Press Release

Wallisellen, 29. January 2026

Waldenburg Railway becomes the first railway in Switzerland to launch semi-automated operation

BLT Baselland Transport AG is the first railway company in Switzerland to introduce semi-automated GoA2 operation on the Waldenburg Railway. In doing so, it is taking a decisive step towards automated rail operations. Modern signalling technology from Stadler has made this milestone possible.

The Swiss Federal Office of Transport (BAV) has approved semi-automated train operation (GoA2, see box) for the Waldenburg Railway. This marks the premiere of this new mode of operation on the Liestal–Waldenburg line. Once again, BLT is demonstrating its role as a pioneer in digital, modern rail operations.

New development enables semi-automated operation
At the heart of semi-automated operation is the train protection system NOVA Pro. Stadler has completely redeveloped this communications-based train control (CBTC) system at its site in Wallisellen. It enables direct information exchange between the vehicles and the wayside safety equipment, thus forming the basis for fully digital train control.

A consistent focus on the future
With the comprehensive modernization of the Waldenburg Railway, BLT is consistently pursuing a modern and future-oriented approach to rail operations. Since the end of 2022, ten new Stadler trainsets manufactured in Valencia have been in service. In addition, BLT has completely renewed the 13-kilometre infrastructure of the Waldenburg–Liestal line – from new tracks and modernized stops to a new generation of signalling and control systems.

A key step towards digitalized rail transport is the move away from conventional lineside signalling. In semi-automated GoA2 operation, the Stadler CBTC system manages the entire journey. Once the doors are closed and the driver has authorized departure, the journey runs fully automatically. The CBTC system controls speed, ensures compliance with permitted maximum speeds, optimizes the control of level crossings and automatically stops the train precisely at the

next station. This relieves train drivers of routine tasks and improves punctuality. The driver supervises the journey and intervenes if necessary.

In parallel, BLT is planning to implement fully unattended vehicle maneuvering in the newly built depot in Waldenburg from the end of 2026. This will achieve full automation within depot operations (GoA4, see box). With this step, the Waldenburg Railway is consistently continuing its path towards increasingly automated operations.

A decisive step into a digitalised future

«GoA2 represents a major step forward in automated rail operations. Train services will become more uniform, resource-efficient and energy-efficient. The Waldenburg Railway will operate with even greater punctuality. GoA2 helps reduce delays and prevent early departures from stations. This is a significant added value for our passengers», says Philipp Glogg, Chief Technical Officer of BLT.

«We are very proud to be implementing this forward-looking project together with the Waldenburg Railway. For Stadler Signalling, it represents an important milestone in the further development of modern, digital train control systems – and at the same time a significant step for automated rail transport in Switzerland», says Marc Trippel, Executive Vice President Division Stadler Signalling.

GoA in rail operations

The Grades of Automation (GoA) describe the level of automation in train operations. The scale ranges from GoA0 (fully manual operation) to GoA4 (fully automated, driverless operation).

GoA0 – Manual train operation

The train driver controls the train entirely manually. All driving tasks, door operations and safety functions are carried out by the driver.

GoA1 – Manual operation with supporting systems

The train driver remains fully responsible but receives technical support, for example through automatic train protection systems (speed and braking supervision). All decisions and driving actions remain with the human operator.

GoA2 – Semi-automated operation

The system (Stadler NOVA Pro) takes over driving and braking. A train driver remains on board, supervises operations and can intervene if necessary.

GoA3 – Highly automated, driverless operation with on-board staff

There is typically no train driver in the cab. The system operates the train autonomously, while a staff member is on board to handle tasks such as passenger assistance or emergency situations.

GoA 4 – Fully automated, driverless operation (UTO – Unattended Train Operation)

The train operates fully autonomously, without any staff on board. Monitoring and control are performed from the operations control centre.

About Stadler

Stadler has been building trains for more than 80 years. The provider of mobility solutions in rail vehicle manufacturing, service and signalling technology is headquartered in Bussnang in eastern Switzerland. Around 17,200 employees work at 8 production sites, 6 engineering locations and more than 80 service sites worldwide, including approximately 6,000 in Switzerland. Stadler is the world's leading manufacturer of vehicles with alternative propulsion systems (hydrogen and battery) as well as rack railway vehicles. The company is committed to its social responsibility for sustainable mobility and therefore stands for innovative, sustainable and durable high-quality products.
Stadler Signalling offers tailor-made control and signalling solutions for mainline, branchline, LRV, metro and depot applications. Our interlockings, signalling systems and automation technologies ensure precise control and maximum safety in rail operations, and are characterised by reliability, efficiency and the highest safety standards.

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