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New trains for the RegioExpress line: RBS awards contract to Stadler

Regionalverkehr Bern-Solothurn (RBS) has awarded the contract for the upcoming vehicle procurement to Stadler. Between 2028 and 2030, a total of 20 new multiple-unit trains will enter service on the Solothurn-Bern RegioExpress line (RE5). This will enable significantly more travellers to reach their destinations in future and increase passenger comfort. The vehicles will be produced in Bussnang / Switzerland.

In December 2023, RBS launched a tender for the procurement of 20 new three-car multiple units to replace the oldest RBS fleet and to increase capacity on the Solothurn-Bern line (RE5). The contract was signed in Worblaufen in mid-November. The order is worth around CHF 190 million and the trains will be built in Bussnang, Thurgau / Switzerland. "Stadler impressed us with their high-quality realisation of our requirements, their well thought-out and efficient project planning, as well as the standard and high reliability rates of the vehicles they have already delivered to us," explains Fabian Schmid, Director of RBS. "This partnership gives us the opportunity to heighten passenger comfort and make public transport in the region more appealing in the long term."

At the signing of the contract, Peter Spuhler, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Stadler Rail, said: "I am delighted that RBS has placed their trust in us and that for the third time, we are able to build trains for them. This latest order is testament to many years of good cooperation between the two organisations. Once again, we have been able to impress our client with a customised vehicle and demonstrate that comfort, reliability and design can go hand in hand. I hope that RBS and its passengers will enjoy these new trains."

More comfort and modern features for passengers

In order to meet the needs of both passengers and the region, RBS is focusing on proven concepts, comfort and future-proof technologies. Like the existing RBS trains, the new multiple-unit trains are 60 metres long and can now be used in triple formation, making a train 180 metres

long. This means that it can carry 50 per cent more passengers at peak times. The vehicle concept is partially based on suggestions from passengers, which were already factored in at the development of the RBS "Worbla" trains.

Features of the new trains:

- **Barrier-free entrances** with extendable sliding steps
- **Mixed use passenger areas:** generous multifunctional spaces for pushchairs, bicycles, luggage and wheelchairs are available in every second class carriage
- **Seating capacity:** 21 seats in first class; 103 seats and 15 folding seats in second class
- **Modern features:** environmentally friendly air conditioning and power sockets at seats

Expansion of services to strengthen regional transport

The first three new vehicles will be manufactured from 2026 and put into operation on the RBS network between mid-2027 and mid-2028. Following the successful completion of the test phase and once driver training has taken place, vehicles will be delivered from 2029. The new trains will be able to operate with three carriages from around 2030/31. This will help meet the increasing demand for services on the Solothurn-Bern route.

Background to fleet renewal: "Secondas" reach end of life

The "Seconda" S-Bahn trains currently used on the S8 line between Bätterkinden and Bern are now over 30 years old and increasingly prone to breakdowns. They were extensively modernised between 2010 and 2013 and are now reaching the end of their service life. Their age means that maintenance costs are going up and spare parts are difficult to get hold of. The order of new trains will see the "Secondas" replaced by the current RE trains "NEXt" on the S8 line.

Caption to the signing of the contract, from left to right: Fabian Schmid, Director RBS; Peter Spuhler, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Stadler Rail AG

About Stadler

Stadler has been building trains for over 80 years. The provider of mobility solutions in rail vehicle construction, service and signalling technology has its headquarters in Bussnang in eastern Switzerland. More than 14,500 employees work at several production and engineering sites and over 80 service locations, including over 5,300 employees in Switzerland. The company is aware of its social responsibility for sustainable mobility and therefore stands for innovative, sustainable and durable quality products. The product range in the mainline and urban transport sector includes high-speed trains, intercity trains, regional and suburban trains, underground trains, tram-trains and trams. Stadler also manufactures mainline locomotives, shunting locomotives and passenger coaches. Stadler is the world's leading manufacturer of rack-and-pinion railway vehicles.

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