

Media release

LOCKING PERIOD	date
DOCUMENT	Number of pages
SUPPLEMENTS	Photos, further attachments

Bussnang, 29 May 2024

First Stadler FLIRT with ETCS GUARDIA runs as a three-country train

The first FLIRT trains with the ETCS GUARDIA signalling system are now operating in Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany as part of the three-country trains operated by the Dutch operator Arriva. The conversion and approval of the multiple units with the ETCS technology developed by Stadler has been successfully completed. This success once again underlines Stadler's commitment to optimising the safety and efficiency of rail transport throughout Europe. Stadler had already retrofitted multiple units from third-party providers as part of a pilot project in 2023 to enable a faster ETCS roll-out in Germany.

The retrofitting project was undertaken by Stadler in collaboration with the operator Arriva. This included equipping eight FLIRTs with the latest ETCS-GUARDIA system from Stadler. The vehicles are now operating across borders in Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium and, currently, the ETCS system is only required for operation on the Belgian routes. On the Dutch and German ones, the operation is still carried out with the Class B systems PZB and ATB, so that these also had to be integrated into the ETCS signalling system. This now enables cross-border operation of the vehicles and, for the first time, transfer-free operation between the metropolises of the so-called "tri-border region" of Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany.

Michiel Cusell, Regional Director of Arriva Limburg: "The introduction of ETCS on our three-country train fulfils a long-held wish. Our passengers can now travel from Liège to Aachen via Maastricht. Stadler has coordinated and realised the development and retrofitting of our fleet for Arriva with determination and perseverance. This was done in co-operation not only with the suppliers, but also with the regulatory authorities in Europe and the three countries involved."

Marc Trippel, Executive Vice President of Stadler's Signalling Division, explains: "We are very proud that we have been able to realise this project for part of our large FLIRT fleet in the Netherlands. Extending the area of operation of the vehicles to include cross-border traffic increases the value of the vehicle fleet and fulfils a long-held wish of passengers in the border region. With our ETCS-GUARDIA system, we have a customised system that can also be cost-effective when retrofitting small fleets. The fact that we are now bringing our first train with our own ETCS onto Belgian tracks is an important step towards expanding our presence in Europe."

"The core strategic goals for intelligent mobility in the European Union are to improve international connectivity, support automation and provide access to zero-emission vehicles. By upgrading the Stadler FLIRT to our ETCS system, we have supported precisely these three core objectives: We are now travelling signal-controlled, in cross-border operation, in the heart of Europe," says Daniel Baer, Executive Vice President of Stadler's Service Division.

The GUARDIA ETCS train protection system

Increasing travel speed, ensuring interoperability, reusing existing infrastructure and achieving cost efficiency while maintaining the current level of safety are just some of the strategic measures that rail operators need to focus on due to the ever-increasing demand for rail transport.

Stadler then developed and supplied ETCS on-board solutions in collaboration with the technology company AngelStar. The high-performance ETCS-GUARDIA system with its proven electronic technology is already approved in several European countries and is currently in use in Switzerland, Poland, Italy, Hungary, the Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Austria, Croatia and Slovenia. Such developments demonstrate Stadler's clear commitment to customer-focused innovation, cost efficiency and an unrivalled level of experience in retrofitting third-party trains.

Stadler thus continues to lead the way in innovative and reliable solutions for modern rail transport.

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 14,000 employees work at several production and engineering sites and over 80 service locations. 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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