

The Connecting Europe Express

The flagship EU Year of Rail initiative showing the power of rail to connect





ANDREAS MATTHÄ

CER Chair

“Travelling through 26 European countries, the Connecting Europe

Express is proof of the importance of the European Year of Rail. I thank all CER members for their involvement in this key project with the European Commission. In order to achieve our climate targets, we need to further strengthen the vitality of rail with more international long-distance passenger rail services and we must also consistently shift freight transport to rail.”



ADINA VĂLEAN

European Commissioner for Transport

“The Connecting Europe Express has been a rolling laboratory, revealing in

real-time the many achievements of our Single European Rail Area and our TEN-T network to allow for seamless travel across our Union. I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to everyone who helped us turn the Connecting Europe Express from an idea into reality, a packed and exciting itinerary, memorable meetings – of minds and persons – and a true flag-bearer for European rail.”

Connecting Europe Express: the European rail sector coming together to connect Europe

The Connecting Europe Express was the flagship initiative of the European Year of Rail. A special train which crisscrossed Europe, the project was a showcase of rail's strength as a driving force for sustainable mobility, economic activity and European identity.

Initiated by the European Commission, the project was coordinated on the technical and operational side by CER. From the beginning, CER, its members and project partners actively engaged to facilitate the smooth journey of the train across the continent.

They also helped ensure the train received a warm welcome wherever it stopped, with arrival ceremonies, site visits and conferences all along the route. Such events helped to promote rail locally across Europe, part of a key goal of the EU Year of Rail: 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 successful flagship project of the EU Year of Rail could not have happened had CER members not made these contributions. They ensured the Connecting Europe Express was a success and promoted European rail as fundamental to the sustainable transport system of tomorrow, which will have an impact far beyond this Year of Rail!



The train

The Connecting Europe Express was comprised of three trains: the Continental train which covered most of the journey, the Iberian train provided by Renfe for the start of the journey between Lisbon and Hendaye, the Continental train going from Hendaye across Europe and all the way to the Paris terminus, and the Baltic train provided by Lithuanian Railways (LTG) between Tallinn and Kaunas where it met up with the Continental train.

The project symbolised the spirit of cooperation, manifested in the teamwork of European railway undertakings and infrastructure managers.

From ensuring free track access through their respective networks, to providing onboard staff for safety and cleaning, CER members and their project partners were pivotal to this major endeavour.

Several companies lent coaches to make the journey across the continent. The Continental train included a conference coach from SNCF, an Exhibition coach, provided by Hungarian State Railways (MÁV), two seating coaches from Deutsche Bahn and Swiss Federal Railways (SBB), a dining car from Ferrovie dello Stato Italiane (FS) and a sleeping coach from Austrian Federal Railways (ÖBB).



The Exhibition

The continental and Baltic trains included on-board exhibitions from the European Climate, Environment and Infrastructure Executive Agency (CINEA) and Shift2Rail Joint Undertaking (S2R). The exhibition space featured a selection of railway infrastructure projects taking place along the route of the Connecting Europe Express and which have been (or still are) financed by the EU's Connecting Europe Facility programme. Visitors could scan QR codes for information on the projects and there were opportunities to see videos of the latest technologies in rail presented by S2R.



#ConnectingEurope Express

EUROPEAN YEAR OF RAIL 2021

3 gauges-trains

26 countries

20 000 kilometres of journey

> 100 stops

33 border crossings

5 overnight trips

40 railway partners

Find out more about the Connecting Europe Express online

CER
The Voice of European Railways



Lisbon, 2 September

After being fitted with its special stickering, the Connecting Europe Express started its journey in Lisbon on 2 September.

Lisbon also hosted the first EU conference along the route, focusing on high-speed rail and city-to-city connections.



Day 1, Lisbon



Day 2, Madrid



Day 8, Bremen



Day 10, Bratislava



Day 11, Belgrade



Day 15, Bulgaria



Bucharest, 17 September

At the Connecting Europe Express stop in Bucharest, stakeholders gathered for the next EU conference, focusing on the need for investment in Europe's rail network and making the EU Green Deal a reality.



Gdansk, 20 September

On 20 September, CER held its 68th General Assembly in Gdansk, Poland, hosted by Polish State Railways (PKP) at TRAKO and coinciding with the arrival of the Connecting Europe Express.

Travelling on the train were Mr Janusz Wojciechowski, European Commissioner for Agriculture, Mr Walter Goetz, Head of Cabinet for Transport Commissioner Välean, and Mr Andrzej Bittel, Secretary of State from the Polish Ministry of Infrastructure.



Day 28, Berlin



Day 19, Warsaw



Day 23, Ljubljana



Day 26, Zurich



Day 30, Copenhagen



Day 30, Stockholm



Day 18, Budapest



Day 20, Tallinn



Day 25, Prague



Strasbourg, 6 October

When the Connecting Europe Express stopped in at the second home of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, CER and SCNF organised a joint event focusing on rail and youth ahead of the European Year of Youth in 2022.



Day 36, Paris



Day 32, Amsterdam



Day 33, Brussels



Day 35, Strasbourg



Bettembourg, 5 October

As the Connecting Europe Express headed towards its terminus, it passed through Brussels before reaching Bettembourg, where a live demonstration of combined transport operations was followed by a final EU conference, this time focusing on rail freight.



Paris, 7 October

On 7 October, after crossing 26 countries in 36 days, the Connecting Europe Express arrived at its destination in Paris!

This unique train project would not have been possible without the commitment of its rail partners.



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Photos courtesy of CER members, project partners and the European Commission. Design: inextremis.be

