



Back-on-Track Europe

European network to promote cross-border and night trains
www.back-on-track.eu

PROPOSAL

EU initiated target network for night trains 2035

10 April 2025

Conditions to be established:

- Night trains must be treated as a separate traffic segment, thus be exempted from TAC exceeding direct cost and get priority in slot allocations.
- The ERA must define a go-everywhere standard for night train carriages.
- (Ideally) there should be one, and not more than one responsible competent authority per member state.

This is how we think a European network could be created by the EU latest by 2035:

- Competent authorities for ordering PSO traffic must be authorized to cooperate in financing cross-border night train PSOs. This should allow one member state to potentially subsidize more than its own proportion of the route, if needed.
- Availability of rolling stock is crucial. It shall be specified in the various PSO, but the European Investment Bank shall invest in a pool of rolling stock, that can run everywhere in the Union, and be handled by rolling stock leasing companies and available for every night train operations in the Union. This market is important to supplement national- and company owned pools.
- The timespan of the PSOs must allow for the handling of rolling stock. This can be achieved by different means:
 - The timespan of the PSO lasts for 8-10 years and should contain the option of the rolling stock to be taken over by a new operator if the PSO is awarded to a different operator.
 - The PSO (or multiple PSOs) could be divided into operations and accompanied by another PSO for suitable rolling stock to be leased to the winner of the operational PSO.
- To triple the current night train traffic DG MOVE should propose a network of approximately 300 routes.



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- The routes should then be tendered as PSO individually route by route or as a bundle following a market testing procedure by the relevant competent authorities whenever they are ready.
- Conditions must allow operators who already operate a route to continue to do so, even if, under Open Access conditions, when no other bids were made. However, the minimum standards that these operators shall meet will be specified in the tendering; concerning stops, number of days running and service standards for the train.
- The EU should allocate the means from its budget to support member states with 50% of the needed subsidies.

There is no contradiction between day- and night train operations.

Where existing rail transport with high speed takes more than four hours, and travelling time is less than 18 hours, night trains become relevant and should be found in the plan.