

**Zeitschrift:** Swiss review : the magazine for the Swiss abroad  
**Herausgeber:** Organisation of the Swiss Abroad  
**Band:** 38 (2011)  
**Heft:** 1

**Artikel:** Gotthard Tunnel : breakthrough in the world's longest railway tunnel  
**Autor:** Lenzin, René  
**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-907324>

### **Nutzungsbedingungen**

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

### **Conditions d'utilisation**

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

### **Terms of use**

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

**Download PDF:** 22.08.2025

**ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>**



**Breakthrough in the world's longest railway tunnel.** The 57-kilometre Gotthard tunnel is the centrepiece of the new flat rail link through the Alps. The breakthrough in the east tube was achieved in October, while the same stage is expected to be reached in the west tube by April. Trains will be running through the Gotthard by 2017 at the latest. By René Lenzin

Switzerland was celebrating a world record on the Gotthard in mid-October with the breakthrough in the east tube of the new railway base tunnel. This is a superlative feat as, at 57 kilometres, it is the world's longest tunnel. The breakthrough was achieved on schedule, 30 kilometres from the south portal in Bodio (Ticino) and 27 kilometres from the north portal in Erstfeld (Uri) with a minor deviation of eight centimetres horizontally and one centimetre vertically. The Gotthard base tunnel consists of two parallel, single-track tubes, which are connected by 40-metre intersections every 325 metres. The

total length of the tunnel system, including all the shafts and galleries, is 151.8 km.

The excavation teams from the north and south should also be able to shake hands in the west tube this April. Installation of the tracks and railway technology has already begun in the excavated tunnel sections. The first passenger and freight trains will hurtle through the tunnel, designed for maximum speeds of 250 kilometres per hour, by 2017 at the latest. However, the Gotthard line will only become a continuous flat rail link when the 15.4-kilometre base tunnel in Monte

Celebrations at the Gotthard breakthrough last October.

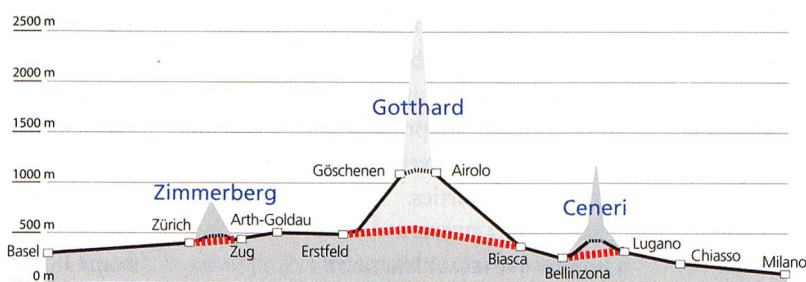




Ceneri is opened. This section between Bellinzona and Lugano, which also has two tubes, is set to open in 2019.

Together with Lötschberg, opened in 2007, Gotthard and Ceneri will make up the New Railway Link through the Alps

(NRLA), which the Swiss people approved in principle in 1992. Six years later, they voted in favour of a financing proposal that earmarked a total of 30 billion Swiss francs for major railway projects. Just under half of that amount has been allocated to the NRLA project. The estimated final costs for the Gotthard section amount to 12.25 billion Swiss francs, with 2.42 billion being spent on Ceneri.



NRLA is the cornerstone of Swiss transport policy, which aims for rail to handle as much freight transport through the Alps as possible. NRLA is also part of the European railway corridor from Rotterdam to Genoa. However, it now looks as

though this line will not be fully completed when NRLA opens. Switzerland has had to make cuts to the access lines to the base tunnel for financial reasons, and neighbouring countries, Germany and Italy, are unlikely to complete the access links to the north and south before 2019.

For more information, visit [www.alptransit.ch](http://www.alptransit.ch)

Trains will travel to and from Italy through this giant hole from 2017.

