

PRESS RELEASE

26 January 2024

MAURIENNE: SNCF RÉSEAU MOBILISED TO PUT RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE BACK INTO SERVICE

On 27 August last, a landslide on an unprecedented scale occurred in the Maurienne Valley (Savoie): 15,000 m³ of rock detached itself from the Praz cliff, in the commune of Le Freney. The railway line and the RD 1006 have since been inaccessible due to the damage caused and the continuing risk of falling boulders. Traffic on the A43 is now possible in 2 lanes instead of the usual 4.

- *Under the coordination of the Savoie department, the first stage in making the site safe was carried out in the autumn.*
- *SNCF Réseau is currently clearing the “La Brèche” railway gallery using radio-controlled equipment.*
- *At the same time, the Savoie department is continuing to secure the Praz cliff.*

A railway gallery at the foot of a slope, a major challenge for securing the site

The “La Brèche” railway tunnel, so-called “slope tunnel” located below the Praz cliff, is around 300m long. It was built between 1869 and 1898.

©SNCF Réseau



“La Brèche” railway tunnel after the landslide on 27/08/23

Before any work could be carried out in the gallery sector, it was essential to make the site safe for the teams involved, due to the continuing risk of falling boulders. Immediately after the rockslide, the Savoie department carried out an initial operation to make the site safe, before building access and a platform at the top of the cliff to accommodate heavy equipment for future work.

In the autumn, SNCF Réseau and the Savoie department carried out purges (large-scale "cleaning" of the cliff) to prevent further rockfalls at the top of the cliff.

An exceptional operation to save the railway gallery

In the the days following the landslide, SNCF Réseau's engineering teams carried out drone flights, followed by expert visits to identify possible damage inside and outside the railway gallery. Technical equipment was installed on site from the beginning of September to monitor movements of the cliff and gallery in real time. Soundings were also taken in the railway gallery in September.

In collaboration with the Centre d'Etudes des Tunnels (CETU), a model of the tunnel was also developed to monitor its movement down to the millimetre. From the analyses carried out, it was concluded that the gallery needed to be rapidly relieved of the rock remaining on its roof in order to ensure the structure's long-term survival.

SNCF Réseau therefore decided to bring forward and intensify the planned clearing operation. To carry out the operation on a site particularly exposed to falling rocks, 3 excavators and 3 tracked dumpers are operated remotely by remote control. Working 7 days a week, these machines made it possible to anticipate the clearing phase before the cliff had been secured, and to reduce the risk of the gallery collapsing. The deployment of these resources on such a scale is unprecedented.



Clearing the gallery using radio-controlled machines

As soon as the clearing is complete, SNCF Réseau will complete its assessment of the condition of the railway gallery and carry out the work needed to consolidate it. All operations that could be anticipated for this work have been carried out, such as the prefabrication of "arches" that could be used to support the gallery.

In the summer of 2024, completion of the site's security measures

Work to make the cliff safer, carried out by the Savoie department, will continue in the first half of 2024. The work will involve purging unstable areas and installing metal fencing on the La Praz cliff to prevent any further boulders from falling, working sequentially from top to bottom.

This work will enable technical teams to work at the foot of the cliff without risk. As soon as they are completed, in autumn 2024, work can begin on restoring the railway gallery, the railway tracks and the departmental road.

About SNCF Réseau

To meet growing mobility needs and develop the rail mode to serve the ecological transition, SNCF Réseau is developing the service offer for freight and the passenger market on the 28,000 kilometres of line for which it is responsible for maintenance, modernisation and safety. As network manager, it markets and guarantees neutral and fair access to the infrastructure. As a partner to public authorities, regional authorities and railway companies, SNCF Réseau's top priority is customer satisfaction. A limited company in the SNCF Group, the company has more than 50,000 employees and a turnover of almost 7.1 billion euros in 2022.

www.sncf-reseau.com

Press contacts :

SNCF Réseau

Marie BATTAGLIA : +33 6 44 77 27 09
ext.marie.battaglia@reseau.sncf.fr

Florence PIERREVILLE : +33 6 85 85 42 69
florence.pierreville@reseau.sncf.fr