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The high-speed link with Switzerland is likely to be postponed

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The new lines from Chiasso to Milan are going to have to wait; the Italian Interdepartmental Committee for Economic Planning (ICEP) **has postponed the funding for the planning of the rail link between Monza and Chiasso**, which is a necessary for the connections with the Gotthard Pass and the **AlpTransit freight system** (photo by Eddie Konijnendijk). During a meeting in which the Prime Minister **Mario Monti**, the Minister of Economic Development Corrado Passera and the Under Secretary Antonio Catricalà also took part, the Regional Councillor **Raffaele Cattaneo** repeated how important the link was, emphasising the need for a plan to build it by 2017. “I repeated **how essential it is that we give priority to this work, which is so important for cross-border relations** through the Gotthard Pass,” he said. “Minister Passera listened to the request, and said he will include it among the priorities for 2012. So I thank Minister Passera and Vice-Minister Ciaccia, who, together with their collaborators and with the support of Prime Minister Monti, wanted to give an immediate message about big infrastructure for the relaunch and the growth that our Country needs.”

The Chiasso-Milan link will **doubling the existing two lines to four**, over a total length of 27 km, from the Monte Olimpino Tunnel, south of Como, to Monza, where there are already four lines. The feasibility study had already allowed for 16 km to be built underground. **The new line will be used to receive goods arriving by rail on the AlpTransit-Gotthard system**, on which Switzerland is seeking to concentrate most of the freight traffic, to reduce the “weight” of the trucks that cross Switzerland from north to south. Once they arrive in Italy, the trains will continue either towards Milan, or towards the South-East, along the Seregno-Bergamo line. Thus, without the Chiasso-Milan line, an important part of the system will be missing. The forecast is that it will take **at least six years to build**: it was previously expected that building would begin in 2015, but this may well be postponed. The Swiss are planning to open the first phase of AlpTransit in 2016; the increase in freight traffic may require improvements on the Chiasso-Milan line, and on the lines that go from Luino to Genoa, passing through Novara or Gallarate.

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