

Fortune in the misfortune

On the evening of 31 October 2018, shortly after 5 p.m., a cabin of the Staubern ropeway above FrümSEN, Switzerland derailed and fell 12 metres to the ground. Fortunately, the gondola was empty at the time, the second cabin of the aerial tramway carried 8 passengers and stopped immediately. A short time later, 200 meters above the valley station, the passengers were roped down by a rescue team and brought to safety unharmed.

The reversible bicable aerial tramway is a system manufactured by Bartholet Maschinenbau AG from Flums. The installation was accepted by the official authorities in March 2018 and inaugurated on 6 April 2018. The ropeway is equipped with a few special features, it is the world's first solar-powered ropeway. It was working perfectly up to the time of the incident and has already registered more than 8'000 trips.

At the time of the incident, the "Föhn" was blowing in the Rhine Valley. Rapidly changing wind speeds of 50 - 60 km/h were registered on the topmost support 3. From wind speeds of 40 km/h, the control sends a wind warning and from 60 km/h it sends a wind alarm. As a further safety feature, a sensor is installed in the cabins to measure the lateral oscillation. A warning is also sent from 9° and a stop of the system is initiated from 11°. Since the value of the transverse oscillation was exceeded on the evening of 31 October, the sensor triggered an emergency braking. The fact is that extreme changes in wind directions occurred at the time of the incident. Shortly thereafter, the cabin still coupled to the hauling rope fell 12 metres to the ground. Fortunately, the 8-person gondola was empty and no people were injured.

Bartholet is doing everything in his power to find out how this incident happened. To this day, no technical defects or human failure have been detected on the basis of the assessments of the public prosecutor's office, police and official authorities.

A cable car is still one of the safest means of transport. Safety and quality will also in the future be Bartholet's top priorities! In order to counteract such natural events, Bartholet continuously invests in the development of new measuring / surveillance systems.

Bartholet Maschinenbau, 2 November 2018

