

Press release

Brussels, 18 May 2022

5 decades of Interrail – an emblem of borderless rail travel & European integration

The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER), their French member SNCF, and Eurail came together on 17 May, kindly hosted by MEP Ondřej Kovařík at the European Parliament and in good cooperation with the French Presidency of the EU Council and the Cabinet of Mariya Gabriel, European Commissioner for Youth, to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Interrail and rail's significance to Europe's youth.

The Interrail Pass is an emblem for European unity which continues to serve as a bridge for cultural exchange and discovery. Interrail has facilitated 50 years of freedom for young Europeans to discover their continent, forging new travel experiences and strengthening European identity through the appreciation of different cultures and traditions. It also represents 5 decades of borderless rail travel and successful cooperation between the European railway carriers.

The concepts of European youth, rail and European identity are intertwined and the Interrail Pass and projects such as DiscoverEU, which started as a European Parliament initiative, are instrumental in the creation and affirmation of a European identity among young travellers.

Extending the DiscoverEU initiative under the Erasmus+ programme to include every student can directly foster sustainable travel and accelerate European integration.

The European Year of Youth, a most appropriate successor to the European Year of Rail, is the perfect opportunity to promote the important relationship between young people and rail. As younger generations are increasingly drawn to a more sustainable way of living, interest in green transport like rail is growing. The unique contribution of European railways is essential to the climate ambitions of the Green Deal – **rail's direct emissions account for less than 0.4% of transport emissions, while it carried 17% of freight and around 8% of passengers of EU27 inland transport in 2019**

The rail community stands ready to work alongside institutions to consider innovative initiatives and programmes to support and foster the sustainable modal choices of young Europeans.

Institutions on all levels, European, national and local, are encouraged to consider the role rail & Interrail can further play in incentivising young people to contribute to the modal shift to rail so urgently needed to meet pressing climate targets.

The celebratory event, which took place in the European Parliament, was also supported by Erasmus by Train, a student-led initiative which aims to link the Erasmus & Interrail programmes for a more sustainable and united Europe, and the Coimbra Group University network who are active supporters and enablers of the modal shift to rail.

CER Executive Director Alberto Mazzola stated: *"CER is proud to count Eurail among its members and is delighted to celebrate this truly European anniversary. For five decades, Interrail has helped young Europeans discover the joys of both Europe and rail travel and helped forge a strong and enduring sense of European identity. Today, there is much that we can learn from European youth: a true commitment to fighting global warming with concrete action, including a clear preference for sustainable transport solutions."*

Eurail General Manager Carlo Boselli stated: *"For the past 50 years, the Interrail Pass has played an essential role in enabling European identity and belonging. As a social rite, "Interrailing" quickly became a way to connect, exchange and discover the European continent. We are delighted to celebrate Interrail's historic significance and discuss rail travel's essential role in shaping European Youth and the future of sustainable travel in Europe."*

SNCF Voyageurs CEO Christophe Fanichet stated: *"SNCF's corporate purpose is to work for a dynamic, caring and sustainable society. To fulfil this objective, we have a duty to set an example and to meet the demands of this young generation, which is more aware of its environmental footprint, for sustainable mobility solutions. Thanks to Interrail, nearly 8,000 young Europeans aged 12 to 27 use the train in France every year. SNCF is proud to contribute to this European success story."*

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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).

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About Eurail B.V.

Eurail gives travellers from all over the world the opportunity to experience flexible, borderless train travel across Europe. With a Eurail or Interrail Pass (for non-European and European citizens respectively), travellers of all ages can use an expansive network of train and ferry connections to travel in and between up to 33 countries. Eurail and Interrail Passes are available via the Eurail.com and Interrail.eu web shops, as well as via an extensive network of trusted distribution partners worldwide. Eurail B.V. is owned by over 35 European railway and ferry companies, and is based in Utrecht, the Netherlands. For more information, visit www.eurail.com or www.interrail.eu.

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About SNCF

SNCF is a global leader in passenger and freight transport services, including management of the French rail network, with revenue of €35 billion (pre-pandemic), of which one-third on international markets. The Group does business in 120 countries and has 272,000 employees, with 210,000 in France and over half in its core rail business. The new SNCF, a public limited company that began operating on 1 January 2020, consists of a parent (SNCF) and five subsidiaries: SNCF Réseau



(management, operation and maintenance of the French rail network, plus railway engineering) with its own subsidiary SNCF Gares & Connexions (station management and development); SNCF Voyageurs (Transilien (mass transit in the Paris region), TER (regional rail) and Intercités (long-distance rail), TGV INOUI, OUIGO, Eurostar, Thalys, Aléo and Lyria (international rail), and OUI.sncf (online ticket sales)); Keolis (a global operator of urban, suburban and regional mass transit systems); Rail Logistics Europe (rail freight); and Geodis (freight transport and logistics solutions). SNCF Group works closely with its customers—passengers, local authorities, shippers and railway operators using SNCF Réseau services—and with regional communities, building on its expertise in all aspects of rail and all types of transport to deliver simple, seamless, sustainable solutions for every mobility need. Learn more at [sncf.com](https://www.sncf.com)