

Zentralbahn looks forward to “Fink” and “Adler”

Roughly eight years after the delivery of ten Class ABe 130 three-coach EMUs for rapid-transit (S-Bahn) services in the Luzern area, the Swiss metre-gauge Zentralbahn (ZB) awaits the commissioning of the next vehicle generation: trains for both adhesion and rack-and-pinion operation which can be

deployed on the entire ZB network. Four seven-coach Class ABeh 150 EMUs for the Luzern – Interlaken Ost Interregio services via the Brünig-Pass rack route are to be purchased, as well as six three-coach Class ABeh 160s for universal deployment to lengthen the Interregios or to operate in

S-Bahn traffic. On 15 February 2012 the first three-coach train was presented at Stadler in Bussnang.

With new vehicles it has become more or less a tradition that as an alternative to the rather dry technical designation, an easily-memorable and to a greater or lesser degree creative name is coined. After having called ABe 130 “Spatz” (sparrow) – “Schmalspur-Panorama-Triebzug”, narrow-gauge panoramic EMU –, ZB have retained the bird theme and selected “Fink” (finch) for the short ABeh 150 (“flinke innovative Niederflur-Komposition”, fast innovative low-floor composition) and “Adler” (eagle) for the long ABeh 160 (“alpiner dynamischer leiser eleganter Reisezug”, alpine dynamic quiet elegant passenger train). The new rolling stock which replaces the venerable passenger coaches of the former SBB Brünigbahn – known for their poor running characteristics – offers passengers many improvements: air-conditioned panorama coaches, partly low-floor entrances, multi-purpose areas, disabled toilets and a passenger information system; in addition, the seven-coach trains also have electronic seat-reservation and a restaurant car.

Besides these positive aspects, however, the only slight difference between the first- and second-class coaches was very noticeable when walking through the first three-coach train. The seats in the 70 percent more expensive first class differ in details only – principally in the seat cover and the form of the headrest – from those of the second class. As the seats and armrests are very narrow, and the seats are arranged very closely together, there is an extremely wide central aisle. Those responsible at Zentralbahn promptly announced that they are looking for appropriate measures to somewhat widen the lateral space between seats.

After the roll-out in Bussnang, ABeh 160 001 was hauled on three standard-gauge carrier bogies to Interlaken Ost and from there on its own bogies and power to the ZB depot at Meiringen. The first test runs on the route took place in February. Commercial services are planned from the beginning of June 2012. In the same month the first seven-coach ABeh 150 001 train is to be delivered. (mr)



Top: The first “Fink” in Weinfelden on the way from Bussnang to Interlaken Ost via SBB standard-gauge routes (photo: R. Reiss, 16 February 2012).

Left: The aisle in first class is extremely wide, due to the narrow seats arranged closely together (photo: M. Rellstab).

Below: The ABeh 160 001 has arrived in Brienz on one of its first test runs. To the right stands the 71-year-old De 110 002 with IR 2217 Interlaken Ost – Luzern (photo: D. Heer, 27 February 2012).



A technical innovation of the new ZB rolling stock is the eccentric disc with which the height of the traction pinion can be adjusted in six 5-mm stages as running-wheel wear gradually increases (photo: J. Lüthard).

