

PRESS RELEASE

EU Year of Rail Kick-off in Lisbon with new long distance Open Access rail in Portugal & Europe

LISBON, March 29th 2021: today is the Kick-off event for the EU Year of Rail 2021.

In order to celebrate this, ALLRAIL is pleased to highlight the growing number of privately owned passenger rail operators investing in NEW long distance Open Access services. These will lead to modal shift in Europe. For example:

- **Snälltåget's NEW night train route Sweden – Denmark – Germany – Austria.**
- **RegioJet's NEW night train route Austria – Czechia – Poland – Ukraine.**
- **FlixTrain's NEW daytime rail services within Sweden.**
- **FirstGroup's NEW daytime rail services between England and Scotland.**

And, latest of all, in the host country of today's event:

- **Barraqueiro with NEW services between the North and South of Portugal.**

Praise should be given to both the EU Commission and **existing EU regulation** stipulating that commercially operated "Open Access" rail services (i.e. without subsidy) must be the default. This is the best approach to achieve innovative and demand-driven services that are not reliant on taxpayer handouts.

If European governments want to spend money on long distance rail, then they should ensure that the right conditions for Open Access are possible, namely:

1. Permanent track access charge reduction, in line with the recent EU Regulation 2020/1429.
2. Fair opportunity to purchase or lease carriages, such as setting up rolling stock pool that all operators can access in a non-discriminatory manner.
3. Impartial ticket retail & through ticketing, to make rail more accessible.

ALLRAIL Secretary General Nick Brooks says: "It is great news that there will be a new long distance Open Access operator in Portugal, which has the Presidency of the Council of the EU in the first half of the EU Year of Rail. For the sake of modal shift to rail, we wish Barraqueiro's new "B-Rail"¹ every success!"

¹ <https://www.railjournal.com/regions/europe/barraqueiro-forms-portuguese-open-access-operator/>