

The Port Authority of Valencia will invest 50 million in Valencia-Zaragoza railway

- PAV investment plan foresees actions worth nearly 100 million in railway improvements of short and medium term.
- The Governments of Valencia and Aragon celebrate PAV's decision.

Valencia, November 29th 2016.- The Port Authority of Valencia will invest 50 million euros to improve the rail freight line between Valencia and Zaragoza; an agreed concept with Ports of the State that will be incorporated in the next Business Plan of the Port Authority of Valencia and processed through the Financial Fund of Port Accessibility.

The announcement of the investment was made this morning by the President of Comunitat Valenciana, Ximo Puig, after the meeting held in Valencia with the President of the Government of Aragon, Javier Lambán and the president of the Port Authority of Valencia (PAV) Aurelio Martínez.

The investment of the Port Authority of Valencia is in addition to the actions foreseen in the 2017 Investment Plan, which was recently closed with State Ports, which provide 31 million euros for the rail access to Sagunto (20 million euros through the Financial Fund of Port Accessibility); 4 million euros for the sidings in the stretch to Teruel, which are extended to 13 million euros for the improvement of sidings so as to allow the crossing of compositions of 750 m; And 3 million euros in 2020 for a railway station to support the Port of Sagunto. In total, almost 100 million euros.

According to the president of PAV before the two presidents of Valencia and Aragon, "the level of investment to be taken by PAV will allow an improvement in the competitiveness of the use of the line and that it becomes an operational corridor and able to serve rail freight traffic between Aragon / Valle del Ebro and the ports of Sagunto and Valencia; As well as solving the multiple bottlenecks in the road."

"Obviously, - added Aurelio Martinez - although PAV's purpose are the goods, passenger traffic will also gain service capacity especially if, in later stages, the possibility of electrification in the track is contemplated."

At present, a freight train from Zaragoza to Valencia, passing through Teruel, covers the journey in 8.30 hours (with speed sections at 20 km / h, with no possibility of night traffic and with the possibility of stopping if there is rain). With the investment announced today, since it is a question of guaranteeing the transport of goods, besides allowing the full use of the road during the 24 hours of the day, ensures the reliability of arriving at the expected time (fundamental for goods transport) and the journey will be reduced by 2 hours. (The trains of passengers cover the route in an average of 5 hours: 4.50h or 5.15h, depending on the compositions with which the convoy is enabled).

Five communities benefited

After informing about the details of the PAV's investment, the President of the Valencian Government, Ximo Puig explained that "the decision of the Port of Valencia will be key in the connection, not only of Aragon and Valencia, but of five Autonomous Communities and The Mediterranean and Cantabrian corridors, a geographical area that represents 36% of Spanish GDP."

In the same sense, the president of Aragon, Javier Lambán has exposed that "the news supposes an accolade that reinforces to Aragón like logistic square of success, since to this action will follow other of the connected communities by the axis that connects the Cantabrian with Valencia".

Lamban said that will contact the parliamentarians of the Communities of Aragon and Valencia to propose amendments to the general budget of the State in order to complete the needs of the connections between the Mediterranean and Zaragoza, given that the Autonomous Communities are constituted as the main axes of a modern Spain that does not pass through Madrid".

According to Aurelio Martínez, the real needs to leave the connection Valencia Zaragoza with the conditions of our time require an investment of 350 million euros, including the electrification of the entire route. With the 50 million of the Port of Valencia will correct the 13 most serious and urgent defects detected in the line, "if we discontinued electrification, only 150 million would be missing; Of which the Port will contribute 50. So that only 100 would be missing; that is, what costs only 5 kilometers of AVE, "added Aurelio Martínez.

As it is a project to be developed on the Railway Network of General Interest it becomes necessary to agree the action with the manager of that network, which is, ADIF. The annuities and their realization will depend on the ADIF deadlines for the drafting, approval and processing of the necessary projects.

Currently, more than 8 projects are currently being processed through the Fund: Ferrol, Cartagena, Barcelona, Cadiz, Algeciras, Seville and Sagunto- Teruel -Zaragoza (Rail access to the Port) and sidings in the line in which the Port Authority of Valencia is processing the necessary agreements with ADIF.

The Fund feeds on the contributions made by State Ports and Port Authorities in the form of a loan and its main objective is:

- Enhance the competitiveness of port facilities
- Favor the modal split road / rail and thus improve the sustainability of the transport system

The funds operation allows port authorities with positive results to compensate for their mandatory contributions whenever investments are made in improving road or rail accessibility, focusing on investments in land access works instead of the maritime part, which, in the Valencian case, already has a good infrastructure.

A PAV decision

According to Aurelio Martínez, "taking into account that the Port of Valencia generates benefits, that the results are positive and that the growth prospects are reasonable, we have decided to invest - through the fund - in those infrastructures of connectivity that at the moment we consider strategic and priority and of which you have so often heard me speaking about, highlighting the connection of the Mediterranean with the Cantabrian in a project of more than 90 years ago. When the railroad track was private, it was already considered a priority. Later, when it became public and decided Madrid with its radial conception, the project was ruled out and that is how we are today ..."

"In recent years, as you know there have been numerous studies on this corridor: the one of the CEV and the UPV, with the help of PAV, Noatum, Logitren etc. Of March 2015 that identified the potential of the goods line, its deficiencies and the necessary investments. It seems obvious - stressed the PAV's president - that the main maritime logistics node of the Mediterranean must be connected with one of the main logistics nodes of the peninsula such as Zaragoza.

"Valencia, through the Port has excellent connectivity with world markets - more than 100 regular lines that connect us with almost 1000 ports worldwide - To guarantee interoceanic we have to gain critical mass and Aragón wins a new and natural output to the sea", Aurelio Martínez concluded.