



Cargo sous terrain AG press release

Basel, 7 September 2017

Coop, Migros, Mobiliar and Helvetia invest in the construction permission phase of Cargo sous terrain

Cargo sous terrain is pleased to present its initial investors for the construction permission phase of the first section from Härkingen-Niederbipp to Zurich. These include insurance companies Mobiliar and Helvetia Versicherungen, along with the two largest Swiss retailers – Coop and Migros. The promised investments amount to a total of CHF 22.5 million.

Cargo sous terrain (CST) offers a solution for reducing congestion on motorways, railways and urban roads. According to predictions from the Swiss federal government, transport infrastructure which is already under a lot of strain will become further burdened due to an estimated 37% increase in freight transport (between 2010 and 2040). CST is paving the way for Switzerland to enter the era of digitally supported, efficient logistics. This will make it possible to guarantee that goods continue to reach their destination at the right time in the future.

When the first section between Härkingen-Niederbipp and Zurich is commissioned in 2030, CST will provide a digitised, comprehensive logistics system for pallets, containers and packages, which will ensure that Switzerland retains its competitiveness and quality of life in the long term. The fully automated network from Geneva to St. Gallen and from Basel to Lucerne, with an additional branch from Bern to Thun, will connect around 80 hubs, where goods can be loaded and unloaded. It is being financed privately and will be completed by 2045. Once it is complete, CST will reduce freight transport in towns and cities by 30% and save 40% of lorry journeys on motorways.

Coop and Migros invest in Swiss infrastructure

The cooperative structure means that Coop and Migros can make long-term investments in the future of Swiss infrastructure, following Swiss tradition. “A quick and efficient supply is crucial when it comes to ensuring that our customers can find the products they want in their local shops. We need innovative and environmentally friendly solutions so that we can continue to guarantee this in the future. This is why we have strongly advocated Cargo sous terrain from the very start,” explains Joos Sutter, CEO of Coop. The contributions from Migros and Coop are an important sign that the market supports investments in CST. “Even today, we need to think about how we are going to be able to provide a reliable supply of fresh goods for our customers 20 years from now,” says Migros boss Herbert Bolliger.



Mobilier and Helvetia evaluate CST as a promising investment

The involvement of Mobiliar and Helvetia Versicherungen emphasises the interest from the insurance sector. According to Markus Hongler, CEO of Mobiliar: “The sustainable development of Switzerland is very much in the interests of Mobiliar, which is organised on a cooperative basis. We are committed to setting the course for the future today.” The two companies see their contribution as both a stable investment and a commitment to sustainability in the private sector. “With this financial commitment, Helvetia is supporting the implementation of a fantastic idea for Switzerland,” explains Philipp Gmür, CEO of Helvetia Versicherungen. “We are looking forward to actively supporting and participating in this project – as both an investor and an insurer.” As a renowned provider of transport and construction, Helvetia therefore wants to ensure an active contribution and provide sustainable transport routes in Switzerland.

Fulfilling the conditions of the Swiss Federal Council

The financial commitment to the underground transport route between cities and micro-distribution in urban areas and industrial hubs (city logistics) made by the investors is an advance payment. This was one of the conditions set by the Swiss Federal Council in parliament for launching a Cargo sous terrain act. The investments amounting to a total of CHF 100 million are linked to the realisation of this act, which is to come into force in the first half of 2019. With the total investment of CHF 100 million for the construction permission phase, CST will be developed to such an extent by 2019 that it will be possible to set about constructing the first section from Härkingen-Niederbipp to Zurich.

The CHF 22.5 million promised by the four companies is made up of investments of between CHF 5 and 7.5 million. CST is currently negotiating investments of between CHF 5 and 20 million respectively with other investors both in Switzerland and abroad. The total package from the investors for the planning and construction permission phase will be presented to the Swiss Federal Council by the end of the year in consultation with the federal authorities and the cantons involved. Peter Sutterlüti, President of the Board of Directors, comments on the investments from CST’s point of view: “I am thrilled to have future customers, users and proprietors of the system on board for its implementation. This emphasises the commitment of the retail sector, the recoverability, and also the attractiveness of CST.”

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