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UK Department for Transport reaches agreement with Alstom for supply and maintenance of Pendolino high-speed tilting trains

The UK Department for Transport reached agreement with Alstom for the supply and the maintenance of Pendolino high-speed tilting trains for use on the West Coast Main Line between London and Glasgow, one of the United Kingdom's main railway routes. This notice to proceed is intended to be followed by a firm contract for trains and maintenance worth a total of €1.8 billion (£1.5 billion) which is due to be finalised in August 2008.

The notice to proceed for rolling stock, worth €318 million (£255 million), will cover the delivery of four Pendolino trains. The West Coast Main Line fleet, currently composed of 52 trains built and maintained by Alstom since 2003 and operated by private operator Virgin, will therefore comprise 56 trains after this delivery.

The new trains with eleven cars each will be put into service in 2011 and 2012. To meet the needs of the growing number of passengers on the West Coast Main Line, 31 of the trains in the fleet currently in service will also be lengthened by two cars each, for a total of 11 cars per train. This will raise their capacity to 589 passengers each. These lengthened trains will be put into service between April and December 2012.

The agreement provides for an option – to be exercised by August 2010 – for the 21 remaining trains to be lengthened to 11 cars as well.

The four new Pendolino trains and the cars required to lengthen the existing trains will be manufactured at Alstom's centre of excellence for high-speed models in Savigliano, Italy. The train lengthening will take place at Alstom's maintenance centre in Liverpool.

Regarding the maintenance of the Pendolino fleet, the €1.5 billion (£1.25 billion) notice to proceed covers maintenance of the Pendolino fleet and would extend the current contract by ten years beginning on 1 April 2012, the date on which the contract with private operator Virgin Trains expires. Maintenance will be performed at the five Alstom Traincare Centres along the West Coast Main Line.

"This agreement confirms the success of the Pendolino," said Philippe Mellier, President of Alstom Transport. *Since 2003, when the Pendolino was put into service on the West Coast Main Line by Virgin Trains, the number of passengers has risen 40%. With this agreement, Alstom will play a role in increasing the UK rail system's capacity. We are committed to providing UK railways with ongoing high-performance maintenance services – just as we've been doing since 2003 for our customer Virgin Trains."*

About Alstom Transport

With sustainable transport in mind, Alstom Transport develops and offers the most complete range of systems, equipment and services on the rail market. Alstom Transport is capable of managing an entire transport system, from rolling stock to signalling and infrastructure, as well as offering turnkey solutions.

Alstom Transport's Pendolino

The tilting trains in Alstom's Pendolino range operate at 200 km per hour. The Pendolino is equipped with Tiltronix technology, a tilting system guaranteeing passenger comfort and safety when the train takes curves at high speeds. Moreover, the energy saved in braking means that the Pendolino consumes 17% less electricity than trains with a conventional braking system. The fleet is also outfitted with the "e-train" maintenance system, which anticipates maintenance needs and relays them to maintenance teams via GPRS, thereby improving train availability.

Since its launch in 1998, Alstom's Pendolino has been a true success, covering over 200 million kilometres in commercial service worldwide. It is already in operation in ten countries: the United Kingdom, Italy, Germany, Austria, the Czech Republic, Switzerland, Slovenia, Portugal, Spain and Finland. Russia will join the list in 2010 with the inauguration of the high-speed St. Petersburg-Helsinki line.

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