have run smoothly and now been accepted for use on the UK’s rail network.

“This ground breaking project has demonstrated the trusted partnership we have with GBRf and our united commitment to ensure the growing demands of the rail freight industry continue to be met.”