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RAILWAY TUNNEL BENEATH MONTGENÈVRE



Editorial



Maurice Brun
President
of SETUMONT

Rail transportation is given priority in the draft bill of the "Schéma National des

Infrastructures de Transports" (National Transport Infrastructure Plan) and is the privileged mode of transport for both passengers and goods. The Plan stresses in particular "the desire to equip France with a high quality and comprehensive network.

However, the Marseille-Turin rail link beneath Montgenèvre for the transportation of both passenger and goods put forward by SETUMONT only receives a brief mention in this Plan.

The members of SETUMONT appeal to the Directorate General for Infrastructure, Transport and the Sea attached to the

Ministry for Ecology, Sustainable Development, Transport and Housing in order that the link beneath Montgenèvre is included as a potentiality, even in the long-term, in the final version of the National Transport Infrastructures Plan.

We call for, at the very least, inclusion of the rail link beneath Montgenèvre, advocated as a tributary or extension of the Lyon-Turin link, in the National Transport Infrastructure Plan.

This inclusion means that, in the framework of local urban planning, we will be able to preserve spaces that, even in the distant future, could be allocated to this project without leaving future generations with the problems of demolition or expropriation.

Is it really wise to adopt these projects which will irreversibly shape both France and Europe over the next thirty years, within such a short timeframe and in such a definitive and decisive manner?

Surely when such a timeframe is at stake, we should at least envisage a full range of possibilities.



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After the Gothard Tunnel, the Montgenèvre !



Jean-Louis Amato

Chief Executive Officer of Amato Transports, President of the Regional Transport Office

For Jean-Louis Amato, a road haulage contractor, constructing the Montgenèvre tunnel is essential to both open up the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region and provide access to northern European markets.

Boring operations for the Gothard tunnel were completed in mid October. With a length of 57 km, it is the longest rail tunnel in Europe linking Zurich to Milan in just 2 hours and 40 minutes. Jean-Louis Amato is concerned about the future of the south of France in terms of transport infrastructure and calls on Public Authorities to include the boring of Montgenèvre on the national Transport Infrastructure Plan as well as on Trans-European transport networks (TEN-T).

"Constructing the Montgenèvre tunnel is really important as roads to Ventimiglia are congested. We have to face facts - driving over the Montgenèvre Pass causes inconveniences and problems.

Moreover, since 2003, only local traffic is permitted to cross the Pass. Major transport flows come to Turin and Milan from northern Europe and if we do not open up this route the PACA region will remain isolated and flow will transit via Lyon or Ventimiglia which is already congested," explains Jean-Louis Amato, who is also president of the regional Transport watchdog in the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region.

Mr Amato is a road haulage contractor specializing in the transport of hazardous materials and is well acquainted with the problems of trans-alpine traffic and the risks incurred by his drivers.

"I dislike sending my drivers to Italy because of the amount of tunnels but we do not have any alternative" In his opinion, the tunnel beneath Montgenèvre will stimulate road transportation.

And to put paid to any preconceived ideas about rivalry between different

modes of transport he adds " I would be pleased to put my crates, especially the hazardous ones, on wagons".

I was one of the first to say that the future of road transportation was rail just as I applauded the initiative to launch a shipping line between Toulon and Civitavecchia. This , unfortunately has since been abandoned."

Nevertheless, for road haulage contractors to accept changing to rail two conditions must be met.

"The service has to be reliable and frequent," adds the director.

The Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur regional Transport watchdog is an association financed by the State and the Provence-Alpes-Côtes d'Azur Regional Council with the aim of developing regional information and knowledge-based tools of an economic nature concerning goods and passenger transportation.

" The watchdog is a place for discussions and creates conditions of debate" concludes Jean Louis Amato.





The Montgenèvre Tunnel will enable us to attract an international clientele



Photo DR

Jean-Yves Salles
Chief Executive Officer of
Serre Chevalier Valley

Can we preserve pristine summits by increasing the use of public transport, the train in particular and reducing the number of parking spaces? It can be done!

For Jean-Yves Salles, Chief Executive Officer of Serre Chevalier Valley, it is just a matter of desire - The desire of local authorities to undertake the boring of the Montgenèvre tunnel. Greener black runs with reduced CO2 emissions! The environmental footprint is important at the top of the slopes.

A study carried out by the Belleville Valley reveals that 85% of carbon emission comes from holiday makers' vehicles. According to Jean-Yves Salles, CEO of Serre Chevalier Valley, the attitude of French people is changing towards cars and people are

more concerned with environmental issues.

"It just seems so obvious that a rail link between Marseille and Italy is essential.

It's the ideal solution in the mid or long term. A frequent public transport service stopping at Briançon is a must. Moreover, we are close to the airports of Turin-Caselle, Milan-Malpensa and Milan-Linate. Our ski resort will only be 4 hours away from London with the tunnel beneath Montgenèvre! And Italian airports never go on strike! The train could go right to the airport just like at Lyon Saint-Exupéry or Roissy thereby attracting more international clients" stresses Jean-Yves Salles, who has been in charge of the ski area (450 hectares) for 4 years now. 500 000 skiers pass through in

three days, that is 1.4000.000 days/skiers.

"81% of our clients come by car and 19% by public transport, mostly by bus.

The tunnel beneath Montgenèvre would lead to savings, fewer car parks, less snow clearing and road maintenance," explains Jean Yves Salle, who on the other hand does not expect more Italian clients as they prefer smaller ski resorts.

"Italians travel by car as they only go skiing at the weekends and generally prefer to stop in family resorts like Sestrières or Montgenèvre," concludes Jean-Yves Salle.



The Montgenèvre tunnel, a complementary route to the existing electricity Transport network (RTE)



Jean-Pierre Huchon

Consultant for Regional Economic Intelligence, member of the NosterPaca association and member of the Setumont advisory board

What are the stakes for the inscription of the Montgenèvre tunnel on the SNIT project (National Transport Infrastructure Plan)?

The direct Durance Valley to Italy rail link via the Montgenèvre tunnel has already been the subject of several governmental decisions. Proceedings were approved in the 2007-2013 CPER State-Region Projects Contracts and confirmed by the Interministerial Committee for Planning and Territorial Development as of 2 February 2009. However, paradoxically, this project is not included in the consolidated draft bill of the National Transport Infrastructure Plan (SNIT) published last January, even although priority is given to rail. I remind you that after nine years work between 1998 and 2007, the Bouches-du Rhône

Territorial Planning Directive DTA 13 positioned this Durance Valley – Italy rail link via the Montgenèvre tunnel as number one in terms of urgency, priority and objective. The TA 13 is a State Council decree of May 2007 whose directions are prescriptive. This means that they are binding for all and first and foremost for State services responsible for equipping our territory.

“The tunnel beneath Montgenèvre is not included on the SNIT even although priority is given to rail.”

The fact that the construction of the Montgenèvre tunnel has been left out of the SNIT draft bill is therefore a very serious signal directed at businesses and investors in our region. This oversight must be made up for as quickly as possible.

Could this be because it is seen as a rival to the Lyon-Turin link ?

The risk of rivalry between the two projects is slight, non-existent even. The routes concerned are in fact clearly separate and perpendicular to each other, north-west to south-east for the Lyon-Turin route and south-west to north-east for Marseille-Turin, making the two corridors geographically complementary to each other.

Moreover, to open up the Briançon region towards Paris, the route passes quite naturally via the proposed tunnel beneath Montgenèvre, then via the current Mont Cenis international tunnel and future Transalpine tunnel.

For freight, routes in the northern and southern Alps meet independent logical logistics flows as shown by several recent studies published by official services concerned in particular French, Swiss and Austrian authorities. On the other hand, it is true that strong competition between northern alpine routes explains the major decline in European transit flows on the Lyon-Turin corridor since the end of the last century. According to the latest Swiss and French evaluations, European transit traffic has become very weak there. The Lyon-Turin corridor's rivals are the Lötschberg-Simplon and Saint-Gothard tunnels, certainly not Montgenèvre. On the contrary, the Montgenèvre tunnel will bring a welcome and timely flow to this severely stricken corridor.

“Lötschberg-Simplon and Saint-Gothard, rivals to Lyon-Turin”

In the southern Alps, the evolution is opposite to that observed in the northern Alps. Traffic flows are continuing to increase and European transit traffic has become a majority in Ventimiglia.



The European Spain-Italy corridor currently passes via our Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region. It is becoming urgent to provide this flow with a modal shift corresponding to the priorities displayed in the preamble to the SNIT. The only possible modal transfer to access the Pô plain with mass flows is the Durance Valley – Montgenèvre tunnel rail link, fully identified by State services in the DTA 13.

What are the eligibility criteria for TEN-T?

Eligibility for the Trans-European transport network TEN-T presupposes that the network's criteria of consistency are respected.

The Val de Durance-Montgenèvre tunnel corridor is not a new route in the TEN-T but, in accordance with the Bradbourn report (European Parliament), forms a complementary cross-border section in the European priority project PP 6 (Pô plain). It is the missing link in the Southern Alps for the Lisbon-Kiev European corridor n°5.

Running south-west to north-east, this Durance Valley corridor will simultaneously provide several essential links leading to the Turin-Novare-Milan sector:

- West-east link between the PP3 (Spain – Languedoc) and the PP6 (Pô Plain)
- South-north link between the French Mediterranean logistics zones and the PP24 (Swiss tunnels)
- A modal alternative to all road transportation on the Mediterranean coastal route (congested at Ventimiglia)

Of course, eligibility for TEN-T depends on the agreement of our Italian friends. Therefore, the Memorandum of Understanding signed on 3rd December 2003 bet-

ween the Province of Turin and the Hautes-Alpes General Council remains the relevant point of reference for identifying the stakes and the planning stage of the project. I would also like to remind you that on the 27th November 2001, during the Franco-Italian summit in Périgueux, both French and Italian governmental authorities entrusted the Intergovernmental commission for the improvement of Franco-Italian connections in the southern Alps (CIG) with the mission of finding concrete solutions for opening up the southern Alps and in particular with studying a rail tunnel project beneath Montgenèvre.

We can observe that nine years later on the CIG has still not honoured the mission it was entrusted with. It is obvious that taking so long to deal with this procedure has seriously harmed the Southern Alps.

What are the technical advantages of the rail link beneath Montgenèvre?

The construction cost for this missing link is particularly low in comparison with similar projects retained by the European Commission. The cost of the single track tunnel, the first target set by political agreement in 2003, is estimated at about €1.5 billion and could be completed in 4 to 5 years. The existing Durance Valley track benefits from the progressive gradients in the Southern Alps. The "Fermed" association recommends a maximum gradient of 1.2% for freight trains. The average global gradient between Marseille and Briançon is 0.5% and the average gradient between stations never rises above 1%. The current design has three short sections of 2.5% but they can potentially be reduced or bypassed. By way of comparison, the access slopes to the Mont Cenis tun-



nel are over 3%. Now, this tunnel is currently being modernized to bring it up to B+ gauge.

“A gas pipeline to remove thousands of tankers from the roads”

Moreover, the Italian network does not accept trains longer than 550 metres (650 m in the future). Trains using this route will therefore be of normal length and relatively light (passenger trains, containers, tankers). The DRE PACA-SYSTRAL study of September 2003 on the improvement of travel in the Southern Alps estimates practical capacity in 24 hours as 80/90 train paths with the single track line. With 25 to 40 TER (transport express regional trains) forecast for 2020, this capacity would provide 40 to 60 freight train paths, that is between 4 and 7 million net tonnes carried annually on this route.

You also wanted to bring up the other trans-European network, that of energy?

Obviously, the coherence that the Montgenèvre tunnel brings to the Transport network is rightly a priority but we must also consider that brought to the trans-European Energy network.

We have listened attentively to the requests of the Piedmont and Lombardy authorities responsible for

energy supply for the Pô plain. We understand their concern about the security and diversification of this supply. They know how important the oil terminals at the port of Fos are and are most interested in the positioning of storage in Manosque less than 200 km away from the Pô plain. Their request to study the installation of a gas pipe which would make use of boring operations for the Montgenèvre tunnel is therefore a particularly relevant and strategic Franco-Italian project. For the environment, this underground connection would remove thousands of tankers from roads in the Alpine valleys. In conclusion, the construction of a railway tunnel beneath Montgenèvre would in the short term and with only a small investment, provide the TEN-T and TEN-E an outstanding direct inter-connection between the Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur and the priority European routes leading to the Pô plain.





The Montgenèvre tunnel should be an international transit route



Jacques Estour

President of the South-east Inter-consular Office for Transport and Communications

The OITC was keen to join Setumont. Why were you so motivated?

“We have been talking about the Montgenèvre tunnel for a long time now. When the OITC was asked to join we agreed immediately and our request to join was made formal last November. This tunnel is of interest in the framework of the general problems of crossing the Alps. The France-Italy route via Ventigmilia has more heavy traffic transiting than the Fréjus and Mont Blanc tunnels put together. The Montgenèvre tunnel is of interest because it can be an international transit route.

Currently there are two issues holding up the project.

Firstly, the port of Marseille has greatly suffered from a number of social

conflicts and it is imperative to regain credibility. The second factor is the dynamism of the Spaniards who have continued to invest in the Perpignan-Nîmes-Montpellier and Rhône valley route. The number of trains on the Perpignan-Bettembourg rail line has risen in frequency to three per day, proving how efficient it is. The Perpignan-Figueras TGV link is now open, the public debate for the Montpellier-Perpignan LGV is over and the rail Montpellier and Nîmes bypass has been approved.

The Durance Valley and the Rhône Valley. Can we talk about two different speeds of development?

Developments planned in the Rhône Valley have nothing to do with the lack of facilities in the Durance Valley. The construction of the rail and road link via the Durance Valley is competing with the Rhône valley, Barcelona-Lyon and Lyon-Turin routes. Public Authorities will not accept the construction of additional facilities, although in actual fact it is a question of complementary structures to serve the port of Marseille and Spain; not even although the construction of the Montgenèvre tunnel would cost a lot less than for Lyon-Turin where the tunnel will emerge in Italy at the Fréjus exit.

This structure will only be built if private operators are ready to participate in funding. Strong government intervention will be required to include this tunnel on the latest National trans-

port Infrastructures Plan which moreover, in spite of positive development, still does not support the completion of the motorway between Grenoble and Gap.

Rhône Valley road infrastructures are congested. The A7 motorway, the most widely used, suffers from 45 days of traffic jams each year and the State does not want to invest in new road infrastructures. The route for the rail bypass north of Lyon has been adopted and the bypass via the south-east is currently being passed.

The aim is to connect traffic flow from the north, from the Rhine-Rhône via the east of Lyon. From the south of Lyon, this track will then cross the right bank of the Rhône which will be dedicated to freight. Then it will continue on to Nîmes, Montpellier and Barcelona. The Rhine-Catalogna route currently under construction will be a heavy axis. The Lyon-Turin link will also be a heavy rail infrastructure for both goods and passengers. We realize that there are many projects for completion or modernization on the SNIT plan. The Montgenèvre tunnel must not be excluded from this programme. It is an essential element in structuring both our south-eastern region and the Alps-Mediterranean Euroregion which unites the Rhône-Alpes, Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, Liguria and Piedmont regions.

“ The Montgenèvre tunnel must not be excluded from the SNIT ”

The second Development Council for the Rail Link beneath Montgenèvre was held at the Regional council building on 17th January 2011.

Results of the preliminary studies undertaken within the framework of the state Region Project Contract 2007/2013 were presented:

the AI Engineering Firm's first observations about the Italian situation highlight their wait and see attitude; they consider that the rail link beneath Montgenèvre is perceived as a tributary to the Lyon-Turin link which should have priority.

A summary carried out by the Ingerop Firm of studies completed to date followed by a suggestion of fur-

ther studies required : studies of goods and passenger traffic flows, including numbers of seasonal clients, defining service scenarios, technical studies and a socio-economic analysis with, in particular, an analysis of costs and profitability.

The Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur region is going to launch these different studies prior to the public debate which will take place at the end of 2013. At this time, two new Development Councils will meet. The Italian authorities will join in the

discussion and studies. The Hautes-Alpes Prefect, Francine Prime, confirmed the State's attachment to the link project beneath Montgenèvre, with studies recorded in the 2007/2013 State Region Projects Contract. Moreover, 225 000 euros have been allocated by the State for these studies to be carried out prior to the public debate. This project should be subject to a new inscription in the 2014-2020 CPER at the end of the 2013 public debate.





Draft Bill of the National Transport Infrastructures Plan



Marc Reverchon

President of the Development Board of the Grand Port Maritime of Marseille



EXTRACTS OF THE MAJOR SEAPORT OF MARSEILLE DEVELOPMENT BOARD 'S OPINION

The « National Transport Infrastructures Plan » lays down the State's guidelines in terms of maintenance, modernization, and development of the networks under its competence.

It aims to encourage modal shift to modes of transport that are more environmentally friendly. (Law of programming relating to the implementation of the "Grenelle de l'environnement") The SNIT draft bill published on 12th July 2010 is therefore an engagement stemming from the laws of the "Grenelle de l'environnement". In this context, the draft bill can be seen as more of a strategy document. It therefore lays down the guidelines for transport infrastructures.

This strategy can be read as a series of concrete actions in a scope of 20 to 30 years. It states the projects for which studies can be undertaken with a completion target of 20 to 30 years' time. Major development projects only are concerned, namely projects creating new transport applications leading to new traffic flows or new modes of behavior. Modernization projects such as those provided for in the CPER or in road programmes of modernization (PDMI) are not included in the SNIT.

This plan is based on four strategic elements

- To Optimize the existing transport system in order to limit the creation of new infrastructures
- To Improve the performance of local and regional services in the transport system
- To Improve the energy performance of transport systems
- To Reduce the environmental footprint of infrastructures and transport equipment

The Major seaport of Marseille Development Board which met in a plenary session on 20th January 2011 requested that the final SNIT include the rail link project beneath the Mongenèvre. Below are some extracts corresponding to its opinion :-

After having taken note of the SNIT draft bill as published on 12th July 2010, on behalf of its President, the GPMM Development Board issued the following statement:

- The GPMM Development Board is delighted that such essential operations for the future of Marseille-Fos port are included such as the connection of structures to the north-south rolling motorway corridors, or

the bypass of the Lyon conurbation. The Fos-Salon link and the Arles bypass are also important projects for the future of the port.

- However, the GPM Development Board considers that several questions remain unanswered in other areas :

(...)

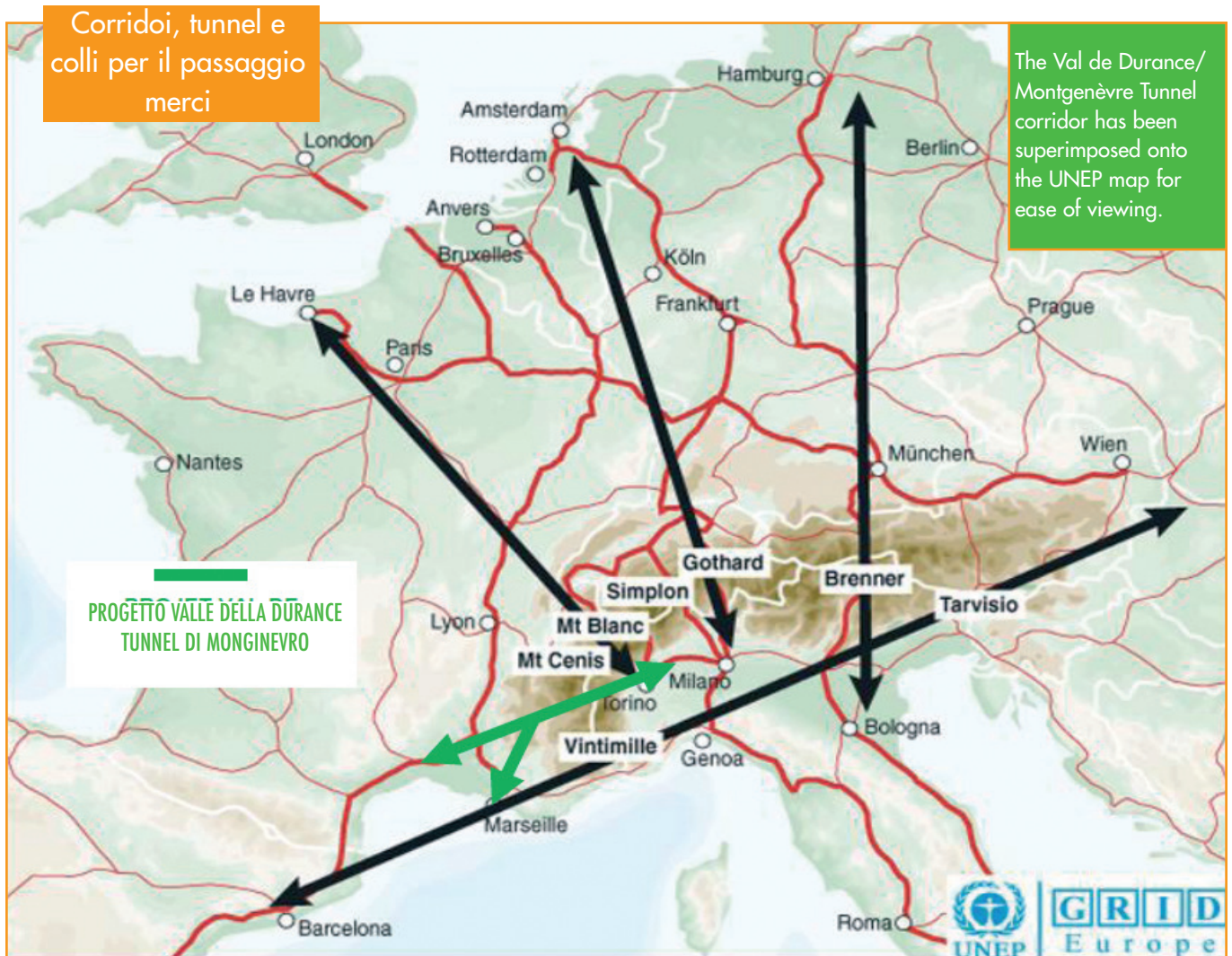
The draft bill fails to mention the needs for East-west trade alongside north-south flows. The Marseille-Fos port does not consider it acceptable that traffic from the Latin Arc is forced

to travel up to Lyon in order to cross the Alps, and the local population will just not accept it. The Marseille Fos port should be a hub in its own right for east-west trade and not just a dead-end or cul de sac. The region and its port should be linked to the centre of Europe by rail via the Durance Valley line and the Montgenèvre alpine crossing (and where passenger transportation is concerned via the PACA LGV extended into Italy). Therefore, it is essential for the State and all public bodies to

intervene with Europe in connection with the revision of TEN-T policy so that the relevant links are clearly included in the European planning document.

The GPM Development Board requests that these comments be taken into account in the final draft of the SNIT.

Pas de traduction
en anglais ???



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- Hautes-Alpes General Council
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- Hautes Alpes Chamber of Trades and Crafts
- Major Seaport of Marseille
- The communities of Argentière La Bessée, Briançon, Gap, Marseille, Montgenèvre, Nevache, Val des Près.

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