



# On the Road to Budapest

First, Bilfinger Berger built Hungary's newest motorway in record time. Now the Company is maintaining it around the clock in return for a monthly payment from the Hungarian state.



The M6 project company, which also includes Austrian partners as well as Bilfinger Berger BOT, is not only responsible for build-

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*A masterpiece of logistics: 58 kilometers of motorway in just two years*

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ing and financing the road, but also for operating it over a 20-year period. “For example, that means fixing damage fast, ensuring that the rest areas

are clean, and keeping the road clear in winter,” explains Arne Speer, General Manager of the project company.

The M6 project comprises 58 kilometers of motorway from Budapest along the line of the Danube to the steel city of Dunaujvaros. Construction involved shifting over twelve million cubic meters of earth, equal to over a million truck loads that had to be moved from A to B. With logistics achieve-

ments such as this, construction took less than two years, and the road has been open to traffic since June 2006 – despite snowstorms in the winter and floods along the Danube in the spring-time. At long last, trucks are no longer compelled to crawl at walking pace along the potholed N6 trunk road that runs roughly parallel to the new motorway. The old road was buckling beneath the weight of heavy vehicles backed up both to and from Budapest. Construction of the motorway was also





vital for South Korean company Hankook, which intends to establish its largest tire factory in Europe on the outskirts of Dunaujvaros. "The new highway is triggering an economic upswing in this region," says Speer. Companies that supply the tire plant are also likely to locate along the route, and the journey southward from Ferihegy Airport south east of Budapest is now much faster, both in the summer and winter seasons.

Meanwhile on this December night, around 2:00 a.m., István Fricska's premonition proves right. The rain deteriorates into a heavy snowfall.

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### *An example for other countries to follow*

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Around here in winter the mercury can fall to below minus 15 degrees centigrade. Fricska's team is well equipped to deal with this extreme weather: Ten trucks stand ready with snow

plows and the depot has 2,800 tons of sodium chloride and another 25 tons of calcium chloride in store. Keeping the road clear in winter requires vigilance 24 hours a day, with a constant eye trained on the weather forecast. Right now for the eight men in the restroom at the O&M that means getting up, changing clothes and warming up the heavy yellow gritters. They then switch on the warning beacons, open the gates and are on their way. In 20 minutes they're all on the road. Half the vehicles head south, the others north.

This round the clock service ensures that the motorway is permanently open, for the M6 functions on the basis of what's called an availability model. Rather than collecting a toll from road users, as is the case with many PPP projects, the concessionaire receives a contractually fixed fee from the Hungarian state, in return for which it must ensure that obstructions due for example to accidents or snow are cleared immediately, the lighting is in working order and the rest areas are kept clean. Traffic volumes are the responsibility of the state. "Other central and eastern European countries are also

looking at this concept as an example to follow," says Jürgen Schönwasser, member of the Executive Management at

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### *The risks are fairly distributed*

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Bilfinger Berger BOT. "We have an overview of the entire life cycle, which leads to a clear increase in efficiency."

Dawn is approaching by the time it finally stops snowing and the men have finished their work. The snow plows make their way back to the O&M Center. Tibor Paulovics' shift is also over. It promises to be a pleasant day: The weather stations are reporting sunshine in place of snowstorms.