

PRESS RELEASE

New articles by "Investigate Europe" reveal growth of cross-border rail is hampered by protectionism

BRUSSELS, November 23rd, 2021: in a major new set of articles¹, independent reporters from the team at "Investigate Europe (IE)" have revealed that the growth of European cross-border passenger rail is still severely hampered by many national governments protecting their state-owned railway companies.

The EU wants to double the number of rail passengers by 2030: there's about 98 months to almost halve emissions so as to avert a rolling global catastrophe. Furthermore: in the 6-7 countries where it has been allowed to happen so far, market liberalisation has really boosted modal shift to rail.

Yet in most of Europe we still see governments deliberately delaying rail liberalisation until the 2030s and sabotaging the goals of the EU Green Deal.

IE's new set of articles describe how: *"The current state of European railways is that of a patchwork rather than a network".* In addition, there is a *"fortress mentality of national rail companies to liberalisation",* preferring to *"opt for a monopoly over domestic connections and a non-aggression pact with each other".*

But the Status Quo does not work. After 70 years and billions of euros in taxpayer subsidy, the market share of cross-border rail remains small – still less than 4%. **Citizens are being denied the benefits of a vibrant Single European Rail Area.**

Meanwhile: in the few cases where they do compete with each other, the national rail companies **themselves prove** the environmental benefit of liberalisation:

- Since SNCF began competing with Renfe between Madrid & Barcelona in May 2021, the total passenger numbers have already grown by 17% (versus all of 2019)².

ALLRAIL President Dr. Erich Forster says: *"To claim that rail liberalisation has failed is nonsense – on the contrary: it has barely even been allowed to start yet!"*

This is because too many European countries – such as Belgium³ & Norway⁴ – seek to maintain the Status Quo & give new 10-year direct awards to their state-owned national rail companies so they remain protected monopolies until the 2030s.

But this is too late for the EU Green Deal! The Single EU Rail Area will remain fragmented & small: a huge disadvantage for both passengers & the environment.

¹ <https://www.investigate-europe.eu/en/2021/derailed-europe-railway/>

² https://twitter.com/ALLRAIL_EU/status/1448977693526081550

³ <https://newmobility.news/2021/11/22/nmbs-sncbs-monopoly-fixed-for-another-ten-years/>

⁴ <https://www.railjournal.com/policy/norwegian-government-halts-further-competitive-tendering-of-rail-services/>