

Press release

Brussels, 29 March 2021



European Commission partners with railways to launch the Connecting Europe Express

This September European railways are coming together in an exciting new initiative launched today by the European Commission: a special train – the ‘Connecting Europe Express’ – will crisscross the whole of Europe in a celebratory display of rail’s strength as a driving force for sustainable mobility, economic activity and European identity. The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) and its members are proud partners of this flagship project in the European Year of Rail.

Announced today by the European Commissioner for Transport Adina Vălean at the official Year of Rail kick-off conference, organised by the Commission in partnership with the Portuguese Presidency of the Council of the EU, the Connecting Europe Express will be one of the European Year of Rail’s most visible initiatives. It will begin its journey in September stopping in most European capitals with events and other activities planned at local level, taking into account applicable COVID-19 measures. At each stop, the train will deliver its important message on the benefits of rail as the cornerstone of a smarter, more sustainable way for passengers and freight to move efficiently, safely and seamlessly throughout the continent. This is part of the overall goal of the European Year of Rail which seeks to promote the use of rail among citizens and businesses and realise the shift to rail required for the EU to achieve its decarbonisation ambitions under the EU Green Deal.

The European Commission enlisted the support of CER as project coordinator of the Connecting Europe Express to work with its rail operator and infrastructure manager members to ensure a smooth train run. Rolling stock, track access and staff will all be put at the project’s disposal. It will be a massive organisational exercise that will demonstrate the spirit of good collaboration between rail companies and their eagerness to contribute to the awareness raising efforts around the future of mobility in Europe.

European railways have a lot to showcase along the route of the Connecting Europe Express, including major infrastructure sites that highlight how investments in rail are helping to complete the EU’s Trans-European Transport Network and deliver the major targets of the EU’s Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy, most notably doubling high-speed passenger traffic by 2030, with a view to tripling it by 2050 as well as doubling rail freight transport by this same year. This will require strong investment both in rail infrastructure and digitalisation. And it is exactly the kind of investment that Europe needs right now for a green economic recovery, providing sustainable growth, leading to more jobs and creating a brighter future. A more rail-connected Europe also enables sustainable travel and cultural exchange enriching the European experience.

Commissioner for Transport **Adina Vălean** said: *“The Connecting Europe Express will be a real, tangible example of the power of rail to connect. At each of the almost 40 stops, events will bring together the rail sector at large, as well as civil society organisations, local and regional authorities, and the wider public, to discuss the benefits*

Press release

Brussels, 29 March 2021



of rail, as well as what still has to be done so that rail can become the number one option for passengers and business."

CER Chair and CEO of Austrian Federal Railways **Andreas Matthä** emphasised the significance of the joint project: *"The Connecting Europe Express shows a strong commitment of the European Union and the European Member States reflecting the importance of the railway sector. Only by consistently shifting freight traffic to rail and expanding international long-distance passenger rail services will Europe be able to achieve its climate targets and make the European Green Deal an overall success."*

Regular updates on the Connecting Europe Express will be provided at www.connectingeuropeexpress.eu.

Contact person

Laura Henry
CER Communications Manager
E: laura.henry@cer.be
M: +32 491 16 21 73

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 73% of the rail network length, 76% of the rail freight business and about 92% 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 Twitter [@CER_railways](https://twitter.com/CER_railways) or [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/cer).