

Press release

RAlpin shifts its millionth truck onto rail

Today, 28 February 2014, the rolling highway is carrying its millionth truck through Switzerland. Thousands upon thousands will follow: with the voters' acceptance of the FABI initiative, which puts the financing and expansion of the railway network on a secure footing, the cornerstone has been laid for accelerating the shift from road to rail.

Since RAlpin was established in 2001, one million trucks and their drivers have benefited from the existence of the rolling highway. And not just them: to date more than 300,000 tonnes of CO₂ have been prevented from entering the atmosphere, and the Swiss population has been spared an avalanche of heavy goods traffic that, if laid end-to-end, would create a traffic jam 20,000 kilometres long – equivalent to 15 lines of trucks stretching from Hamburg to Rome.

"One million is a considerable number, and one that we're proud of," says RAlpin CEO René Dancet. Although the company missed its modal shift target, and critical voices of the rolling highway are still to be heard, there is no doubting the contribution made by RAlpin to Switzerland's policy of shifting freight from road to rail: just under 10% of HGVs transiting Switzerland did so on the rolling highway. "The modal shift in Switzerland is not theory, it's practice. By transporting some 400 HGVs on a daily basis, we are actively contributing to implementing the will of the people," says Dancet.

Continuous expansion

Following the launch of RAlpin AG in 2001, between 45,000 and 65,000 trucks were transported a year; the service started out with five pairs of trains a day. By 2005 this number had grown to ten train pairs a day. This resulted in a rise in the volume transported to around 80,000 HGVs a year. 2009 witnessed a further boost in growth. Despite difficult trading conditions, demand for the rolling highway remained buoyant to reach the 90,000 mark. RAlpin launched its Gotthard-based Basel – Lugano relation in 2011 to run alongside its existing Freiburg im Breisgau – Novara service via the Lötschberg – Simplon axis. This saw the numbers carried rise to around 100,000 a year. 2013 witnessed a new record volume: 109,000 trucks.

With Swiss voters' acceptance of the "FABI" rail financing/expansion proposals on 9 February 2014, the population has once again affirmed its commitment to a strong railway and to the shifting of freight from road to rail. RAlpin welcomes this decision, since it fosters long-term planning security and allows for an expansion of the service.

Long-term customer

Medesan Mihai-Ioan from Rumania, an employee of hauliers Kühne + Nagel S.a r.l., is the millionth truck driver to take the rolling highway. He has been a regular user of the service for many years. He particularly likes the fact that he can get right back behind the wheel after his trip on the train. "The rolling highway allows me to travel from Luxembourg to Milan virtually overnight and still have a whole day of driving time available the next day in Italy. It means I can do all my deliveries and reload the same day." The happy recipient of a congratulatory gift and something sweet and typically Swiss on the seat beside him, he sets off to offload his freight in northern Italy.

Olten, 28 February 2014

RAIpin AG at a glance

Headquartered in Olten, RAIpin AG operates the rolling highway between Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany, and Novara, Italy, and between Basel and Lugano. Every year, the company shifts around 100,000 trucks from road to rail. Under the rolling highway system, drivers drive their vehicles onto low-floor wagons at the terminals and accompany their loads in a passenger coach. This service, which exists alongside the unaccompanied combined transport business, sees RAIpin making a significant contribution to safeguarding the sensitive Alpine region and ensuring the viability of Switzerland's Alpine Initiative. The shareholders of RAIpin are BLS AG, Hupac SA, SBB Cargo AG and Trenitalia SpA.

www.ralpin.com

Contact:

René Dancet
CEO, RAIpin AG
rene.dancet@ralpin.com
+41 58 822 88 88