

## Iceland

### NGOs Call on Banks Not to Fund Kárahnjúkar Hydro and Smelter project

An international coalition of 112 environmental organizations from 46 countries called on private banks and international financial institutions not to provide any funds for the large Kárahnjúkar dam and aluminum smelter project. Landsvirkjun, Iceland's national power company, and Alcoa were expected to sign the project's power contract on 15<sup>th</sup> March.

Landsvirkjun intends to raise funds for the Kárahnjúkar project from the European Investment Bank (EIB), the Nordic Investment Bank (NIB) and private banks. Iceland Nature Conservation Association (INCA), International Rivers Network (IRN), the CEE Bankwatch Network, Friends of the Earth International and WWF's International Arctic Programme have called on the EIB, the NIB and all banks that have funded Landsvirkjun in the past not to provide any funds for the Kárahnjúkar project. If built, the Kárahnjúkar project will consist of nine dams, three reservoirs, a series of tunnels and river diversions, and a 690 MW power plant. It is only the first in a series of large new dam projects in Iceland's highlands that are supposed to power new aluminum smelters. Visit [www.landsvirkjun.is](http://www.landsvirkjun.is) [www.tunnelbuilder.com](http://www.tunnelbuilder.com), is/14.

## Spain

### Transport Minister Urged to Resign After Madrid-Lleida HSL Scandal

Francisco Álvarez Cascos is under pressure to resign further to the many construction defects found on the Madrid-Lleida high speed link. Lleida is a city some 100 km west of Barcelona.

Trade unions accused the minister of pressurizing companies to cut time frames at the expense of safety. They also say the minister is now putting the pressure on the recently appointed expert committee to hurry up the remittance of their report. Renfe is now taking over from GIF the line's construction management and Ramón Escribano, a Renfe manager, has been named at the head of GIF. He is a member of the expert committee together with Antonio Lanchares, Félix García and Manuel Benegas, all of them former Renfe staff. Renfe

believes the opening will be delayed by 6 months to one year. At the second national congress of civil engineers held last week, civil engineers denounced the loss of their decision-making in public work projects due to the strong political pressure they have been undergoing. In addition, they criticized the establishment of GIF by the ministry of development. The management by GIF of high speed line projects is highly politicized, costs have increased and administrative controls required by the legislation have been cut down. They also stressed the distortion in invitations to tender, the excessive dependence on the political class, the absence of an institutional framework of loyalty and confidence among the administrations that would be above the political interests of the political parties, and the lack of definition of the responsibilities and tasks of the many companies hired by the administration.

The engineers declared, for example, that when it comes to choose a candidate, the main criterion within the administration is the good relationships rather than the professional capabilities, and that what prevails in the planning, construction and maintenance of public works is rather political than technical criteria.

Aragon's society of geologists revealed they had warned the ministry over the instable ground between Saragossa and Pina de Ebro – where a big hole appeared under the tracks – but that their reports had not been taken into account. Francisco Álvarez Cascos replied saying the society was

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## World Digest of Tunnels Under Planning

**Indonesia.** A 33 km bridge or an undersea tunnel linking Java and Sumatra islands across the Sunda strait is not feasible at present. The project, which was first planned by the administration of President Soeharto in the mid 1990s, is too expensive. Visit [www.tunnelbuilder.com](http://www.tunnelbuilder.com), id/13.

**United Kingdom.** Scottish transport minister Iain Gray gave the go-ahead for a rail link to Edinburgh airport which involves building a 1.6 km tunnel under the runway. The £505 million project will re-route the main Edinburgh-Glasgow line so the airport can connect with services from cities across Scotland and the north of England. Mr Gray came down in favour of the runway tunnel option, the most expensive of the schemes being considered, despite warnings it could be more difficult to attract private sector funding. The cheaper alternative plan would have involved spur lines from the main Edinburgh-Glasgow and Fife routes. However, that would have increased journey times for some passengers on the Fife line by up to 15 minutes while their trains were diverted to the airport. The tunnel option reduces the extra journey time to five minutes for the Fife trains which go via the airport. Detailed design and further costings for the Edinburgh link should be finalised by 2005. Parliamentary approval would come in 2005-06 and construction could start in 2006. The new line and station could be in operation by the end of 2010. Read E-News Weekly 8/2003.

**United States.** The City of Austin is trying to revive the dormant Waller Creek tunnel project downtown, this time by looking to the Lower Colorado River Authority (LCRA) and Travis County for increased support. The possibility of creating a unique agreement among the three entities is being explored. The 1.6 km Waller Creek tunnel would run from the University of Texas south to Town Lake. Voters approved \$25 million in bonds for the project in 1998, but costs estimates since have risen to \$46 million, preventing the project from moving forward.

## World Digest of Bids

**Austria.** Open invitation to tender, deadline 30<sup>th</sup> April, 2003 for construction of a 10 km road section including the 250 m Assingberg tunnel. Visit <http://ted.publications.eu.int/udl?request=Seek-Deliver&language=en&docid=042343-2003>, OJ S 49, or contact Autobahnen- und Schnellstraßen-Finanzierungs AG, Graz, fax +43 3168772131. E-mail [fa18a@stmk.gv.at](mailto:fa18a@stmk.gv.at)

**Austria.** Open invitation to tender, deadline 6<sup>th</sup> May, 2003 for electric equipment for the 255 m-long Hochsteg tunnel. Visit <http://ted.publications.eu.int/udl?request=Seek-Deliver&language=en&docid=042440-2003>, OJ S 49, or contact Amt der Steiermärkischen Landesregierung, Graz, fax +43 3168772669. E-mail [fa18a@stmk.gv.at](mailto:fa18a@stmk.gv.at)

**France.** Open call for bids, deadline 22<sup>nd</sup> April, 2003 for equipment and safety systems for the 475 m-long La Vierge tunnel on the A75 motorway in Lodève. Visit <http://ted.publications.eu.int/udl?request=Seek-Deliver&language=en&docid=043230-2003>, OJ S 50, or contact DDE de l'Hérault, Montpellier, fax +33 467156801. Read E-News Weekly 7/2003. Visit [www.tunnelbuilder.com](http://www.tunnelbuilder.com), fr/36.

**France.** Negotiated procedure, deadline 19<sup>th</sup> March, 2003 for assistance to engineering during construction of three 20 sq m cross passages totalling 770 m between the Somport road tunnel and the parallel railway tunnel. Visit <http://ted.publications.eu.int/udl?request=Seek-Deliver&language=en&docid=044534-2003>, OJ S 51, or contact DDE des Pyrénées-Atlantiques, Pau, fax +33 559808609. Read E-News Weekly # 9/2003.

**Norway.** Open call for bids, deadline 10<sup>th</sup> April, 2003 for delivery and installation of a radio system for broadcasting 6 FM channels and 4 VHF communication channels in the Brovoll tunnel on road Rv35 in Oppland county. Visit <http://ted.publications.eu.int/udl?request=Seek-Deliver&language=en&docid=040917-2003>, OJ S 47, or contact Statens Vegvesen, Oslo, fax +47 22073823. E-mail [arild.koldgrov@vegvesen.no](mailto:arild.koldgrov@vegvesen.no)

## World Digest of Contract Awards

**France.** Ligeron and Scetauroute have won three contracts worth €320,000 for safety studies in the tunnels on the A8 and A500 motorways in southeast France operated by Escota. Visit [www.escota.fr](http://www.escota.fr), [www.ligeron.com](http://www.ligeron.com) and [www.scetauroute.fr](http://www.scetauroute.fr). Read E-News Weekly # 2 & 3.

**Spain.** Siemens and Dimetronic have won a €59.7 million contract for the ATC, signalling and centralized control room for Line 9 of the Barcelona metro. Visit [www.siemens.com](http://www.siemens.com) and [www.dimetronic.es](http://www.dimetronic.es)

## World Digest of Ongoing Tunnelling

**France.** Work is progressing well on the Modane/Villarodin-Bourget access adit, which is part of the Lyon-Turin high speed link. As of 13<sup>th</sup> March, 2003, the contractors – Eiffage, Condotte d'Acqua and GRA – have completed 455 m. Altogether, this access tunnel will be 4 km in length. The contract is worth €52.7 million. The notice for work start has also been given to Razel, Billinger Berger, Pizzarotti and GRA for the 2,040 m-long St-Martin-la-Porte access adit, located 7 km from the entrance of the future base tunnel in St-Jean-de-Maurienne. Once this drift has reached the axis of the base tunnel, 3 km of exploratory tunnel will be bored with an option for another 800 m. Visit [www.tunnelbuilder.com](http://www.tunnelbuilder.com), fr/11.

**Kenya.** The first phase of the Sondu Miriu hydropower project has been completed at a cost of five billion shillings. The phase, which included the construction of the intake weir, a 6.2 km tunnel, accommodation and office space was started in 1999. Minimum work at the site is still ongoing at the tunnel whose walls are 80% complete. Visit [www.tunnelbuilder.com](http://www.tunnelbuilder.com), ke/11.

**United States.** J.F. Shea Co. Inc. is building the CSO tunnel spine and connecting tunnels in Fall River City in Massachusetts consisting of a 4.9 km-long 6.1 m-diameter main line tunnel with four connecting tunnels leading to the drop shafts. The contract value is \$56 million. Portal work includes concrete structure and a 25.6 m conduit connecting the CSO tunnel to the waste water treatment plant. The tunnel is designed to remain unlined. Occasional rockbolts will be installed as needed and sections of steel ribs encased in shotcrete will be installed in potential zones of loose or blocky ground. The CSO tunnel and connecting tunnels are in an old crystalline basement rock. This is a complex of mainly granite, gneiss and schist. The rock is hard and strong. Only 10% of tunnel is expected to require support. A rebuilt Robbins machine originally built in 1979 as a dual diameter machine for the use on the New York City subway tunnel is being used. The machine was last used by Shea in New York on the Schiavone/Shea JV contract for the city's water tunnel No. 3. The machine is an open style TBM with a main beam and gripper system. The cutterhead is 6.15 m in diameter, with 44 43.2 cm-diameter cutters. The cutterhead drive is provided by electric motors with torque limit control 2,400 HP (8 x 300 HP). The TBM length is 29 m, and the total length with trailing gear and double California switch decks is 244 m. The muck is being removed from the TBM using Mühlhäuser side-dump muck cars hauled by a 25 ton diesel locomotive. The muck cars are dumped into the hopper at the portal. The feeder and overland conveyor system transport the muck from the portal pit to the truck loading area. Setup and portal excavation has been completed. A tieback wall in the overburden and drill/blast excavation in granite was executed to create the portal. Overland conveyor, feeder and hopper system for side dumping Mühlhäuser muck cars have been installed.

Refurbished in Milwaukee, the 6.15 m-diameter Robbins TBM was delivered by 1<sup>st</sup> November, 2002. The TBM was assembled at the surface and rolled down the ramp to the portal face. TBM excavation of the tunnel began on 17<sup>th</sup> December, 2002. As of 14<sup>th</sup> March, 708 metres of the main line tunnel have been excavated with only 80 rock dowels installed to date. Project completion date is 27<sup>th</sup> January, 2005. Designer and engineer of records is CDM (Camp Dresser & McKee). The Fall River City's drainage system discharges a combination of rainwater and untreated sewage into the Quequechan and Taunton Rivers and Mount Hope Bay during rainstorms to prevent overloading of the sewer lines and the wastewater treatment plant on Bay Street. The CSO project aims to eliminate storm-related discharges by collecting the combined rainwater and wastewater in tunnels bored into the granite bedrock beneath the city. The water will be sent to the wastewater treatment plant for treatment prior to discharge into Mount Hope Bay. The new tunnel is designed to intercept a number of the city's 19 existing CSO tunnels. Hopelessly outdated and undersized, the 19<sup>th</sup> century tunnels currently allow more than a billion gallons of raw sewage and rainwater to spill into Mount Hope Bay each year. The city is under a court order to limit the amount of pollution Fall River spills into the bay. The order was issued in 1992 in response to a lawsuit filed against the city by the Conservation Law Foundation in 1988. Visit [www.jfshea.com](http://www.jfshea.com) and [www.robbinstbm.com](http://www.robbinstbm.com)

## World Digest of Inaugurations

**Greece.** In about two weeks from now, a crucial new section of the Athens metro is due to open, linking central Syntagma Square station with the Monastiraki stop on the old Kifissia-to-Piraeus electric railway. The tunnel and the station are already ready for use, and trial runs have been going on since 24<sup>th</sup> February. Only 1.5 kilometres in length, the western extension of Line 3 from the Ethniki Amyna to Syntagma proved to be perhaps the toughest part of the entire metro project, the first section of which was completed in January 2000. One major hurdle was the presence of dozens of ancient wells just west of Syntagma Square, while the rickety state of buildings such as the earthquake-damaged Cathedral forced planners to alter their plans. Athens metro officials estimate the new tunnel, which will start operating at the end of March, will serve 80,000 passengers daily. Read E-News Weekly # 5. Visit [www.ametro.gr](http://www.ametro.gr)

## World Digest of Tunnel Renovation & Maintenance

**France.** Open call for bids, deadline 17<sup>th</sup> April, 2003 for health and safety coordination services as part of the construction of a 4.8 m-diameter 6 km-long service tunnel parallel to the existing Fréjus tunnel. Visit <http://ted.publications.eu.int/udl?request=Seek-Deliver&language=en&docid=040005-2003>, OJ S 46, or contact SFTRF, Paris, fax +33 147059901. More info from Yves Cypierre, fax +33 479202610, e-mail [ycypierre@tunneldufrejus.com](mailto:ycypierre@tunneldufrejus.com). Visit [www.tunnelbuilder.com](http://www.tunnelbuilder.com), fr/47.

**France.** Periodic notice for reinforcement works of the invert and wall bases in the Voltaire Malaquais Conti tunnel with 1.3 m-diameter jet grouting columns. Also injections in the roof in this tunnel and the Montebello tunnel, both on Line C of the RER suburban line. Visit <http://ted.publications.eu.int/udl?request=Seek-Deliver&language=en&docid=043834-2003>, OJ S 50, or contact SNCF, Paris, fax +33 140480192. Read E-News Weekly # 43 & 47.

**Spain.** The government has approved emergency work worth €1.25 million to improve the Gabiria-Txiki tunnel in Ezkio (Guipúzkoa) on the Madrid-Hendaya railway. The improvement will mainly consist in lowering the floor and installing a longitudinal drainage and a concrete slab.