

Summary of the Stuttgart Green Party 10-point opposition to the Deutsche Bundesbahn project *Stuttgart 21*

The initial project involved the replacement of the current terminus station in Stuttgart with an underground through station. This project has been extended to the construction of a new stretch of high speed rail between Wendlingen and Ulm. Normally the term *S21* refers to just the first project, but both projects are functionally linked. The Green Party is opposed to both projects in their current form. *S21* was initiated around 2001 and construction started around 2010, triggering large scale demonstrations. This note is a summary of the Stuttgart Green Party's opposition to these high speed rail developments.

1. Both projects are haphazardly calculated and the risks embodied by these costings are enormous

Since *Stuttgart21* was planned, the proponents have always minimised the costs of the project and any criticism of the cost calculations has been dismissed with the statement: "*Stuttgart21* is the most carefully planned large-scale project of the DB". Initially in 1995 costs were €2.5 billion; in April 2009 the financing agreement was based on €3.1 billion. By December 2009 this had been increased to €4.1 billion but even that increase was based on unrealistic assumptions about construction; and the final cost is put at €4.9 billion. This is finally more in line with the serious alternative estimates that have been regularly dismissed e.g. The Federal Audit Office estimated costs of €5.3 billion and Vieregg Rössler traffic consultants (VR) calculated construction costs of at least €4.99 billion, with a possible increase up to €6.9 billion.

A similar story is taking place over the costs of the new 60km stretch between Ulm and Wendlingen. The initial estimate of €1.5 billion in 2004 was increased to €2 billion in 2007. Although this amounts to €33 millions per km, it is still unrealistic in view of the terrain through the Swabian Alps – it is the same costing as was chosen for constructing a stretch across the completely open, flat Lüneburger Heath.

In 2010 VR calculated construction costs for the new stretch at probably €5.3 billion, with a range between €4.6 billion and €10 billion. The traffic scientist and engineer Karl Dieter Bodack, who worked for DB for many years, suggested expected building costs should be €5.2 billion.

DB has continued to contest independent estimates of cost - but they also contested the costs calculated by VR for the Transrapid project in Munich, which did indeed fail because of inadequate costing by DB.

2. The financing of the project is completely unsecured

When the financing agreement for both projects was secured in 2009, those responsible were proud of the fact that in the case of *Stuttgart 21*, a risk fund of €1.4 billion for cost increases during the construction period had been agreed in addition to the calculated costs of €3.1 billion. When, in December 2009 the cost estimate of €4.1 billion was made public, this risk fund was already used up by 2/3, before an excavator had even moved.

Stuttgart21 will cost at least €5 but more likely €6 to €7 billion, because neither inflation during the construction period, nor possible cost increases because of geological risks, have

been considered. It is unclear how these extra costs will be distributed between DB, city, regional and national government.

The Stuttgart station development has been financed by Stuttgart city but as this development makes no sense without the completion of the W>Ulm line, the Baden-W regional government, in a very unusual agreement, gave a subsidy to national government to ensure its completion. This subsidy was granted on the basis that the new section of track must come into business together with *Stuttgart21* in 2019, because *Stuttgart21* makes no sense without the new section. However, regional government has been taken for a ride as the agreement that was signed only refers to the “goal” that both projects should proceed simultaneously. It is not clear at present whether the DB will continue to pursue the new section at all. Currently, the net benefit ratio (NKF) for the *S21* project is only 1.0. That means that the project no longer has an economic case. There are numerous more urgent rail projects in Germany with substantially higher use value.

3. In the case of both projects the geological risks of construction are incalculable

The geology of the Swabian Alps presents unpredictable risks to construction due to the gypsum and anhydrite layers and the thermal waters. The famous architect Frei Otto pulled out of the project because of his safety fears. The geologist who did a study of one section reminded DB that the National Office for Geosciences orders drilling for terrestrial heat to stop immediately if gypsum is encountered, and he also has long term fears that after 50 to 100 years there is a risk that buildings could sink. VR says that the risks of building the new stretch are incalculable in cost terms.

4. The political legitimacy of the projects is open to attack

The proponents of both projects do not get tired of stressing that everything has been legitimised by passing several times through the resolutions of parliamentary committees at every level. This may formally be the case but not in reality. The parliamentarians were not aware of either the clear costs or the geological risks when they made those decisions. There are also seemingly irresolvable problems with the timetabling of trains through the new underground station which were not made clear when decisions were made. The national parliament has been prevented from seriously undertaking its task of controlling the government. For this reason the GREEN group in Parliament is currently examining ways to involve the Federal Constitutional Court. As one newspaper says, “*decisions that were made long ago should be reconsidered in the light of today’s knowledge*”.

5. *Stuttgart21* creates few jobs

The proponents of *Stuttgart21* praise the project as the [economic] engine of the moment because it will create new jobs. This is not entirely wrong but the largest volume of orders will only be able to be met by large concerns because of the technical requirements, and these require expensive machinery and few workers. This is also recognised by the Federal Government. The Federal Department of Finance in its monthly digest July 2010, reporting on ‘Aspects of growth from investment in traffic infrastructure in the context of financial policy’ clearly concluded, “*No empirical evidence could be found for direct job-creation effects from traffic infrastructure investments. Simulations using the RWI economic model point at most to relatively small effects.*”

If the *Stuttgart21* money were to be put into the reorganization of existing rail infrastructure, the job balance would look quite different because such work is very labour intensive.

6. *Stuttgart21* is neither a win for the country nor for public transport

The money that will be sunk into the Stuttgart underground station will deprive commuter and regional traffic of resources. Bavaria and Rheinland-Pfalz have invested heavily in commuter and regional services and critically, unlike Baden-Wuerttemberg, they have held costs down through competitive tendering. The decline in commuter and regional services will be intensified if over many years, millions are spent from this budget on *Stuttgart 21*, particularly if there are substantial increases in construction costs.

7. Even without *Stuttgart21*, Stuttgart will remain a long-distance traffic hub

Passenger demand to go by ICE via Stuttgart will not change whether or not there is a new station. The time savings of the projects mostly results from the stretch from Wendlingen to Ulm (which may not now be built). The new station in Stuttgart only accounts for an average time saving of approximately 3 minutes. €5 billion will be spent just for this, at a time of tight budgets!

There are threats to take the TGV line from Paris to Munich via Frankfurt if the terminus station in Stuttgart is not replaced, regardless of the fact that the travel time via Stuttgart will be shorter than via Frankfurt – and that Frankfurt has a terminus station!

8. A consequence of going deeper underground: train travel will become really stressful!

The planners of Stuttgart main station are ignoring the interests of travellers. Passengers can currently transfer on the level but this will be lost with the new station. This is particularly exhausting for the increasing numbers of older people.

Additionally, arriving, departing and transferring will become very stressful because instead of four minutes, the planned stop time for ICEs will be only two minutes and for regional trains only one minute. One or two minutes are not sufficient for passengers to change trains at peak times [especially if changes of level are required]. All this is driven by the reduction of capacity from 16 to only 8 platforms in the rebuilt station. Additionally there is no capacity for trains to wait even for short periods in such a situation and more passengers will miss connections.

9. Where is the respect for our cultural inheritance?

The Stuttgart station building was a unique example of modernism and was given protection as a monument. Nevertheless two thirds is now demolished, reducing it to an amputated torso. In October 2008 in Berlin more than 270 architects and heritage conservationist from around the world published an appeal to retain the old station. The architect of the planned new station maintained that the national monument conservators had been “involved as experts” in the context of the architectural competition and “would have agreed” to the final plans. This was a lie. As the conservators made clear, they regarded the proposal as a *“serious substantive loss of the structural integrity of the Bonatz main station and the associated loss (...) of the artistic impact of the architectural setting.”*

10. The commuter rapid-transit railway [S-Bahn] will become more unpunctual

The proponents of *Stuttgart21* stress again and again, how carefully the project has been planned, but the passengers of the rapid-transit railway can only laugh. The current signalling system cannot cope with an increase in trains – it has already had to reduce train numbers and the issue will not be resolved for some years. Even as they started construction, the DB “forgot” about that problem. Additional bottlenecks in the S-Bahn system are part of the package of the development of the high speed trains because there is no money to sort out the knock-on effects. The commuters will be the ones to be punished in this development.

Summary M Wahlberg January 2011