

Press release

Brussels, 14 December 2021



Ambitious action plan to increase rail modal share in international passenger transport

On 14 December, the European Commission will adopt the Action plan to boost long-distance and cross-border passenger rail, which aims to increase the modal share of rail passenger traffic and help support the objectives of the EU Green Deal. The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) welcomes the adoption of the far-reaching Action plan and looks forward to engaging with the Commission and other sector stakeholders in its implementation.

For the past decades, the international rail passenger offer has been stagnating in comparison to the constant increase of air travel, rail travel being predominantly domestic. The targets in the Smart and Sustainable Mobility Strategy and the European Green Deal give new impetus to increase railway passenger services and CER Members are determined to be an active partner in the push to realise the modal shift. CER is an active participant in the International Rail Passenger Platform, is engaging the European Commission in its activities and is establishing internal working groups (CEO coalitions) on the highest level to boost passenger services in the EU. CER Members gained new insight with the Connecting Europe Express, experience they are now sharing and will put to good use when participating in the pilot projects due to be announced as part of the Action Plan.

Rail is recognised as key in greening the EU's mobility system, and the EU Strategy for Sustainable and Smart Mobility sets ambitious goals. While CER fully supports the Action plan, we would like to emphasise again the importance of full internalisation of external costs and a level playing field for all transport modes. There is an urgent need to improve the competitiveness of rail transport and its infrastructure, both physical and digital. To boost modal shift, the EU should create a level playing field for all transport modes, for example through the abolition of VAT on international train tickets in all Member States (as is already the case for international plane tickets) and equal treatment in energy taxation. The aim should be to shift short and medium-distance travel in Europe from air to rail in order to cut CO2 emissions. Rail traffic has also been severely impacted by the COVID crisis with total losses of about 50 billion euros in the last 2 years, such losses were particularly high in international rail services. The impact will be felt in the level of investments in the next years and, so far, airlines with similar losses have received more public aid than rail. This situation should be corrected.

In order to achieve the necessary modal shift, we will need to focus also on other areas, such as ticketing and distribution of rail tickets. While national journeys are quite easily arranged, booking a train ticket today for an international journey can leave much to be desired. Therefore, railway undertakings have committed to improve international ticketing in the Ticketing Roadmap, where we presented our vision of seamless ticketing for our customers and passengers by 2030.

CER Executive Director Alberto Mazzola said: *"European railways welcome the comprehensive Action plan and the impetus it gives to international rail services. It*

shows yet again that rail is the best way to decarbonise European transport with good policies and strong investments. We call on the Commission to support sector initiatives and take them as the foundation, when improving aspects of international rail services, such as ticketing."

CER Fact Sheet

CER Ticketing Roadmap for seamless international passenger rail travel

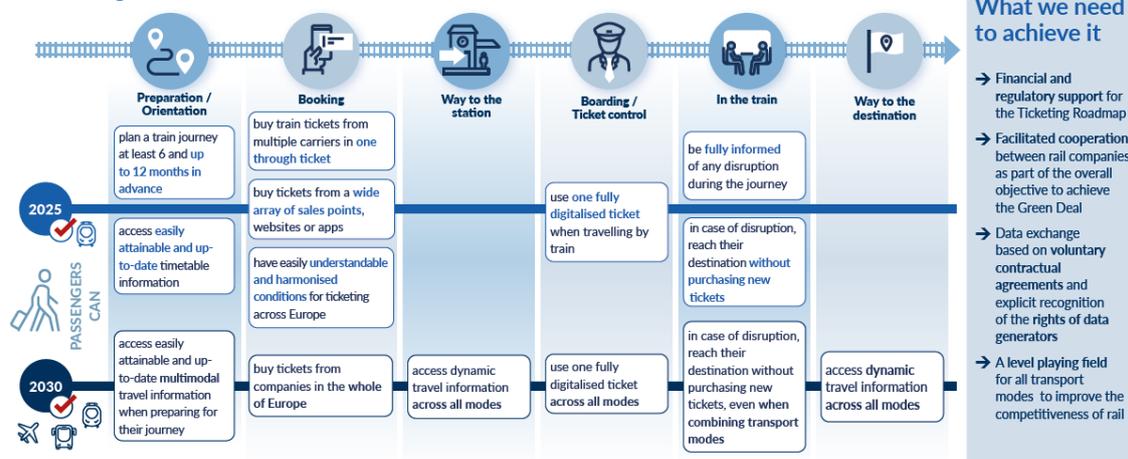


The vision

Passengers will have a seamless user experience when searching, selecting, buying and using rail services, including first and last mile transport, with:

- access to simple, reliable and comprehensive online information regarding timetables, prices, dependable real-time information and ticket purchasing for (rail) transport services, both domestic (urban, regional, long-distance) and international
- easy acceptance throughout Europe of tickets issued by different railways and ticket vendors
- guidance in case of travel disruption on onward journey options and passenger rights

How we get there



See also the [CER Ticketing Roadmap](#) and [Interim Position Paper on International Rail Passenger Services](#) on the CER website.

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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 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).