

## PRESS NOTE

### **WEBUILD: TBM “KATHRIN” STARTS EXCAVATION OF GARDENA TUNNEL ON FORTEZZA–PONTE GARDENA LOT FOR BRENNER SOUTH ACCESS**

#### **GROUP WORKING ON A TOTAL OF 50 KILOMETRES OF LINE FOR WORLD’S LONGEST RAIL TUNNEL PROJECT**



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- *TBM “Kathrin” begins most challenging phase of project beneath the Alps after completing Funes access adit*
- *This key infrastructure along the Brenner axis will strengthen the Southern Access to the Base Tunnel and improve rail flows between Italy and Central Europe, increasing capacity, speed and sustainability of the Alpine link*

*MILAN, May 13, 2026* – Excavation of the Gardena Tunnel, part of the new Brenner rail axis, has officially begun. Tunnel-boring machine (TBM) Kathrin has started boring the Fortezza–Ponte Gardena lot. Located in the region of Trento Alto Adige, the project, carried out by the Webuild Group on behalf of RFI (FS Italiane Group), will reshape freight and passenger transport flows across the Alps.

The launch of the TBM follows the completion of the so-called Funes “window”: a 650-metre exploratory tunnel that opened access to the mountain massif. From here, Kathrin – a 144-metre-long giant with a cutterhead nearly 10 metres in diameter – will proceed excavating the twin tubes that will comprise the Gardena Tunnel, as well as the interconnection tunnels with the future Ponte Gardena station. Overall, the plan includes the excavation of more than 16 kilometres of tunnels and the installation of approximately 9,000 precast concrete segments.

The Fortezza–Ponte Gardena lot is being built by a consortium led by Webuild, with Implenia and the participation of SELI Overseas, the Group’s tunnelling specialist subsidiary, as partners. The new rail line that

will eventually pass through it represents the first segment of the quadrupling of the southern access of the Munich–Verona route. The project is almost entirely underground, with a total of 52 kilometres of tunnels designed to reduce gradients compared to the existing line, significantly increasing speed and freight transport capacity.

Designed to tackle complex geology, Kathrin is a “dual mode” TBM, capable of alternating between hard rock excavation and more unstable sections. This flexibility has already been successfully tested during the undercrossing of the Brenner highway, carried out without interrupting surface traffic. The machine also stands out for its sustainable footprint: thanks to highly efficiency motors and cooling water recovery systems, Kathrin reduces energy consumption per cubic metre excavated by 20–25 percent compared with traditional models.

As Kathrin advances, work proceeds on other fronts. At the Forch cavern, preparations are underway to excavate the Scaleres Tunnel (15 kilometres), while at the Chiusa access adit, 1,400 of the planned 1,800 metres have already been completed. Activities involve geologists and operations teams working simultaneously at multiple sites, including tunnels and a 250-metre viaduct over the Isarco River and upgrades to the Ponte Gardena station.

Webuild’s commitment to this project is part of the broader Brenner Base Tunnel system which, at 64 kilometres, will become the world’s longest underground railway tunnel. Webuild is a key player in this engineering challenge on both sides of the Italy–Austria border, with the construction of a total of around 50 kilometres divided into four lots. For the Brenner Base Tunnel, on behalf of BBT SE, the Group is involved in the Mules 2-3 on the Italian side, where TBM excavation was completed in May 2025, and in the Sill Gorge–Pfans lot in Austria. It has already completed the Tulfes–Pfans lot, also in Austria, and the Isarco underpass Lot in Italy. Webuild is also involved in the construction of the Trento railway bypass. Once completed, the entire Brenner system will revolutionise transalpine transport. Its dual objective is to reduce travel times and shift freight traffic from road to rail, strengthening one of the most vital corridors connecting the Mediterranean and Northern Europe.

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*Webuild is a global leader in the construction of large, complex infrastructure, with a focus on sustainable mobility, hydropower, water treatment and supply, and green buildings. It has long been recognised as the world’s top contractor in the water infrastructure sector. Active in approximately 50 countries, the Group employs some 95,000 people directly and indirectly of over 125 nationalities. With 120 years of history and over 3,700 completed projects, Webuild boasts a track record that includes 13,686 kilometres of railways, 895 kilometres of metros, 82,708 kilometres of roads and highways, 1,023 kilometres of bridges and viaducts, 3,466 kilometres of tunnels, and 320 dams and hydropower plants. Among its most iconic delivered projects are the Grand Ethiopian Renaissance Dam, the expansion of the Panama Canal, the Long Beach International Gateway in the United States, the Second Bosphorus Bridge in Turkey, the Riachuelo environmental restoration system in Argentina, and new metro lines in cities such as Copenhagen, Paris, Rome, Milan, Naples, Doha, Thessaloniki, and Riyadh. Among those under construction are strategic public works in Italy, such as the New Genoa Breakwater, the Brenner Base Tunnel, the Pedemontana Lombarda Highway, Rome Metro’s Line C, sections of high-speed and/or high-capacity railways between Genoa and Milan, Verona and Padua, Naples and Bari, and Palermo, Catania and Messina. Abroad, there is the Snowy 2.0 hydropower scheme in Australia and key sections of the Grand Paris Express in France. As of December 31, 2025, the Group reported total revenues of €13.6 billion and a total order backlog of €58.4 billion, with over 95% of the construction backlog aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Webuild is headquartered in Italy and subject to the direction and coordination of Salini Costruttori S.p.A. Listed on the Milan Stock Exchange (WBD; WBD.MI; WBD:IM), its stock is included in the MIB ESG index of Italy’s leading blue-chip companies for ESG practices.*

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