

**SOUTH EUROPE ATLANTIC TOURS–BORDEAUX HIGH-SPEED LINE
INAUGURATED IN THE PRESENCE OF FRENCH PRESIDENT FRANÇOIS HOLLANDE**

- _ **The line will shorten journeys between Paris and Bordeaux to 2 hours 4 minutes**
- _ **LISEA invested €7.8 billion in the line, SNCF Réseau invested €1.2 billion to connect it to the existing rail network**

The South Europe Atlantic Tours–Bordeaux high-speed line (SEA HSL) was inaugurated today in Villognon (Charente), in the presence of French President François Hollande, Nouvelle Aquitaine Region President Alain Rousset, SNCF Réseau CEO Patrick Jeantet, VINCI Chairman and CEO Xavier Huillard, LISEA CEO Laurent Cavois, the public sector organisations that financed the project and the other partners that contributed to this project's success.

The SEA HSL will shorten journeys between Bordeaux and Paris to 2 hours 4 minutes. It was Europe's biggest rail project and was completed in record time, ahead of the schedule provided in the contract (6 years for design and construction). This concession involved building a 302 km high-speed line between Saint Avertin (Indre et Loire) and Ambarès et Lagrave (Gironde) along with 10 links spanning 38 km to connect the new line to other cities in southwest France.

In total, almost 10,000 employees worked on this project, and public and private sector parties jointly invested €7.8 billion in it. SNCF Réseau invested an additional €1.2 billion to interconnect the new line, which involved building 38 km of rail links, setting up control rooms, easing congestion in Bordeaux and upgrading the Montparnasse station in Paris. The line is set to be opened to traffic on 2 July 2017 and expected to carry 20 million passengers a year.

A unique concession arrangement in France

The SEA HSL was built and will be operated and maintained under a 50-year concession contract between SNCF Réseau (the concession grantor) and LISEA (the concession company). LISEA, a consortium comprising VINCI Concessions (33.4%), Caisse des Dépôts (25.4%), Meridiam (22%) and Ardian (19.2%), was tasked with designing, building and financing the line, and will operate and maintain it until 2061. SNCF Réseau will oversee LISEA to ensure compliance with service quality objectives and principles, monitor the high-speed line's performance indicators, and manage traffic on LISEA's behalf.

This concession model, which was chosen by French public authorities and embedded in the concession grantor's requirements, made it possible to harness the private sector partners' resources and innovation capabilities in order to develop France's rail network, while enabling efficient programme management and full compliance with environmental requirements. This arrangement also optimised the project over a longer period of time, as the 44-year arrangement covering operation and maintenance is included in the concession contract, in which LISEA guarantees costs.

A catalyst for regional development

This new line is providing new options for passengers and business. It is bringing areas between Paris and Bordeaux closer together, and opening up connections between Bordeaux and the main cities in southwest France. It is also opening up new prospects for France's entire western quarter, shortening journeys between Bordeaux and Brussels, London and Barcelona. In France, journeys from Bordeaux to Lille will take 4 hours 36 minutes and journeys from Toulouse to Paris will take 4 hours 10 minutes on trains travelling at 320 km/h.

Lastly, this line will free up capacity on the existing rail line between Paris, Tours, Poitiers, Châtelleraut, Angoulême and Libourne, and even Orléans, Limoges and Toulouse, so SNCF can develop TER (intercity) traffic, which is essential to everyday mobility and to invigorate local areas. It will also help to develop freight traffic.

Laurent Cavois (CEO, LISEA): *"I'm proud of the way we delivered on schedule, the quality of our construction work, our uncompromising stand on environmental protection measures and the partnerships we have built with all the stakeholders.*

What we are sharing today at this inauguration ceremony is a success story: this new line is a vital tool to fuel development throughout Europe's western quarter."

Patrick Jeantet (CEO, SNCF Réseau): *"This inauguration is the first step in what will be an historical year for high-speed travel in France. In 2017, three new lines will reshape the rail landscape and bring places and people closer together. This is a praiseworthy accomplishment, the result of constant cooperation between LISEA and SNCF Réseau teams, and has brought about SEA, the first step in the biggest rail project that Europe has seen in years."*

Take-aways: the main steps before opening the line to traffic on 2 July 2017

The incremental speed trials began in July 2016 and were completed in February 2017. The dynamic trials were carried out in both directions, gradually increasing speed from 160 km/h to 320 km/h (the line's commercial operation speed) and an additional 10%.

Training for 500 drivers began on 20 February and will be completed on 15 June, on two trains running three daily return trips and calling at Angoulême and Poitiers stations.

SNCF Réseau, the concession grantor, will issue the line's certificate of compliance with the Concession contract requirements. The Etablissement Public de Sécurité Ferroviaire (rail safety authority) will then issue the permit to operate the line, before it opens to traffic on 2 July.

Press contacts

Valérie Marquis LISEA valerie.marquis@lisea.fr +33 6 20 67 45 86

Edouard Ameil SNCF Réseau edouard.ameil@reseau.sncf.fr +33 6 13 31 64 51