



*Presse release
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International night train network in support of the Altona rail station

More than 100 people from ten European countries attended the night train conference in Altona, Hamburg from October 18th to 20th. They expressed their strong support to keep and develop the Altona terminus rail station.

The growing climate awareness is raising the demand for rail travel with night and motorail trains. »We need more capacity for trains and for this we need the Altona station«, says Ellie Cijvat, from Sweden.

The Swedish government is planning to subsidize the introduction of night trains from Stockholm to Hamburg, and more and more people are also using the night trains from Vienna, Innsbruck/Munich and Zurich to Hamburg. Altona is an important hub in the growing night train network in Europe.

At the meeting in Hamburg the night train coordination network Back on Track met with experts, national transport authorities and politicians, among them Karima Delli, chair of the transport committee in the European parliament.

»Extending the night train offer would be a win for the City and the Metropolitan Region of Hamburg«, Senator (Minister) of Finance Dr. Andreas Dressel declared in his welcome message.

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

From 18.10. to 20.10. the international annual conference of the European night train initiatives "Back on track" will take place in Hamburg under the motto "Night trains for future – the future of night trains". The European night train initiatives are united by the goal of re-establishing respectively expanding cross-border night train connections as an alternative to short- and medium-haul flights. This is a right and important goal and highly up-to-date in view of current debates on climate-friendly travel.

Most European centres (Paris, Brussels, London, Amsterdam, Stockholm, Warsaw, Prague, Milan) cannot be reached from Hamburg with a day train. Night trains currently only travel in the direction of Austria and Switzerland. Not only in Hamburg, but throughout Germany, the number of night train connections has declined significantly in recent years. But there are also positive messages. For example, there have recently been news about the consideration of resuming night train services.

As a railway fan and long-time night train traveler, I would personally be delighted if there really were a renaissance in night train travel. This requires an expansion of the offer – and travelers who take advantage of this offer! Let us hope that the discussion about climate-friendly travel will also stimulate demand for night trains. If more people decide to reach their destination by rail than by air, the offer will follow.

From Hamburg's point of view, it is clear that an expansion of night train services would benefit the city and the metropolitan region. Hamburg's citizens like to travel, but at the same time Hamburg, as the second largest German city, is becoming increasingly attractive for many city tourists from the European area. With the StadtRad and attractive public transport facilities for visitors, Hamburg already has an attractive offer for exploring Hamburg in a climate-friendly way. Therefore, it would only be logical if a growing environmental awareness also had a positive influence on the choice of transport mode for the journey to Hamburg.

I am delighted that many active people are coming together here in Hamburg this weekend to work for a better night train service in Europe. Among the guests will be the Chair of the Transport Committee of the European Parliament, the Secretary General of the Association of Rail New Entrants in Europe (ALLRAIL), representatives of the Swedish government, as well as representatives of the Fridays for Future and the Scientists for Future initiatives. This promises interesting presentations and exciting discussions.

I wish all participants of the "Back on Track" conference a good interaction in the coming days.

Your
Dr. Andreas Dressel
Finance Senator