

PRESS NOTE

WEBUILD: STRAIT OF MESSINA BRIDGE AN INNOVATIVE, STRATEGIC PROJECT READY TO BE BUILT BRIDGE EQUAL TO 4% OF TOTAL RAIL, ROAD INVESTMENTS IN ITALY FOR SCANDINAVIAN- MEDITERRANEAN CORRIDOR PROJECT PART OF WIDER INFRASTRUCTURE INITIATIVE FOR SOUTHERN ITALY, WITH STRONG IMPACT ON ECONOMY, EMPLOYMENT

MILAN, April 18, 2023 – A bridge over the Strait of Messina in southern Italy is a strategic infrastructure project that is ready to be built. Awarded after a long international tender process, the project would support economic growth, making possible the development of one of the most extensive metro systems in the Mediterranean. It would support the improvement of the rail network in Sicily, as well as the development of a high-speed/high-capacity rail axis connecting Salerno, Reggio Calabria, Messina and Palermo. These were the highlights of the speech made by Webuild Engineering Director Michele Longo at a parliamentary hearing in Rome today. The hearing on the subject of a stable connection between Sicily and Calabria concerned the two commissions, one on the environment, land and public works, and the other on transport and postal and telecommunications services.

“The Bridge over the Strait of Messina is a highly innovative project. It will be the longest suspension bridge in the world at 3,660 metres, with a span of 3,300 metres. The Eurolink Consortium, which won the tender for its construction and of which Webuild is the leader, is comprised of an international group of some of the most qualified companies in the world for the design and construction of bridges,” said Longo. Webuild itself has a track record of 1,018 kilometres of built bridges and viaducts in Italy and abroad, among which the second and third bridges over the Bosphorus in Turkey, and the Genova San Giorgio Bridge in Italy.

“The Bridge over the Strait of Messina is a project that can break ground immediately. As soon as the contract is reinstated and updated, the project can start. The executive design is expected to take eight months, while the time needed to build the bridge will be a little more than six years. Webuild, as leader of the Eurolink Consortium, is interested in building the project and it makes itself available to the country to get to work as soon as possible,” he said.

“The cost of the construction of the bridge – just the structure – is approximately €4.5 billion, which is about 40 percent of the total value of the infrastructure network that would include the bridge and all the related works. The remaining 60% is in fact related to a series of works related to the crossing as well as the upgrading of the road and rail networks in Sicily and Calabria. It also includes a considerable amount of work to prepare the terrain and reduce hydrogeological risks,” Longo said. “The bridge represents only 4 percent of the €110 billion of total investments in road and rail infrastructure currently foreseen for the Alps-Sicily route, the Italian part of the Scandinavian-Mediterranean, the strategic European corridor.”

“The project will have a strong impact on the economy and employment in the region. It is expected to boost the national GDP by €2.9 billion a year, equal to 0.17 percent of the national GDP. It would involve about 300 suppliers, especially small- and medium-sized businesses from the region. More than 100,000 people would potentially be employed during the life of the project, including in the local economy. Most of these people would come from the regions of Sicily and Calabria where there the rates of unemployment are high.”

From a technical point of view, “the studies that have been conducted over time have led to the development of a type of stable aerodynamic deck (the Messina Type Deck) that has been deployed with success abroad in the construction of bridges with large spans such as the Chanakkale in Turkey, which is today the longest suspension bridge in the world,” Longo said.

The span would support three vehicle lanes in each direction (two for regular traffic, a third for emergencies) and one for a rail. It would support 6,000 cars per hour, and the passage of up to 200 trains per day.”

“The mid-point of the bridge would have a maximum height of approximately 74 metres above sea level. That would guarantee a navigation channel 600 metres wide with a clearing of 65.5 metres compared with the world standard of 65 metres. So, it would allow for the safe passage of all ships that cross the Mediterranean today. As it is designed, the bridge is stable and secure. The span’s aerodynamic stability is guaranteed for winds of up to 300 kilometres per hour. The bridge would be accessible with winds of up to 150 kilometres per hour. As regards seismic activity, the bridge would have a structural integrity compatible for a quake measuring 7.5 on the Richter Scale, which is greater than the Messina earthquake of 1908.”

Webuild is a global leader in the design and construction of large, complex projects in the sectors of sustainable mobility (rail, metro, bridges, roads, ports), hydropower (dams, power plants), water (treatment and desalination plants, wastewater management, irrigation dams) and green buildings (civil and industrial buildings, airports, stadiums, hospitals). It supports clients in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) established by the United Nations. The recognised leader in infrastructure for the water sector, it operates in 50 countries, generating 70 percent of its revenues from international markets. It has 83,000 direct and indirect employees from 100 nationalities, and a supply chain of more than 17,500 businesses. In its 117 years of applied engineering on more than 3,200 projects, the Group has built 14,118 kilometres of rail and metro lines, 82,509 kilometres of roads and highways, 1,018 kilometres of bridges and viaducts, 3,396 kilometres of tunnels, and 313 dams and hydropower plants. Projects include the Genoa San Giorgio Bridge, the second Panama Canal, the Lake Mead Third Intake hydraulic project near Las Vegas in the United States, the Airport Line in Perth, Australia and the Stavros Niarchos Foundation Cultural Center in Athens. Projects under construction include the Brenner Base Tunnel, Line 4 of the Milan metro system, the Terzo Valico dei Giovi-Nodo di Genova in Italy, and the North East Link of Melbourne in Australia. In 2022, the Group had revenues of €8.2 billion, total orders worth more than €53 billion, and projects that will help reduce annual CO2 emissions by 25 million tonnes. Webuild, subject to the direction and coordination of Salini Costruttori S.p.A., is headquartered in Italy and is listed on the Milan stock exchange (WBD; WBD:MI; WBD:IM). Since 2021, it is member of the MIB ESG, the index of Italian companies with the best ESG practices.

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