

Alvia cuts Madrid – Barcelona to 4 h 15 min

THE FASTEST journey time between Madrid and Barcelona was cut to 4 h 15 min on May 17 when RENFE brought its fleet of 12 Class 120 EMUs into service under the Alvia brand. Equipped with CAF's Brava system, the self-propelled trains pass through the new gauge-changing installation at Puigverd de Lleida in just over 1 min, cutting 15 min off the time required to perform the same operation with Talgo formations where the locomotive must be also be changed.

The headline non-stop journey time between Madrid Atocha and Barcelona Sants is also made possible by two further sections of high speed line brought into service on May 17. These are a 21.2 km route avoiding Zaragoza, and a 13.1 km section by-passing Lleida.

The 12 Class 120 EMUs have been supplied by CAF and Alstom for €115.5m, and eight of the 16 axles on each four-car trainset are powered. With a maximum speed of 250 km/h on 1 435 mm gauge and 220 km/h on 1 668 mm gauge, each unit seats 156 passengers in standard class and 81 in first.

