

Media release

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An international best-seller: sale of the 2,500th FLIRT multiple unit

Stadler is celebrating a major anniversary: the sale of 2,500 FLIRTs. Around 20 years since the first vehicle was ordered, Stadler has just sold the 2,500th multiple unit from the FLIRT family. An international best-seller, the FLIRT boasts an innovative design and is recognised by customers for its high quality and unrivalled performance. The FLIRT is now in operation in 21 countries – from the Arctic Circle to North Africa.

The latest order received by Stadler for its FLIRT model has enabled the company to reach a landmark milestone. The contract for four FLIRT electric multiple units for the Italian region of Valle d'Aosta marks the sale of the 2,500th multiple unit from the successful FLIRT family. FLIRT stands for **F**linker **L**eichter Intercity- und **R**egional-Triebzug (English: "fast, light, innovative intercity and regional train") and has become one of the most popular and successful platforms for modern rail vehicles.

The first FLIRTs were designed as four-car articulated trains with two traction end bogies. The design followed the same philosophy of concentrated traction as in Stadler's innovative articulated railcar (GTW), but shifting the traction to the ends of the multiple unit. This resulted in a spacious low-floor interior along the whole length of the train, setting new standards in the market for regional multiple units. The innovative concept was first used in the Zug S-Bahn for Swiss Federal Railways (SBB), but Stadler did not stop there.

Continuous improvements have been made to the FLIRT over the last 20 years, and a variety of new options have been developed in terms of drive technology. As well as full electric traction, drive modules are now also available for hydrogen, battery and diesel operation, or using hybrid solutions combining several of these technologies. The latest innovation incorporates Stadler's in-house signalling solutions, resulting in a highly digitised vehicle. The FLIRT has been an important catalyst for Stadler's success story over the last few decades.

"When we launched the FLIRT, it was an extremely impressive concept. Being imitated by the major rail vehicle manufacturers was a welcome acknowledgement for Stadler – and a driver for further innovation. The success of the FLIRT is a credit to our dedicated team. We are constantly endeavouring to develop and improve the vehicle. The sale of the 2,500th FLIRT is a significant milestone for Stadler, and demonstrates the outstanding quality and performance of our vehicles. We are proud that the FLIRT is appreciated by rail operators and customers worldwide, and that it is helping to make rail transport more efficient and more attractive," says Peter Spuhler, Executive Chairman of Stadler's Board of Directors.

From Switzerland to the wider world

The success story of the FLIRT began with a pioneering order from Swiss Federal Railways (SBB) in 2002. Stadler won a tender to deliver twelve FLIRTs to Stadtbahn Zug and a further 30 FLIRTs to Basel S-Bahn. These initial compositions were put into service about two years later and proved very popular with passengers.

The FLIRT not only conquered the Swiss market, but was also very well received internationally. Norway in particular has become one of the most important sales markets for the FLIRT. The Norwegian state railway NSB has ordered a total of 150 FLIRTs for use on the Oslo suburban train network or as intercity trains. Routes that operate with FLIRT trains have witnessed an increase in passenger numbers of up to 20 percent without any other timetable measures being taken. Every second rail passenger in Norway now travels on a Stadler train. In March of this year, the state-owned company Norske tog signed another contract with Stadler for the manufacture and delivery of up to 100 additional FLIRTs. The largest FLIRT fleet outside Switzerland is currently in service in Germany, where almost 500 vehicles are used by various operators for regional and regional express transport.

Recipe for success: the FLIRT's modular structure

The FLIRT combines an intelligent, innovative design with tried-and-tested technology. It is also extremely versatile thanks to Stadler's proven module concept. The FLIRT is a cost-effective response to urbanisation and the growing pressure in the transport market on account of its high-performance drive system, excellent acceleration and braking characteristics, ergonomic driving properties, comfortable interior design and functional modular set-up.

Wide variety of drive options

In 2015, the Valle d'Aosta region ordered the first FLIRT trains with bimodal drive. Today, Stadler's FLIRT model offers a variety of drive solutions that meet customers' needs whilst being environmentally friendly and efficient at the same time.

Alongside models with fully electric, diesel or mixed drive, Stadler also produces FLIRTs with alternative drives such as battery and hydrogen. Stadler is supplying 55 battery-powered FLIRT Akku trains to Nahverkehrsverbund Schleswig-Holstein (NAH.SH) and 58 battery-powered FLIRT Akku trains to DB Regio in Germany, for example. It is also developing the first hydrogen-powered FLIRT for the American San Bernardino County Transportation Authority (SBCTA). Moreover, Stadler holds the world record for the longest journey in a battery-powered train in battery-only mode with its FLIRT Akku model.

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, eastern Switzerland. It has a workforce of around 13,500 based in various production and engineering locations as well as more than 70 service locations. The company is conscious of its social responsibility for sustainable mobility and therefore stands for innovative, sustainable and durable quality products. The product range in the field of mainline railways and city transport includes high-speed trains, intercity trains, regional and suburban trains, metros, tramways and trams. Stadler also manufactures main-line locomotives, shunting locomotives and passenger carriages. It is the world's leading manufacturer in the rack-and-pinion rail vehicle industry.

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