

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. History and status of the Turin-Lyon

The first rumours about a TAV are dated 1998, when a connection between Grenoble and Turin was envisaged via a tunnel under the Monginevro pass, but the first seed of the Turin Lyon and the 50 Km tunnel under the Mont Cenis was put one year later at the Agnelli's foundation in Turin, where Tecnocity association has presented it to a group of expert and politicians. The idea started growing in 1990 and contemporary the dissent of the environmentalists began, while at the end of the year the first Italian-French agreement took place, followed by a book containing the EC study for the development of a European compatible railway net with outmost modern means. At that time in Italy there was a very interested train named "Pendolino" able to run faster over the ordinary railway net.

It is worth to note that the historical international line was opened on 6 Oct 1871 and run as single rail for 114 years until 1985, when the second rail between Bussoleno and Bardonecchia was completed and the original line enhanced. So it appeared immediately strange that a new line was judged necessary only since 4-5 year after the double rail operation opening also because from 1980 to 1990 there was no traffic increase.

The group Habitats was founded in 1991 and taking advantage of cooperation with very valuable Italian university professors, it began to comment and to technically dismount all ideas maturing on the subject, diffusing the opposition's reasons, locally and in the western Turin surroundings, via two local newspapers "La Valsusa" and "Luna Nuova".

Meanwhile, the leadership of the TAV sponsoring committee passed from Agnelli to Pininfarina, asserting: *The new high speed railway line will cost 7,200 billions Lire (about 3.7 billions Euro) and will be necessary in order to carry 7,7 million international passengers and 18,6 Mt (million tons) of freight, forecasted in 2002, against 1 million and of persons and 8 Mt of freight transported today.*

Studies were assigned to several institutions and the first estimations came available together with a booklet advertising the line. Between alternating of politicians and railroad responsible, the opposition to the project enlarged to several involved commons, CMBVS^(a), independent research institutes, to all the environmentalist associations, agriculture producers associations and so on.

Alpetunnel Company is created at the end of 1994 with the initial task of defining the modality of the financing and management of the tunnel, while immediately after, the conference of Essen has placed the Turin-Lyon railway line among the 14 projects to be submitted to the European Union for approval.

At the end of 1995 a stop appeared imminent even if the ministers of Berlusconi and Mitterand have signed the agreement to finance the feasibility studies. The press asserted that the TAV reached a dead point because of the strong oppositions and local battles "e.g. the motion of the 4 NOT", fully supported by the CMBVS.

Nevertheless the projects continued and two draft proposals of the International railway segment, which extend from Bruzolo to Saint Jean de Maurienne, were proposed by Alpetunnel and by the administration of the Province of Turin in the year 2000. The trace passing in the north side of the valley, proposed by Alpetunnel was selected by the administration of Piedmont region.

Accuses of having already spent 200 billions Lire (about 100 millions Euro) and asking others 600 billions for other studies, were formulated in the 2001 by the Turin Province president, Mrs Bresso.

A counter analysis assigned by the CMBVS to Polinomia institute, completely demolished the feasibility and economic return of the project. The feasibility was questioned as well from the French company Setec-Economie to which the CIG, Inter Governmental Commission - Italian-French, through Alpetunnel entrusted one study of economic appraisal.

That was the end of Alpetunnel, but immediately after an other French/Italian company, Lyon Turin Ferroviare (LTF) comes constituted in order to carry on the studies, the surveys and the plans at completion. Meanwhile the Italian Parliament approved and launched the "objective law" for simplifying the procedures for ambient impact evaluation, excluding completely any possible of intervention and discussion with the local administrations

Under the request of the CIG^(b) headed by Pininfarina, all the project documentation relevant to the Italian segment and the "Gronda nord di Torino" (northern Turin collector) remained secret until April 2002, when the first preliminary indications of the railway path were presented.

The first preliminary project plan of the national segment appearing from RFI^(c) in spring 2003, was immediately strongly commented and technically taken apart by all members of the opposition, because of the heavy impacts to the environment and because of the rough forgetfulness and weaknesses. Criticism was so large that RFI withdrawn the project in autumn of the same year.

Meanwhile the CMBVS requested to the European Community the position concerning presumed violations of railway projects against the environmental impact verification procedure.

On 12 Feb 2004 the European Community the returned the response in Italian stating: *"no hypothesis of violation of the directive 85/337/CEE could have been identified concerning the project of the railway line Lyon Turin, in relation to which no authorization to the realization of the work turns out to have been given. This*

project turns out to be still in the feasibility phase". This answer gives justice to TAV opposition, confirming the falsity of the politician affirmations that the European Union had already decided and already financed.

In 2004 comes written up the second preliminary plan, with many more details, a given number of valid points, however the technical and economic justification of the work is still inexistent, while the impact to the environment remains too high. In the meantime, CIPE ^(d) approved of the International segment, where the preparation of the detailed plans requires long studies, surveys and soundings, including the geognostic gallery of Venaus, near the Italian entrance of the international tunnel.

On 14 Oct 2004, E.Ghigo, the President of the Piedmont Regional Administration, nominated the monitoring commission for the geognostic surveys. Obviously the commission was composed by members of the Piedmont Region, Turin City, Province of Turin, Ministry of Transportation, RFI, LTF, but no member of the local administrations or experts nominated by them were included. In France the supervisory committee are usually including independent observators, having as well the right to call and convene on call controls.

Technical Commission Rivalta was constituted in August 2005, including representatives of the Ministry of Transportation, Piedmont Region, Turin City, Province of Turin, ARPA ^(e),LTF, RFI, as well as the CMBVS. The commission met on weekly basis since August 29. Several argumentations were pointed out, discussed and debated as the lack of risk analysis of the International segment.

The commission often mentioned and referred to the August 2005 CIPE approval of the national segment, however neither the deliberation and nor the plan / modifications eventually approved, contextually to the deliberation, were available. Afterward it was discovered that it was blocked by the Corte dei Conti ^(g), and subsequently published only in March 2006.

On 26 October 2005, the commission is pushing discussion on the geognostic tunnel, trying forcing agreements in absence of the CIPE deliberation: The representatives of the CMBVS took distance from the commission as the attempt of pushing for agreements without having the terms of the CIPE approval was judged a severe matter of concern on transparency and proceeding approach.

The geognostic tunnel is a real tunnel, 10Km long with 6.3 meters drilling diameter, bringing 400-500 thousand cubic meter of extracted material. It cannot be sold out to the population as a sounding, without environmental impact verification, without risks analysis, without local hydro-geological evaluation, without planning how to treat extraction of eventual dangerous material (asbestos-uranium) and without a basic agreement with the local administrations. This created a strong protest of the local population, the presidium of the sites, the blocking of the access areas, railway, motorway and the events of the beginning of December 2005, reported by most of the European media.

Thanks to these events the TAV opposition has got the national level and European levels, problems and the reasons of the opposition become difficult to be hidden by the national press, as it was in the past. All commons of the low Susa Valley were continuing the opposition all together, while opening of discussions among the government and all involved entities was envisaged. Start of the geognostic gallery works is postponed after the conclusion of the Turin 200 Olympic games or even after spring political elections.

The design of the international segment is more advanced and the start of the sounding works is the LTF current primary objective, so to be able to produce the final design within 2007, while the works of recognition will continue until 2009.

Italy and France will have to declare the reciprocal public interest to the project within the 2007, only after this event the selected general contractors will apportion the works to subcontractors and providing the availability of financing, the work might start. The final national segment design was expected by spring 2006.

At the beginning of 2006, ISPA (f) has started advertising in television the importance of the company in realising the big infrastructures, promising prosperity, wealth and comfort to the population as well as an indirect message of economical return to private investors.

But today, in June 2006, nothing is so far decided and frozen concerning the Turin-Lyon AC/AV line and the financing for realising the project might not become available.

The bottom line is that after years and years of requests, nobody has been able to demonstrate the necessity of a so heavy impacting project.

(a) CMBVS: "Comunita Bassa Val Susa e Val Cenischia" is a local administration grouping all commons of the low side of the Valley.

(b) CIG, Commission Inter-Governative

(c) RFI, Rete Ferroviaria Italiana, is the Italian company in charge of the railway network.

(d) CIPE, Comitato Interministeriale Per lo sviluppo Economico, Interministerial Committee for the Economical Development, in charge as well to approve the economical plan and financing of such projects.

(e) ARPA, Agenzia Regionale Per l'Ambiente, regional institution for the environment

(f) ISPA – Infrastrutture S.p.A, is the company in charge of managing the realisation of the Italian's infrastructures

(g) Corte dei Conti is the ultimate institution endorsing the financing plans.

1.2. Geographical framework

The Susa Valley is a glacial alpine valley, one of the largest of the west Piedmont area, extending for more than 100 Km, from the French border until the flat area of the Turin western surroundings. Known for the various winter 2006 Olympics game sites, the Susa Valley has been a passing place since millennia, thanks to its two major natural passes, the Moncenisio e Monginevro, at 2000 and 1800 meters of altitude respectively.

The Moncenisio pass opens over the French narrow valley of the Arc River, descending to Modane and Aiton, few tens of kilometres before Chambéry. On the south-western side, Monginevro pass bring down to Briançon and to the south of France.

From the Roman emperor until the 1861 when Italy became a state, almost all population of the north-western Europe has crossed or attempted to cross the valley, Celts, Barbarians, Normans, Longobards (famous was the battle of the "Chiuse"), French, including Hannibal who descent toward Susa with his elephants.

Frequent invasion of foreign population and the fog extending for long periods from the flat, have contributed to move the population to the mountains. Several villages developed on the mountain slopes are today still permanently populated and sites of summer vacations. Today agriculture, industries and commercial activities has grown along the river, while the mountains deserve a variety of sites of a rare beautifulness, together with hundreds place where the sacrifices of the mountain population and the effects of the wars is still alive, in an environment where only the noise of the trains brake the sound of the wind.

Some numbers of the Susa valley, just to get familiar with it.

- Population: about 76,500 residents, 63,500 in lower valley and 13,000 in upward valley.
- Surface: 1047 squared Km, 468 in lower valley and 579 upward.
- Communes: 23 in low valley side and 1 in upward valley, grouped in the respective two Communities, "Comunità Montana Bassa Val Susa e Val Cenischia" and "Comunità Montana Alta Val Susa"
- Railways (existing): Turin – Bussoleno – Modane – State border and Bussoleno Susa, for a total of 89Km, excluding the segment pertaining to the Turin city and surroundings.
- Highways: A32 – Rivoli-Bardonecchia-State border, 82 Km
- National Roads: SS24 of Monginevro (82 Km) and SS25 of Moncenisio (60Km), SS23 Cesana-Sestriere (11Km) and SS 335 Oulx-Bardonecchia (14Km). 167 Km in total, excluding Turin city and surroundings segments.
- Main River: Dora Riparia, 105 Km long from its spring to confluence inside Po river.
- Artificial Water Basins: Moncenisio lake with 333 million of cubic meters and supplying several power plats in France as well tone in Italy (Venuas). The Pont Ventoux barrage and its power plants in the Dora Riparia River rapids over Susa. The Rochemolles Lake and the power plant of Bardonecchia.
- International passes: There are 5 international crosses points: Frejus motorway tunnel (T4), Monginevro road pass, Moncenisio road pass (May to October), "Colle della Scala" (scenery road – June to September), Frejus railway tunnel.
- Population density: 22 people/Km² in upward valley and 135 people/Km² in low valley side, against a national average of 192, but considering the 85% of the valley is composed by mountains and very narrow side valleys.
- Railway density: 85 Km every 1000 Km², against a national average of 53. The railway density of the valley is already 50% higher of the Italian average.
- Highway density: 78Km of highway ever 1000 Km², while the Italian average is 22 Km only. The Susa valley density is three times higher, despite the mountains.
- National road density: 159 Km of national roads every 1000 Km², about the same of the national average of 152 Km.

The Susa Valley is as a consequence, a quite occupied natural area, considering the very limited flat surface across the river, already taken by national roads, highway railway, other local roads and so on. A large infrastructure as a high speed/high capacity railway line, inevitably creates impacts to the population and to the environment. An impact difficult to be accepted, even in presence of a real technical and economical justification (so far non existing) for building a so impacting infrastructure.

Railway network Km		Km of Railway for 100,000 habitats		Km of Railway for 1000 Km2		Population density (people over 1 Km2)	
Germany	35,804	Susa Valley	116	Belgium	115	The Netherland	385
France	29,352	Finland	113	Luxembourg	105	Belgium	338
United Kingdom	16,652	Sveden	111	Germany	100	United Kingdom	245
Italy	15,985	Austria	70	Susa Valley	85	Germany	231
Spain	12,298	Luxembourg	69	Piedmont	74	Italy	192
Sveden	9,860	Ireland	51	United Kingdom	68	Piedmont	167
Europe (average)	9,818	France	50	The Netherland	68	Luxembourg	154
Finland	5,850	Piedmont	44	Austria	67	Denmark	123
Austria	5,647	Germany	43	France	54	UE	117
Belgium	3,518	UE	39	Italy	53	Portugal	109
Portugal	2,881	Denmark	39	Denmark	48	France	108
The Netherland	2,806	Belgium	34	UE	46	Austria	97
Greece	2,383	Spain	31	Portugal	31	Spain	80
Denmark	2,047	Portugal	29	Ireland	27	Greece	76
Ireland	1,919	United Kingdom	28	Spain	24	Susa Valley	63
Piedmont	1,870	Italy	28	Sveden	22	Ireland	54
Luxembourg	274	Greece	24	Greece	18	Sveden	20
Susa Valley	89	The Netherland	18	Finland	17	Finland	15

Data from Union international chemin de fer (Uic.) - Year 2002 and ISTAT for local Italian data.

Before entering into the railway transportation topic, an overview of the situation of the railway transportation in Piedmont, Italy and Europe is given, allowing as well some easy comparisons.

Only 6221 Km over the 15,985 Km Italian railways are double track and electrified while in France the double track electrified is almost large as the whole Italian network (14,135 Km equal to 44.6% of the entire SNCF network). In Germany the double track – electrified is 12,267 Km long, 43% of the entire network. This means that in Italy the 84% of the whole railway traffic is concentrated over about 6,000 Km, 38% of the network.

The Italian network extension is the fourth in Europe after, Germany, France and UK, however the railway density per habitants is one of the lower in Europe. Only 28Km of railway for 100,000 habitants, against 43 Km in Germany, 50Km in France and 113 Km in Finland. The Italian railway service is less capillary.

The average density of the Piedmont and Susa Valley are well above the Italian values.

The Turin compartment administers 1,870 Km of railways, the most extended network over all Italian regions, but only 27% of it is double track and electrified, while an other 27% is double track non-electrified and the remaining 46% of the network is single track non-electrified. The average length of the Italian double track – electrified railways is 38%, 46% for the continental side (excluding Sicily and Sardinia island railways). This brings the Piedmont as the second last region of the continental Italy, in front of Bari compartment only.

Operating railway network for typology and territorial zone (compartment) - Year 2002 (data in Km)									
Compartment	Double track		Single track		Total	% of the total	Double track %		Single Track %
	Electrified	Non-electrified	Electrified	Non-electrified			electrif	total	
Torino	498	520			851	12%	27%	54%	46%
Milano	677	667			203	10%	44%	87%	13%
Genova	360	188			3	3%	65%	99%	1%
Verona	409	235			165	5%	51%	80%	20%
Venezia	376	95			316	5%	48%	60%	40%
Trieste	298	82			98	3%	62%	79%	21%
Bologna	452	404			30	6%	51%	97%	3%
Firenze	907	226	18		578	11%	52%	66%	34%
Ancona	360	336			453	7%	31%	61%	39%
Bari	298	352			581	8%	24%	53%	47%
Roma	645	373			80	7%	59%	93%	7%
Napoli	422	318			275	6%	42%	73%	27%
Reggio Calabria	378	237	10		386	6%	37%	61%	39%
Palermo (Sicily)	141	637			621	9%	10%	56%	44%
Cagliari (Sardinia)			16		412	3%	0%	0%	100%
Italia (continental)	6,080	4,033	28	4,019	14,160	89%	43%	71%	29%
Italia	6,221	4,670	44	5,052	15,987	100%	39%	68%	32%

Data from ISTAT and FS

In Piedmont most of the freights run over the 500 Km of double track – electrified railway, mainly in the axes between Turin and Milan, Genoa, Bardonecchia (Frejus) and Simplon. The passenger traffic among cities and villages not included in the above main axes, are served by single-track rails, mostly non-electrified and in a significant state of degradation.

The service offered to passenger is too often inadequate to the current epoch, for timing, cleanliness, and comfort; so several passenger associations have grown in the last years, for denouncing the status and for defending the passengers rights.

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60. DIRETTIVA 2001/14/CE DEL PARLAMENTO EUROPEO E DEL CONSIGLIO del 26 febbraio 2001 relativa alla ripartizione della capacità di infrastruttura ferroviaria, all'imposizione dei diritti per l'utilizzo dell'infrastruttura ferroviaria e alla certificazione di sicurezza
61. DIRETTIVA 96/48/CE DEL CONSIGLIO del 23 luglio 1996 relativa all'interoperabilità del sistema ferroviario transeuropeo ad alta velocità
62. DIRETTIVA 95/19/CE DEL CONSIGLIO del 19 giugno 1995 riguardante la ripartizione delle capacità di infrastruttura ferroviaria e la riscossione dei diritti per l'utilizzo dell'infrastruttura
63. COMMISSION DECISION of 30 May 2002 concerning the technical specification for interoperability relating to the rolling stock subsystem of the trans-European high-speed rail system referred to in Article 6(1) of Directive 96/48/EC (notified under document number C(2002) 1952)
64. Oggetto: Aiuti di Stato N 810/2002 – Italia Piano di incentivazione per il trasporto di merci per ferrovia -articolo 38 della legge 1° agosto 2002, n. 166 - C(2003)4538fin

Local Administration and Associations documentation:

In addition, all comments, observations and petitions prepared from 2002 until now and sent to Institutions, by:

- Local administrations as Comunità Bassa Val Susa e Val Cenischia (CMBVS), Communs,
- Environmentalists associations, e.g. Legambiente, WWF, Habitat, Pro Natura Torino,...
- Spontaneous committees against the Turin-Lyon
- Letters of solidarity of associations and institutions