



300 coaches by 2023: Itabus launches in Italy with state-of-the-art vehicles from MAN leading the way

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Around 350 routes per day and 90 million kilometres every year: Itabus is a new long-distance coach operator in Italy and is causing a stir with its services and its ultra-modern coaches. The company relies on the NEOPLAN Skyliner and the MAN Lion's Coach to provide its passengers with a high level of safety and reliability, not to mention outstanding comfort – in other words, a truly special travel experience.

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- **The first 50 NEOPLAN Skyliner and MAN Lion's Coach vehicles have already been delivered, with a further 20 Skyliners to follow by the end of the year**
- **A total of up to 300 MAN and NEOPLAN coaches are to be part of the Itabus fleet by 2023**
- **Celebrations for the launch of the new long-distance coach operator at the MAXXI Museum in Rome – with Itabus shareholder and Italian entrepreneur Luca Cordero di Montezemolo in attendance**
- **The collaboration between Itabus and MAN involves, among other things, a new customer service concept, maintenance and servicing of the coaches and driver training courses**
- **Moreover, the strategic partnership will accelerate future cooperation on alternatively powered coaches**

Itabus is causing a stir in Italy: The new long-distance coach operator launched its service on 27 May. The launch was celebrated with the traditional ribbon-cutting ceremony in front of the MAXXI Museum in Rome. Numerous prominent figures from the world of politics and business were in attendance, such as Giovanni Punzo as honorary president of the company, Itabus shareholders Flavio Cattaneo and Luca Cordero di Montezemolo,

MAN Truck & Bus is one of Europe's leading commercial vehicle manufacturers and transport solution providers, with an annual revenue of more than 9,5 billion euros (2020). The company's product portfolio includes vans, trucks, buses/coaches and diesel and gas engines along with services related to passenger and cargo transport. MAN Truck & Bus is a company of TRATON SE and employs more than 37,000 people worldwide.

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former top manager at Ferrari, Fiat and Alitalia, as well as representatives from MAN Truck & Bus Italia.

One of the highlights of the event was a NEOPLAN Skyliner coach, which parked in front of the MAXXI Museum, drawing the attention of guests and journalists. With its modern design, the red and black exterior design and the stylised horse – a symbol of freedom and vitality – on the side of the coach, it was and is a real eye-catcher. The luxurious coach is one of 50 vehicles that MAN Truck & Bus recently handed over to Itabus. Among them are 25 MAN Lion's Coaches and 25 NEOPLAN Skyliners. "We are proud to be one of Itabus' business partners. The fact that Itabus has opted for vehicles from MAN is confirmation that our products are now setting a benchmark in the long-distance coach segment in terms of performance and safety thanks to continuous further development," says David Siviero, Sales and Product Manager Bus at MAN Truck & Bus Italia, adding: "We will be delivering a further 20 NEOPLAN Skyliners to Itabus this year. In addition, 30 double-deckers have already been ordered, with delivery scheduled for early 2022. As a result, Itabus has given us one of the biggest Skyliner orders ever – this is a huge success story for us and shows how well our luxurious double-decker is received by companies that promise their passengers a special travel experience." And that is precisely the objective that Itabus has set itself: to offer affordable travel on extremely comfortable and ultra-modern buses. A total of up to 300 MAN and NEOPLAN coaches are to be part of the Itabus fleet by 2023.

The MAN Lion's Coach and NEOPLAN Skyliner coaches that have been delivered are already out on the road and are now taking travellers from A to B in a safe and comfortable manner. Initially, these long-distance coaches will connect around 70 locations throughout Italy via strategic hubs in Milan, Rome and Naples. Most of the connections are direct routes without any stopovers. And the plan is for the network to continue to grow. In future, the Itabus fleet will complete around 350 routes per day and cover around 90 million kilometres per year. "And for that you need vehicles that you can rely on completely and that ensure passengers arrive relaxed at all times – even if they have been on the road for several hundred kilometres," says Rudi Kuchta, Head of Business Unit Bus at MAN Truck & Bus.



And that is the case with both the MAN Lion's Coach and the NEOPLAN Skyliner. After all, the 14-metre-long Skyliners offer a generous amount of space for up to 73 passengers across two levels and the utmost comfort. Passengers are wowed by the lounge ambience, galley kitchen and lavatory on the lower level, not to mention the largest luggage compartment in the double-decker class. Passengers can reach the light-flooded upper deck via two stairways. The upper deck features extremely comfortable premium seats from which passengers can enjoy a unique panoramic view. "The high-quality facilities and fixtures, the quality of the materials and the on-board service definitely set benchmarks and make Itabus' service something special," says Heinz Kiess, Head of Product Marketing Bus at MAN Truck & Bus. On top of that, the generous range of on-board equipment provides that little bit of luxury: From 220V and USB sockets at every seat, the 5G Wi-Fi connection and individual furnishings such as coffee tables, to the sophisticated lighting concept and vending machines for snacks and drinks, everything is there to ensure that even long journeys without a stopover are as pleasant as possible for passengers. For any travellers who want to travel in even greater luxury, a first class category is also available. In this category, customers can enjoy luxurious seats that can be pulled out, and even greater legroom. "Leaning back, stretching your legs, watching a film or listening to music – that's what first-class travel is all about," says Kuchta.

The 510 hp (375 kW) NEOPLAN Skyliner with Euro 6 engine is also visually impressive: Clear lines and sharp edges in glass and sheet metal are combined with uncompromising aerodynamics. NEOPLAN's consistent lines and award-winning "sharp cut" design form the basis of the Skyliner look. On the road, innovative assistance systems ensure safety.

With the MAN Lion's Coach as well, a truly special travel experience is guaranteed. The 13-metre-long coaches are powered by the efficient 6-cylinder, 470 hp (346 KW) Euro 6 D2676 LOH diesel engine. With the automated 12-speed manually operated gearbox, a particularly smooth ride is guaranteed. Comfort is provided above all by the spacious interior and the interior fittings, which leave nothing to be desired. Passengers can make themselves comfortable on the premium seats as they travel across Italy.



The lighting and the lighting concept also contribute to the pleasant atmosphere. Those who prefer to be entertained can take advantage of the multimedia equipment including power sockets, USB ports and 5G Wi-Fi connection. The new MAN Lion's Coach also guarantees maximum safety for all passengers thanks to a range of features including innovative assistance systems, the torsion-proof skeleton with fire protection, and the larger glass skylight, which makes it even easier to escape in case of emergency. "The MAN Lion's Coach has been consistently impressive for years now thanks to its high degree of reliability and low fuel consumption. What's more, it's the clear winner when it comes to total cost of ownership. Itabus appreciates this as well," says Kiess.

The collaboration between MAN Truck & Bus and Itabus goes well beyond the mere supply of vehicles. MAN's experts were involved in the process of analysing the needs and requirements of the business model and the customers. Based on these results, MAN adapted the vehicles and services to the specific wishes and requirements of future passengers and the operator. Constant monitoring of the vehicles that are in service and a particularly strict and tightly-meshed maintenance programme are the key aspects of the day-to-day collaboration between Itabus and MAN. In addition, the drivers are trained on how to drive efficiently and safely in special coaching sessions. "In this way, Itabus benefits from maximum operability of its fleet and can count on the expertise and responsiveness of the MAN network at all times and in all eventualities," says Rudi Kuchta, adding: "We have decided to enter into a strategic partnership with Itabus so we can also focus on developing our future collaboration with regards to alternatively powered coaches."

Itabus had studied the market and long-distance passenger transport in Italy in detail previously and analysed where there was a requirement for new connections. The long-distance coach operator now serves cities all over Italy, some of which are either not well connected to the railway network, or not connected at all. "The new routes and connections make it far easier for many people to get to their chosen destination, thus improving mobility. We are delighted that we could contribute to this innovative project with our vehicles and services. But we are also delighted that locals and tourists are

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able to make use of our NEOPLAN and MAN coaches to travel throughout Italy in great comfort and in the safest manner possible,” says Kuchta, in summary.