

Press release

Brussels, 25 February 2026



The journey as part of the destination: Railways contribute to Strategic Dialogue on EU Strategy for Sustainable Tourism

The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER), represented by CER Chair and CEO of PKP Group Alan Beroud and CER Executive Director Alberto Mazzola, took part in the second Strategic Dialogue convened by European Commissioner Apostolos Tzitzikostas to prepare the EU Strategy for Sustainable Tourism. Tourism is a cornerstone of Europe's economy, and rail has a unique role to play in its sustainable future.

The meeting gathered senior representatives from the tourism and transport sectors to identify the key actions needed to strengthen a greener, more digital, resilient and competitive European tourism ecosystem. CER highlighted three core mobility-related challenges the forthcoming strategy must address:

- **Decarbonisation:** 75% of tourism emissions are transport-related. With most EU tourism being intra-European, shifting these flows to rail is essential.
- **Overtourism:** national rail passes and international products, such as Eurail and Interrail, already help counter this problem by redirecting visitors away from saturated hotspots towards "hidden gems" and encouraging off-season travel, supporting balanced regional development.
- **Data fragmentation:** Europe lacks comprehensive data on tourist mobility; closing this gap is vital to plan services that can trigger a real shift to rail.

CER called for synergies with the EU Action Plan for a European High-Speed Rail Network, as connecting all major European capitals through high-speed rail will give the 81% of intra-EU tourists a viable travel option to reach their destination more sustainably. It will also create tangible economic benefits and create long-term jobs in Europe's services and manufacturing sectors.

Successfully attracting more tourists to rail hinges on a genuine level playing field among transport modes, including abolishing VAT on international rail tickets, addressing energy taxation on rail electricity, and applying the polluter-pays principle so that the greenest choice becomes the most affordable.

Rail is not only the greenest form of motorised travel, it also offers a culturally enriching way to experience Europe. In a competitive world market, making the journey part of the destination is an important European strength to be harnessed.

CER Chair and CEO of PKP Group Alan Beroud said: *"With thousands of rail stations across Europe and a variety of national and international rail passes to choose from, railways can bring travellers to almost any region they want to visit. As 97% of CO₂ emissions from hotel stays stem from how guests arrive and depart, it is clear that sustainable tourism cannot exist without sustainable mobility. Railways should find an important place within the upcoming EU Strategy for Sustainable Tourism as providers*

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of clean, efficient transport that encourages the discovery of lesser-known destinations, driving local economies while offering unique ways to explore Europe's landscapes and cultural heritage."

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About CER

The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) brings together around 70 railway undertakings, their national associations as well as infrastructure managers and vehicle leasing companies. The membership is made up of long-established bodies, new entrants and both private and public enterprises, representing 78% of the rail network length, 81% of the rail freight business and about 94% of rail passenger operations in EU, EFTA and EU accession countries. CER represents the interests of its members towards EU policymakers and transport stakeholders, advocating rail as the backbone of a competitive and sustainable transport system in Europe. For more information, visit www.cer.be or follow us on [LinkedIn](#), [Bluesky](#) or X [@CER_railways](#).