

5 February 2008

Alstom unveils the AGV, its latest very high speed train, capable of reaching a cruising speed of 360 kph

On Tuesday 5 February, Alstom unveiled the prototype of the AGV¹, its latest, new generation very high speed train. This single deck, state-of-the-art train incorporates articulated carriages, a technology which contributed to the success of France's TGV train², and a new distributed drive system. The AGV has been designed to reach a cruising speed of 360 kph. The AGV already has its first customer: Italy's new railway operator, NTV³.

Patrick Kron, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Alstom and Philippe Mellier, President of Alstom Transport, unveiled the prototype of the AGV on Tuesday 5 February 2008 at Alstom Transport's plant in La Rochelle, France, in the presence of Nicolas Sarkozy, President of France and numerous dignitaries.

During the unveiling ceremony, the futuristic and aerodynamic design of the AGV and its technological innovations were particularly highlighted. The AGV is the first train in the world to feature an articulated architecture (with the bogies located between the carriages), a solution which provides the highest levels of safety, combined with a distributed drive system (the train's motors being located on the bogies, under the train), an innovation which considerably increases the potential number of seats onboard the train by eliminating the need for locomotives. This novel architecture will give operators great flexibility. They will be able to vary the length of their trains (from 7 to 14 carriages, and from 250 and 650 seats) depending on demand. It will also substantially lower maintenance costs.

The AGV is particularly environmentally friendly, with a 15% lower energy consumption than its main competitors. It also incorporates the latest ERTMS signalling standards so can run on all European lines. Alstom Transport's sites in France (at La Rochelle, Ornans, Tarbes, Le Creusot, Villeurbanne, Reichshoffen) and in Italy (at Bologna and Savigliano) will all be involved in producing the AGV.

¹ AGV stands for Automotrice Grande Vitesse [high-speed self-powered carriage]. AGV is a registered trademark of Alstom

² TGV is a registered trademark of France's national railway company, SNCF

³ Nuovo Trasporto Viaggiatori

The AGV's novel traction system has already been tested under extreme conditions, since it was used in the train which set the world rail speed record on 3 April 2007: 574.8 kph.

Patrick Kron, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Alstom, said: *"We have developed this train using our own funds, a very unusual approach in the railway industry, because we understood that the market for very high speed rail travel was about to diversify. In order to maintain our leadership, we needed to broaden and update our range of products. The AGV has arrived on the market just at the time when very high speed rail travel is undergoing a new expansion phase, not only in its traditional markets, but also in many developing countries"*.

Over the past 25 years, Alstom has sold more than 650 TGV trains, becoming the world leader in this high technology field. Its trains have carried, in complete safety, nearly one and a half billion passengers over 2 billion km - or 6,500 times the distance from the Earth to the Moon. Alstom has just won two major export orders from Argentina and Morocco for its TGV Duplex trains.

Philippe Mellier, President of Alstom Transport, said of the AGV that it was *"both the outcome of Alstom's unparalleled experience in the field of very high speed trains, backed by a successful track record of 25 years, and also the result of the company's capacity to innovate which has enabled it to remain at the forefront of railway technology. The trust which Italy's new railway operator NTV has placed in Alstom by becoming the first launch customer of the AGV will enable us to demonstrate rapidly the performance, comfort, convenience, environmental soundness and low cost of ownership of our train."*

Italy's new railway operator, NTV, has placed firm orders for 25 trains (with options for 10 more), and has signed a maintenance contract with Alstom. Production of the first trains will begin in mid-2008, and they will be delivered from 2010 onwards.

About Alstom Transport

A promoter of sustainable mobility, Alstom Transport develops and markets the most complete range of systems, equipment and services in the railway sector. Alstom Transport manages entire transport systems, taking in rolling stock, signalling and infrastructure, and offers "turnkey" solutions. In the 2006/07 financial year, Alstom Transport's sales lifted the company to the number one position in the world transport market.

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