

## Volume 182 No 2



East Midlands Railways finally put the first of its much-delayed Class 810 Aurora electro-diesel inter-city trainsets into passenger service during December (p27). Currently run by Transport UK, EMR will be one of the last three DfT-contracted passenger businesses to be taken under public control as the government makes progress towards the establishment of Great British Railways (p22).

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- 50 Dieter; Publication; ProMedia acquires Railway Gazette Group



CRRC Dalian has unveiled the first of 11 EMUs and 12 electric freight locomotives it is supplying to operate on Malaysia's East Coast Rail Link. Two of each type were shipped on November 28 and were expected to arrive at the port of Kuantan by the end of 2025. The remaining EMUs and locos are scheduled for delivery during 2026.

Being developed by state-owned Malaysia Rail Link and China Communications Construction Co, the 1 435 mm gauge ECRL is separate from the country's metre gauge national network. It will run for 665 km from Port Klang on the west coast to Kuantan and Kota Bharu in the northeast, close to the border with Thailand. The double-track, electrified mixed-traffic line is being laid out for 160 km/h operation, but freight trains will be limited to 80 km/h. Construction began in August 2017 and completion is envisaged by 2027.

# COMMENT

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## The grass is always greener

Visiting Singapore in November, members of the international rail trade press were faced with an ongoing ‘scandal’ in the local media about falling reliability and growing disruption affecting the metro network. Local colleagues explained the scale of the problem, which was dominating the airwaves although the metro was still among the most reliable globally.

A Rail Reliability Taskforce had been formed in September, bringing together Singapore’s Land Transport Authority and operators SMRT Group and SBS Transit to improve reliability and provide joint responses to service disruption, in a bid to head off the increasingly heated media coverage that had been seen over the summer.

The Taskforce issued its final report in December, having determined that the underlying causes of the various incidents were essentially unrelated. Nevertheless, it highlighted several areas for improvement, for example introducing additional back-up and workaround options enabling train operations to resume more quickly after a minor fault, once the safety of passengers has been ensured. It also recommended prioritising the renewal of rolling stock, signalling and power supplies, and shortening the time needed to complete these renewals.

International observers could be forgiven for greeting the furore in Singapore with a degree of confusion, given the city state’s overall reputation for high quality infrastructure. Indeed, it is tempting to ask a simple question: do people all over the world simply assume that their rail or metro system is uniquely afflicted by delays, disruption and generally poor service? It appears from ‘word of mouth’ and mainstream media reports that some countries seem to retain a reputation for railway excellence, even if that does not stand up to much scrutiny.

The scale of disruption on the German network is perhaps the most glaring contrast between perception



and reality. The ongoing saga of Stuttgart’s mammoth rail remodelling has done little to help matters, as we report on p34. No surprise that there has been a degree of gloating from neighbouring countries: at the opening of the Koralmbahn on December 14, Federal Transport Minister Peter Hanke said ‘Austria remains Europe’s number one rail country’ (p6), while the operator of the Baltic Hub terminal at Gdańsk in Poland has stated that it intends to exploit German rail woes to grow its own share of the rail freight market (p40).

Yet the perception that other railways are superior to one’s own endures. A business travel survey undertaken by corporate service provider Amex GBT in July 2025 (RG 8.25 p48) found that executives from the UK, France and Germany all thought that rail provision in the other two country was superior.

Clearly, we must recognise that all railways are a reflection of the societies that they serve, and perhaps there is some truth to the idea that national cultural tropes come though on the tracks. Is the famous reliability of the Japanese Shinkansen a reflection of a highly disciplined society? Do delays and disruption really matter less in the supposedly relaxed south of Italy than they do in Milano or Torino? Perhaps.

Yet operational efficiency is not just a function of culture: Japan’s high speed network is physically separate from the

conventional rail network precisely to prevent disruption being imported onto the Shinkansen. And South Korea is now developing a slew of suburban rail routes in and around its cities with a high degree of separation.

But in the current era of constrained fiscal budgets, massive spending on swathes of new infrastructure is largely unrealistic. In many countries, ridership continues to grow and the quality of the rail network struggles to keep up, prompting a steady flow of low-level criticism. This is not necessarily a bad thing: it shows that the railway really matters to its users, and as the old adage goes, ‘we are often the most critical of those closest to us’.

Perhaps the most mature stance to take on the question of criticism — justified or not — is for railway executives to accept that to some extent this is the price of doing business. Much more difficult to defend, though, are the failures that occur after significant investment has been made. Sadly, there are plenty of examples — one tragic case being the recent fatal derailment in southern Mexico, which has cast a shadow over a flagship government policy of railway rehabilitation. While an accident that led to multiple fatalities cannot be trivialised, there are several cases of expensive upgrades failing to deliver what had been promised. Indeed, former Network Rail Chief Executive Andrew Haines (p13) has made a point over recent years of asking publicly if anyone can name a major rail project in the UK that has met its intended goals.

There are arguably situations when public and political blowback is warranted, and rail leaders must do their utmost to avoid overpromising and underdelivering. But where rail is broadly providing a high standard of service on a day to day basis, as in Singapore, complaints are only to be expected when the quality metrics occasionally slide. This should not be regarded as a sign of institutional collapse. 🗣️

“Perhaps the most mature stance to take on the question of criticism — justified or not — is for railway executives to accept that to some extent this is the price of doing business”

## Briefing

**Lineas** has launched the 70:30 Modalink joint venture with **FS Logistix** to manage operations at the Mainhub Terminal in the port of Antwerpen and develop intermodal connections to and from Italy. The eight-track terminal has capacity to handle up to 200 000 containers per year. Modalink will also operate feeder services from and to the various quays.

The **Ottawa – Montréal** section will be the first part of the Alto high speed line to be built, Canadian Transport Minister Steven MacKinnon announced on December 12. The 300 km/h line will eventually link Toronto with Québec City via Ottawa and Montréal. Public consultation on the route was expected to start in January, with construction to begin in 2029.

Private equity investment group EQT has agreed to acquire **Arlanda Express** operating concessionaire A-Train from Portare 1 AB, which is owned by Australian pension funds State Super, Sunsuper and China's State Administration of Foreign Exchange. EQT will support A-Train's SKr3bn programme to introduce a new fleet of Stadler trainsets by around 2030.

**Union Pacific** and **Norfolk Southern** formally applied for Surface Transportation Board approval of their proposed merger on December 19, following endorsement of the proposals by shareholders at both companies (RG 1.26 p6). Subject to regulatory approval, the two railways hope to complete the deal by early 2027. STB was due to determine by January 18 whether to accept the application for consideration or to reject it as incomplete.

**SNCF** formally confirmed on December 19 a 12-year framework contract for CAF to supply its planned AM30 train fleet, following unsuccessful legal challenges. An initial €1.7bn firm order covers 180 EMUs and BEMUs with a total capacity of 54 000 passengers, and requires the first trains to enter service in 2030.

# Koralmbahn link inaugurated

## AUSTRIA

Completion of the Koralmbahn project to forge a direct rail link between Wien and the southwest of the country was marked by celebrations in Graz and Klagenfurt on December 12, attended by Federal President Alexander Van der Bellen, Chancellor Christian Stocker and ÖBB CEO Andreas Matthä, as well as representatives from the European Commission.

Under construction for 27 years at a reported cost of €6.1bn, the 130 km 'high-performance' line forms part of the EU's TEN-T Baltic-Adriatic Corridor. It has been laid out for 250 km/h operation, requiring 50 km of tunnelling including a 33 km base tunnel. The 53 km western section between Klagenfurt and St Paul im Lavanttal was opened in December 2023, and freight trains began using the whole route in November.

Opening of the line has reduced the fastest Wien – Klagenfurt timing from 3 h 55 min to 3 h 10 min, while Wien – Villach is cut from 4 h 18 min to 3 h 34 min. Graz – Klagenfurt now takes just 41 min, compared to 2 h 53 min via the old route with a change at Bruck an der Mur.

Transport Minister Peter Hanke said the 'landmark project' had 'many superlatives that also stand out internationally: cost-stable, environmentally friendly, and technically state-of-the-art. Austria remains Europe's number one rail country, with a comprehensive service and the highest quality.'

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# Capacity enhancement funded

## ANGOLA

Lobito Atlantic Railway has secured US\$753m in loan financing to support the rehabilitation of the 1 300 km rail corridor that provides the Copperbelt mining region of DR Congo with access to global markets via the deepwater Atlantic port. The railway is operated under a concession by the Lobito Atlantic Holdings consortium of Trafigura,

Mota-Engil and Vecturis.

The US\$553m from US International Development Finance Corp and US\$200m from the Development Bank of Southern Africa will enable upgrades to the infrastructure, 1 067 mm gauge track, workshops, signalling and rolling stock. This is expected to increase the line's capacity tenfold to 4-6 million tonnes/year as well as reduce the cost of transporting critical

minerals by up to 30%.

Minister of Transport Dr Ricardo Viegas D'Abreu said LAR played 'a vital role in connecting regions and facilitating trade'. The 'unprecedented' financing deal would strengthen the line's operational capacities, 'ensuring the railway operates at full potential and contributes to sustained economic growth in Angola and across the broader region.'

# High speed train dispatched

## UZBEKISTAN

The first of six high speed trainsets that Hyundai Rotem is building for national railway UTY was shipped from the South Korean port of Masan in December, having been formally dispatched in a ceremony attended by Uzbek Deputy Prime Minister Jamshid Khodjaev.

The seven-car, 1520 mm gauge trains were ordered in June 2024 at a cost of 270bn won, backed by financing from the Ministry of Economy & Finance and Export-Import Bank of Korea. They are based on the KTX-Eum 260 km/h EMUs in service with Korail since 2021, but modified for Uzbek operating conditions, including high temperatures and wind-blown dust. The trainsets are to be branded *Jaloliddin Manguberdi* after a 13th century ruler, and will be deployed on UTY's Toshkent – Bukhara – Khiva route later this year.

The 250 km/h trainsets are the first South Korean-built high speed trains to be exported, and Hyundai Rotem Executive Director Kim Jeong-hoon said the 'very meaningful occasion' would showcase the technology on the world stage for the first time.



# Fleet renewal

## GREECE

Hellenic Train, which is owned by Italy's FS Group, has signed a €393m contract with Alstom for the supply of 23 six-car Coradia Stream EMUs, including 10 years of maintenance at a customised depot in Athens.

The order covers 12 trainsets with 335 seats to work Athens – Thessaloniki long-distance services and 11 higher-density units with 362 seats for use on Athens and Thessaloniki suburban services. The accessible EMUs will be designed to run at a maximum speed of 160 km/h, and they are to be fitted with ETCS onboard equipment.

Design and production will be undertaken at Alstom's Savigliano plant in Italy, with deliveries expected to start in the second quarter of 2027. Deputy Prime Minister Kostis Hatzidakis said it was 'the first order for new trains in two decades.'

## Accessible rack railcars

### SWITZERLAND

Appenzeller Bahnen has awarded Stadler a SFr17.5m contract to supply two rack-and-adhesion railcars to replace the life-expired fleet on its 7 km Rorschach – Heiden line from the end of 2028.

The two 1435 mm gauge railcars will replace vehicles built in 1998 and two older reserve vehicles dating from 1953 and 1967, which the operator said could not be brought into line with modern accessibility requirements viably. They will be prepared for GoA4 unattended automated operation, which AB plans to introduce from around 2035.

Meanwhile, AB and SBB will look at remodelling Rorschach station to eliminate conflicting movements, enabling services on the rack line to be increased from hourly to every 30 min at peak times. 🌐

## Long distance stock orders

### SLOVENIA

National passenger operator SŽ Potniški Promet signed contracts worth €97.7m for the renewal of its long-distance train fleet on December 15, aiming to strengthen its position in the cross-border market as part of a broader rolling stock renewal programme.

Siemens Mobility has been awarded a €25.9m contract to supply four 200 km/h Vectron multi-system electric locomotives in April and May 2027. These will be fitted with ETCS and authorised for operation in Slovenia, Austria, Germany, Croatia, Hungary, Serbia and the Czech Republic, as well as on the 29 km route from Villa Opicina to Trieste Centrale in Italy.

Magyar Vagon has been awarded a €71.8m contract to supply 20 IC+ coaches, including five with dedicated spaces for passengers with reduced mobility and for transporting bicycles. Delivery is scheduled for June to October 2028. 🌐

# Investor backs Trenitalia's international ambitions

### EUROPE

FS Group and investment group Certares signed a strategic partnership agreement on December 29 providing support for Trenitalia's €1bn European high speed rail expansion plans. This provides for the creation of a joint venture along with investment to accelerate the growth of Trenitalia France in France, the UK and other cross-border markets.

The operator plans to deploy the new capital to consolidate its position and expand its network further, including additional cross-border services. Key initiatives

include enlarging the fleet to at least 19 trainsets, developing a new maintenance facility near Paris, and increasing frequencies on existing routes with up to 28 daily train pairs between Paris and Lyon, creating 'hundreds' of new jobs.

Trenitalia France CEO Marco Caposciutti told *Railway Gazette International* that the operator plans to offer 10 daily return trains between Paris and London through the Channel Tunnel by 2029, using second generation ETR400 trainsets from Hitachi Rail. These are expected to be maintained at the proposed Paris servicing hub.

In parallel, Trenitalia France

and Certares plan to promote rail-inclusive itineraries for leisure travellers, integrate booking and dynamic packaging tools and encourage people to choose rail as their preferred mode. Certares will facilitate arm's-length commercial agreements focused on product distribution between Trenitalia France and its portfolio companies; it has investments in AmEx Global Business Travel (including CWT, Ovation and Egencia), Marietton Développement (including Havas Voyages and Selectour), Voyageurs du Monde (including Original Travel) and Internova Travel Group (including Barrhead Travel). 🌐

# EMU-370 development completed

### SOUTH KOREA

Technologies required to support high speed trains able to run at a commercial speed of 370 km/h have been developed as part of a 22.5bn won national research and development programme, the Ministry of Land, Infrastructure & Transport announced on December 22.

The project to develop the EMU-370 trainset began in April

2022, led by Korea Railroad Research Institute. Other partners included Korail, Hyundai Rotem and train vehicle control system specialist Intercon Systems. Funding worth 18bn won was provided by the government, and 4.5bn won by the private sector.

The EMU-370 is designed to run at a maximum speed of 407 km/h, but would be limited to 370 km/h in commercial operation. The ministry expects to

order two eight-car prototypes in the first half of 2026 for use by Korail, with production to start by the end of the year. Test runs are scheduled to commence in 2030, leading to commercial operation from 2031.

The ministry said the train design was aimed at both domestic and export applications, adding that it would be the fastest train in operational use in the world after China's CR450 family. 🌐

## Bridge installed from barge

### DENMARK

Nordic Crane Heavy Lift has used an Enerpac JS-250 jack-up system to install the lifting section of the expanded King Frederik IX bridge across the Guldborgsund, between the islands of Lolland and Falster on the route leading to Germany via the Fehmarn Belt fixed link.

The existing 295 m bridge carries a road and single track railway. The additional rail bridge being built alongside it by MT Højgaard Danmark is intended to increase capacity on the route ahead of the opening of the fixed link. It will have 13 concrete sections and a 20 m long steel lifting section to enable ships to pass. Swietelsky Rail Scandinavia has been selected to undertake track works for the bridge. 🌐



# Warning over remote monitoring

## UK

The Rail Accident Investigation Branch has issued urgent advice asking Network Rail to consider the risk of remote monitoring sensors on earthworks being overwhelmed during extreme weather, and being unable to send safety-critical alerts to control staff.


The urgent safety advice issued on December 19 warned that line-side monitoring equipment might not be able to detect the failure of

slopes 'in some circumstances', and as a result might not provide data to support safety decision-making.

The advice was issued as part of RAIB's ongoing investigation into the derailment of an Avanti West Coast Pendolino at Shap on November 3 2025. The Class 390 tilting EMU was travelling at around 134 km/h when it struck debris that had been washed onto the track.

RAIB said the landslip had been caused by a period of heavy and

sustained rainfall. A drainage channel was unable to accommodate the volume of water, leading to the cutting slope becoming saturated and giving way. The slope had been fitted with remote monitoring equipment designed to detect ground movement. This was recording data and reporting to its online monitoring service at the time of the accident, but it had not been formally entered into operational use and was not sending alerts to the Network Rail control centre.

Available evidence suggested that the two sensors in the path of the debris were tipped over and subsumed by the material sliding down the slope, too quickly for them generate an alert. RAIB also concluded that the sensors' wireless signal was unable to pass through the material that covered them, as they began reporting a variety of alert levels as the site was cleared. 

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## Regional Flirt arrives

### PORTUGAL

The first of 22 Stadler Flirt 1668 mm gauge multiple-units ordered by CP to operate regional passenger services was delivered in December for testing ahead of entry into service.

The €158m order signed in October 2020 covers 10 electric and 12 electro-diesel trainsets designated Class 2700, along with staff training and four years of maintenance. All will be formed of three passenger vehicles, with the diesel sets also having an intermediate power module that could be removed later if it is decided to convert them to all-electric operation.



The 160 km/h units each have a capacity of 369 passengers, including 204 seated. 

## ETCS deployment completed


### BELGIUM

Infrabel has formally completed its 10-year programme to equip the entire Belgian network with ETCS, commissioning the final 87 km through Brussels between Haren and Ottignies over the weekend of December 13-14.

Under its national masterplan, the infrastructure manager has fitted 2361 track-km with ETCS Level 2, 2783 km with Level 1 Full Supervision, and 1113 km with Level 1 Limited Supervision (RG 9.25 p22).

A consortium of Siemens Mobility and Equans was responsible for the Level 2 programme, which included major hubs such as Bruges, Ghent, Hasselt, Arlon, Verviers and Mons. Siemens has supplied 37 Trainguard 200 radio block centres and 46 Simis W interlockings, along with more than 19000 balises. Equans carried out on-site installation including civil engineering, electrical works, hardware deployment, cabling and documentation.

'Belgium is the first country to implement ETCS across a highly complex network under rolling conditions with almost no closures — setting the example Europe must follow', said Siemens Mobility CEO Michael Peter. 'The on-time completion and commissioning of this project, exactly 10 years after its start, reflects the strength of our partnership with Infrabel.'

ERA Executive Director Oana Gherghinescu added that Belgium was 'leading the way with full ETCS deployment and decommissioning of national signalling systems, ahead of the TEN-T deadlines'. As an early adopter, she felt it was 'providing inspiration to other countries'. 

## Co-operation accords

### VIETNAM


Noting that Vietnam was pursuing an aggressive strategy to develop the country's rail network and supply industry, THACO has selected Hyundai Rotem to support the local production of high speed and urban electric trains.

The industrial holding company plans to invest in a rolling stock manufacturing facility, test track and a repair centre at its Mechanical Engineering & Supporting Industry Park in Ho Chi Minh City. The deal envisages that Hyundai Rotem would transfer advanced railway technologies to THACO, enabling the Vietnamese company to produce rolling stock domestically. The companies also plan to partner to offer integrated packages including rolling stock, signalling and other E&M systems.

Meanwhile, Siemens Mobility

has signed a strategic partnership agreement with the VinSpeed High-Speed Railway Investment & Development Joint Stock Co, covering the development of two planned high speed rail lines as turnkey projects.

One is a 121 km standard gauge electrified passenger line running east from Hanoi to Hạ Long in Quảng Ninh province; this would have four stations including one at the future Gia Binh Airport. The other is a 54 km line running south from Ben Thanh in Ho Chi Minh City to Cần Giỏi on the coast, which was recently approved by the HCM City People's Committee.

Siemens Mobility would serve as VinSpeed's technology partner, responsible for design, supply and integration of 350 km/h Velaro Novo high speed trains and key railway subsystems including electrification, telecoms and ETCS Level 2 with automatic train operation. 


## FirstGroup wins London Overground contract

### UK

Transport for London has selected the First Rail London Ltd subsidiary of FirstGroup as preferred bidder for the next concession to operate London Overground suburban services, taking over from Arriva Rail London on May 3 2026.

The contract is to run for an initial eight-year term, with an option to extend for up to two additional years at TfL's discretion. FirstGroup estimated the contract value at around £3bn.

TfL will specify the service levels, with FRL responsible for train services and station management. TfL retains all passenger revenue risk, and some cost risk for electricity pricing, regulatory charges and inflation protection up to an agreed amount.

Improvements to be delivered over the contract period include additional peak-time trains on the Mildmay Line from May 2026, and more frequent trains on the Windrush Line from December 2026, increasing the service through the core section to 18 trains/h. 

## Bhopal metro Orange Line launch

### INDIA

Limited revenue services have started on the first 6.2 km section of the Bhopal metro Orange Line, following a launch on December 21 attended by Dr Mohan Yadav, Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh. Trains are initially running every 75 min between 9.00 and 17.00.

Being built at a cost of Rs22.25bn, the eight-station priority corridor links Subhash Nagar and the AIMS medical campus in the southeast of the city.

Alstom is supplying 27 three-car Movia trainsets, CBTC and telecoms for the line under a combined contract covering both the Indore and Bhopal metro projects, awarded in June 2022. Nine had been delivered in time for the opening.

Further sections under construction will take the Orange Line to a total length of 16.7 km, while the Blue Line will add a further 14.2 km. 📍

# Suburban Loop operator

### AUSTRALIA

Victoria's Suburban Rail Loop Authority has awarded the A\$6.7bn Linewide contract package to fit out and operate Melbourne's Suburban Rail Loop East to the TransitLinX consortium of John Holland, RATP Dev, Alstom, KBR and WSP.

Under construction since 2022, the 26 km eastern section of the planned 90 km orbital line will run

entirely underground from Cheltenham to Box Hill, serving six stations. The contract provides 10 years for the design and installation of signalling, power supplies, passenger information, telecoms, CCTV and security systems, platform screen doors and tunnel ventilation. It also covers the construction of the depot and control centre at Heatherton. The fit-out period will be followed by 15 years of operation

from a scheduled opening in 2035, which will be undertaken by RATP Dev and John Holland.

Alstom will supply 13 four-car Metropolis metro trainsets from its Dandenong plant, along with Urbalis Forward CBTC, telecommunications and platform screen doors, plus a FlexCare Perform full maintenance tool. The company values its share of the package at A\$1.8bn. 📍

# Sydney contracts awarded

### AUSTRALIA

The New South Wales government has awarded four major contracts for the Sydney Metro West project to build a 24 km underground line connecting the city centre with Parramatta and Westmead.

The Metro Trains West Consortium of MTR Corp and CRRC has been awarded the 22-year TSMO contract, covering the supply of 16 driverless trainsets, and 15 years of operations and maintenance after the line opens in 2032. The Hong Kong operator already runs Sydney Metro line M1 through its

subsidiary Metro Trains Sydney.

John Holland has been selected for the linewide contract covering the installation of 60 km of track and railway systems plus the construction of a 38 ha stabling maintenance depot in Clyde, the operations control centre and the high and low voltage electrical systems.

Malaysian contractor Gamuda has been awarded the Stations Package West, covering the design and construction of five underground stations at Westmead, North Strathfield, Burwood North, Five Dock and The Bays. Contracts for the stations at

Parramatta, Sydney Olympic Park and Pyrmont are to be finalised later this year.

The 'landmark' Hunter Street station in the city centre is to be built by the Metropolis Consortium of Lendlease, Mirvac and Coombes Property Group; the Precinct Development Partner will also be responsible for two over-station commercial developments. Forecast to be handling 30,000 passengers/h by 2061, the station will provide interchange to suburban services at Wynyard and M1 at Martin Place. Journey time from Parramatta will be 20 min. 📍

## RTS Link begins dynamic test running

### ASIA

The first dynamic test run on the Rapid Transit System Link being built to connect Malaysia and Singapore across the Straits of Johor was successfully completed on December 26. The test train left Wadi Hana Depot at the Malaysian end of the route, and ran through Bukit Chagar station onto the cross-strait viaduct as far as the international border.



Participants included engineers from the future operator, the RTSO joint venture of Prasarana RTS Operations and SMRT RTS, Jacobs, rolling stock supplier CRRC, power supply contractor Pestech and track contractor CHEC, with support from infrastructure partners MRTS in Malaysia and LTA in Singapore.

Opening of the 4 km automated metro is planned for December 2026. Journey time will be around 5 min, with border formalities to be completed at the departure station in each direction. 📍

# Automated metro package

### ITALY

Napoli regional transport operator EAV has awarded civil works and railway systems contracts for the first stage of the 14.3 km fully automated metro Line 10. The 12-station line is intended to link the city's Afragola high speed hub with Piazza Principe Umberto next to Napoli Centrale terminus in the city centre, at an estimated overall cost of €3.1bn.

The €660m Lot 1A contract covering civil works on the first 6.5 km section linking Afragola Centro to an interchange with Line 1 at Piazza Di Vittorio has been awarded to a Webuild-led consortium including Eteria Consorzio Stabile, Costruire Icm and Metropolitana di Napoli. The contract announced on December 29 includes provision for the consortium to build the remaining sections of Line 10,

which would take the total value of its contract to over €1.7bn.

The €259m Lot 2 contract announced the following day covers the supply of railway systems and rolling stock, as well as power supplies and the operations control centre. This has been awarded to a CAF-led consortium including AET, Francesco Ventura Costruzioni Ferroviarie, MerMec STE and Leonardo. CAF will supply

its Optio CBTC, along with an undisclosed number of three-car trainsets based on its Inneo platform. This contract also includes options covering the rest of the line, which would take the value to more than €630m.

★ The city of Napoli has awarded Hitachi Rail a €630m contract to build a station and depot at Via Campagna on light metro Line 6, which will maintain the 22 trainsets that the manufacturer is supplying under a contract awarded in 2024. 📍

# Line C reaches Colosseo

## ITALY

A 3 km extension of Roma metro Line C was inaugurated on December 16, along with two stations at Porta Metroni and Colosseo/Fori Imperiali.

The opening ceremonies were attended by the capital's Mayor Roberto Gualtieri, Minister of Transport & Infrastructure Matteo Salvini and Minister of Culture Alessandro Giuli.

Work on Section T3 of Line C, extending the route from San

Giovanni toward the historic city centre, began in March 2013. The line has been built by the Metro C Scpa consortium which includes Webuild, Vianini Lavori, Astaldi and Ansaldo STS (now Hitachi Rail). Work has taken 12 years due to the significant archaeological discoveries along the route, and the complex civil engineering required.

Colosseo/Fori Imperiali station is located beneath Via dei Fori Imperiali, between the Colosseum and the Basilica of Maxentius. This

station box is 32 m deep, with four underground levels. It provides a direct interchange to Colosseo station on Line B. Historical exhibits inside the station have been curated by the Colosseum Archaeological Park, along with the Department of Architecture & Design at Sapienza University of Roma.

When completed, Line C will run for 26 km from Monte Compatri/Pantano in the east to Farnesina in the northwest, with 31 stations; of this, there will be 9 km above ground and 17 km in tunnel. 📍

## Briefing

The first section of **St Petersburg's** Krasnoselsko-Kalininskaya metro Line 6 was inaugurated on December 26. This runs for 2.6 km in the southwest of the city, linking a large residential district at Yugo-Zapadnaya to Putilovskaya, which provides interchange with Kirovskiy Zavod station on Line 1.

The Basque government and Bizkaia provincial council have approved the construction of **Bilbao** metro Line 4, which will run from an interchange with Line 3 at Matiko to Irauregi via Deusto/Universidad, Basurtu and Zorrotza. Work on the first 6.7 km section is expected to start in late 2027 at an estimated cost of €412m.

The isolated light metro Line 4 in **Guadalajara** was opened on December 15. CRRC Zhuzhou has supplied 12 twin-section LRVs to work the 21.7 km nine-station route, which links Las Juntas to Tlajomulco Centro south of the city, paralleling an existing freight railway alignment. The line is forecast to carry 106 000 passengers a day.

MBTA has shortlisted three consortia to bid for the next contract to operate **Boston** commuter train services, after the current agreement with Keolis Commuter Services expires on June 30 2027. These are a Keolis-Alstom joint venture, the Mass Regional Rail consortium of Alternate Concepts, TransitAmerica Services and RATP Dév, and Transdev North America with Transport UK Holdings. The agency aims to select a preferred bidder by the end of 2026.

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## Baltimore refreshed

### USA

The first of 78 metro cars being built for the Baltimore Metro SubwayLink by Hitachi Rail entered service on January 9, following a launch ceremony two days earlier.

Maryland Transit Administration awarded the Hitachi Ansaldo Baltimore Rail Partners joint venture a \$400.5m contract in July 2017 to provide new rolling stock and CBTC to replace legacy vehicles and control systems dating back to the opening of the 25 km metro in 1983.

Designed to run in married pairs, the vehicles are similar to

those that Hitachi Rail supplied to Miami in 2017-20. The first cars for Baltimore have been assembled in Florida, but most of the fleet will be produced at its new Hagerstown plant, which opened in September 2025. So far 12 cars have been delivered, and all are expected to be in service by 2027. 📍



## Linking people and nature

### FRANCE

December 20 saw the start of revenue services on Montpellier tram Route 5, which runs for 14.2 km and serves 27 stops. The central section shares tracks with routes 1 and 4, linking 4.5 km of new alignment running north from Saint-Éloi on Route 1 to Clapiers, and 6.6 km from

Gambetta-Saint-Denis to Grés de Montpellier in the southwest.

Built at a cost of €440m, Route 5 is expected to carry around 80 000 passengers a day. Services are initially running every 12 min, although headways are scheduled to decrease to every 7.5 min by September as more rolling stock is delivered. CAF is supplying 60 seven-section Urbos trams to

operator TaM, of which 22 are destined for use on Route 5.

In Montpellier, each tram route has its own visual identity. The Route 5 livery designed by Barthélémy Togu features plant and animal figures on a white base, symbolising the tramway linking nature and people. The line serves several parks and green spaces, as well as the Zoo de Montpellier. 📍

## Tram-train order

### GERMANY

The Fahma rolling stock subsidiary of Rhein-Main transport authority RMV has awarded Stadler a contract to supply 27 Citylink tram-trains for the Regionaltangente West project

serving the western side of Frankfurt am Main.

The north-south orbital route is intended to reduce travel times to destinations such as Frankfurt Airport by avoiding the need for people to travel via the city centre. It will make use of existing

lines, as well as 22 km of new infrastructure. The 52 km route will serve 28 stops, of which 12 are existing S-Bahn stations. Separate northern and southern services will overlap in the middle, handling a predicted ridership of more than 30 000 passengers/day.

Able to operate on both main line and light rail tracks, the

vehicles will be 50 m long with capacity for 360 passengers. The customised vehicles will offer easy access from 760, 800 and 960 mm high platforms. Delivery of the first three vehicles for testing and approval is scheduled for autumn 2028, while the entire fleet is expected to be ready for full operation from the December 2030 timetable change. 📍