

PRESS RELEASE

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Road-Rail Robot VLEX at Fret SNCF in the French Alps

Shunting expert Vollert deploys its VLEX robot vehicle for rail and road at Fret SNCF's maintenance site in Modane. The compact road-rail robot moves locomotives weighing up to 120 tons effortlessly into their maintenance boxes.

From minor repairs to complete maintenance – Fret SNCF, the leading transport company in France for the rail transport of goods, regularly prepares locomotives in 14 maintenance boxes at the maintenance center in Modane. Vollert's road-rail vehicle VLEX enables the positioning and shunting of the locomotives, which do not run by themselves, on the maintenance site.

Compact and powerful

"Particularly challenging in the French Alps are the harsh weather conditions," knows Michael Spohn, Vollert's project manager for sales. "However, the VLEX is ideally equipped for this. It can be used in snow, rain, ice or high minus temperatures." The shunting robot also manages the change between different surfaces on the terrain without any effort: A swing axle guarantees safe continuous ground and rail contact of all four wheels even on uneven and unpaved floors. At the same time, the sophisticated vehicle geometry with articulated steering and four individually controlled wheel hub motors makes it extremely maneuverable and economical. The compact VLEX 20 model at Fret SNCF in Modane has a tractive force of 20 kN or 300 tons to move locomotives weighing up to 120 tons without difficulty to the desired location. With the VLEX 40 model, Vollert is also doubling the application range of its compact solution for shunting operations up to 600 tons, and thus further increases flexibility in shunting freight cars or internal transport wagons. At Fret SNCF, the shunting vehicle is coupled to the trains by means of a standard coupler using the UIC hook. In addition, the VLEX can be equipped with all manual or automatic couplers, for example, also for shunting underground trains and tramways.

Emission-free and flexible to use

"With the VLEX, we offer an emission-free solution that is also space-saving and more maneuverable than a conventional shunting solution," reports Michael Spohn. In addition, while two employees were previously required to move the locomotives, the VLEX now enables more flexible shunting on the plant premises: "Controlling the shunting robot by remote control and thus shunting the locomotives only requires one employee," explains

Christophe Pottier, Managing Director of Séname, Vollert's French sales partner, who also instructed all factory staff in Modane in the operation of the vehicle on behalf of Vollert. " This allows the VLEX to be used for shunting tasks at shorter notice and as required, or to quickly clear the tracks for through-traffic by switching from the rail onto the terrain when needed. " The battery-powered VLEX itself is exceptionally easy to maintain. Thanks to its on-board charger, it can be powered either standing on the tracks or away from them via a 16 A socket. At night, the vehicle is stored in one of the maintenance boxes.

In addition to Fret SNCF, the Swiss manufacturer Stadler also uses the road-rail vehicle for the shunting of trains in the production and maintenance process. The manufacturer of railway rolling stock makes use of Vollert's shunting solution both at its branch in Liverpool, England, and at Stadler's new plant in St. Margarethen, Switzerland.

About Vollert Anlagenbau GmbH

As an innovator, Vollert Anlagenbau GmbH develops economical shunting systems for connecting and secondary lines. Since the 1950s, Vollert's stationary, cable-mounted shunting systems are used worldwide for the shunting of railway wagons and trains. Moreover Vollert delivers stand-alone shunting machines, heavy-duty transport trolleys and transfer platforms for reliable and efficient operations in refineries, mines, ports, steel and cement plants, explosion protection areas, train wash facilities and maintenance facilities.

Vollert's plant and machine solutions are deployed in more than 80 countries around the world and in Asia and South America the company's own subsidiaries strengthen in addition the sales activities. Vollert employs more than 250 people at its company headquarters in Weinsberg. **www.vollert.de**

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Image 1 - Source: Vollert

14 boxes in the maintenance center of the rail freight company Fret SNCF in Modane are used to maintain the locomotives.



Image 2 - Source: Vollert

Compactly built, the VLEX 20 has a tractive force of 20 kN. With the VLEX 40 model, the range of application is even extended to shunting operations up to 600 t.



Image 3 - Source: Vollert

The road-rail vehicle VLEX allows positioning and shunting of the 120 ton locomotives on a turntable with subsequent shifting to one of the maintenance boxes.



Image 4 - Source: Vollert

For shunting, the VLEX at Fret SNCF is manually connected to the locomotive's UIC hook via a standard UIC coupling.