

## Media release

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## Roll-out of the Voralpen-Express: Stadler and the Swiss railway company Südostbahn AG together unveil the new 'Traverso' train

Stadler and Südostbahn AG (SOB) celebrated the roll-out of the new 'Traverso' for the Voralpen-Express line today in the company of around 200 guests from business and politics. After just under two years of development and construction work, the multiple-unit FLIRT train 'Traverso' was presented for the first time. The trains for the SOB reflect the current development status of the FLIRT vehicle line (Fast Light Intercity- and Regional Train) – with innovations such as completely new motor bogies and other optimised carrying bogies. Altogether, Stadler is building 6 eight-car and 5 four-car trains for the SOB. Changes to the 2019/2020 timetable will coincide with the implementation of the new fleet of the popular Voralpen-Express for the railway's St. Gallen – Lucerne line.

The SOB ordered the electric low-floor multiple units from Stadler at the end of June 2016 in order to be able to replace its older compositions, some of which had been in operation for 40 years, with eleven new vehicles when the timetable changes for 2019/2020. The new trains will run on the Voralpen-Express route between St. Gallen and Lucerne, adding to the quality and comfort of the journey through the Pre-Alps.

The roll-out is one of the most important milestones in the creation of a rail vehicle featuring highly-complex technology. It is common practice in the industry to duly celebrate reaching this stage of the realisation process. The spectacular arrival of the 'Traverso' in Erlen was watched live by around 200 guests from business and politics invited to the event.

### **Peter Spuhler: "Contribution to the Voralpen-Express success story"**

"We are very proud to be able to present the new train for the Voralpen-Express line in association with the SOB. We are delighted to be making a contribution to the Voralpen-Express success story, and are extremely pleased that Stadler trains will be used on this beautiful route between St. Gallen and Lucerne. The new trains will offer passengers even more comfort and a great improvement in their travelling pleasure", commented Peter Spuhler, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Stadler.

Thomas Ahlburg, Group CEO of Stadler, also highlighted the good teamwork between the project teams from Stadler and SOB: “The two project teams worked extremely well together, which was very instrumental in enabling this train to be developed and constructed so quickly.” He went on to add, “Both companies have a pragmatic approach to challenges. This was apparent in the joint testing of new technologies for existing vehicles, for instance. In the case of the new Voralpen-Express, a variety of innovations could be incorporated into the train thanks to the excellent cooperation between the two project teams. We are grateful to be able to work for companies like SOB so that we can prove together that state-of-the-art technology can be developed and implemented in record time in the Swiss workplace.”

The cooperation between the two companies from Eastern Switzerland goes back a long way: according to Peter Spuhler, the SOB is one of Stadler’s oldest customers. “When the founder of Stadler, Ernst Stadler, died unexpectedly in 1981 and Irma Stadler had to step in overnight as the new head of the company, it was far from easy for her or for the workforce. The SOB was the first customer to place an order with Irma Stadler, for two control cars which were produced from existing passenger cars with baggage compartments. This went a long way to helping overcome the difficult period after the death of Ernst Stadler.”

After carrying out an extensive modernisation programme on the SOB’s existing fleet at the end of the 1990s, Stadler is now replacing the fleet for the Voralpen-Express line. “Of course we also hope to continue this successful partnership in the future”, Thomas Ahlburg told guests.

### **Hans Altherr: “By moving into the field of long-distance transport, we are doubling the number of kilometres covered”**

“15 December 2019 and 13 December 2020 are two important, or even historic, dates for the SOB. Once timetable changes have been introduced in December 2019, the new vehicles will be rolled out on the Voralpen-Express line to replace the entire previous Voralpen-Express fleet. And on 13 December 2020 the SOB will enter into a partnership with Swiss Federal Railways (SBB) in the area of long-distance transport. From this date, trains will set off each hour from Zurich or Basel in turn, and cross the Gotthard mountain route to Locarno, considerably increasing our market area”, declared Hans Altherr, Chairman of the Board of Directors of SOB.

The new, eight-car trains are copper in colour. “As a semiprecious metal, copper symbolises value and solidity on the one hand, and is closely linked to the history of human progress on the other. The new trains represent progress for everyone: travellers, the SOB and Stadler. This is the idea we want to express with the copper colour”, stressed Thomas KÜchler, CEO of SOB, at today’s event. The new multiple-unit will go by the name ‘Traverso’ once it is operated by the SOB both on the Voralpen-Express route and for long-distance journeys. “The word Traverso is based on the Italian verb meaning to cross. We will be using the new vehicle to cross Switzerland – from north to south and from east to west”, explained Thomas KÜchler.

### **A comfortable ride through the Pre-Alps**

The eleven vehicles comprise six eight-car and five four-car latest generation multiple units. The trains stand out for their innovation and comfort. They allow passengers to experience a journey in a unique vehicle on a unique route. The high-quality interior fittings have been specially tailored to the needs of the different user groups: commuters will find areas where they can work in peace and quiet. Tourists and people on weekend excursions can enjoy fabulous views from the panoramic windows, stow skis and bikes away safely, and buy food and drink in the two catering areas. There is even a special area designated for families. The train meets the latest European legislation regarding equal access for handicapped persons, and has an information system with between four and seven screens per car.

The eight-car trains can seat over 359 passengers, including 68 in first class. The four-car trains can seat 197 people, including 22 in first class. Passengers can plug their devices into power outlets fitted next to every seat. The trains run at an operating speed of 160 kilometres an hour and have a new, lightweight bogie which can be replaced quickly during maintenance work.

The new 'Traverso' also has the following characteristics which are typical of all the vehicles in the FLIRT family: step-free entrances, a spacious, clearly laid-out interior, and car bodies with a lightweight aluminium construction, which results in significantly lower energy consumption and therefore considerably reduces energy costs. Innovative vehicle technology enables low-wear operation on the SOB's winding transport network.

### **About Schweizerische Südostbahn AG**

*The Swiss railway company Südostbahn AG (SOB) is an independent rail company based in Eastern and Central Switzerland which employs over 560 members of staff. It is a driver of know-how and innovation in the industry, as well as a technology and systems leader. The SOB actively supports the Confederation and the cantons in meeting their mobility targets by taking on the role of creative innovator and lateral thinker.*

*The SOB's core business is passenger transport. It focuses on providing optimum passenger care, both in an advisory capacity in its rail travel centres and on journeys, with fast and punctual connections in modern rolling stock. In 2017 over 13.5 million passengers travelled with the SOB. Over the past few years the integrated rail company has optimised operational processes, expanded its range of services, and increased investments in infrastructure, rolling stock and security. The SOB rail network covers 123 kilometres full of tunnels, viaducts and bridges, including the highest rail bridge in Switzerland, the 99 metre high Sitter Viaduct near St. Gallen.*

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### **About Stadler**

*International rail vehicle construction company, Stadler, is headquartered in Bussnang in Eastern Switzerland. Founded in 1942, it has a workforce of over 7,600 based in various production, service and engineering locations across Switzerland, Germany, Spain, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Belarus and the United States. Service locations are also being operated in countries including Algeria, Denmark, France, Italy, the Netherlands, Norway, Russia, Sweden and the UK. Stadler provides a comprehensive range of products in the heavy and urban transport segments: high-speed trains, intercity trains, regional and commuter heavy rail trains, underground trains, tram trains and trams. Stadler also manufactures main-line locomotives, shunting locomotives and passenger carriages, including the most powerful diesel-electric locomotive in Europe. It is the world's leading manufacturer in the rack-and-pinion rail vehicle industry.*

*The best-selling FLIRT (Fast Light Intercity- and Regional Train) vehicle has already sold more than 1,500 units in a total of 18 countries. The KISS, an acronym of the German for Comfortable Innovative Speedy Suburban Train, is also very popular, with nearly 300 units sold in 11 countries. The most powerful diesel-electric locomotive in Europe is the EURO4000, which has sold 140 units in 7 countries. The Stadler Service division maintains vehicle fleets and comprises more than 680 vehicles, covering a combined annual distance of 120 million kilometres in 16 different countries.*

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