



Event Review

City in the Spotlight

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Innovation

Long

HOME > UNCATEGORIZED > Eurostar Bailout: calls for market opening remedies which support on-rail competition

Eurostar Bailout: calls for market opening remedies which support on-rail competition

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*In light of a possible Eurostar government bailout, **Tangent** sits down with **Nick Brooks**, secretary general at **ALLRAIL**, to discuss the impacts of excluding other open access operators, and how market opening for a post-COVID recovery of rail can be successful.*

Recent reports suggest Eurostar is expected to receive a government bailout, despite open-access operators such as Hull Trains and Grand Central Rail receiving no funding support.

Taxpayer subsidiaries are expected to top over £10bn by the end of 2021. Nick Brooks, secretary general of Alliance of Passenger Rail New Entrants in Europe (ALLRAIL), explained: “We believe that in this crisis all operators, at least in the same country, should be treated the same fair and equal way.”

“Therefore, if Eurostar is helped then Hull trains and other open access long distant operators within the UK should be,



Nick Brooks, Secretary General
of ALLRAIL

especially seeing as they serve UK communities and the domestic city routes.”

Other European countries, such as Italy, offered extensive support for open-access operators. They calculated predicted sales – based on previous years sales – to calculate a funding package for the operators.

“ We believe that in this crisis all operators, at least in the same country, should be treated the same fair and equal way

ALLRAIL: Open the market for bailed out trains

Nick expressed his concerns of what will happen if Eurostar receives a bailout without any market remedies: “If you bail out Eurostar they will say thank you very much, then they will go back to the same old ways. Then we will only have Eurostar on the line in 20 years.”

“That is why competitive remedies are important. We need a double down on market opening which can even help achieve the green deal.”

“ That is why competitive remedies are important. We need a double down on market opening

In Italy, they have had private and nationalised services operating on the same track since 2012. Since this time, ticket prices have reduced, while ridership has increased over 50%.

Nick explained to Tangent what the benefits of introducing competitive remedies to Eurostar would have on passenger rail. He said: “Wherever there has been a marketing opening it has gone well. I mean look at Italy, where in just 8 years there are two high speed operators on the same track.”

“A bit like the competition you see in British Airways and Easyjet, it has doubled the number of people accessing the high speed networks since 2012. Which is an incredible bonus for passenger rail.”

Logically, including a new operator on the line would increase jobs, increase competition and make Eurostar respond to the new demands of passenger rail.

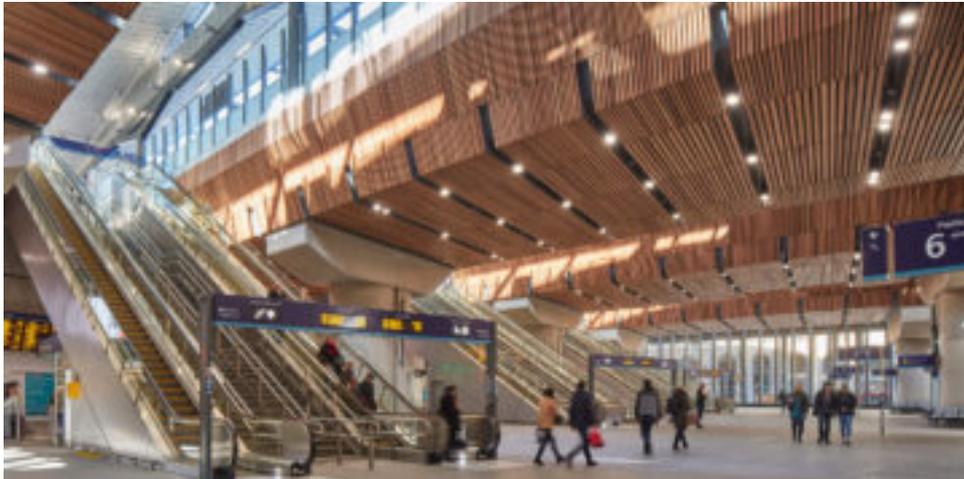
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by Editor

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