

RAILWAY TUNNEL BENEATH MONTGENEVRE

EDITORIAL



Striving towards European economic integration and the need for sustainable development are frequently recurring themes of discussion.

Sustainable development is tomorrow's burning issue with the essential modal shift from road to rail for passenger and freight transport at stake.

With this in view, the Marseille-Turin rail link beneath Montgenevre cannot fail to be one of the high priority projects in the new national and cross-border transport development plans. This link is located on an east-west European axis, directly connected to north-south European links, and is therefore an evident answer to the growth and transfer of transalpine flow towards the south. The "Grand Port Maritime de Marseille", the major port in the Mediterranean, will also greatly benefit from an increase in business.

With this in mind, the regional network of Chambers of Commerce and Industry has endeavoured to respond to the European Commission RTE-T Green Paper consultation for inclusion of the Montgenevre tunnel project in the European transport development plan.

Setumont would also like the rail link beneath Montgenevre project to have priority status on the National Transport infrastructures development plan which follows on from the "Grenelle de l'Environnement".



A new European consultation to draw up the transport White Paper is open until 30 September, and welcomes our contributions to the think-tank for transport policy for the decades to come.

This is also the opportunity for us to present the project for a Marseille-Turin rail link beneath Montgenevre.

The Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur Regional Council, the project administrator, is in charge of supplementary studies. Financing has already been made available in the framework of the current State-Region project contract.

I appeal to all our political representatives and to all our decision-makers to fully support this project for the link beneath Montgenevre. The economic future of the Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur region and its place amongst the great European regions of the Mediterranean Arc are at stake.

Maurice BRUN

President of SETUMONT



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Strategically essential for the whole of the greater Marseille area



Photo : Mairie de Marseille

**Jean-Claude Gaudin,
Senator Mayor
of Marseille,
Vice-president
of the Senate**

What do you think about the project to build a tunnel beneath the Montgenevre mountain pass? Do you find it an-eco-friendly approach at a time when the "Grenelle de l'environnement" is in the spotlight?

Jean-Claude Gaudin : We have been talking about this idea for over forty years now. Environmentally-friendly or not, it is obvious that Alpine tunnels are strategically essential for the whole of the greater Marseille area and even for the whole western part of the Provence-Alpes-Cote D'Azur area.

The lack of communication infrastructures between Marseille, France's leading port and the Mediterranean, and the Turin/Milan zone is a major handicap to the economic growth of the second largest city in France and to its catchment area.

Local protagonists are in favour of creating a tunnel beneath Montgenevre but the project is being blocked by highly-ranked politicians. What exactly is the situation?

J-C. Gaudin : Of course the majority of local politicians are in favour of the construction of this infrastructure. The block is not political, but stems from a Jacobin perception of the national communication infrastructure plan which persists in the State's highest decision-making spheres.

In France, all communication and territorial planning is carried out depending on needs in Paris and the Ile de France. This explains the fact that the vital link between the south of the European prosperous zone (Turin/Milan) and the south of France

(Marseille/Aix en Provence-Avignon) has always been neglected in favour of Paris-Lyon-Milan links.

Why is the project taking so long to be put into action?

J-C. Gaudin : Purely for financial reasons. Priority is given to greater Paris and not to Marseille. The "Grenelle de l'Environnement" is not concerned with techno-structure.

Is the tunnel beneath Montgenevre suffering from the Lyon-Turin link and the project for the Paca LGV (high-speed rail link)? There are so many infrastructure projects in such a close area.

J-C. Gaudin : Of course, creating the tunnel beneath Montgenevre has been sacrificed to the Lyon/Turin link, much to the detriment and even prejudice of the economic interests of the Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur region. The Paca LGV project is part of a global rail scheme in the Mediterranean Arc and as such, has to be continued with the Nice/Genoa link and beyond.

**« Moving the economic centre
of gravity down towards
southern Europe »**

What benefits can the people of Marseille expect from this Alpine tunnel?

J-C. Gaudin : The Alpine tunnel will bring major benefits. Firstly, the European economic centre of gravity will move down to the south and secondly, the Marseille metropolitan area will become a logistical platform for supply and distribution for Southern Europe and the Mediterranean. ■

Propos recueillis par Nathalie Bureau du Colombier



Obvious Benefits for the Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur area and the Mediterranean Arc

Photo : Conseil Régional PACA



**Michel Vauzelle,
MP,
President of the
Provence-Alpes-
Cote d'Azur
region**

**« A possible 4 M €
available for studies
this year »**

What benefits will the Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur region reap from a tunnel beneath Montgenevre?

Michel Vauzelle : The Montgenevre tunnel will greatly improve the accessibility of the Hautes-Alpes departement, one of the most isolated in France, to the high speed French or even Italian networks. It will also shift freight transport, which is congesting our roads, to rail which is essential for protecting our environment. Travel time between Marseille and Turin will be reduced. Today, you have to go via Nice, making the trip too long and therefore unattractive. This link will bring us closer to Turin, the Piedmont region and beyond to Milan, two of Italy's industrial and commercial capitals.

Do you think a connection between the future Lyon-Turin line and the Montgenevre tunnel could be a possibility in the long run?

M. Vauzelle : TGV trains for Briancon and Gap will run on the Lyon-Turin line to Saint Jean de Maurienne, which is already possible today on the classic lines.

Do you think the port of Marseille will become more attractive?

M. Vauzelle : Of course. The Montgenevre tunnel, together with the current development of the Alps line, will bring new opportunities to the port of Marseille, strengthening links with northern Italy and central Europe. Don't forget that Marseille is the only major European port in the western Mediterranean that still has major land resources available for extension.

**« The Region fully prepared
to participate
in the financial set-up »**

What are the Region's financial commitments for this project?

M. Vauzelle : We have insisted on the State setting up a line of financing within the framework of the State Regional projects Contract 2007/2013. Therefore, 20M€ including 10 M€ from the Region, have been made available on the "Montgenevre" budget line to carry out the necessary studies.

What is stopping the project from going ahead?

M. Vauzelle : For the time being, the State would appear to be interested only in the Lyon-Turin project which requires massive funding, thus holding up the Montgenevre tunnel project. But things have evolved since I led a delegation of Alpine MPs to meet with Monsieur Dominique Busserau, the Secretary of State for Transport, in autumn 2008. He stressed his interest in this project and his willingness to defend it in front of the European Union authorities.

The total budget is of about 1.4 billion Euros. How is it possible to find financing for such a project?

M. Vauzelle : First of all I would like to point out that although it is not a question of two opposing projects but rather two complementary ones, the Montgenevre tunnel will cost at least ten times

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less than the Lyon-Turin project. It is therefore extremely important that all parties involved work together to find the necessary financing. Obviously, the State should play a major role as creating an international axis falls within its jurisdiction. Equally, the Region is fully prepared to participate in the financial set-up.

**« This project will cost
ten times less
than the Lyon-Turin project. »**

When do you think the public debate procedure will be launched?

M. Vauzelle : The State has set up funding for studies to the tune of 1 million Euros in 2009. With other financial aid from the Region, RFF and other authorities concerned, a possible 4 million Euros should be available this year. All the studies required for the consultation file have to be carried out before the public debate procedure can be launched. If all parties involved unite and work in the same

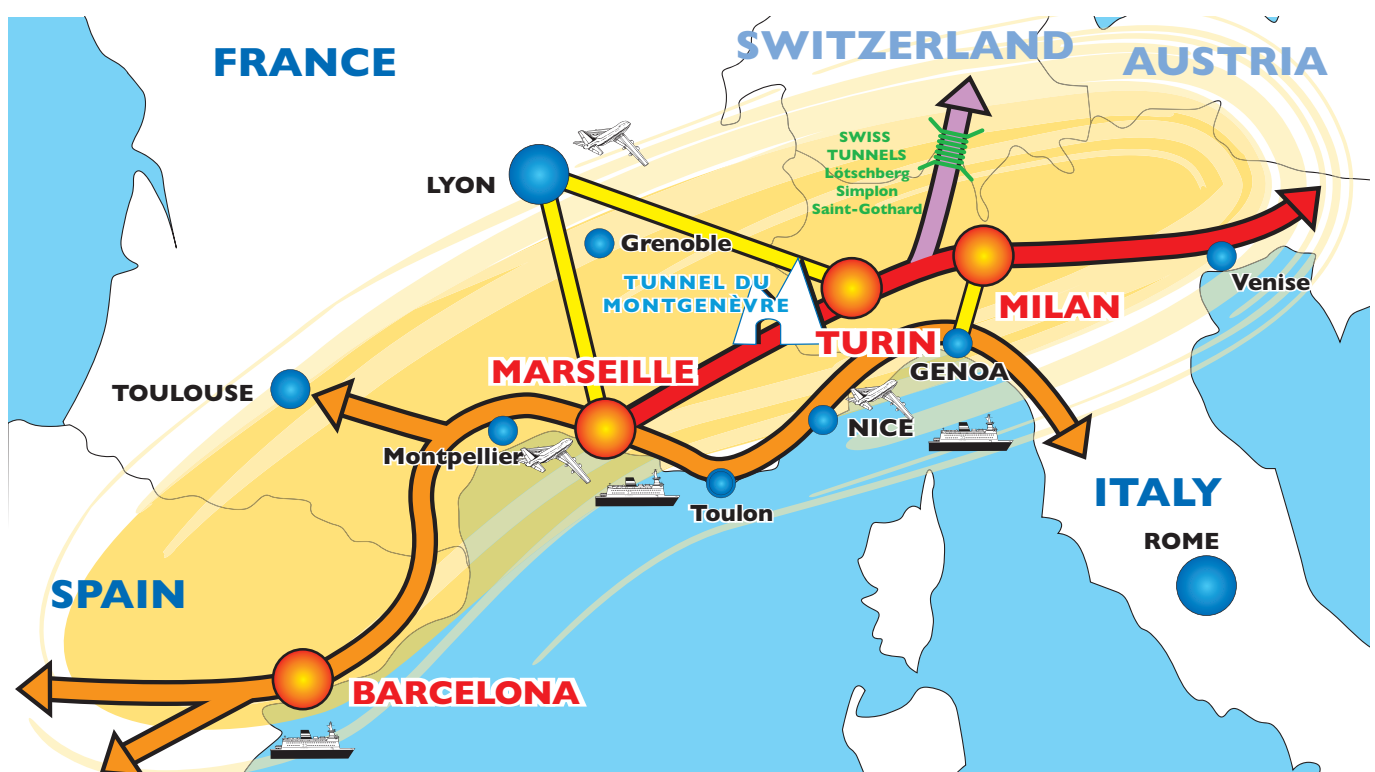
direction, this public debate could be set up before the end of the projects Contract. Technically, work could be finished in three years allowing the tunnel to be put into service more rapidly than the Lyon-Turin tunnel.

Are the tunnel and the A51 motorway an answer to developing and opening up the Hautes Alpes?

M. Vauzelle : The Montgenevre tunnel is undeniably a major tool in opening up the Alpine departments. But that is not all - the whole of the Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur region will benefit from this infrastructure, consolidating the development of the Mediterranean arc.

Right from the start, we have enjoyed the support of the president of Piedmont, with whom I went to Brussels to defend the issue, which goes to prove that we are not alone in our convictions. ■

Propos recueillis par Nathalie Bureau du Colombier





A tunnel beneath Montgenevre to revitalize the economy in the Hautes Alpes



Photo : Conseil Général des Hautes-Alpes

Jean-Yves Dusserre,
President of the
Hautes-Alpes
General Council

Can we imagine that Gap and Briançon will be linked to Italy via Montgenevre and if so, when?

Jean-Yves Dusserre : The idea of creating a tunnel beneath Montgenevre has been talked about since the end of the 19th century, and was clearly mentioned in the peace treaty with Italy signed in 1947. The growth of trade has today led to a flow of lorries which is no longer compatible with the safety of inhabitants in the towns and villages in the Hautes Alpes they pass through. The quality of our environment is also in danger. We cannot let this serious situation last any longer. The interest of a tunnel link would be to create a rail-road transport system enabling lorries to be carried on the train and thus freeing the RD 1094 road from this type of traffic. This type of system already exists in mountain areas in many countries and could be a solution to the problem. I think we could reasonably expect it to be operational within 20 years but obviously, the sooner the better

Since the year 2000, many studies have been carried out but so far nothing concrete has arisen. What are the reasons for this opposition to change?

J-Y. Dusserre : Feasibility studies in partnership with the Italians have been commissioned over many years. They have proved their worth, determining the feasibility of the project, examining all the different solutions available with the choice of the underground one being retained, and establishing the costs.

All confirm that this project is of great importance for structuring Southern Europe, but so far no technical study has yet been undertaken.

In addition, opening the tunnel to rail traffic would require electrifying the track from Marseille and from Valence. However, major work carried out on the lines mainly involved replacing ballast. For the time being, no project is under study for the electrification of the line. The opposition to change that you so rightly mentioned, is essentially linked to the cost of this work. Unfortunately, the studies carried out are just a smokescreen which conceals the extreme difficulty of funding. There are only 133 000 Haut Alpins and we have the impression that they are not taken into consideration because of their lack of electoral weight.

**« Looking for partnerships
with major private companies »**

How can such a project be funded?

J-Y. Dusserre : The cost of this development, which is so essential for the development of the region, could play a major role in connecting the Iberian peninsula and the south of France with Italy and the other central European countries. The French and Italian States should fund this work with European aid and if need be, by looking for partnerships with major private companies who could then manage the infrastructure. In this way, the Montgenevre tunnel would cost ten times less than the Lyon-Turin one.

In which way do the Montgenevre and the Lyon-Turin projects complement each other?

J-Y. Dusserre : The Lyon-Turin tunnel will be to the Benelux countries and northern France what Montgenevre will be to southern Europe. They are not in opposition but complementary. These links



should be encouraged as they lead to a reduction in heavy goods traffic.

What benefits can the Hautes-Alpes expect from this project?

J-Y. Dusserre : The Montgenevre tunnel will lead to an increase in the number of tourists coming to our region but the main advantage will be the reduction of the flow of lorries which disturb the inhabitants and pollute our environment thereby blacking our image. Technical choices made will benefit local building enterprises and create structures and logistics services resulting in long-term job creation.

Do you think that a tunnel will revitalize the economy in the Hautes Alpes?

J-Y. Dusserre : It is important that the Hautes-Alpes is equipped with major infrastructures in the long run or the already fragile economy will suffer. It can not live in self-sufficiency any longer while all around other regions are connected by rail, motorway or air transport. If the people of the Hautes Alpes are full-fledged French and European citizens then prove it! Yes, such a project will revitalize the economy of the département. ■

Propos recueillis par Nathalie Bureau du Colombier

SETUMONT'S PARTNERS

- Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur REgional Council
- Hautes-Alpes General Council
- Hautes-Alpes Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Provence-Alpes-Cote d'Azur-Corsica REgional Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Marseille-Provence Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Alpes de Haute-Provence Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- Hautes Alpes chamber of Trades and Crafts
- Major Seaport of Marseille (membership pending)
- The communities of Argentiere La Bessee, Briancon, Gap, Marseille, Montgenevre, Nevache, Val des Pres.





The link beneath Montgenevre responds to the guidelines set out in the Marseille Grand Port Maritime plan of strategy



Photo : GPMM

Jean-Claude Terrier
President of the board of directors of the Marseille Grand Port Maritime

The Marseille seaport is a new member of Setumont and is counting on the Montgenevre tunnel to enlarge its hinterland, massify traffic and strengthen the rail mode of transport. This objective responds to the port plan of strategy guidelines adopted in April 2009 through 2013.

It was quite natural for the Marseille seaport to join Setumont, in a manner of speaking. The Marseille Grand Port Maritime (GPMM) has traffic massification projects with a lot of potential and which represent real possibilities for developing the regional economy. Along the same lines as the future container terminal development at Fos 2XL, the Montgenevre rail tunnel will offer new outlets for transporters and new markets for loaders.

“This link is aiming at northern Italy which is a rich region in our furthest hinterland. It will contribute to a wider choice of connections which today consist of by-pass links via Ventimiglia or the north with the existing Lyon-Turin line. In this way, distances will be reduced by 200Km also cutting journey times,” relates Jean-Claude Terrier.

The president of the board of directors of

GPMM is appealing for the rail link beneath Montgenevre to be listed amongst the European Commissions’ priority projects at a time when the network of European transport is being revised, on the same basis, moreover, as the link between the Rhone-Saone basin and its connection to the rest of the inland waterways network.

“This future rail link will help open up the region both for passengers and for goods. In addition, it will result in the increase of the regional GDP, leading in the long run to more trade and traffic for the port,” added M. Terrier.

« With the Montgenevre tunnel, more trade and traffic for the port »



Photo GPMM

We are constantly striving to make the port of Marseille more attractive, and intend to diversify pre- and post- transportation of goods by the development of inland waterway and rail



transport. In 2013, two years after the container terminal at Fos 2XL is put into service, the port intends to double the modal part of massified modes. GPMM's objective is to increase river transport from 5 to 10 per cent and rail from 14 to 30 per cent, with a reduction in the amount of road freight from 81 to 60 per cent within 5 years.

Multimodality equally applies to the eastern basins of the port of Marseille, with the future construction of a terminal on the quayside in two years time. This will combine both maritime and rail logistics dedicated to trailer transport.

Once this rolling hub is in use, the amount of traffic should pass from 4 to 5.5 million ton-

nes per year by 2013. This project will connect us to the Perpignan-Bettembourg rail motorway. Once the terminal has been built, we could envisage a connection with Italy. Nothing is stopping connecting Marseille to Turin via the Montgenevre tunnel in the long run" added Jean-Claude Terrier, quoting the Lyonnaise example.

In fact, no fewer than 11 rail shuttles and 5 inland waterway turnrounds link Marseille-Fos to Lyon every week.

«We are introducing attractive rates and legal support to encourage the development of these shuttles. We provide support for all massified rail services," concluded the President of the GPMM board of directors. ■

Propos recueillis par Nathalie Bureau du Colombier



Photo GPMM