A ropeway as a symbol of peace

LEITNER ropeways revitalizes Sarajevo's Olympic mountain

The ropeway to Trebević, the local mountain of the Herzegovinian capital Sarajevo, was one of the most famous symbols of the 1984 Olympic Games. The system was destroyed during the Yugoslav Wars in the 1990s. Now, more than a quarter of a century later, the new system by LEITNER ropeways is breathing new life into the mountain area. This is being made possible in part thanks to the great commitment of Sarajevo's Mayor Abdulah Skaka and a Dutch patron, whose special relationship with the ropeway inspired him to make a significant donation towards the reconstruction. On April 6, Sarajevo was celebrating the return of a real monument: When the new ropeway opened, the city left behind one of its darkest chapters and also revitalized its local mountain thanks to the latest technology by LEITNER ropeways. For the people of Sarajevo, the construction of the new ropeway is so significant because it is bringing one of the city's landmarks destroyed in the Bosnian war back to life. An actual music project shows how important this ropeway is for that region: Some musicians have created the song „Trebević opet silazi u grad" (The Trebević is coming back to town) to welcome the new gondola lift. The old Trebević gondola lift was built in 1959 and carried passengers to the mountain, a popular day-trip destination, in 12 minutes. With the Winter Olympics in 1984, the gondola lift became world-famous: located right next to the bobsleigh run, it provided a superb view of the events. Between 1992 and 1995, the system was heavily damaged and the surrounding area mined. After an arduous clearing process, the area was declared mine-free in 2010, and initial plans were made for construction/reconstruction of the ropeway. State-of-the-art ropeway technology at a highly symbolic location

The new 10-passenger gondola lift brings tourists and local residents directly from the center of Bosnia's capital quickly and comfortably to the 1,160 meter summit of Trebević. The new system has an inclined length of 2,158 meters and is equipped with 10 support towers. At a speed of five meters per second, the 33 cabins can transport up to 1,200 passengers per hour. The journey from the Hrvatin bottom station to the Vidikovac top station takes seven minutes and 15 seconds. Like the glory days of the ropeway, five cabins in the Olympic colors red, black, green blue and yellow will soar to the mountaintop. The technical workings of the ropeway are also state-of-the-art – it is equipped with the LEITNER DirectDrive system.

A major donor makes landmark investment for love

For the Dutch nuclear physicist and businessman, Edmond “Eddy” Offermann, Sarajevo has always been a very special place. The globetrotter, who now lives in the USA, not only found the love of his life in nuclear physicist Maja Serdarević from Sarajevo, but also found a spiritual home in the ropeway to Trebević. “I remember my first visit there in 1991. It feels like this first carefree trip with Maja was only yesterday. I was fascinated by this mountain and the beautiful view of the city,” recounts Offermann. After years of war, which placed a tremendous strain on the entire Serdarević family, Offermann – who had made a fortune on Wall Street – set himself a goal: helping to rebuild the destroyed ropeway. While bureaucracy put paid to initial attempts at a new project in 2011, the ball started rolling again under the new Mayor Abdulah Skaka. Offermann’s offer to contribute 3,5 million dollars to the construction led to a new tender, which LEITNER ropeways succeeded in winning. Overall, including the ropeway, construction work and a new hotel at the top station, the project volume is 9 million Euros. This means that the couple could return to this place with which they have had such emotional associations since the beginning of their relationship for the official opening on April 6: “It is a historic day for Sarajevo, as it not only marks the anniversary of the city’s liberation from the Nazis in the Second World War, but also the day a symbol of peace will be revitalized. On April 6, my wife and I certainly remember our trip in the spring of 1991 and the many tragic hours we spent worrying about our nearest and dearest. I hope that this ropeway will contribute to the renaissance of Sarajevo.”

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