

Report

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CER Ticketing Roadmap – 8th Implementation Monitoring Report Spring 2026 – Better European Rail Journeys

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1. Summary

Highlights:

- The CER Ticketing Roadmap provides a common European framework for improving international rail journeys from planning and booking to travel and disruption support.
- The Spring 2026 Implementation Monitoring covers 22 CER member railways operating in and between 20 EU Member States and Switzerland, representing approx. 95% of CER members' combined passenger ridership.
- Passengers increasingly benefit from more reliable timetable information: 18 surveyed railways report full implementation of data exchange through the established sector database MERITS.
- Advance booking of rail tickets has improved substantially. Eleven railways now offer booking horizons of six months or more. Seven of these even make their tickets available nine months or more before a journey starts. By doing so, CER members have made a great leap forward catching up with typical airline booking periods and better positioning rail in the multimodal competition when passengers make early travel choices. Final and precise timing still depends on path allocation of the concerned infrastructure managers.
- Through-ticketing, tariff data exchange and OSDM connections are making more international journeys available through railway and third-party sales channels.
- Fourteen railways report operational eTCD connections, supporting digital presentation and inspection of international tickets across participating networks.
- The CIT Agreement on Journey Continuation provides practical support following missed connections, with 17 respondents reporting that tangible customer benefits are already clearly visible.
- The Roadmap provides key foundations for the European Commission's Passenger Package:
 - The MERITS database of the UIC supports dependable journey discovery.
 - The standardised OSDM sales interface enables access to and combination of rail offers.
 - Harmonised conditions improve transparency.
 - UIC eTCD supports interoperable digital ticket inspection.
 - Real-time data exchange improves information during travel.
 - Journey-continuation arrangements support passengers during disruption.
- Passenger Package implementation should build on these existing European assets, focus on measurable passenger outcomes and distinguish ticket-content access from the more complex obligation to host competitors' products.
- The Roadmap's 2026–2030 phase extends the same approach to multimodal planning, ticketing, travel information and disruption support.
- Europe does not need to start again. The Passenger Package and the CER Ticketing Roadmap can reinforce one another by combining clear passenger rights and market-access principles with standards and operational systems that are already delivering results.

CER Ticketing Roadmap – A common European delivery framework is producing passenger benefits

European railways have built shared operational foundations that make international journeys easier to plan, book and complete. The CER Ticketing Roadmap ("Roadmap") connects timetable data, earlier sales, through-ticketing, digital ticket inspection, real-time information and disruption support in one passenger-centred programme.

The CER Ticketing Roadmap was adopted in 2021 to improve the international rail journey from initial search to assistance after disruption. Its central value is that it joins many railway undertakings, sales channels and national systems around shared data, interfaces and customer-service arrangements. The Spring 2026 monitoring evidence shows that this framework has moved well beyond technical design: operational services are increasingly visible in the passenger experience.

The report at hand explains the benefits already visible to passengers, how the Roadmap supports the objectives of the European Commission Passenger Package, and how the same standards and cooperation model can carry European mobility into its next multimodal phase.

The report is intended for external stakeholders such as passenger organisations, Members of the European Parliament, national authorities and others interested in practical delivery of ticketing improvements across the Single European Railway Area.

What passengers can experience today

- More dependable journey discovery as timetable information is refreshed through the European MERITS¹ database. Eighteen of the 22 surveyed railways report full implementation of this Roadmap action.
- More time to plan and buy. Eleven railways report booking horizons beyond six months during most of the year, including seven at nine months or more.
- More journeys available through connected sales systems as shared tariff exchange, through-ticketing and OSDM² production links widen distribution.
- Simpler paperless travel. Fourteen railways report operational eTCD³ connections, supporting digital presentation and inspection of international tickets.
- A clearer route forward when connections are missed. Seventeen respondents report passenger benefits from the CIT Agreement on Journey Continuation.

¹ Multiple East-West Railways Integrated Timetable Storage (MERITS) is a UIC database that contains integrated European timetable data, comprising a few hundred railway undertakings, which are published four times a week.

² Open Sales and Distribution Model (OSDM) is an open-source application programming interface (API) to substantially simplify and improve the booking process for customers of public transport trips. It was developed in a joint effort of CER member railways and third-party ticket vendors.

³ Electronic Ticket Control Database (eTCD) is a centralised, real-time passenger ticket management system developed by UIC for use by railways around the world. The service is defined by a common specification for the exchange of control information on railway tickets between ticket issuers and rail carriers.

A practical foundation for the Passenger Package

The Passenger Package seeks more complete journey offers, fair access to rail products and relevant data, stronger multimodal booking and protection across a journey in a seamless way. The Roadmap already supplies many important building blocks for these objectives. MERITS supports discoverability of rail services; OSDM enables standardised offer and order exchange; harmonised conditions improve comparability; eTCD supports interoperable digital fulfilment; real-time data exchange supports information during travel; and the Agreement on Journey Continuation (AJC) provides a cooperation model for disruption support.

This is not an argument that policy has no role. It is evidence that implementation can advance fastest when policy builds on recognised operational standards and investments, targets clear passenger outcomes and preserves the capacity needed to scale working solutions. The Roadmap offers a tested route from policy ambition to deployable services.

The main conclusion

Europe does not need to begin again. Passengers will benefit most when the Passenger Package and the CER Ticketing Roadmap reinforce one another: a clear regulatory framework, common European standards, stable investment conditions and continued expansion of interoperable services.

Eight Coordinated Actions Turn Technical Cooperation into a Simpler Journey

International rail involves multiple operators, infrastructure managers, ticket vendors and national rules. A passenger, however, experiences one journey. The Roadmap therefore organises its first eight Actions around four practical stages.

Stage	Roadmap actions	Passenger outcome
PLAN	1. Up-to-date timetable data 2. Longer booking horizons	Reliable discovery of services and more time to organise a trip
BOOK	3. Tariff exchange and through-tickets 4. OSDM online sales interface 5. Harmonised ticketing conditions	More complete offers, wider sales reach and clearer conditions
TRAVEL	6. Digital tickets and mutual inspection 7. Real-time information	A ticket that works across participating networks and useful information on the move
RECOVER	8. Journey continuation and disruption support	Practical assistance when a missed connection interrupts the itinerary

Why a shared framework matters

Each action has value on its own, but passengers gain most when the actions work together. Fresh timetable data makes early booking credible. Common interfaces turn timetable possibilities into saleable offers. Harmonised conditions make those offers easier to understand. Digital fulfilment allows a ticket to be recognised beyond the retailer that issued it. Real-time exchange and journey-continuation arrangements help preserve the journey when operations change.

This combination also creates a network effect. Every additional participating railway, connection or sales channel increases the number of passenger journeys that can benefit from the common framework. Bilateral deployments can therefore be useful building blocks rather than isolated projects: if they follow a shared European specification, they can connect into a broader ecosystem over time.

Evidence and interpretation

The Spring 2026 survey received responses from 22 CER member railways representing approximately 95% of the combined CER member railways' 2025 passenger ridership. The respondents operate in and between 20 EU Member States and Switzerland. Reported figures describe implementation among these respondents and are based on company assessments. They are best read as a sector-wide picture of operational progress and passenger-facing capability, rather than as a ranking of individual companies.

The following chapters focus on achieved benefits and on the common assets available for further scaling. Technical terms are explained where they first appear.

2. Passengers Can Find Services More Reliably and Book Further Ahead

Action 1: Fresh timetable information through MERITS

MERITS is the shared European timetable database managed within the railway sector, by the UIC. It brings together timetable information from many operators and provides a common source for journey-planning and distribution services. Under Roadmap Action 1, railways committed to more frequent and dependable data delivery.

Eighteen of the 22 surveyed railways report full implementation; every respondent reports at least 60% implementation. Fifteen provide timetable data several times per week, daily or more frequently. For passengers, this means that changes and newly available services can reach planning and sales channels more quickly and consistently. The benefit is especially important for international searches, where an itinerary is only as dependable as the information exchanged across all participating networks.

Action 2: Longer booking horizons

The Roadmap also promotes booking horizons of six to twelve months. Earlier sales give passengers more choice over trains and fares, allow families and groups to coordinate accommodation and other arrangements, and make rail easier to compare with modes that are commonly sold far in advance.

During most of the year, eleven surveyed railways report booking horizons beyond six months; seven reach nine months or more. These are tangible improvements in the time available to plan a European journey. Railways are also using pragmatic route- and service-based approaches, so passengers can benefit from earlier booking on suitable corridors while broader timetable and production processes continue to evolve.

How this supports EU objectives

Accurate schedules and earlier availability are prerequisites for neutral journey comparison and complete offers. They directly support the Passenger Package objective of making travel options easier to find and compare. They also improve the quality of any multimodal

service: a platform cannot assemble a reliable rail - air, rail - coach or rail - urban transport itinerary unless the rail leg is discoverable and open for sale.

The policy value of MERITS is therefore larger than a database. It is an established European coordination mechanism that converts many national and company schedules into reusable information. Building on that asset helps turn the Passenger Package's emphasis on accessible and relevant data into dependable consumer services.

3. Shared Standards Make More Journeys Easier to Sell

Action 3: From timetable connection to purchasable journey

A journey shown in a planner is only useful if the traveller can obtain the right product. Roadmap Action 3 improves the exchange of fares and conditions and supports through-tickets across operators. Eleven respondents report OSDM Offline coverage across their entire domestic and cross-border network, while four report coverage of all cross-border services. Fourteen can issue through-tickets with most or selected neighbouring railways. This enlarges the set of journeys that can be completed in one purchasing process.

Action 4: OSDM as the scalable sales interface

The Open Sales and Distribution Model, or OSDM, is a shared European specification for exchanging rail offers and orders. It is designed for railway undertakings, retailers and third-party ticket vendors. Instead of developing a unique technical interface for every commercial relationship, participants can connect through a common model and expand connection by connection.

Operational bilateral deployments are already creating sales opportunities. Some railways report multiple production connections, and third-party vendors can sell the international tickets of a growing group of participating operators through OSDM. Its acceptance as a technical alternative under the EU Telematics Applications for Passenger Services framework gives the sector a recognised basis for continued deployment.

The passenger benefit

- Wider sales reach: an operator's products can become available through more railway and independent retail channels.
- More complete offers: connected systems can combine timetable, fare, reservation and product information for international journeys.
- Less bespoke integration: a shared specification supports faster replication of working connections and more consistent information.
- Future readiness: the same offer-and-order logic can support multimodal combinations as the Roadmap develops towards 2030.

Contribution to the Passenger Package

The Passenger Package proposes broader access to rail ticketing content under fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory conditions and envisages platforms combining products from different operators. OSDM supplies a practical technical channel through which these policy objectives can be implemented. It supports access to offers without prescribing a single retail platform, and it allows existing railway and third-party channels to innovate on a common foundation.

4. Clearer Conditions and Interoperable Digital Tickets Reduce Friction

Action 5: Harmonised information for everyday travel choices

Passengers should not need specialist knowledge to understand whether a ticket covers a child, bicycle, pet or item of luggage. Roadmap Action 5 aligns customer-facing ticketing conditions where common treatment is practical. Survey responses indicate comparatively mature implementation for rules covering dogs and small pets, luggage and bicycles. Work on clarity for age categories and passengers with reduced mobility complements this foundation.

Harmonisation improves the booking experience in two ways. First, common concepts allow sales channels to present comparable information across operators. Second, clearly communicated exceptions become easier to understand. The result is a more predictable journey even where national rules or product characteristics remain relevant.

Action 6: Digital fulfilment through eTCD

The electronic Ticket Control Database, or eTCD, enables participating railways to exchange the information needed to inspect digital international tickets. Fourteen surveyed companies report operational connections, two are in pilot and one has a planned implementation. Seven report entire-network scope and six cover all cross-border services.

For passengers, the goal is simple: a ticket bought digitally should be presentable and recognisable throughout the itinerary. Seven respondents report validation by any participating railway and six by most partner railways. Mutual inspection reduces dependence on paper documents, supports last-minute purchases and makes a cross-border ticket feel like one usable travel credential rather than a collection of national artefacts.

How these actions reinforce EU policy

The Passenger Package's vision of more complete journeys requires more than access to prices. A platform must be able to describe product conditions accurately, issue a usable travel document and support inspection by the operators carrying the passenger. Harmonised concepts and eTCD provide those operational layers.

This illustrates why data access, technical interoperability and operational acceptance belong together. A retail obligation can make content available, but passengers receive the full benefit only when the resulting product is understandable, correctly fulfilled and recognised on board. The Roadmap connects these steps within one implementation programme.

5. Information and Cooperation Help Passengers Stay in Control

Action 7: Real-time information across company boundaries

During an international journey, passengers need information from every operator involved, not only the company that sold the ticket. Roadmap Action 7 establishes a shared approach for exchanging real-time mobility data. Fourteen surveyed railways participate actively in the UIC Real-Time Expert Group, and a substantial group is ready or preparing to test the exchange of data as providers and consumers.

The passenger outcome is foreign real-time information appearing in familiar channels: apps, websites, station displays and staff tools. A common exchange model reduces the need for separate feeds and makes it easier for customer channels to show delays, platform information and journey changes beyond their home network. This capability is also essential for multimodal itineraries, where a change to one leg can affect every subsequent connection.

Action 8: Practical arrangement after a missed connection

The CIT Agreement on Journey Continuation, known as AJC, gives participating railways common arrangements for helping passengers continue after a missed connection. Sixteen substantive respondents report implementation and two plan to join. Seventeen respondents report observed customer benefits, making disruption support one of the strongest passenger signals in the survey.

AJC turns cooperation between railways into practical reassurance. Rather than leaving the passenger to negotiate separately with each operator, the agreement creates a shared basis for continuation under defined circumstances. The related development of digital delay annotations in eTCD can make the process quicker and easier for passengers and staff by carrying relevant information with the digital ticket.

Contribution to full journey protection

The Passenger Package seeks protection across a multi-operator rail journey sold as a single ticket in one transaction, including assistance, rerouting, reimbursement and compensation. AJC and eTCD are not substitutes for statutory passenger rights. They are operational foundations that show how railways can cooperate across company boundaries and how entitlement information can be made usable during disruption.

Policy and sector implementation can therefore reinforce one another: clear legal rights define the passenger promise, while shared railway arrangements, real-time data and digital fulfilment help frontline systems and staff deliver it in practice.

6. The Roadmap Translates Policy Objectives into Deployable Capabilities

The Commission's May 2026 Passenger Package places ticketing, multimodal comparison, distribution access and end-to-end protection at the centre of a more integrated European passenger market. The Roadmap is directly relevant because it already connects the technical and operational layers needed to make those ambitions work.

Passenger Package objective	CER Ticketing Roadmap contribution	Passenger value
Neutral and transparent journey comparison	MERITS timetable exchange and more frequent data updates	More dependable discovery of European services
More complete multimodal journeys	Longer booking horizons and the 2026–2030 multimodal programme	More time to compare and assemble the whole trip

Access to rail offers, fares, reservations and functions	OSDM Offline and Online offer-and-order exchange	More products available through more sales channels
Ability to combine operators' products	Through-ticketing, common tariff exchange and OSDM connections	International journeys that are easier to buy in one process
Clear and comparable customer information	Harmonised ticketing conditions	Fewer surprises about bicycles, luggage, pets and passenger categories
Usable digital travel documents	eTCD ticket inspection and mutual recognition	Paperless tickets that work across participating networks
Relevant information during the journey	UIC real-time mobility data exchange	Partner data in the channels passengers already use
Protection across the itinerary	Agreement on Journey Continuation cooperation and digital delay annotation	A clearer route to continuation when connections are missed

One architecture rather than parallel solutions

The table shows that Passenger Package objectives are not separate from the Roadmap. They depend on many of the same capabilities. Recognising MERITS, OSDM, eTCD, real-time exchange and AJC within the implementation framework can reduce duplication, protect prior investment and concentrate expertise on expanding passenger coverage.

This standards-based approach also supports competition and innovation. Different operators and retailers can develop distinct customer propositions while exchanging information through common specifications. The policy framework can set outcomes and access principles; interoperable standards can provide the route to implementation.

7. A Proportionate Framework Can Accelerate Outcomes for Passengers

Build on working European assets

MERITS, OSDM, eTCD and AJC are operational foundations, not future concepts. They have governance, participating organisations, technical implementations and live use cases. Their value increases as coverage expands. EU measures can accelerate that expansion by recognising established standards and avoiding requirements that force the same functionality to be rebuilt in parallel.

Focus on outcomes and interoperability

For passengers, the important questions are practical: Can the journey be found? Can it be booked far enough in advance? Are the relevant products available in the chosen channel? Is the ticket understood and accepted? Does useful information arrive during

travel? Is assistance available after disruption? A policy framework organised around these outcomes can accommodate innovation while maintaining accountability.

Distinguish content access from platform hosting

The Passenger Package discusses both access to ticketing content and, for certain large sales channels, a potential obligation to host competitors' products. These measures involve different technical, commercial and operational tasks. Content exchange can be supported by standard interfaces such as OSDM. Hosting additionally requires integration into search, display, payment, fulfilment, customer service, accounting and disruption processes. Clear definitions and proportionate implementation arrangements will help ensure that each obligation produces demonstrable passenger value.

Protect the capacity that delivers implementation

European ticketing relies on scarce specialist resources across sales systems, cybersecurity, operations, data management and customer channels. Stable standards, realistic transition arrangements and targeted support allow these teams to extend live services rather than repeatedly redesign them. Funding can be particularly valuable where one company bears integration costs while benefits accrue across a cross-border network.

Use evidence to refine delivery

Regular monitoring provides a factual basis for policy dialogue. It can track the outcomes that matter most: additional sellable journeys, booking-horizon coverage, production OSDM connections, digital-ticket recognition, foreign real-time data in customer channels and successful disruption use cases. This makes it possible to identify where an EU measure adds value and where scaling an existing solution is the faster route.

The shared objective is not a choice between legislation and voluntary action. It is a coherent combination in which rights, market-access principles, standards and operational cooperation all point towards the same passenger experience.

Common standards allow improvement connection by connection

European rail is a network of networks. No single company controls every timetable, fare, reservation, sales channel, train or disruption process. The Roadmap's delivery model reflects that reality: it combines sector governance with implementation by individual railways and partnerships between them.

A reusable implementation chain

Layer	Shared asset	What it enables
Discover	UIC MERITS timetable data	A European journey can be found in planners and sales systems
Offer and order	OSDM and tariff exchange	Products can be requested, combined, priced and ordered across organisations
Explain	Harmonised conditions	Retailers can present key rules in a clearer and more comparable way
Fulfil and inspect	UIC eTCD	A digital international ticket can be issued and recognised by participating operators

Inform	Real-time mobility data exchange	Partner updates can flow into passenger-facing channels
Assist	CIT Agreement on Journey Continuation and digital delay annotation	Railways can cooperate when the planned itinerary breaks

Why bilateral connections can scale

A production link between two railways creates immediate value on the journeys they share. When both use a common specification, the implementation knowledge, software components and testing methods can be reused for the next partner. The ecosystem can therefore grow incrementally without waiting for one centrally imposed platform to replace every existing system.

Why governance remains important

Common specifications must remain stable enough for investment and responsive enough to operational learning. UIC, CIT, CER and participating railways provide complementary roles: technical standardisation, contractual arrangements, policy coordination and company delivery. This structure also allows passenger feedback and regulatory objectives to inform subsequent versions of the standards.

A credible basis for cooperation with stakeholders

Passenger organisations, EU institutions, national authorities, operators and retailers share an interest in measurable improvements. The Roadmap provides a common reference point for prioritising journeys, use cases and information that deliver practical benefit.

8. Next Phase: The Same Passenger Logic Extends Towards Multimodal Journeys

The 2026–2030 Roadmap phase carries the established approach beyond rail-only journeys. Its programme covers multimodal journey planning, pan-European OSDM rollout, multimodal ticketing, multimodal travel information and future disruption support. These themes closely match the Passenger Package’s ambition for more complete journeys across rail, air, coach and waterborne transport.

Continuity rather than reinvention

- Journey planning can build on the timetable-data discipline established through MERITS and connect it with relevant information from other modes.
- Pan-European OSDM rollout can extend the production connections already used for rail offers and orders.
- Multimodal ticketing can reuse common product, reservation, fulfilment and retail concepts while respecting the characteristics of each mode.
- Multimodal travel information can build on the emerging real-time exchange capability so that changes to one leg inform the rest of the itinerary.
- Future disruption support can combine statutory rights, contractual arrangements and digital information to give passengers a clear path when a multimodal journey changes.

Principles for the next stage

Passenger benefit should remain the organising principle. New functionality should be tested through real journeys and familiar customer channels. Common European standards should be preferred where they can reduce bespoke interfaces. Deployment can proceed in useful stages, starting with suitable routes and products and expanding as partners and systems connect. Monitoring should continue to translate technical progress into outcomes that external stakeholders can assess.

9. Conclusion

Under the framework of the CER Ticketing Roadmap, railways have already substantially improved European rail travel, and they continue to do so. They have, for instance:

- made timetables more dependable,
- extended advance booking,
- widened the reach of rail offers,
- enabled digital-ticket inspection and
- created practical cooperation for journey continuation.

These benefits are supported by a coherent set of common solutions that can grow as participation and cross-company connections expand.

The Passenger Package can amplify this progress. The strongest implementation pathway is to align regulatory objectives with the standards, systems and cooperation mechanisms already delivering results, while maintaining clear passenger rights and measurable outcomes. In this way, Europe can move faster towards journeys that are easier to find, easier to buy, easier to use and better protected from origin to destination.

Source: CER Ticketing Roadmap 8th Implementation Monitoring Report, Spring 2026, and CER external executive summary. Figures refer to the 22 surveyed CER member railways unless stated otherwise.

About CER

The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) brings together railway undertakings, their national associations as well as infrastructure managers and vehicle leasing companies. The diverse and comprehensive membership made up of long-established bodies, new entrants and both private and public enterprises, covers the large majority of the rail infrastructure network, rail freight business and rail passenger operations in EU, EFTA and EU accession countries. CER represents the interests of its members towards EU policy makers and transport stakeholders, advocating rail as the backbone of a resilient, competitive, and sustainable transport system in Europe. For more information, visit www.cer.be or follow us on social media.

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