



What is claimed to be the world's first hybrid train has entered commercial service in France.

The train can run across the entire French network, using electricity from overhead wires or as a diesel.

It will clear the way for new non-stop services to towns not on the electric network.

The new dual-mode dual-voltage train was launched in October at Troyes in the Champagne-Ardenne region, in the presence of French National Railways chief executive Anne-Marie Idrac.

The train can run both as an electric or a diesel and at either 1,500 or 25,000 volts.

Makers Bombardier say the hybrid high-capacity train can "glide seamlessly across the entire railway network and access electricity from any available source".

This will result in energy savings

## World's first hybrid

and reduced carbon dioxide emissions, as well as reducing infrastructure constraints and the need for passengers to change trains.

The hybrid is the latest variant in the AGC range and is at the "cutting edge of railroad technology".

AGC trains already operate in 21 French regions and SNCF plans to operate the hybrid on the Paris-Troyes-Culmont and Culmont-Saint-Didier-Vitry lines.

VIP guests travelling to the presentation ceremony in Troyes had an opportunity to enjoy this train's features including the "imperceptible" switches from electrified to non-electrified tracks.

"This technological breakthrough demonstrates the Regional Council's determination to remain at the

forefront of progress in the rail sector in Europe," said regional president Jean-Paul Bachy.

Bombardier Transportation president André Navarri said: "This hybrid AGC is a new leap towards sustainable mobility. It further increases the environmental edge that trains have created over other transportation options."

Jean Bergé president of Bombardier Transportation France added: "We are especially proud of this train, which was engineered and built in our plant in Crespin, in the Valenciennes area.

"The many foreign delegations that have joined us at the event reflect the interest that this environmentally friendly technology has generated. We see that as an encouraging

sign for our efforts to harness this trail-blazing expertise to augment our exports from France."

In Britain the Unite trade union has launched a campaign to get more trains built in Britain.

In 2008 the Government will award contracts for new inter-city trains including a hybrid electric-diesel train. If the Government gets it right, it could mean an end to noisy, smelly diesels ruining the peace and cleanliness of electrified stations like London Liverpool Street.

Hybrids could be used to run services to places like Lowestoft and Aberdeen, off the electrified network.

Even with hybrids, there is still a good case for electrification of important routes like Paddington to South Wales and Bristol as well as London to Leicester, Sheffield and Nottingham.

Picture: BOMBARDIER

You can download information from [www.railwatch.org.uk](http://www.railwatch.org.uk) and [www.railfuture.org.uk](http://www.railfuture.org.uk)

