

6th of October, Paris

## European Year of Rail: The Connecting Europe Express train arrives safe and sound in Paris but misses the objective to revive train through Europe

Initiated by the European Commission in order to celebrate the [European Year of Rail](#) (EYoR) 2021, the [Connecting Europe Express](#) (CEE) is arriving tomorrow at la gare du Nord in Paris after one month of travelling through Europe. As the CEE arrival announces the end of the EYoR 2021, it is now time for our coalition to assess if this EYoR 2021 did pave the way to put back Europe on Rail.

The [Europe on Rail](#) coalition welcomes the fact that the CEE and other European Commission initiatives raised awareness on how vital trains are in order to achieve transport greenhouse gasses (GHG) reduction. In Europe, trains carry 8% of all passengers and 19% of goods while producing only 0,4% of the transport sector GHG emissions<sup>1</sup>. Yet we do regret that this European Year of Rail did not contribute to the effective approval or implementation of **structural measures** to revive trains through Europe.

This lack of concrete decisions and actions is even more regrettable as the European Commission presented earlier this summer the **Fit for 55 package** in order to reduce by 55% its GHG emissions by 2030. While **70% of the EU citizens say that they are interested in travelling by night train**<sup>2</sup>, we more specifically regret that no commitment was made at the EU level to launch at least **30 new Europe Express lines and night trains between 2021 and 2025**<sup>3</sup>.

This year did not permit either to solve the issue of the **lack of sleeping carriers**<sup>4</sup>, though it is a crucial point if we wish to see new night train services being developed in the coming years. More generally very little was done to facilitate the funding of **interoperable rolling stocks**. This is a lost opportunity for both climate and employment in Europe.

According to **Valentin Desfontaines**, Sustainable Mobilities Officer at the [Climate Action Network-France](#): *“Unfortunately the European Year of Rail 2021 did not yet pave the way to train revival through Europe. As rail is at the crossroads of inter-related issues such as climate, social justice, employment or European integration, we are calling on the European Commission to **extend the European Year of Rail in 2022** and to take very concrete actions to make train revival become a reality in Europe. The French government will have to take its part too as France will hold the presidency of the Council of the European Union on the 1st of January 2022.”*

While the massive investment of the EU **Resilience and Recovery Funds** can finance Member States investments into trains, an EU coordinated action in the long run is necessary to close

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<sup>1</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/rail/market/market\\_monitoring\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/rail/market/market_monitoring_en)

<sup>2</sup> See March 2021 survey: <https://germanwatch.org/en/20045>

<sup>3</sup> See Europe On Rail Press Release, June 2021:

<https://europeanrail.eu/open-letter-to-the-commission-demanding-to-step-up-meaningful-action-and-engagement-on-the-eu-year-of-rail/>

<sup>4</sup> <https://trainsforeurope.eu/>

the infrastructure gaps and to modernise the existing rail network in Europe. Last but not least, no long term train development will be possible as long as there is not a **fair competition** between transportation modes: train journeys should always have to be cheaper than flying the same distance<sup>5</sup>.

According to **Laia Segura**, Policy and Communication Officer at [eco-union](#): *“The window of opportunity for European governments to invest massively in the rail renaissance and build a more sustainable post-pandemic mobility and economy is closing slowly. It is a pity for European citizens and companies that deserve more ambitious, evidence-based and climate-friendly commitments from European and national policy and decision-makers”*.

As the 2021 **European Year of Rail has been under-delivering due to the pandemic**, we are calling on the European Commission to **extend the European Year of Rail in 2022** and to take very concrete actions to make train revival become a reality in Europe. Rail is at the crossroads of climate, social justice, employment and European Union integration issues. It deserves ambitious actions from both the European Commission and its Member States.

#### Press contacts:

- **France and french-speaking countries:** Valentin Desfontaines, Sustainable Mobilities Officer, Climate Action Network-France, [valentin.desfontaines@reseauactionclimat.org](mailto:valentin.desfontaines@reseauactionclimat.org) +33 6 66 07 33 26
- **Spain and non-french speaking countries:** Laia Segura, Policy & Communication Officer, eco-union (Spain) - [laia.segura@ecounion.eu](mailto:laia.segura@ecounion.eu) . +34 606711670

#### About EuropeOnRail

*EuropeOnRail is a European initiative led by Civil Society Organizations to reduce carbon emissions from international mobility by promoting night and day passenger trains between European cities and countries.*



+ information: <https://europeonrail.eu/about/> - [info@europeonrail.eu](mailto:info@europeonrail.eu)

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<sup>5</sup> A full assessment of the state of European passenger rails is available here: <https://europeonrail.eu/portfolio/hop-on-the-train-a-rail-renaissance-for-europe/>