

26 countries in 36 days: Commission unveils Connecting Europe Express timetable

Devised by the European Commission as part of the European Year of Rail, and made possible by unprecedented industry collaboration, the Connecting Europe Express will cross the continent this autumn. The special train will demonstrate – in real time – the power of rail to connect people and businesses, and the importance of EU infrastructure policy in making this possible.

The route was announced today, on Europe Day, as Europe celebrates peace and unity, and the close links that have been built over the years – cultural, economic and physical. The [Connecting Europe Express](#) will be able to explore many of those physical links. Beginning its journey on 2 September in Lisbon and stopping in more than 40 cities in 26 countries, the train will link the Portuguese, Slovenian and French Presidencies of the Council of the EU, arriving in Paris on 7 October.



Commissioner for Transport **Adina Vălean** said: *"Crisscrossing the continent, from Lisbon to Bucharest and from Berlin to Paris, the Connecting Europe Express will follow routes that bind us together – whether as countries, businesses or people. While a symbol for connectivity, this train also serves as a reminder that we still have a long way to go and much work to do before rail becomes the transport option of choice for Europeans. Welcome the Connecting Europe Express as it stops at a station near you and join the events taking place around the continent."*

The project is a unique endeavour, involving the European Commission and the Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER), European rail operators, infrastructure managers and numerous other partners at EU and local level.

CER Chair and CEO of Austrian Federal Railways **Andreas Matthä** emphasised: *"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."*

At each of the stops, events and other activities, adapted to local COVID-19 measures, will shine a light on the key role that rail plays for our society, but also on the challenges that rail must still overcome to attract more passengers and freight.



Background information

A reminder of the lack of interoperability between some parts of Europe's rail network, the Connecting Europe Express will comprise, in reality, three different trains that fit the different gauges used in Europe. But it will also demonstrate the very good cooperation in place between railway undertakings and infrastructure managers.

The Connecting Europe Express running on the standard gauge will have six coaches. Two will host mobile exhibitions on the many technologies and innovations already improving the rail experience, and on how the EU supports infrastructure projects. A conference, sitting, dining and sleeping coach will complete the train.

A separate train will run on the Iberian gauge in Portugal and Spain, and a third one on the Baltic gauge in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Both trains will meet with the standard gauge train along the route.

Press release

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Five conferences have already been confirmed and will take place along the route – in Lisbon, Bucharest, Brdo, Berlin, and Bettembourg – inviting discussion and debate on the ambitious targets and action plans for rail outlined in the EU's [Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy](#). The conferences will focus on EU infrastructure policy, and highlight the role of the Trans-European Network for Transport (TEN-T) in connecting not only Europe, but also transport.

Hop on the Connecting Europe Express!

Citizens and organisations interested in organising an event or activity along the route are invited to share their ideas via info@connectingeuropeexpress.eu

For a detailed map and regular updates on the Connecting Europe Express as well as the European Year of Rail, visit www.connectingeuropeexpress.eu and europa.eu/year-of-rail/

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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 [@CER_railways](https://twitter.com/CER_railways) on Twitter.