

Press Release

Rotkreuz, September 20, 2021

Polybahn back in top form

Last Friday, the thoroughly modernized Polybahn funicular in Zurich was officially opened on schedule for the start of the semester. Equipped with cutting-edge technology and safety systems, the Polybahn shines in a new splendor.

The Zürichbergbahn, as the Polybahn was originally known, first went into operation in 1889. Today, this popular means of transport provides a service for two million passengers a year (before Covid-19). To ensure that the “Student Express” can continue to carry future generations from Central up to the university and back, the operating company Verkehrsbetriebe Zürich and Garaventa AG jointly carried out a complete modernization of this Zurich landmark.

New drive with displacement unit

The most fundamental replacement was the drive, which is now entirely located on a displacement unit. This enables compensation of the track length differences between tracks 1 and 2. Normally, this is achieved with individual bullwheel displacement units. However, this was not possible due to the limited space available in the machinery room, which dates back to 1889. The project team therefore developed a new concept, based on the model of the displaceable drive on the Funifor ropeway system. In concrete terms, the control system calculates the distance that the drive has to be displaced so that the stopping point in the lower terminal can be precisely maintained. Length changes in the haul rope can also be compensated with this system. A key element of this technical solution is the bumper with shock absorber in the lower terminal. The Polybahn’s technical director, Stephan Kobler, is pleased: “The solution developed by Garaventa makes the boarding and disembarkation situation very comfortable for our passengers.”

New control system and cars

The rebuild also included the supply of a new control system from Frey AG Stans as well as a comprehensive vehicle overhaul at CWA in Olten. Stephan Kobler underlined the excellent collaboration: “The removal of the vehicles in Zurich city center posed a logistical challenge. Thanks to the close and professional working relationship between our employees, the installation team from Garaventa and the forwarding company, we successfully mastered this challenge and we are delighted to be able carry our passengers once again on the ultra-modern ‘Polybähnli’ with immediate effect.”

Polybahn Zurich

Customer:	UBS Polybahn AG / Verkehrsbetriebe Stadt Zürich
Inclined length:	176 m
Vertical rise:	41 m
Capacity:	1,200 PPH
Speed:	2.5 m/s
Number of carriers:	2 50-passenger cars
Opened:	09/2021

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Garaventa AG is a Swiss company headquartered in Rotkreuz, with additional sites in Goldau, Uetendorf and Sion. It is the Swiss branch of the Doppelmayr/Garaventa Group and has established itself as the competence center with international reach for reversible aerial tramway, funicular railway and material ropeway systems as well as for complex rope installation work. Garaventa is also responsible for all ropeway projects of the Doppelmayr/Garaventa Group in Switzerland. All functions and competencies for special ropeways are made available to the Group worldwide from Switzerland. Garaventa employs 380 people in Switzerland.

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