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THE FIRST 9 KM OF THE BASE TUNNEL FOR THE TURIN-LYON LINE COMPLETED

First phase of the 57.5 km of this great European infrastructure.

The Federica boring machine arrives in La Praz: celebration on the part of the 450 workers who took part in the advance of this extraordinary construction project

La Praz (France), 23 September 2019 - The excavation of the **first 9 km of the Turin-Lyon base tunnel** has ended: the “Federica” boring machine has now broken down the last section of rock and has completed the first phase of the **great European infrastructure**.

The boring machine that set off from Saint-Martin-la-Porte in summer 2016 has excavated the first part of the south tunnel of the 57.5 km tunnel, arriving today in the large cavern at the foot of the La Praz inclined shaft (a tunnel of 2,480 m, completed in 2009), where Federica will be dismantled.

It is an important stage in the history of the Turin-Lyon line, because it constitutes the first section of the **tunnel in which passenger and freight trains** will pass in the direction of France, **as of 2030**.

The ceremony for the cutting of the face was held in the presence of Philippe Chantraine, representative of the European Commission's DG Move, of the new French minister of transport Jean-Baptiste Djebbari, with the participation also of senior national and local institutional representatives of the two countries.

Acting as hosts were **Hubert du Mesnil and Mario Virano**, respectively President and General Manager of TELT-Tunnel Euralpin Lyon Turin, the bi-national public promoter in charge of the realisation of the cross-border section of the line, 50% of which controlled by the French State and by Gruppo Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane.

To celebrate the event, the front row was filled with all the **skilled workers** involved in the construction of the infrastructure: as is traditional in underground work, the workers on board the boring machine from SMLP were first to cross the perforated rock, welcomed by the guests who awaited on the other side. Symbolically, the miners **passed the baton to a young colleague** who will continue to work on the advancement of the base tunnel. The workers are part of the **group of companies** that won the tender for the first lot of works (worth about 390 million euros), consisting of Spies Batignolles TPCI, Eiffage TP, Ghella, CMC, Cogeis, Sotrabas and of professionals of the works management entrusted to Egis and Alpina.

Under the flags of Italy, France and the European Union, **over 450 workers** have brought the work forward, digging 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. The workforce is mainly made up of Italians and French, of whom about 200 are workers from the Maurienne itself and about 70% from the Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes region. **The Turin-Lyon is thus the third-largest employer in the area** and, in view of the progress of the construction sites on the French side, over 2,000 direct jobs are planned.

Federica stops after a **3-year journey** in which it has made constant progress in the most complex geological section of the mountain, characterised by the presence of coal and water; however, the tunnel was built **on time, within budget and without serious problems**. The excavation of the boring machine was started on 22 July 2016 by the then French Prime Minister, **Manuel Valls**, in the presence of the then European Coordinator of the Mediterranean Corridor Jan Laurens Brinkhorst: they were the first to visit the boring machine. Subsequently, the technology deployed and the extraordinary nature of the work have attracted **over 3,000**

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visitors during the worksite's period of activity, including institutions, associations, students and citizens, as well as newspapers from all over the world.

During the event in La Praz, the opinion poll on the **perception of the Turin-Lyon** was presented today. Undertaken in France and in Italy by **BVA and Doxa**, the study reveals that the work benefits from the approval of a vast majority of public opinion. In a context in which support for rail transport is overwhelming (over 95% of respondents in France and over 87% in Italy say they are favourable to the development of freight transport by train instead of road in Europe), people of all age groups and social categories, as well as all electoral basins, are favourable to the large European infrastructure in progress: France (93%), Italy (86%).

Usefulness and necessity constitute the basis of the consensus for the project that, in the territories crossed, is **perceived as widely beneficial by the local residents**; the "reduction of truck traffic" is the most widely shared argument. The positive perception of the interviewees, however, has posed **different reasons in France and in Italy**: in France, **ecological considerations** (combatting global warming and air pollution) dominate; in Italy, perceptions of **economic and social interest** prevail (improvement of infrastructure and conditions of mobility, creation of jobs and so on). The survey therefore allows us to affirm that the work is disputed only by an "active minority" in the Val di Susa, where the opinions of the opponents are based essentially on the costs of the project and on the fear of a destruction of standard of living and of the local environment. It is significant that the survey shows that even in the Susa Valley the majority of citizens are in favour of the work (54%), while in Maurienne this figure rises to 77%.

Among the other elements highlighted by the survey is the extensive knowledge of Italians with regard to the **progress of the construction site on the French side**, and the fact that the controversies have had no particular repercussions on the perception of the project.

The survey summary can be downloaded at the link:

The **work for the great European project, today at 18% of the total, is continuing** and in the coming months new progress is expected: after this first boring machine arrived at the finish line, another seven will be active following the awarding of tenders for the remaining four lots, procedures for which were started during the year.

In the meantime, **four sites** are active: in Saint-Martin-La-Porte (France) where, for geological reasons, traditional excavation continues; in Saint-Jean-de-Maurienne (France) for the temporary station, which will later become the new multimodal hub with the international station; in Saint-Julien-de-Montdenis (France), for the cut-and-cover tunnel, an artificial tunnel that will be the entrance to the base tunnel; in Chiomonte (Italy) which is preparing to open the works for the base tunnel on the Italian side.

TELT-Tunnel Euralpin Lyon Turin

This is the company responsible for the construction and management of the future infrastructure of the cross-border section of the rail link between Turin and Lyon. It is 50% owned by Italy and France through Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane (FS) and the French Ministry of Economy and Finance.