

Newsletter EMZ April 2026

The rail infrastructure is becoming visible

Over the past few weeks, a lot of hard work has gone into the new railway line. The outlines of the rail infrastructure are becoming clearly visible at Maasvlakte Zuid.



Photo by M.J. van Riel

Closure of the fire-fighting access road

In mid-March, Swietelsky reached the fire access road – commonly known as Ben Janssenweg – as part of the works. The road is named after the former director of the Joint Fire Service. The road is situated between Maasvlakteweg and Malakkastraat. As the fire access road is closed, vehicles from the Joint Fire Service have recently started using the Container Exchange Route (CER) to reach the RWG terminal from the Coloradoweg fire station. This means that the crossing may no longer be required, and the tracks can be laid alongside the fire-extinguishing lines. Due to the road closure, the utility corridor, including the cables and pipes within it, is not freely accessible. Swietelsky carefully coordinates access and the necessary cordoning-off arrangements with the relevant cable and pipeline owners to ensure that work is carried out safely and in a well-coordinated manner.

Temporary diversion of Malakkastraat due to the construction of culverts

In recent weeks, Swietelsky has begun work on the construction of a culvert. The culvert, a pipe with a diameter of 1 metre, has been buried at +2.50 metres above sea level up to the edge of Malakkastraat / the TenneT access road. This culvert forms part of the waterway running through the railway yard from Distriepark/Conversiepark 2 to the N15. Ultimately, the water is drained into Amaliahaven. In addition to this culvert, two further culverts have been installed to provide the necessary waterways.

Swietelsky has constructed a temporary asphalt bypass to divert traffic on Malakkastraat heading to TenneT and vice versa around the construction site. They will then proceed with installation of the next section of the culvert. Once that is complete, they will backfill the excavation with sand and lay a road substrate with temporary paving. At the end of week 17, they will divert traffic back to the original road, which has been temporarily resurfaced.

Ballast bed: a solid foundation for new track

Part of the ballast bed, the substrate of the new railway yard, has been laid. The ballast bed is a crucial part of the track structure. This thick layer of angular stones supports the concrete sleepers and, consequently, the rails on which rail freight traffic will eventually run. The ballast ensures that the track remains stable, dampens vibrations and allows rainwater to drain away efficiently. The ballast bed thus forms the foundation for a sustainable and safe railway.



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Angular natural stones are deliberately used for the ballast bed. These stones interlock, ensuring they stay firmly in place. This is essential for absorbing the heavy forces exerted by passing trains and for continuing to support the track when the rails expand in hot weather. Round stones would roll off each other too easily and are therefore unsuitable as ballast material.

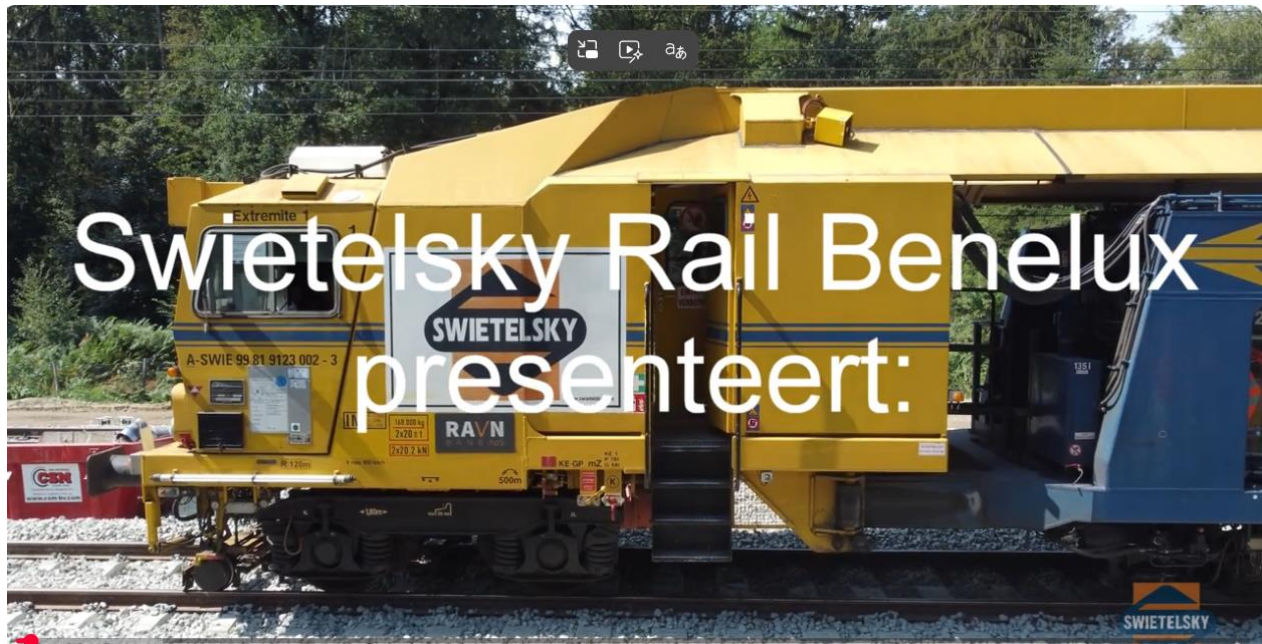
Tamping machine: precise adjustment of the track

To ensure that trains will be able to run safely and comfortably on the new track in future, the track must be correctly aligned. The track is carefully inspected in the ballast bed. The ballast bed is filled, compacted and finished. This is done using a special works train: the so-called tamping machine.

This machine travels along the track, lifts the ballast slightly and compacts it using vibrating steel spikes. This movement temporarily loosens the ballast layer and mobile, after which the machine compacts the ballast firmly and tightly beneath and between the sleepers. This ensures the track remains stable and results in a smooth, reliable alignment.

These works are scheduled for EMZ in June

Watch the film: [A glimpse of the work carried out using the tamping machine](#)



Work on the overhead lines is in full swing

Intensive work is currently underway at the Maasvlakte Zuid Railway Yard to install the new overhead line. Work is visible across the entire site: the foundations for the supporting structures are being laid and the first masts are now in place. We are also fitting the crossbeams.

These steps are necessary to enable electric rail services in the future. We will continue to work steadily over the coming period. Later, we'll install the catenary from which the trains will draw their power.

The equipotential conductor, which is now visible in the photo, has been attached to the gantries and tensioned. The structure provides support and helps to withstand strong winds on the Maasvlakte during construction.



Points: key components in a flexible railway yard

At a railway yard, it's all about flexibility and reliability. Points – the track structures that allow trains to switch from one track to another – play a key role in this. Without points, it would not be possible to manage train movements safely and efficiently.

Various types of points, such as standard 1:9 points, double compound points and diamond crossovers, are being used in the construction of the new Maasvlakte Zuid railway yard, each serving a specific purpose within the design.

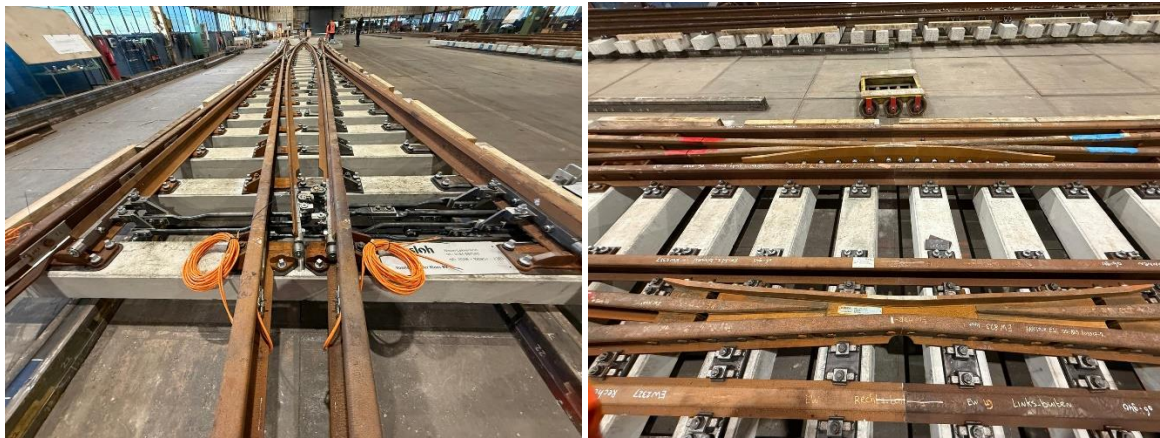


1:9 points

Maasvlakte Zuid mainly uses standard 1:9 points. A 1:9 turnout is a relatively long and gentle point, allowing trains to change tracks smoothly and fairly quickly.

Double compound points

Additionally, we are also installing double compound points in the section on the western side of the site. These points make it possible to accommodate multiple directions of travel and crossing movements within a small area. This gives signallers considerable flexibility when shunting and positioning the rail cars.



Double compound points for the EMZ in the Vossloh factory

Diamond crossing points

Diamond crossings are also used within EMZ. What is remarkable is that a diamond crossing with a track gauge of 5 metres is being installed at EMZ. This is a standard point, but it is not commonly used in the Netherlands. A distance of 5 metres between the track centres is beneficial for safety and maintenance. It provides sufficient space for the installation of signals and catenary supports between the tracks.

Using this type of point keeps the design compact and improves the flow of train traffic. This ensures that the available space is used efficiently and that the site remains suitable for a variety of future uses.

Twenty-three of the 34 points have now been installed at the Maasvlakte Zuid railway yard. The remaining points will be installed from week 8 of 2027.



Film bij Vossloh van bob toevoegen

High-quality points manufactured by Vossloh

The points for this project are being supplied by Vossloh. Vossloh develops and manufactures points for clients including ProRail, which meet the most stringent requirements in terms of safety, stability and service life.

The points for the new marshalling yard are manufactured to specific project requirements based on ProRail's points drawings and undergo a comprehensive approval and quality assurance process. This means that every set of points is measured prior to delivery and inspected at the depot or factory (Factory Acceptance Test). As a result, once installed, the points integrate seamlessly with the wider track design and operational requirements.

A milestone: a road-rail crane rides on the railway tracks for the first time

To lay the track, a road-rail crane is used; a crane mounted on the track. A milestone has been reached: the crane is driving itself along a new section of track.



Film footage

Outlook for the coming quarter: preparations for the train-free period over Whitsun 2026

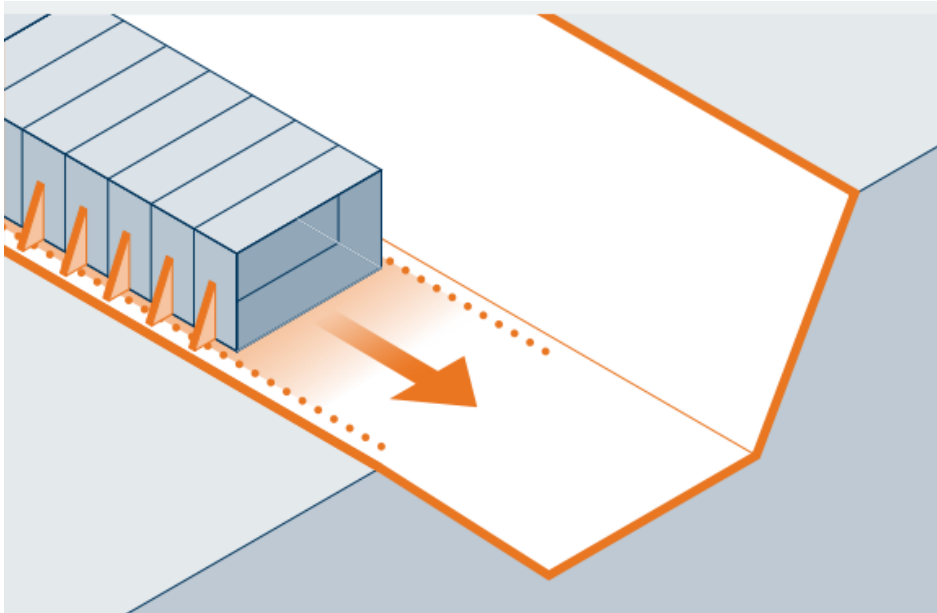
Over the coming quarter, we will be focusing our efforts on preparations for the train-free period (TVP) during Whitsun 2026. During this 130-hour closure, significant progress will be made on the construction of the new Maasvlakte Zuid Railway Yard.

Preparatory work on site

- Construction of the utilities tunnel: work is underway on site to assemble the tunnel using prefabricated sections, which will eventually provide space for cables and pipes to run beneath the railway tracks.

During the TVP over the Whitsun weekend, several crucial steps will be taken:

- Extension of the slide: Once the existing track at LWR has been removed, the slide* will be extended so that the tunnel structure can be slid into place. (* A guidance system used to slide heavy structural elements, such as underpasses, bridges or building sections, from where they were constructed (often adjacent to their final location) to their final position.)
- Sliding the tunnel into place: one of the key milestones: during the TVP, the tunnel is slid into its final position.



Sliding the tunnel via the slide. Illustration: Swietelsky Rail Benelux

- Track restoration: once the train has been moved into position, the track is rebuilt so that train services can resume safely.
- Modifications to the overhead lines: the overhead lines on the existing track are being modified in preparation for the future connection to EMZ.
- Installation of cables and pipes in the tunnel: once the tunnel structure is complete, the cables and pipes required by ProRail will be installed alongside the track.

Following the TVP, the telecoms cables, pressure pipes and water mains belonging to PoR and Evides respectively will be rerouted through the installed protective conduits.

Preparing signal relay houses

The sites where the new signal boxes – which are essential for train safety – are to be built are being prepared for construction.

Creation of a dune landscape

In addition to the technical work, we are also working on landscaping the surrounding dune landscape. This is gradually giving the area its final shape. Once completed, the dune landscape will cover an area of approximately 7,000 m².

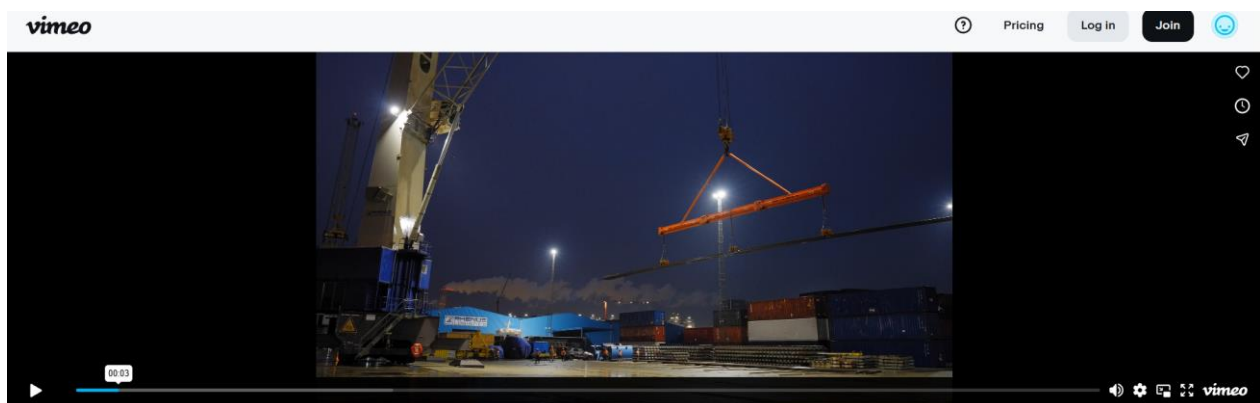


Unique footage of the transport of building materials

In this project, we aim to work as sustainably as possible. That is why we transport materials by ship to the project site. Over the past few weeks, a series of large-scale transport operations have taken place, including the unloading of over 600 railway rail sections, each 36 metres long.

These rail sections arrived by ship at the Rhenus Logistics deep-sea terminal in Rotterdam. Due to the exceptional length and weight of these sections, the onward transport to the project site took place at night, using specially equipped heavy-duty vehicles.

This night-time transport operation was a remarkable and impressive logistical undertaking. The accompanying video footage offers a behind-the-scenes look at this operation and shows how the rails are being transported, step by step, to the future marshalling yard site.



Film toevoegen