

Press release

Positive development in demand for the Rolling Highway – continuation until 2028 is important to guarantee modal shift

Since the fourth quarter of 2022, the demand to transport lorries on the Rolling Highway between Freiburg (D) and Novara (I) has returned to pre-pandemic levels. The task now is to secure the future of this still important modal shift product until the end of 2028, in order to prevent a shift back of heavy goods vehicles onto the road.

A restrictive decree by the Italian government prevented RAIpin from loading trucks onto the railway in the first quarter of 2022 if the lorry drivers were not fully vaccinated against COVID-19. This resulted in a loss of 5,600 shipments. Nevertheless, almost 72,000 lorries (compared with almost 69,000 in the previous year) were able to cross Switzerland by rail instead of road last year thanks to the RAIpin service, saving the environment 24,660 tons of CO². This pleasing demand persisted in the first months of 2023. The target agreed with the federal government of transporting around 80,000 lorries a year on the Rolling Highway is realistic.

The political decision-making process for the continuation of the Rolling Highway from 2024 is challenging: RAIpin has proposed to the federal government that the product be discontinued at the end of 2028. By then, the conditions will be in place for a significant proportion of the lorries currently being transported to switch to unaccompanied combined transport. For financial policy reasons, the Federal Council came to the conclusion in September 2022 that the Rolling Highway should be ordered only until the end of 2026.

Thus, the cessation of operations would fall in the middle of the reconstruction phase of the Novara terminal. During this phase, unaccompanied combined transport capacity will be reduced by 100,000 consignments per year. This would mean a capacity shortfall of 180,000 in the area west of Milan in the years 2026 to 2027. Freight-forwarding companies will have to make these journeys through the Alps by road again.

The Rolling Highway uses its own terminal in the immediate vicinity, which is not affected by the conversion and can at least partially absorb the volume that will be lost. Between 2026 and 2028, it will thus make an important, useful contribution to avoiding the shift of heavy goods traffic back onto transalpine road links through Switzerland.

For more information, please see our Annual Report 2022 at <https://www.ralpin.com/gb2022> (only available in German).

Olten, 23 May 2023

RAIpin AG at a glance

Headquartered in Olten, RAIpin AG operates the Rolling Highway (Rola) between Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany, and Novara, Italy. Its service encompasses over 100,000 opportunities for lorries to transfer from road to rail each year. Drivers embark their vehicles onto low-floor waggons at the terminals and accompany their loads safely in a sleeping car. RAIpin's Rolling Highway service makes a significant contribution to the modal shift of traffic from road to rail and to safeguarding the sensitive Alpine region.

The shareholders of RAIpin are BLS AG, Hupac SA and SBB AG.

Contact: Ludwig Näf, CEO RAIpin AG, ludwig.naef@ralpin.com, +41 58 22 88 88