

## **COMMUNIQUÉ OFFICIEL – CHANTIER DU PONT DU COULOUBRIER**

Domaine des Canebières, le 20/05/2025

Chères Canebiéroises, chers Canebièrois,

We would like to bring you up to date on the latest developments in the reconstruction of the Couloubrier bridge, whose importance for our area is well known. This project, which is vital for the safety and mobility of everyone, has been hampered for several months by a series of administrative obstacles, the consequences of which have unfortunately become cruelly apparent today.

A journey fraught with administrative pitfalls

As early as November 2024, we launched the various studies required by the authorities: geological, hydraulic and environmental studies, with no possibility of a free pass given the urgency of the situation. Although some service providers were recommended to us by our contacts, we took care to consult several companies in order to avoid any abuse of pricing linked to the urgency of the situation.

On 19 December 2024, we submitted a request for emergency works to the prefecture, stating that the temporary ford would not withstand a new flood and asking to be able to rebuild without delay. This request was refused on 20 December.

On 2 January 2025, Mr Henry, our project manager, presented us with the plans and an initial costing, based on the studies carried out in December. Further estimates were received between 10 and 15 January, completing our comparative analysis.

On 20 February, a request for work was submitted to the government.

On February 25, in view of the rapidly deteriorating condition of the old bridge, we also submitted a request for demolition. We received no response, so on 7 March we submitted another request for urgent investigation. This also went unanswered.

The situation changed abruptly on the night of 11 to 12 March, when the bridge deck collapsed. It was only then that deconstruction could begin.

On 11 March, the authorities required us to submit a 'Water Law' dossier. We immediately subcontracted this task to the specialist company Alizé Environnement.

On 28 March, the complete reconstruction file was submitted, including all the required elements. At the same time, we referred the matter to the authorities once again, emphasising the absolute urgency of the situation and requesting a shorter investigation period.

Despite this, on 28 April, a month later, our file was returned to us for 'missing documents'. These items were immediately completed and the application

resubmitted. We received a receipt for the application, which was considered complete, on 7 May and was given two months to process.

Everything was ready... but we were stuck

On the ground, everything was ready:

- the piles were dug and ready to be poured
- the materials were available
- the prefabricated beams were waiting to be lifted
- the riprap and aggregates were stored on site

But we were still not allowed to start, on pain of administrative and financial penalties expressly mentioned in the deposit receipt. We were given no room for manoeuvre.

And this morning, reality caught up with us

On Tuesday 20 May, a thunderstorm of rare intensity hit the region, causing the Couloubrier to rise suddenly. The temporary ford, installed to maintain minimum access, was partly washed away. Our teams did everything they could to limit the damage, but the flow of the Couloubrier, combined with the backflow of the Argens, took its toll.

At 4pm, the waters were still rising dangerously.

And it was at 4.55pm on 20 May that we finally received, by e-mail, the official authorisation to build the new bridge.

A bitter coincidence

After months of approaches, reminders, letters, technical justifications and warnings to the authorities... this authorisation comes on the very day that the consequences of its absence are materialising before our very eyes.

This brutal coincidence illustrates the glaring gap between the authorities and the realities on the ground. If the authorisation had been issued earlier, the bridge could have been built and the temporary ford replaced.

From now on, we'll be taking action

We have finally received the long-awaited administrative green light.

The teams are ready, the resources have been mobilised, and everything is in place to start the work.

Unfortunately, this morning's bad weather and the damage to the temporary ford will mean a further delay to the actual launch of the works. Before we can start work in full, we will have to re-secure the site and repair what has been damaged.

We remain fully committed to completing this project as quickly as possible, with the same determination as at every stage. As always, we will keep you regularly informed of progress.

On this tragic day, our thoughts go out first and foremost to the victims of the violent storms that have hit the Var. We mourn the loss of several lives, and offer our full support to the families affected by this tragedy.

Canebièrement,

*Le Conseil de Surveillance, en accord avec le Gérant*