An Alpine Crossing from Zermatt to Italy: vision becomes reality

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The submission in the summer of 2018 of the project to construct a cableway link via a 3S cableway made by LEITNER ropeways between the stations at Testa Grigia and Matterhorn glacier paradise (Klein Matterhorn) generated intensive discussions between Zermatt Bergbahnen AG (ZBAG) and the complainant, the Swiss Foundation for Landscape Conservation (Stiftung Landschaftsschutz Schweiz, or SL). With both sides offering constructive proposals, an agreement has been reached and work can now start on the realization of an “Alpine Crossing” between Zermatt and Cervinia (Italy).

Within the framework of these amicable talks, ZBAG and the SL signed an accord taking appropriate account of the interests of both parties. For its part, the SL agrees that where the legal proceedings covering concession and planning approval are concerned, it will not object to the anticipated granting of concession and planning approval by the Federal Office of Transport for the LEITNER ropeways 3S cableway between Testa Grigia and the Matterhorn glacier paradise. In return, ZBAG affirms its commitment to promote quality tourism, provide a high-calibre experience of the mountains and natural surrounding and maintain a respectful approach to the environment. Furthermore, ZBAG also pledges to remove the existing materials cableway between Cime Bianche in Italy and the Klein Matterhorn, plus the cross-border lift which is currently a component of the summer ski area, and restore the sites to their original condition. This is to be done upon receipt of the operating licence from the Federal Office of Transport. Agreement was also reached on the issues of the outside lighting of the mountain station and the colour scheme for the valley station with respect to improved integration of the buildings into the surrounding landscape. It is hoped that opening up the design and use of the existing buildings to an architectural competition will improve the appearance of the landscape on Testa Grigia and integrate the development better into the surrounding mountain scenery and other natural features. As soon as ZBAG has produced the overall concept for the future infrastructure, design and operations on Klein Matterhorn, it will be presented to the SL so that mutually agreeable solutions can be arrived at where these are concerned too. Construction work is set to begin without delay on the new 3S cableway between Testa Grigia and the Matterhorn glacier paradise which will connect Zermatt with Italy all year round and form the highest Alpine crossing. The “Alpine Crossing” is scheduled to go into service in 2021.

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