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## European premiere: drone garages to save on thousands of minutes of delay in future

Rockfall and storm damage on a railway line that is difficult to access means the line has to be closed for safety reasons. Consequently, the experts of ÖBB-Infrastruktur AG set off: they have to walk the tracks. Is it just a few small stones or are heavy clearing machines needed? Are there branches or even tree trunks on the tracks or in the overhead line? This work involves many unanswered questions, and often a lot of valuable time passes before this is clarified. Afterwards, the operations control centre is notified, and necessary further measures are put in place – that's how it used to be.

However, from now on drone garages will be distributed along the ÖBB's rail network to provide valuable support: as the first infrastructure company in Europe, ÖBB-Infrastruktur AG has obtained the authorisation to use drones that can be operated also without direct visual contact with the pilots. In close cooperation with Frequentis and supported by Austro Control, this innovative project was realised. Instead of sending employees on foot into hazardous, impassable terrain or snow-covered slopes, drones will be sent off from a nearby drone garage. They will fly the defined route and send real-time images showing the line's condition, meaning necessary decisions regarding the next steps can be made immediately. Depending on the case, the use of drones will result in a huge amount of time saved, therefore minimising line closures. Passengers and railway companies can adapt more quickly to the new situation thanks to this rapid development of information.

Johann Pluy, Member of the Executive Board of ÖBB-Infrastruktur AG, is delighted by this success: "The use of drones for line inspection is an important building block for the digital railway of tomorrow. Especially in impassable terrain, as we can rapidly gain a detailed overview of the situation and the necessary measures with a huge benefit to our customers."

"Hanger-based drone flights are the technological answer to the strongly growing drone ecosystem. Frequentis has developed a highly automated solution that can be fully integrated into control centres and working positions of big infrastructure companies, as well as being easy to use for our clients' employees," says Norbert Haslacher, CEO Frequentis. "We are proud to carry out this pioneering work together with ÖBB and to have helped facilitate the first authorisation of this kind in Europe for our partner."

“The innovative potential of drones is enormous, and it is our declared goal as an aviation authority to support new, promising applications from development to use. We are therefore particularly pleased that we were able to support and approve this project. Automated drone flights without visual contact for monitoring infrastructure are a new and innovative approach, showing us what is already possible today with this still young technology,” says Valerie Hackl, Managing Director of Austro Control.

Take a look at the video to see a real-life example of hangar-based drone use:

<https://youtu.be/SrUC6NeAE2I>

### **About FREQUENTIS**

Frequentis is a global supplier of communication and information systems for control centres with safety-critical tasks. The listed family company develops and markets its “control centre solutions” in the Air Traffic Management segment (civil and military air traffic control, air defence) and the Public Safety & Transport segment (police, fire brigades, emergency rescue services, railways, coastguards, port authorities). With a market share of 30%, Frequentis is the world market leader in voice communication systems for air traffic control. Frequentis is also the global leader in aeronautical information management and aeronautical message handling systems.

As a global player with around 2,200 employees (full-time equivalents/FTE), Frequentis has a global network of companies and representatives in more than 50 countries. Its head office is in Vienna, Austria. Frequentis’ products, services, and solutions are used at more than 45,000 operator working positions in around 150 countries. Shares in Frequentis are traded on the Vienna and Frankfurt stock exchanges; ISIN: ATFREQUENT09, WKN: A2PHG5. In 2022, revenues were EUR 386.0 million and EBIT was EUR 25.0 million.

Wherever Frequentis’ systems are used, safety-critical operators bear responsibility for the safety of other people and goods. The company also works towards a more sustainable future through its air traffic optimisation solutions.

For more information, please visit [www.frequentis.com](http://www.frequentis.com)

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