

## Spanish network to grow by 500 km in 2006-07

During the course of 2007, high speed infrastructure is due to be brought into service to Barcelona, Málaga and Valladolid as investment continues at an average €7.7bn per annum, writes Robert Preston

THE NEXT section of the high speed line between Madrid, Barcelona and the French border, comprising 82.5 km between Puigverd de Lleida and Roda de Barà (RG 11.06 p699), was expected to open to traffic in mid-December. Works inspected by Minister of Development Magdalena Álvarez on September 19 were 97% complete, including the gauge-change installation at Roda de Barà that is equipped for both Talgo and CAF systems.

It is hoped to open the 86 km between

Roda de Barà and Barcelona Sants during the last quarter of 2007, but work is still far from completion - particularly on the approach to Sants alongside existing routes. Civil works still in hand include the 4.1 km Sant Joan Despí - Sant Boi section on Barcelona's western outskirts where an 870 m long viaduct is being built over the River Llobregat and the FGC route to Martorell. This structure is expected to be completed in the summer of 2007.

Before the end of 2006, the first section of the 155.5 km Córdoba - Málaga high speed

line is due to open as far as Antequera. This will include new stations at Puente Genil and Antequera Santa Ana, where a gauge-changing installation equipped for both systems has been built. When the route opens between Antequera and Málaga during the last quarter of 2007, the fastest Madrid - Málaga journey time will be cut from 4 h 20 min to 2 h 30 min.

At the time of a ministerial visit which took place on October 25, work on the Madrid - Segovia - Valladolid high speed line was 76% complete, and it is hoped to open the route during the last quarter of 2007. However, progress has been delayed by geological problems in the San Pedro tunnel between Colemanar Viejo and Soto del Real. Also including a 28.4 km tunnel under the Guadarrama mountain range, the new line will shorten the distance between Madrid and Valladolid from 248 km to 179.5 km. South of Valladolid at Valdestillas, a gauge-changing installation for both CAF and Talgo systems will be used by trains leaving or joining the existing main line between Madrid and Irún. ■



CAF's Brava gauge-changing equipment is fitted on the fleet of 12 Class 120 EMUs supplied to RENFE in conjunction with Alstom. Using the new gauge-changing installation at Roda de Barà, these will provide the fastest Madrid - Barcelona journey time of 4 h 15 min for the 612 km