



One of Stadler's exhibits was the **LEO Express FLIRT EMU 480.003**, which features in the photo at the head of this report. This is a notable train, the Class 480s being the first members of the FLIRT family to be built for long distance services, and featuring a luxurious Premium class saloon, with seating which is superior to the first class accommodation offered on many trains.

LEO Express also purchased from Stadler a driver training **simulator**, which was exhibited for the very first time at Berlin. After InnoTrans it was taken to the Czech Republic and is now being

prepared for the LEO Express driver training sessions. At InnoTrans 2008 and 2010 Stadler exhibited its portable simulator, which was developed jointly by Berner Fachhochschule and Stadler (see R 5/10, p. 30). These simulators are installed in the cab of the train in question (in this case in the LEO Express FLIRT's cab), which requires slight modifications to enable this. Usually, a driver's eye view of a trip over the line between Winterthur, Zürich and Brugg is played, but for this occasion the trip was one between Praha and Ostrava (upper right-hand photo). The location shown



here is Praha-Běchovice, and visible is a green-liveried ČD Cargo's Class 122 electric heading the „other way“.

LEO Express is gradually releasing further information regarding the innovative features on board its trains. Some of this information was not available (or visible) at InnoTrans. One aspect concerns the **WC** cubicles, which will feature a „night sky“ decoration, with a view into space, shown in the lower left-hand photo. But each WC cubicle will have its own individual decor, developed by a female Czech artist. To date 480.001 and 002 have had their „smallest rooms“ thus adorned.

The Class 480s notched up another milestone on 9 October 2012, when Drážni úřad granted its approval for them to realise test operation without passengers on the Czech network. This was announced after the last outstanding issue - EMC under 3 kV DC catenary - had been satisfactorily cleared up. So it was that on 12 October the **480.002** became the first LEO Express FLIRT to

realise such a test run, from Velim to Lichkov, the purpose being to check its compatibility with the axle counters installed on this line. Then, on 15 October this train made a test run over the whole of the main line between Praha and Ostrava, under its own power. In the lower right-hand photo we see it poised for departure from Praha hl. n.

Now LEO Express's FLIRT fleet of five is nearing completion. On 29 September 480.003 returned to the Czech Republic from Berlin, travelling direct to its new home depot at Bohumin, where it was the first member of the family to take up residence there. 480.004 was the next new train to enter the Czech Republic, on 6 October 2012. It was taken straight to Velim and the VUZ's test circuits. The count-down has now begun in earnest, since before the 2013 timetable starts in early December, LEO Express hopes to launch a pilot passenger-carrying service, to attract the attention of the travelling public to this latest offer.



Photo: LEO Express



Photo: Bohuslav Kotál