

30 April Start For FGC's Class 331 DMUs

The stage is set for the transformation of passenger services on the Lleida to La Pobla de Segur line (see R 1/16, pp. 38 - 42). The second Class 331 GTW 2/6, 331.02, left Bussnang on 8 February 2016 and was railed on 12 February at the ARMF works in Pla de Vilanoveta. The first train, 331.01 made its initial brake tests within the yard at the ARMF works on 20 January, followed by its first real test run between Balaguer and Pobla on 17 February.

No authorisation to enter service for the new trains is required for the Pobla line, according to the pertinent Spanish national legislation, RD 1434/2010, issued by the Agencia Estatal de Seguridad Ferroviaria (AESF - National Rail Safety Agency), given that the infrastructure now belongs to FGC. However the trains have to use a short stretch of track of the State-Owned General Interest Network (Red Estatal de Interés General) between Lleida Pirineus station and the junction at the start of the branch, crossing the Segre river, whose administration has been entrusted to Adif. Here the AESF requires authorisation to enter service.

Belgorail, a Brussels-based concern founded in June 2004 for testing, certification and inspection services, whose Spanish subsidiary has been active since 2012, was contracted by FGC to assess the Class 331 DMUs' conformity and to deliver their compulsory certificate of conformity. This certification by a certification body appears to be a preliminary step and is a necessary step in granting by the AESF of authorisation to enable the new GTW 2/6 trains to enter service.

A further test run was made to Pobla on 9 March 2016, this photo showing 331.01 crossing an inlet

Photo: Aleix Cortés López



of Sant Antoni reservoir just south of Salàs de Pallars. At a media event at Balaguer and Pobla stations that day the Catalan Minister of Infrastructure, Ricard Font, announced that both new DMUs would enter service on 30 April 2016. A revised timetable, and fares integrated with those on local bus services (with a reduction, in the case of fares on the northern part of the line, in the district of Pallars Jussà, of up to 37%), would be introduced simultaneously. Between Lleida and Balaguer there will be ten train pairs instead of four (nine on Saturdays and Sundays), while between Balaguer and Pobla there will be four train pairs (two on Saturdays and three on Sundays).

In early April the Catalan Government's Departament de Territori i Sostenibilitat (Land Use and Sustainability Department) authorised a project to integrate the 680 m of line passing

through the urban area of Balaguer (shown in the lower image). This is estimated to cost some 5 million EUR, and will involve providing paving between and alongside the tracks, thus

enabling greater freedom of movement of pedestrians. Ballast will be retained on adjacent sidings.

Mike Bent

Image: FGC



Third Batch Of Finnish FLIRTS

Under a contract announced on 24 September 2014 Stadler is now delivering a batch of 34 Class Sm5 EMUs to Junakalusto (see R 5/14, p. 41). Deliveries started in early spring 2016 and are scheduled for completion in spring 2017. The new trains, numbered 42 to 75, are technically similar to the earlier FLIRTS acquired by Junakalusto. However their passenger accommodation has been slightly changed, a modified passenger information system installed, and they wear a new purple and

white livery. **This photo was taken on 9 April 2016 at Helsingin päärautatieasema terminus (Helsinki Central), showing the first two of the batch, 42 and 43, running in multiple.**

And the Class Sm5 story should continue, as on 17 November 2015 Helsingin seudun liikenne (HSL - Helsinki Regional Transport Authority) resolved to authorise Junakalusto to buy a further six FLIRTS to cover more suburban services requested by the Authority.

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More Appenzellerbahn EMUs

On 7 April 2016 Appenzellerbahn announced that it had placed a 36 million CHF order with Stadler for four 80 km/h EMUs, with an option for a fifth. These three-car, 1.5 kV DC trains will be 58,800 mm long, 2,650 mm wide, and will be fitted with 161 standard and 15 first class seats. They will also have space for up to 123 standees, a multi-purpose area, and a wheelchair-accessible WC cubicle. They will be fully air conditioned. Deliveries are scheduled for mid-2018,

to replace the existing trains used on the line from Gossau to Appenzell and Wasserauen.

Essentially the trains will be similar to those ordered for the Nyon - St. Cergue - Morez line (four trains, of which the first was presented on 5 November 2015) and the Réseau Express Régional Sud of Transports Publics Fribourgeois (six trains; see R 2/13, p. 8, the first presented in October 2015).

Appenzellerbahn