

ICE-4 EMU 9005 in trial operation running as ICE 786 München Hbf – Hamburg-Altona at the west portal of the 633-metre-long Esslingerberg Tunnel on the Ingolstadt – Treuchtlingen line on 11 June 2017 (photo: A. Dollinger).

**Class E 402 returns to the Brennero route**

In the 2004 timetable, FS (Ferrovie dello Stato / Italy) scheduled the new E 402 A/B converter locomotives for Eurocity trains on the Brennero/Brenner axis to replace the class E 652 deployed up until then. These new engines suffered from poor wheel-slip protection control which frequently led to all-axle slip on wet rails. For this reason, in the following year Trenitalia Cargo E 405s took over traction duties for all long-distance passenger trains between Verona and the border station Brennero/Brenner. With the transfer of EC trains to DB/ÖBB/Trenord (with ÖBB class 1216 locomotives), most of these services were discontinued some years ago, and deployment of class E 405 with passenger trains ended in December 2016 with the reallocation of the remaining night train pair to the Tarvisio border crossing.

The sole scheduled long-distance train still operated by Trenitalia via the Brennero route is the Moscow – Nizza (Nice) Express. Since the change of timetable, this is hauled from Ventimiglia with an E 402 B from the Milano Greco depot, and on to Brennero in double traction with an E 402, E 444 R or E 656 coupled behind. These locomotives return to Verona empty on Sundays and are made available especially on Fridays for the return service. The Venice – Simplon – Orient Express which also runs regular services despite being classified as a special train is hauled on the northbound leg to Brennero with an E 402 A tandem-traction unit based at Venezia Mestre depot; last year, class E 405 still provided the traction for this. This season, the southbound train generally takes the Gotthard upper route. (hpe)

**First dual-power Flirt on display**

Stadler in Bussnang is building five Flirt dual-power multiple units for services on the Torino – Aosta line, which is only electrified along a short section (see RU 9-10/2015, p. 139). The first complete train was presented to the customer and other guests from Italy on 15 June 2017; an SBB Re 420 hauled the 67-metre-long train towards Chiasso via the upper Gotthard line two weeks later. The dual-power Flirt can reach speeds of up to 160 km/h in 3 kV DC mode, but only 140 km/h when powered by its diesel engine. The manufacturer emphasises that the new vehicle with its maximum axle load of 18 tonnes is also suitable for branch lines. Further potential for orders is considered to lie in southern Italy, for instance. (mr)

Centre: E 402 108 (in Frecciabianca colours) and 154 (in XMPR livery) head towards the mountains near Klausen/Chiusa with the Nizza – Moscow Express 13016 on 21 May 2017 (photo: H. Petrovitsch).

Below: The first complete dual-power Flirt for Aosta valley services on the Stadler tracks at Erlen (photo: J. Lüthard, 15 June 2017).

