


WHITE PAPER

# RAIL TRANSPORT FOR INTERNATIONAL TOURISM IN EUROPE


Towards a shared  
vision for a more  
sustainable growth

By the European Travel Commission (ETC) and Eurail B.V.

This white paper is co-edited by the European Tourism futures Institute (ETFI - [www.etfi.eu](http://www.etfi.eu)). The ETFI is the research institute of the Academy of Leisure & Tourism, NHL Stenden University, The Netherlands. Project team: Stefan Hartman (contact person), Bernadett Papp, Ian Yeoman, Albert Postma.

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**White Paper - Rail transport for international tourism in Europe:  
Towards a shared vision for a more sustainable growth**

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## FOREWORD BY THE EUROPEAN TRAVEL COMMISSION

Train travel and tourism belong together since their birth in Europe in the 19th century, when the industrial revolution greatly expanded the group of people who could afford the European Grand Tours previously reserved for the few members of the nobility. Long before the invention of the aeroplane, tourist groups were boarding excursion trains, and innovative products like Thomas Cook's «inclusive independent travel» around Europe were made possible by the continent's rapidly expanding railway network. Travel for leisure then spread worldwide and has grown exponentially to reach 1.5 billion<sup>1</sup> tourism arrivals in 2019.

Almost 200 years later we see Europe setting the example once more by taking the global lead on one of the major challenges of our time and committing to become the world's first climate-neutral continent. We all should take our fair share in the transformation to this new economy. In the European Union, tourism has grown to account for more than 10% of the GDP, securing more than 27 million jobs and €400 billion export revenue<sup>2</sup>.

Precisely because of its crucial importance for the European economy, tourism must also lead the way and ensure that Europe stays at the forefront of global climate action, while securing that no one is left behind. This white paper, produced jointly by ETC and Eurail, testifies that our two sectors are willing to become, once again, inseparable, and help the transformation that Europe aspires to.

Tourism stimulates economic growth where it is most needed and helps to sustain our cultural and natural heritage. Train travel connects Europeans and gives our guests from origin markets the opportunity to get to know the real face of Europe. Re-uniting train travel and tourism can generate additional revenue to fund infrastructure enjoyed by visitors and residents. Expanding tourism flows to lesser known destinations via train connections will help the rejuvenation of rural areas and remote regions, and will promote an awareness of a common European identity marked by diversity and inclusion.

Here we propose four scenarios for a desirable future which help to illustrate how the roles and actions of stakeholders could influence the future of international leisure travel by train. The most ambitious scenario illustrates how seamless travel in Europe can result from the collective effort of many stakeholders, including the railways, operators, DMOs/NTOs, governments, etc. This White Paper is the first step on a long journey, which we hope will be joined by the EU institutions. I wish you a pleasant reading.

Eduardo Santander

Executive Director

European Travel Commission

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<sup>1</sup> UNWTO World Tourism Barometer, 2020.

<sup>2</sup> WTTC, 2018 data & UNWTO, 2019 data



## FOREWORD BY EURAIL

This study marks a step forward in the collaboration between Eurail B.V. and tourism destinations in Europe. Since 1959, Eurail has been offering travellers from all over the world the opportunity to explore all the diverse and unique travel experiences Europe has to offer. With a Eurail or Interrail Pass (for non-European and European citizens respectively) anyone can enjoy borderless travel on an extensive network of trains and ferries across Europe, via any route they choose. Eurail is therefore a natural partner in initiatives that strengthen cooperation amongst stakeholders from the travel industry in Europe.

Since the European Green Deal established Climate Change as the priority of the next European Commission, a policy debate has started with a reflection on how the European tourism sector could contribute to achieving Europe's ambitious climate targets. In this context, it is evident that both railways and tourism destinations should play an integral role in being part of the public debate and continuing initiatives that shape such dialogue. In this spirit, Eurail and ETC took the lead and launched a research project that explores possible future scenarios for international rail travel in Europe.

Today, only a limited number of international tourists use train as the main mode of transport for their holidays in Europe. Thus, tourism has only a marginal weight on the rail system's EU annual turnover. To change the current state of play, all relevant actors across the industry should join forces and take action – including railways, national tourism boards and European institutions. The four scenarios described in this study are meant as a first step in this direction. Scenarios are designed to trigger discussions on how stakeholders can engage, and eventually foster policy initiatives, in favour of more sustainable transport for a more sustainable tourism.

I trust this study will be of inspiration to the many organisations who actively support European tourism development and growth. Together, we can work to build a shared vision for sustainable growth.

Carlo Maria Boselli  
General Manager  
Eurail B.V.



# INTRODUCTION





## INTRODUCTION

Tourism as one of the leading industries in the world grew by 4% in 2018, outperforming the global economy. Arrival numbers to Europe - the leading destination worldwide - have been continuously growing for the past decade. The number of international tourist arrivals to EU-28 increased by over 2% each year between 1995-2010<sup>3</sup> and is forecasted to grow further by an annual average of 2% towards 2025<sup>4</sup>. As a result of such sustained growth, nowadays tourism contributes significantly to local economies. The industry generates (directly and indirectly) over 10% of the total EU28 GDP, a value forecasted to rise to 11% by 2027<sup>5</sup>. Growth is supported by EU institutions, National Tourism Organisations (NTOs) and national governments that aim to enhance and diversify the existing tourism offers by supporting private sector initiatives.<sup>6</sup>

Growth is particularly strong in the leisure travel segment, which has grown faster than travel for professional and other purposes, such as visiting friends and relatives, health and religious travel. Globally, the share of leisure travel grew from 50% in 2000 to 56% in 2018<sup>7</sup>. Leisure travel spending (inbound and domestic) already accounts for the vast majority (78%) of GDP attributable to the travel and tourism sectors and its value is expected to grow by over 2% per annum by 2028<sup>8</sup>. The growing industry means that people travel, more frequently and over longer distances<sup>9</sup>. Demand for mobility is increasing as transport is an essential component of the tourism system. Within this group and in line with the growing travel and tourism industry, the social awareness concerning sustainability and the implications of climate change has increased and societal pressure for more sustainable mobility gained momentum. Tourists are increasingly experienced and conscious of their environmental footsteps. In order to minimize the negative impacts, travellers are seeking ways to reduce their CO2 footprint and are keen to make new, unique and meaningful experiences.

Transport's emissions are a major source for environmental concerns. The societal implications, however, do not yet result in a swift or massive behavioral shift in how visitors travel, the way business models are organized and the design of governance of responsible destination development. There remains an attitude-behavior gap. Despite of the growing consciousness, the number of train travellers is relatively small in terms of modal share. Globally, air travel has increased from 46% in 2000 to 58% in 2018, while in the same period land transport has decreased from 49% to 39%. In 2018, the mode of transport was 58% by air, 37% by road, 4% by water and 2% by train<sup>10</sup>. For EU-28 residents, the modal share regarding leisure travel is 29% by air and 71% by land out of which 5% by train<sup>11</sup>. Here, railways can contribute to the tourism sector with sustainable mobility solutions and provide valid support in

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<sup>3</sup> UNWTO (2011) *Tourism Towards 2030, Global Overview*

<sup>4</sup> UNWTO (2019) *International tourism trends in EU-28 member states; current situation and forecasts for 2020-2025-2030*.

<sup>5</sup> WTTC (2017) *Travel & Tourism Economic Impact 2018 European Union*; WTTC (2019) *Global economic impact & trends 2019*; WTTC (2019) *Economic impact 2019 world*.

<sup>6</sup> *European Tourism Manifesto for Jobs and Growth*, accessed via <https://www.tourismmanifesto.eu/>

<sup>7</sup> UNWTO (2019) *International Tourism Highlights, 2019 Edition*; UNWTO (2018) *European Unions; tourism trends*;

<sup>8</sup> WTTC (2018) *Travel & tourism; economic impact 2018, Europe*

<sup>9</sup> OECD (2018) *Tourism Trends and Policies 2018*, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/tour-2018-en>

<sup>10</sup> UNWTO (2019) *International Tourism Highlights, 2019 Edition*; UNWTO (2018) *European Unions; tourism trends*;

<sup>11</sup> modal share of EU residents on leisure trips, 2016



improving the management of tourist flows, reducing pressure on popular hotspots<sup>12</sup> and promoting places outside popular tourism routes.

A gap between what people say (or feel) about environment and how people behave (hereinafter referred to as the 'attitude-behavior gap') exists and requires policy interventions. The public sector could accelerate the slow rate of market adaptation<sup>13</sup> and generate favorable conditions for train travel to grow whilst reducing the footprint on the environment. Destinations can contribute to this movement by promoting international leisure travel by train within Europe and integrated service delivery. Overall, cooperation between stakeholders and institutions' support are needed to promote growth as untapped potential is available.

Representatives of railways and destinations showed their interest to join forces<sup>14</sup> and work on a shared vision by drafting this white paper. The underlying assumption of this paper is that an increased use of rail transport for international leisure travel would help to reduce the environmental footprint of tourism and strengthen the management of tourist flows. EU institutions' commitment and support is needed to realize this vision under time pressure imposed by climate change and the identified gap between social attitude and the tourists' actual behavior.

While train travel could become the preferred transportation mode for some segments of the tourist demand, we must also recognize that travel by air will remain extremely important and efforts should not be spared in research and support to find ways to minimize its carbon footprint. Visitors from long-haul markets will continue arriving to Europe by air, and many remote areas and insular territories must remain easily accessible to travelers, a connection which should be guaranteed by continued investment in air transport infrastructure and services. Cooperation between NTOs, DMOs and airlines is well rooted in destination marketing and management of visitors' flows. Best practices and learnings could be partially replicated in a renewed collaboration initiatives between destinations and rail service providers.

By making use of strategic foresight, this white paper explores plausible futures and maps possible actionable interventions by EU institutions, destinations and railways. Four future scenarios are presented to help increase the use of train for international leisure travel through 2030.

**“Disclaimer: This paper focuses only on EU policies in the tourism sector. EU policies and investments in other sectors (e.g. transport) are considered as an external factor. The paper does not intend to provide any assessment of the impact of current and future EU policies and investments beyond those directly related to the tourism sector. The opinions expressed are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the views of Eurail BV and ETC.”**

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<sup>12</sup> MacKinsey & Company and WTTC [2017] *Coping with success; managing overcrowding in tourism destinations*; Peeters, P., Gössling, S., Klijs, J., Milano, C., Novelli, M., Dijkmans, C., Eijgelaar, E., Hartman, S., Heslinga, J., Isaac, R., Mitas, O., Moretti, S., Nawijn, J., Papp, B. and Postma, A. (2018) *Research for TRAN Committee - Overtourism: impact and possible policy responses*, European Parliament, Policy Department for Structural and Cohesion Policies, Brussels; World Tourism Organization; Centre of Expertise Leisure, Tourism & Hospitality; NHTV Breda University of Applied Sciences; and NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences (eds., 2018), 'Overtourism? Understanding and Managing Urban Tourism Growth beyond Perceptions'; UNWTO: Madrid; World Tourism Organization; Centre of Expertise Leisure, Tourism & Hospitality; NHTV Breda University of Applied Sciences; and NHL Stenden University of Applied Sciences (eds., 2019), 'Overtourism'? – Understanding and Managing Urban Tourism Growth beyond Perceptions, Volume 2: Case Studies, UNWTO, Madrid, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.18111/9789284420629>

<sup>13</sup> There are early signs (weak signals) of change such as niche players on sustainable travel, TIU promoting train travel over short haul flights, R&D in electric aviation

<sup>14</sup> Workshop with representatives of railways and destinations held on Wednesday June 26, 2019, Brussels





# STATE OF PLAY AND CURRENT CHALLENGES



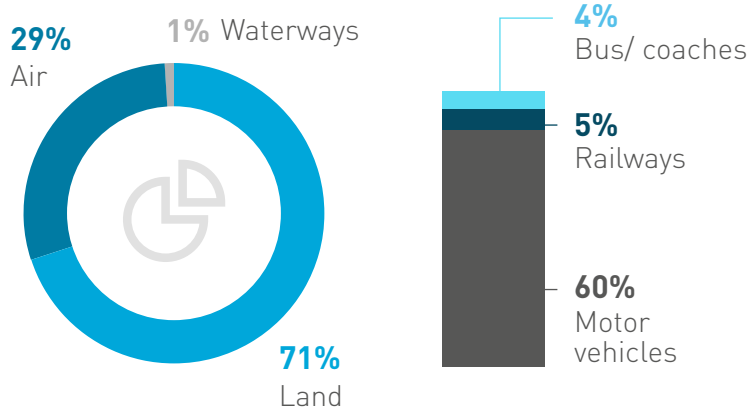
## STATE OF PLAY AND CURRENT CHALLENGES

Exploring the future requires an understanding of the current state of play and challenges that need to be overcome in order to increase international leisure travel by train. We draw on an extensive document study as well as workshop results<sup>15</sup>.

### THE CHALLENGE OF INCREASING THE MODAL SHARE

The tourism sector is growing steadily while the modal share of leisure travel by train remains stable. Currently the share within land transportation is about 5%. As the tourism sector in the EU is expected to grow further a rise in mobility demand is expected. To increase the modal share, this change should be accompanied by growth in leisure travel by train. To foster such developments, existing policy interventions are aimed at the liberalization of rail markets to increase competition. Furthermore, the emphasis is currently placed on the optimization of price/quality ratios, harmonization of technical and safety standards via the establishment of the European Railway Agency (now: European Union Agency for Railways), stimulation of infrastructure development, and the enhancement of service levels<sup>16</sup>. A range of other options to stimulate leisure travel by train that are outlined in the challenges below and in the scenarios currently receive limited policy attention. Consequently, funds to increase the modal share are limited<sup>17</sup> which is reinforced by tourism having only a marginal weight on the rail system's EU annual turnover<sup>18</sup>.

Figure 1 – Number of trips of EU residents for personal reasons by mode of transport (%), 2016<sup>19</sup>.



### THE CHALLENGE OF MEETING THE NEED FOR SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL

There is a pressing need for the transport sector to comply with environmental targets regarding the decarbonisation of transport, reduction of energy consumption and the ability to cope with mobility demands<sup>20,21</sup>. This need is fuelled by progressing urbanisation, growing demand for transportation, road congestion, increasing number of flights and polluting emissions. As a sustainable mode of transport, rail can contribute to the EU's Green Deal objectives as it is less CO<sub>2</sub> intensive than road and air travel and more energy efficient as well as safer than road travel<sup>22</sup>. As such, rail as the

<sup>15</sup> workshop with representatives of railways and destinations held on Wednesday June 26, 2019, Brussels,

<sup>16</sup> OECD 2016 efficiency of open access competition

<sup>17</sup> European Court of Auditors (2018) A European high-speed rail network: not a reality but an ineffective patchwork

<sup>18</sup> CER Policy Agenda 2019-2024

<sup>19</sup> Source: Eurostat.

<sup>20</sup> ERRAC (2017) Rail 2050 vision

<sup>21</sup> EU (2011) White Paper on transport

<sup>22</sup> EIA (2019) The Future of Rail; Opportunities for energy and the environment





backbone of sustainable, low-carbon mobility, both for urban, sub-urban and medium/long-distance transport has a potential<sup>23</sup>. However, to implement such changes, a shift in consumer behavior is needed. Besides behaviour, further issues to address are 1.) infrastructure connections, 2.) service provision, and 3.) the quality of services<sup>24</sup>. Even though many initiatives have been taken, meeting the above outlined objectives remains difficult given the challenges outlined below<sup>25</sup>.

## THE CHALLENGE OF STIMULATING LIBERALIZATION AND INTERMODAL COMPETITIVENESS

A series of four 'Railway Packages' have been introduced between 2001 and 2013. The fourth Railway Package targets inter alia domestic passenger services<sup>26</sup>. It aims to open up markets and promote competition by making competitive tendering of public service contracts mandatory, ensuring non-discriminatory access conditions, and removing legal barriers. Whereas some Member States have opened their rail markets to competition, the institutional landscape of railways across the EU is still extremely diversified. There is also diversification when it comes to intermodal competitive conditions<sup>27</sup>. Aviation is exempted from VAT whereas VAT applies to rail services on cross-border travel. Price differences are passed on to consumers and influence their preferences and decision making. The fourth Railway Package does also complete the technical pillar of the railway sector, allowing for greater interoperability of Europe's rail infrastructure and rolling stock.



<sup>23</sup> CER EIM UNIFE (2018) position paper; 2018 Graz Declaration: Starting a new era: clean, safe and affordable mobility for Europe

<sup>24</sup> EC (2017) Boosting growth and cohesion in EU border regions, COM(2017) 534 final; EC (2018) Comprehensive analysis of the existing cross-border rail transport connections and missing links on the internal EU borders;

<sup>25</sup> ITF Transport Outlook 2019

<sup>26</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/rail/news/2019-05-16-single-european-railway-area\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/rail/news/2019-05-16-single-european-railway-area_en)

<sup>27</sup> CER Policy Agenda 2019-2024



## THE CHALLENGE OF INTEGRATING (HIGH SPEEDS) RAIL NETWORKS

The high-speed network is increasing in length and there is a steady growth in the total number of passenger-kilometres as well<sup>28</sup>. High speed trains are becoming more competitive and in many cases are able to substitute short haul flights<sup>29, 30</sup>. EU co-funded investments in high-speed rail can be beneficial and EU support is significant, but it now covers only a fraction of the costs and there is no solid EU-wide strategic approach. Funding is also required for other actions such as electrifying tracks, harmonizing safety and ICT systems, enhancing service levels, greening of energy sources, and so on. Moreover, Member States plan and decide on their national networks hence a consistent and comprehensive international approach is lacking. Despite the progress, the current state of the network has recently been described as an ineffective patchwork<sup>31, 32</sup>.

## THE CHALLENGE OF STAKEHOLDER COOPERATION

Overcoming challenges requires effective support and efficient multi-stakeholder, multi-domain and multi-level cooperation. The observation is that the focus is largely on infrastructure and little on travel behavior shift. For example, within the European Commission, the alignment of DG Growth and DG Move is seen as suboptimal by stakeholders<sup>33</sup>.

The aviation sector successfully contributes to destination development due to a combination of 1) collaborations between tourism organisation (NTOs, DMOs) airlines, airports and tourism service providers; 2) public-private partnerships; 3) economic regulation by means of the liberalization of air transport; 4) increasing air service and connectivity; 5) effective destination marketing, 6) generating and sharing data, information and knowledge<sup>34</sup>. Future progress in the cooperation between European destination and railways must start from a model of cooperation which is mutually beneficial for both parties. European institutions can directly influence the degree of collaboration between the railway and tourism sector through targeted tourism policies (see section on future scenarios for further explanation).“

## CHANGING THE CURRENT STATE OF PLAY?

The current state of play can be influenced by the processes and outcomes of individual and collective decision making by destinations, railways and policy makers of EU institutions. Furthermore, external drivers of change, described in the following section, may also help realizing the potential of rail transport for international tourism in Europe. In the following section the key drivers will be explained.

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<sup>28</sup> European Parliament (2015) High-speed rail in the EU. Briefing, September 2015

<sup>29</sup> Armstrong, J. & Preston, J. (2011) Alternative railway futures: growth and/or specialisation? *Journal of Transport Geography* 19 (2011) 1570–1579; Clewlow, R. R., Joseph M. Sussman, J. M. & Balakrishnan, H. (2014) The impact of high-speed rail and low-cost carriers on European air passenger traffic

<sup>30</sup> OECD & ITF (2019), ITF Transport Outlook 2019, OECD Publishing, Paris, [https://doi.org/10.1787/transp\\_outlook-en-2019-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/transp_outlook-en-2019-en).

<sup>31</sup> European Court of Auditors (2018) A European high-speed rail network: not a reality but an ineffective patchwork.

<sup>32</sup> ETC (2018) European high-speed rail network, Briefings for ETC members, November 2018

<sup>33</sup> workshop with representatives of railways and destinations held on Wednesday June 26, 2019, Brussels,

<sup>34</sup> UNWTO (2012) Global Report on Aviation Responding to the needs of new tourism markets and destinations.





# DRIVERS OF CHANGE





## DRIVERS OF CHANGE

External forces will drive change in the nature of transport for international leisure travel in Europe over the next decade. For this study, the focus is on drivers of change who might produce large-scale and long-lasting impacts on the social political and economic environment in Europe, which are relevant for the European tourism sector. Such forces are considered as being independent from the actions and decisions of railways, European National Tourism Organisations and European Institutions. This section presents a set of four forces driving major change in the European tourism sector, which have been identified through a review of published literature<sup>35</sup> and a workshop with industry representatives<sup>36</sup>. This overview intends to map some of the key forces that might impact on the cooperation between railway companies, National Tourism Organisations and European Institutions to increase the use of train travel for leisure purposes and is not meant to be fully comprehensive.



<sup>35</sup> OECD (2018)

<sup>36</sup> Workshop organized by ETC and Eurail with representatives of the European railway and tourism sector, held in Brussels on Wednesday June 26, 2019.



## WHAT DRIVES INTERNATIONAL TOURISM GROWTH?

Europe is the leading region in terms of international arrivals as well as international tourism receipts. It means Europe handles much of the tourism flows globally<sup>37</sup>. Not only inbound and outbound tourism is of high significance for the continent but cross-border travel amongst EU member states plays a key role as well.

The constant increase in arrival numbers can be associated to the impact of four megatrends which are discussed in detail below:



1/

**CONSTANTLY  
EVOLVING VISITOR  
DEMAND**

2/

**INCREASING AWARENESS  
OF THE IMPORTANCE  
OF SUSTAINABILITY**

3/

**TECHNOLOGICAL  
INNOVATIONS  
AND UNCERTAINTY**

4/

**INCREASING  
TRAVEL  
MOBILITY<sup>38</sup>.**

These developments will continue to drive visitor numbers up having significant impacts on travel volumes. Consequently, new approaches may be required in terms of travel facilitation, transport technology, innovation, infrastructure developments and transport policy<sup>39</sup>.

### ***Driver 1: Evolving visitor demand***

Travel demand is highly influenced by changing demographics and lifestyles. In the coming years, implications of the globally ageing society, new generations and the growing middle class will most likely alter the way people travel and the type of experiences they seek<sup>40</sup>.

As a consequence of the above mentioned socio-demographic trends new market segments are emerging. Seniors are currently the fastest growing tourism demand segment in Europe and the only one that is expected to increase its market share in the next 5 to 10 years<sup>41</sup>. According to forecasts, by 2050 34% of the regional population will be 60+<sup>42</sup>. As travel and tourism is one of the major industries that can benefit from the aging population, attention must be paid to the unique needs and mobility demands of this target group. Senior citizens are usually high-spenders, they have immense free time to travel and they enjoy good health<sup>43</sup> and remain active<sup>44</sup>. Senior citizens are especially interested in

<sup>37</sup> UNWTO (2019). International Tourism Highlights 2019 edition, Madrid, Spain.

<sup>38</sup> OECD (2018).

<sup>39</sup> OECD (2018).

<sup>40</sup> VISA (2014). Mapping the Future of Global Travel and Tourism, available at:

<https://usa.visa.com/dam/VCOM/global/partner-with-us/documents/global-travel-and-tourism-insights-by-visa.pdf>

<sup>41</sup> VISA (2014).

<sup>42</sup> United Nations (2019). World Population Prospects 2019: Highlights, United Nations, New York.

<sup>43</sup> Future Foundation (2015). Future Traveler Tribes 2030, Understanding Tomorrow's Traveler, available at:

<https://amadeus.com/documents/en/retail-travel-agencies/research-report/amadeus-future-traveller-tribes-2030-report.pdf>

<sup>44</sup> Horwath HTL (2015). Tourism Megatrends, 10 things you need to know about the future of tourism, available at:

<http://corporate.cms-horwathhtl.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2015/12/Tourism-Mega-Trends4.pdf>



slow, experiential tourism<sup>45</sup> which makes them a relevant target group for train travel for leisure purposes<sup>46</sup>. Taking into consideration the special needs of the aging population, a seamless for travel that covers transportation within the place of residence and within the place visited may turn into a major enabler of travel for this growing segment of the travel demand market.

In line with the aging society, the growth potential of the accessible tourism sector in Europe is increasing<sup>47</sup>. As the demand for inclusive and accessible travel services is constantly growing, adaptation and adjustment is of vital importance in the mobility sector. Universal design of transport systems will gain strategic importance<sup>48</sup>.

Emerging generations, such as Generation Y<sup>49</sup> and Z will continue to represent important market opportunities in the coming decades. Generation Z will become the major force on the labor market by 2040<sup>50</sup>. Satisfying their needs will pose challenges that may impact upon the entire value chain. Their lifestyle is driven by technological innovations, digitalization, the search for unique and authentic experiences and they tend to travel more independently<sup>51</sup>. They indicate climate change as the major global societal challenge<sup>52</sup>. The shift from Generation Y to Generation Z is rather big and service providers may need to significantly adjust their communications and products to meet the expectations of this market segment.

A new travelling class is emerging due to the expansion of the middle class, also in countries such as China and India<sup>53, 54</sup>. The increasing discretionary income of this segment allows them to travel further and more often. Their reliance on technology and their increasing purchasing power makes them better connected to goods and services, however they still seek value for money.

## **Driver 2: Sustainability awareness**

There is a rather complex relationship between travel and tourism and the natural environment. Tourism is largely dependent on the natural capital of destinations and can significantly contribute towards its protection. However, travel and tourism is one of the key contributors towards climate change and related issues. The use of large amount of natural resources, the large quantity of harmful emissions and poor waste management have been on the top of the agenda. According to statistics, the contribution of tourism to the global CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is 5% and if all greenhouse emissions are taken into account this number may be even higher<sup>55</sup>. Aviation alone accounts for 40 % of these emissions while other modes such as cruises, cars, railway etc. together account for the same amount<sup>56</sup>.

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<sup>45</sup> Horwath HTL (2015)

<sup>46</sup> For overall purposes, only 8% of EU population aged 55+ travels by train, according to an European Commission report on Europeans' satisfaction with passenger rail services published in 2018.

<sup>47</sup> Weinswig, D. (2016). Gen Z: Get Ready for the Most Self-conscious, Demanding Consumer Segment, Fung Global Retail and Technology, available at: <https://www.fbicgroup.com/sites/default/files/Gen%20Z%20Report%202016%20by%20Fung%20Global%20Retail%20Tech%20August%202016.pdf>

<sup>48</sup> OECD (2018).

<sup>49</sup> IPK International (2019). ITB World Travel Trends 2018/2019, Messe Berlin GmbH, Berlin.

<sup>50</sup> OECD (2018).

<sup>51</sup> OECD (2018).

<sup>52</sup> Deloitte (2019) The Deloitte Global Millennial Survey 2019, p. 6.

<https://www2.deloitte.com/content/dam/Deloitte/global/Documents/About-Deloitte/deloitte-2019-millennial-survey.pdf>

<sup>53</sup> VISA (2014).

<sup>54</sup> WTTC (2019). Travel and Tourism: Economic Impact 2019, London, UK.

<sup>55</sup> UNWTO (2017). Tourism for Development, Volume 1: Key Areas for Action, UNWTO, Madrid.

<sup>56</sup> UNWTO (2017). World Conference on Tourism and Future Energy, Unlocking Low-Carbon Growth Opportunities, Astana, Kazakhstan.



In view of the above, there is an urgent need for complementary and alternative travel modes and, at the same time, a need for more research in innovative solutions to minimize the CO<sub>2</sub> footprint of transport modes. The travel landscape is changing as awareness spreads across society concerning the negative impacts of travel (movements such as ‘shame of flying’, slow travel, compensation schemes etc.), and service providers invest more and more into the greening and decarbonizing of the industry. It is widely argued that transport does not only need to be efficient and sustainable but also affordable, accessible, safe and resilient. The shift from fuel-based transport systems towards carbon-efficient solutions<sup>57</sup> is paving the way for alternative travel modes such as railways. Currently rail is the most carbon-efficient mode (motorized) of transport as it accounts for only 3% of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions<sup>58</sup>. The rail sector has already reached the EU’s 2030 renewable energy target for transport. The use of wind energy and hydropower for electric trains has already become a reality in Sweden and Switzerland<sup>59</sup>.

### **Driver 3: Enabling technologies**

Technological innovations are revolutionizing the way people live, travel and do business. The newly available technology provides endless opportunities for travel and tourism. Advanced data collection and analysis made it possible to provide highly personalized and integrated services. The use of big data has become one of the key elements of competitive advantage<sup>60</sup>. Due to the wide usage of smart phones and other gadgets, digital channels (mobility and social networks) are becoming extremely popular<sup>61</sup>. Artificial intelligence, 4G/5G, augmented and virtual reality, machine learning, robotization and automation<sup>62</sup> have opened up new possibilities in terms of the customer/passenger experience. Technologies are offering possibilities for the rail sector to upgrade the service and comfort levels in order to meet the needs of contemporary tourists by focusing on user centric product design, enhance the position of a competitive alternative and grow out to become the preferred choice (dynamic pricing, mobile ticketing, integrated booking systems, real-time information provision (e.g. time tables etc.)). However, the unpredictability and uncertainty of how the existing technologies will evolve and what new technologies will enter the market pose great challenges for service providers. The new technologies will continue to cause distributions on the labor market<sup>63</sup>. The abundance of information and the variety of available platforms and channels are creating a highly complex environment<sup>64</sup>. Furthermore, even though the majority of the travelers embrace the new technological developments, a counter trend of people seeking un-plugged experiences is emerging<sup>65</sup>.

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<sup>57</sup> UNWTO (2017). World Conference on Tourism and Future Energy, Unlocking Low-Carbon Growth Opportunities, Astana, Kazakhstan.

<sup>58</sup> CER (2019). Policy Agenda 2019-2024, Ever Better Railways for an Ever Closer Union, available at: <http://www.cer.be/publications/latest-publications/cer-policy-agenda-2019-2024>

<sup>59</sup> CER (2019). Policy Agenda 2019-2024, Ever Better Railways for an Ever Closer Union, available at: <http://www.cer.be/publications/latest-publications/cer-policy-agenda-2019-2024>

<sup>60</sup> WTTC (2019). World, Transformed, Megatrends and their Implications for Travel and Tourism, available at: <https://www.wttc.org/publications/2019/megatrends-2019/>

<sup>61</sup> Horwath HTL (2015)

<sup>62</sup> Deloitte (2018). Moving the Global Travel Industry Forward, Special Article Produced for the 2018 WTTC Global Summit, available at: <https://www2.deloitte.com/global/en/pages/consumer-business/articles/moving-global-travel-industry-forward.html>

<sup>63</sup> OECD (2018).

<sup>64</sup> Horwath (2015).

<sup>65</sup> Ofcom (2016). The Communications Market Report 2016, available at: [https://www.ofcom.org.uk/\\_\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0024/26826/cmr\\_uk\\_2016.pdf](https://www.ofcom.org.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0024/26826/cmr_uk_2016.pdf)





## Driver 4: Travel mobility

Mobility demands are on the rise as a result of constant growth in the tourism industry. However, it is not only the visitor numbers that put pressure on the sector. Mobility is currently undergoing a revolution due to a range of social, technological and economic transformations. The major disruptive forces are: electric and alternative vehicles (e.g. alternative powertrains), connected and autonomous vehicles and real-time, on-demand mobility services. As a result of the growing global population, urbanization and the environmental agenda new forms of mobility and newly adapted mobility systems are needed. As a consequence of the increased pressure on the transport infrastructure, there are emerging discussions on CO2 taxes, road pricing and congestion charges. In response to the above, the mobility ecosystem will most likely shift towards data-driven, driverless, more efficient and environmental friendly services. Travelers will also more extensively seek seamless journeys with constant access to real-time information, booking options, etc. A new multimodal mobility ecosystem is needed characterized by interconnected value chains, new commercial partnerships and collaborations<sup>66</sup>.

More sustainable transport capacities need to be (made) available and/or available capacity needs to be used (more) efficiently. Meeting mobility demands requires integral approaches and solutions at EU level. On the one hand it is a question of pursuing a particular modal shift or modal share, on the other hand it is about seeking solutions that stakeholders consider efficient, effective and sustainable. According to forecasts, global air transport will nearly double by 2035, however by 2050 significant growth (120% to 230%) is expected in the global road and rail passenger travel as well<sup>67</sup>. As the increase in air passenger travel is expected to slow down after 2030 (globally) due to the saturation of the existing network the aviation sector is expected to face stronger competition from other modes of transport<sup>68</sup>.

Table 1 – Summary of forces driving change based on OECD (2018) and workshop results<sup>69</sup>. 

Evolving visitor demand		
Aging population: lifelong learning, experience driven, inclusive and accessible travel.	Rise of Generation Y & Z: digitalization, authentic experience, individual travel.	Expanding middle class: travel further and more often.
Sustainability awareness		
Increasing awareness in society regarding sustainability.	Changing travel landscape in favour of sustainable travel modes.	Continuation of greening and decarbonizing travel.
Enabling technology		
Progressing data driven decision making.	Advancing digitalisation, automation and digital platforms.	Enhanced service levels and service quality.
Travel mobility		
New forms of mobility: electric, alternative, connected and autonomous vehicles.	Emergence of multimodal transportation systems for seamless travel.	Integration of Mobility as a service (MaaS).

<sup>66</sup> KPMG (2019). Mobility 2030: Transforming the Mobility Landscape, How Consumers and Businesses can Seize the Benefits of the Mobility Revolution, Thriving on Disruption Series, available at: <https://home.kpmg/content/dam/kpmg/uk/pdf/2019/08/mobility-2030-transforming-the-mobility-landscape.pdf>

<sup>67</sup> OECD & ITF (2019), ITF Transport Outlook 2019, OECD Publishing, Paris, [https://doi.org/10.1787/transp\\_outlook-en-2019-en](https://doi.org/10.1787/transp_outlook-en-2019-en).

<sup>68</sup> OECD & ITF (2019).

<sup>69</sup> Workshop with representatives railways and destinations held on Wednesday June 26, 2019, Brussels,





# STRATEGIC FORESIGHT & FUTURE SCENARIOS

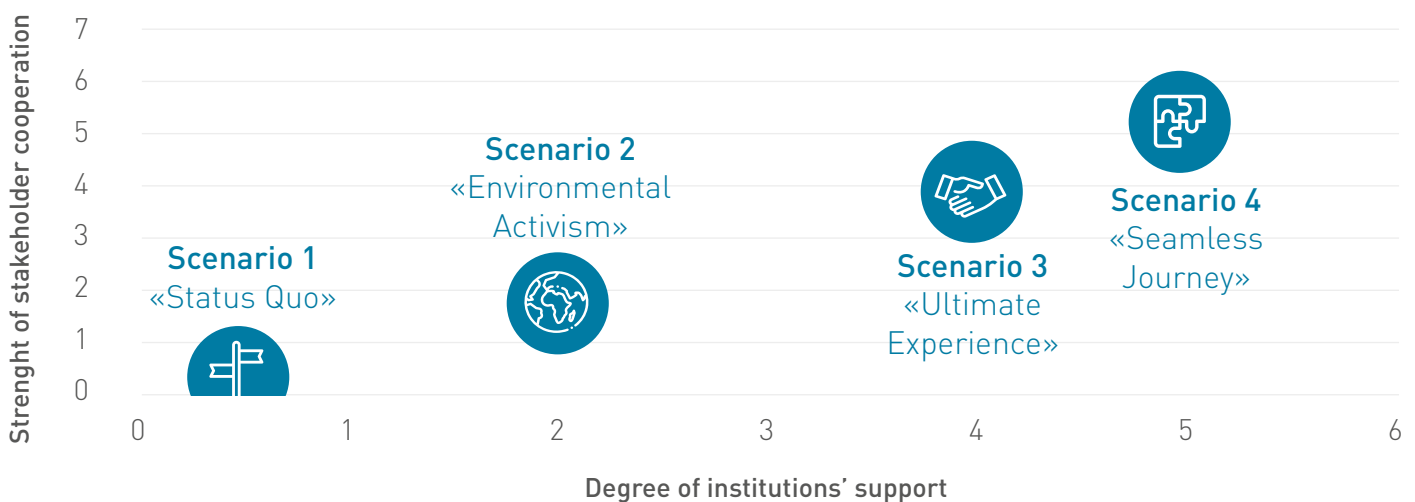


## STRATEGIC FORESIGHT & FUTURE SCENARIOS

Towards 2030, international leisure travel by train in Europe is undergoing vast changes. Some changes are inevitable and irreversible. Others are harder to predict and will come unexpectedly. It is possible to act upon those who are predictable and to be best prepared to deal with unpredictable ones. It is now time to make informed decisions.

Strategic foresight involves understanding the future and applying future oriented insights to strategic activities and decision making – a fusion of futures methods with those of strategic management. This white paper presents four goal-oriented scenarios of possible but plausible futures for international leisure travel by train. The scenarios are based on key challenges presented along the two axes of **degree of institutions' support** and **strength of stakeholder collaboration**<sup>70</sup>. The four scenarios are illustrative and serve the purpose to provoke thinking and support the identification of a shared vision on the most desirable future scenario for all parties involved. The scenarios are not mutually exclusive or meant to be exhaustive or prescriptive.

Figure 2 – Degree of institutions' support.



The scenarios help to illustrate how the roles and actions of stakeholders could influence the future of international leisure travel by train. More importantly, the scenarios provide stakeholders with a set of alternative futures to learn about, choose from and align their actions with. Each scenario provides insight into choices of stakeholders and projected outcomes for train travel of 2030, and how these choices and outcomes align with the key forces driving change as presented earlier. All scenarios are probable, whereby one is more ambitious than the other, and one depends more on actions of stakeholders than others. For instance, the most ambitious scenario (no. 4) has the biggest influence on international train travel and aligns best with key forces driving change but requires major changes in efforts of stakeholders. Stakeholders of the international train travel and tourism sector will need to decide together which combination of features from the four scenarios they believe will best help increase the use of train for international travel and achieve the objectives of greener, better managed tourist flows.

<sup>70</sup> Scenarios are based on output of the workshop with representatives railways and destinations held on Wednesday June 26, 2019, Brussels, an extensive literature review and on scenario frameworks to differentiate between scenarios such as Dator, J. (2002) Advancing futures studies in higher education. Westport: Praeger, and Bezold, C. (2009) Aspirational Futures, Journal of Futures Studies, May 2009, 13(4): 81 - 90





## SCENARIO 1: STATUS QUO

### STRATEGIC FRAME

In the **status quo** scenario, stakeholders will not make much changes compared to the current situation. This scenario is characterised by almost no change in stakeholder cooperation and hardly any change in institution's support.

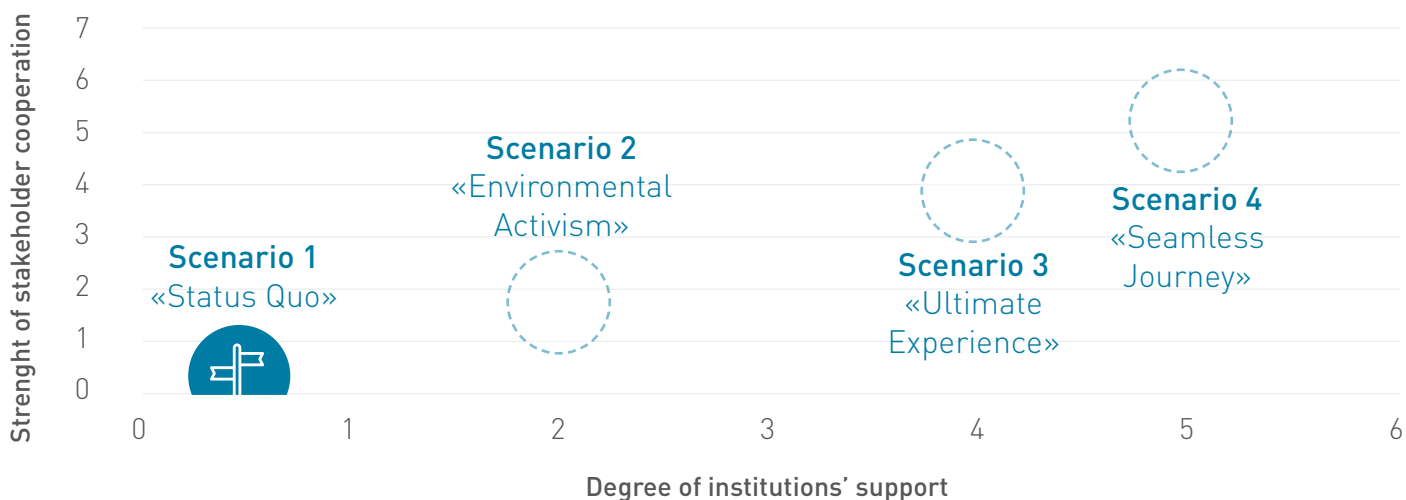
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Figure 3 – Degree of institutions' support.



## ROLES AND ACTIONS OF STAKEHOLDERS

- Railways:** Railways increasingly show interest in the economic opportunities of rail transport for international tourism in Europe, but domestic rail passenger services and freight transport remain priority segments over tourism. Advances on collective ticketing systems and other sorts of actions geared towards improving the consumer-oriented service quality to meet the needs and draw more interest of international leisure travellers depend on commercial agreements between operators. Despite high investments in ICT infrastructures, integrated travel solutions within and between modes of transports do not reach a pan-European dimension.
- Tourism sector:** The EU tourism sector remains highly fragmented. It is complex to handle due to the many stakeholders. Absent coordination on management of tourism flows results in increasing competition between airlines, buses and railways on the same tourist routes, not exploiting Europe's potential for tourism development through the valorisation of less known destinations. From a (OTA) business perspective, small scale operations add value by creating unique tailor-made tours whereas large scale market entry remains labour and capital intensive. It poses a business risk because the consumer is used to and benchmarks with the high service levels that can be found for instance in the aviation sector.
- EU institutions:** Limited political and financial support from European institutions remains for the European tourism sector. International passenger transport remains a low priority in EU transport policies. EU tourism policies continue dealing with tourism and transport separately, without acknowledging the role transport plays in tourism. Europeans' concern for climate is not reflected in in tourism behaviour. People seem reluctant to change travel behaviour and decision making. Carbon offsetting schemes offered by polluting modes of transports are sufficient for consumers to feel at ease with climate change concerns.

## PROJECTED OUTCOME IN 2030

*In a status quo scenario the operations and experiences in 2030 will not fundamentally differ from that of 2020. Many barriers related to railways integration remain in place and hamper easier cross-border travel. Consumers remain reluctant to change their travel behaviour and decision making regarding transportation<sup>71</sup>. International tourists travel across in Europe mostly by plane or car, as this remains to be perceived as more convenient, practical and easier to plan and book. Some destinations continue relying on existing agreements with airlines*

<sup>71</sup> OECD (2018) Tourism Trends and Policies 2018, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/tour-2018-en>



and tour operators, instead of exploring partnership opportunities with railways. The tourism flows concentrate on a limited number of well-developed tourism corridors roughly between the larger cities in Northwest and Central Europe<sup>72, 73</sup> which is reinforced by the product and service offer revolving around routes with critical mass. This is at the expense of lesser known destinations and does not contribute to releasing visitor pressure (and potentially overtourism) in hotspots. Tourism reputation losses occur in relation to sustainability.

Train operators allocate annual budgets to the improvement of services (mainly via investments in ICT), regular upkeep and renewal of rolling-stock. Some investments are stimulated, also via the EC's policy measures, although they are limited, regionally focussed and far from sufficient to reach ambitious goals e.g. concerning the reduction of CO2 emissions, modal shift (from other modes to train) and modal share (more tourists on the train). As such, some innovations are taking place albeit at the national level and by individual railway companies and operators. Moreover, tourism is not a large priority in the context of the EU Green Deal.

The tourists that get on the international trains for tourism purposes know what they get themselves into. Consumers that choose the train and consciously choosing for the sustainable alternative or find themselves in a holiday state of mind which allows them to cope with some of the unresolved barriers. They are aware of the booking systems that require in advance booking to get decent prices, knowing that booking last minute could mean paying high prices as less capacity is available. These consumers feel that they are part of a relatively small community of international tourists. There is still room for the more traditional travel agents that focus on sustainable, responsible travel, helping consumers out to design and book their itineraries.



<sup>72</sup> ETC (2018) Tracking Multi-Destination Travel in Europe from Long-Haul Source Markets – US, China, Japan and India.

<sup>73</sup> European Court of Auditors (2018) A European high-speed rail network: not a reality but an ineffective patchwork





## SCENARIO 2: ENVIRONMENTAL ACTIVISM

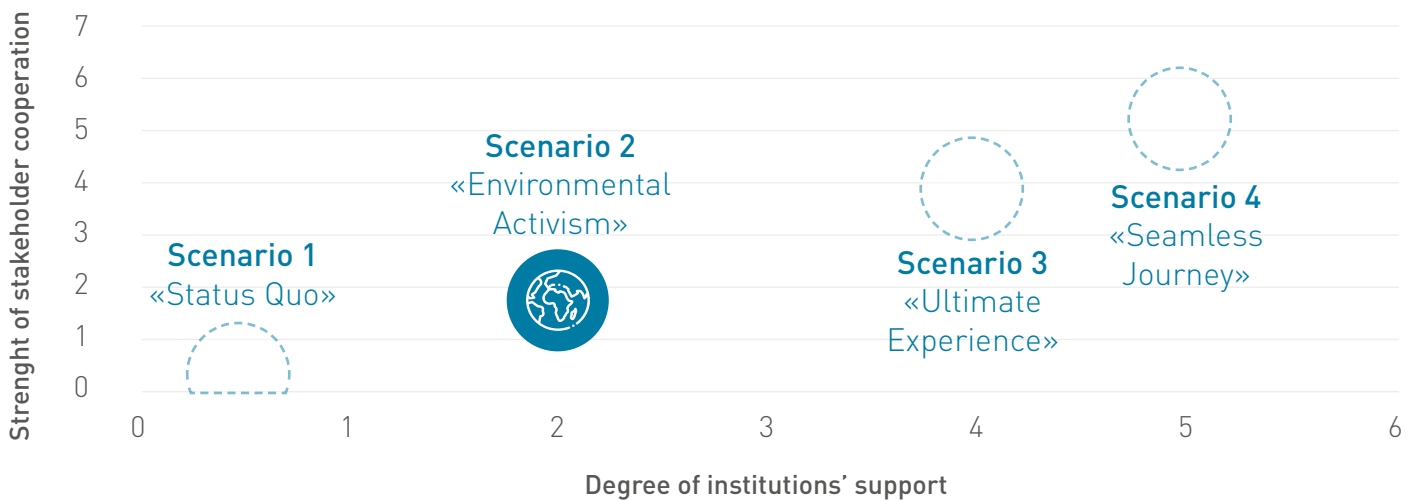
### STRATEGIC FRAME

In the ***environmental activism*** scenario, stakeholders will make a range of changes compared to the current situation. This scenario is characterised by minor change in stakeholder cooperation and minor change in institution's support.

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Figure 4 – Degree of institutions’ support.



## ROLES AND ACTIONS OF STAKEHOLDERS

- Railways:** Green mobility boom has acted as a driver for railways to invest more in the leisure travel segment. The rise of demand for sustainable travel for tourism creates new commercial opportunities for railways and boosts cooperation between railway operators. It also triggers cooperation with operators in front-end operations (e.g. OTAs). Such cooperations result in a more user-centric provision of transport services.
- Tourism sector:** Destinations shift promotional efforts and cooperation interest to train travel, and start exploring the possibility of joining forces with railways to develop and promote “green” or “sustainable” travel. NTOs try to actively focus on dispersal of tourists towards lesser known places, better distributing tourism flows outside of rush hours and involving social enterprises. The emphasis in tourism is more often put on value over volume of tourists, which aligns with the evolving visitor demand.
- EU institutions:** Schemes are put in place to enhance the competitiveness of the railway sector by reducing costs and the administrative burden on railway stakeholders. Modal shift targets are set to reach emission reductions needed in the transport sector, in compliance with the ambitious goals set in the Paris agreement (COP21) and in the Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs). Laws, rules and regulations have been put in place to simulate sustainable modes of travel such as by train, aiming at a cross sector approach to greening the value chain. Policy interventions are in place that create an equal tax regime all modes of transport, causing an increase of costs to consumers to discourage (short haul) flights (when and where train alternative exists) but also for road transportation by means of vignettes, road pricing, congestion charges, parking costs. Investments are made with a focus on electrification, high speeds network and green energy over tourism specific issues.

## PROJECTED OUTCOME IN 2030

*In 2030, there is an ever-increasing momentum for sustainability in society. Consumers widely embrace and actively pursue sustainability in their decision making processes and travelling behaviour. Sustainability is strongly promoted by all stakeholders, from European Institutions to national governments and NTOs and DMOs. Marketing campaigns are directed towards raising awareness of environmentally sustainable travel and drawing attention to the qualities of international train travel. Key international individuals present themselves as*





*ambassadors of international train travel, being influencers and serving the purpose of changing people's mind-set and decision making habits in favour of international train travel. All in all, there seems to be a race to reduce environmental impacts, waste and emissions as much as possible and promote the greening of energy sources and socio-economic and cultural value creation. The result is that international train travel is widely recognised, throughout Europe and beyond, as the most sustainable form of transportation for international leisure travel within the EU. In this perspective, rail and train have a far more positive image compared to air, road (car, coach) and water (cruise) travel.*

*The concern for the environment is transferred to action by tourists. Tourists choose deliberately for the train over the car, bus or airplane particularly for the short haul (less than 600/800 miles or 1,100/1,500 km) but also increasingly for medium-haul (between 600/800 and 2,200/2,600 miles or between 1,100/1,500 and 4,100/4,800 km). The result is a modal shift from other modes to train travel, increasing its modal share. Business opportunities arise as more people select the train and form a critical mass. OTA's are offering services although their presence is not as big yet in other tourism sectors due to the complex, capital intensive and therefore relatively slow implementation of innovations in ICT by railways. Still, the railway industry is not yet consumer oriented and is not tailored to the contemporary needs of the international train tourist. Also in terms of speed and comfort, the train hasn't seen massive improvements compared to 2020 apart from the regular upkeep and renewal of rolling-stock.*







## SCENARIO 3: ULTIMATE EXPERIENCE

### STRATEGIC FRAME

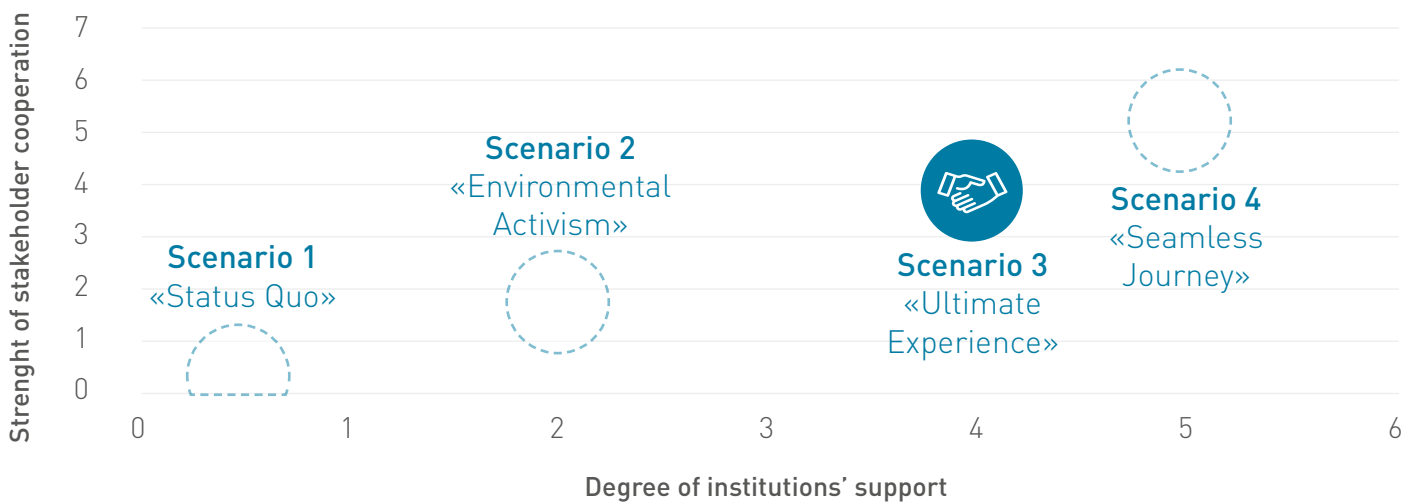
In the *ultimate experience* scenario, stakeholders will make a range of changes compared to the current situation. This scenario is characterised by substantial change of stakeholder cooperation and substantial change in institution's support.

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Figure 5 – Degree of institutions’ support.



## ROLES AND ACTIONS OF STAKEHOLDERS

- **Railways:** Railway stakeholders invest in the leisure travel segment and join forces with tourism experts (e.g. destinations) to coordinate efforts. This leads to consultations with tourism stakeholders for product design and operations to make better use of the widespread and dense railway network in relation to spreading tourism flows and stimulating regional economies of lesser visited destinations. Such consultations help identifying possible barriers that could be encountered by tourists when travelling by train. Intermodal and intramodal competition on price becomes fierce. From the industry perspective, this pushes towards increased efficiency, yield management, dynamic pricing, automation and a focus on routes with the best returns-on-investments.

- **Tourism sector:** NTOs and DMOs collaborate with railway stakeholders to design and present high-end, memorable experiences that align with the profiles of the tourists. Private sector tour operators and OTAs are involved to design and develop unique routes and packages (e.g. themed, night trans, to festivals) enabling flows to lesser known places. Joint marketing campaigns are launched to draw attention to the added values of train travel (speed, price, point-to-point travel, comfort, experience) and raise awareness about its competitive position compared to air and road travel.

- **EU institutions:** Actions are accelerated by the support of the EC for pilot projects and its policy interventions, ambitiously following up on the Fourth Railway Package’s technical pillar and the S2R Joint Undertaking, aiming to achieve Single European Rail Area (SERA)<sup>74</sup>. Equally, schemes are put in place to enhance the competitiveness of the railway sector by reducing costs and the administrative burden on railway stakeholders. Actions geared towards achieving a model shift. Funds are made available for awareness campaigns, marketing budgets as well as innovations in tourism and destination development of more rural areas.

## PROJECTED OUTCOME IN 2030

*In this scenario the importance of memorable experience design is embraced and offerings well-developed along the entire customer journey to cater to the demands of the generally experienced highly demanding tourist. Over the years much effort has been put to remove barriers. Service levels are continually optimized as big data on the customer journey is more and more utilized to its potential. This approach brings stakeholders*

<sup>74</sup> [https://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/rail/news/2019-05-16-single-european-railway-area\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/rail/news/2019-05-16-single-european-railway-area_en)



together as individual stakeholders are aware that they are part of a wider service (profit) chain and depend on each other to a greater or lesser extent to provide excellent service to consumers. The historically wide spread and dense rail network becomes an enabler for peripheral and even remote destination.

For tourists, international travel by train is an ultimate form of experiential travel. A voyage of discovery into new places. The journey to the destination(s) is an integral part of the holiday, so much more than a functional trip from A to B. Tourists choose deliberately for the experience, the transfers along the route, the scenery, meeting locals and choose consciously/responsibly for the (perceived) sustainability of train travel over air, road and water transportation. Youngsters get acquainted with international train travel via the classic, basic interrail ticket and dedicated festival trains, to become return customers also later in life. As the tourists that select the train are more affluent and have limited time, there is a demand for a high level of service, comfort, convenience, entertainment, education and other sorts of elements that add to the experiential quality of the trip. For the elderly and relatively affluent consumers there is the all-inclusive 1st class version of the interrail ticket. Tourist also select the train for the point-to-point, city-to-city type of transportation that quickly brings one to the middle of (historic) city centres, major airports and major sites of transport-oriented-development (TOD). Money-wise, consumers select the train because the price is competitive compared to aviation and road transportation – also due to the increased pricing of road and air. Train travel is in practice as well as in the perception of people equally fast if not faster transportation mode for the short haul and middle haul.







## SCENARIO 4: SEAMLESS JOURNEY

### STRATEGIC FRAME

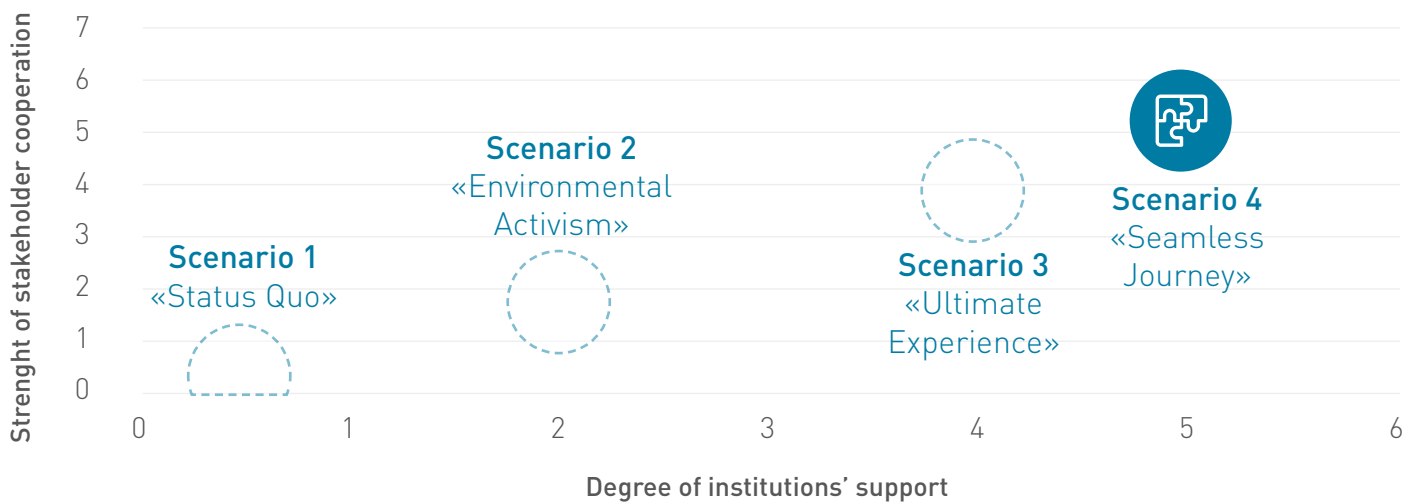
In the ***seamless journey*** scenario, stakeholders will make a range of changes compared to the current situation. This scenario is characterised by major change of stakeholder cooperation and major change in institution's support.

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Figure 6 – Degree of institutions' support.



## ROLES AND ACTIONS OF STAKEHOLDERS

- **Railways:** Railways adopt a customer-oriented approach to service quality improvement, taking the extra effort to exceed leisure travellers' expectations. On relevant routes, facilities of rolling stock are aligned with the evolving visitor demand, such as access to real time personal communication and new services for work or leisure. Railway operators create strategic alliances with other transportation partners in the value chain e.g. to implement Mobility as a Service (MaaS). Investments in conditions for MaaS are made such as technically harmonizing ICT systems.
- **Tourism sector:** Bookings systems are up to date and work efficiently for cross boarder travel regardless which railway or operator is involved. Dynamic pricing is introduced to enable tourists to travel outside of peak hours for reduced fees. The tourism sector is taking much initiative to create joint products and campaigns with mobility operators. Lesser known destinations see an influx of tourists due to coordinated actions to relieve tourism pressures in hotspots. Together, stakeholders are delivering rail focused and integrated end-to-end mobility solutions. The train is an integral part of almost every journey.
- **EU institutions:** Funds are made available to accelerate developments in sustainable mobility in a relatively short time span. Whereas the focus is strongly on technical measures (infrastructure, digitalisation, safety) these have an effect on the travel experience in terms of high levels of comfort, efficiency, safety, reliability. Policy schemes are initiated to draw together all stakeholders involved in destination development ranging from tourism, transportation, culture and more.

## PROJECTED OUTCOME IN 2030

*The visitor journey is embraced by all stakeholders as the guiding principle in their strategic plans, policy interventions and operational efforts to make leisure travel by train more efficient and effective. The level of convenience is highly improved compared to the situation in 2020. Passengers are able to access real time personal communication and new services for work or leisure continuously - before, throughout and after the journey. Consumers easily find their way to consumer-friendly online booking platforms, a direct result of implementing the concept of Mobility as a Service (MaaS) that combines sustainable modes of transport with a railway backbone<sup>75</sup>. These online one stop shops can take care of entire itineraries and are well-organised, well-promoted*

<sup>75</sup> ERRAC (2017)



and well-found by consumers. Some are operated by railways but also increasingly by commercial parties/OTAs. The notorious 'last mile' to reach accommodations is incorporated. Experiments with autonomous road vehicles are promoted to separate flows of luggage (collected by autonomous vehicle, by road) and passengers (via rail); increased bicycle carry capacity; and expansion of other tourist-specific services all become part of a strategy to fully utilize rail capacity. Because stakeholders are continuously removing barriers that hamper the experiential quality of all tourists, there is an uptake in the segments of accessible and inclusive tourism.

Seamless travel is a collective effort of many stakeholders, including the railways, operators, DMOs/NTOs, governments, etc. based on strategic alliances with all partners in value chain. Together stakeholders are capable to (re)organise a well-functioning rail infrastructure network, technology-rich 'smart' stations, a multimodal transportation system and integrated ICT network. Efficient and barrier-free interchanges between transport modes allow for safe, secure, reliable and smooth journeys, optimised over all available transportation infrastructure and dynamically adjusted to traffic and service conditions. Offers are digitally accessible and online (pre)bookable (far) in advance by individuals as well as tour operators and travel agents. NTOs are actively promoting international train travel by means of 'travel trade' aimed at tour operators and travel agents. Specialized tour operators that offer routes and packages including international train have become wide spread, OTAs emerged with sophisticated online booking systems, and rolling-stock is tailored to the contemporary needs of the tourists. Marketing campaigns raise awareness about the added values of international train travel and draw attention to wide variety of (pre-packed) itineraries and the ease of online bookings. Influencer marketing is common practice to reach target (niche) audiences. All in all, a pan-European multimodal transportation network emerges as a result of investments in rail infrastructure, ICT infrastructures and organisational structures. This is reinforced by transport oriented development (TOD); high density real estate development around transport hubs as well as tourist attractions that generate a high mobility demand (ref: Disneyland Paris).







# CONCLUSIONS





## CONCLUSIONS

The playing field is shifting in favour of international leisure travel by train. Windows of opportunity are opening up. There is an increasing number of tourists, tourists are eagerly looking for new experiences, tourism flows need to be managed and if possible redirected. Doing this by train addresses demand concerns and meets policy objectives for a greener Europe.

This White Paper presents four scenarios and related actions that help to steer the debate on the role international leisure travel by train for the sustainable growth of tourism flows in Europe. The futures presented in these scenarios do not unfold themselves in an autonomous manner. Active steering by means of proactive decisions are needed, by a range of stakeholders.

<b>RAILWAYS</b>	Embrace the potentials of green mobility for the tourism sector. Identify market-driven solutions to enhance customer experience. Invest in and lobby for a more attractive, competitive train travel experience, enabled by an equal playing field in transport, strategic partnerships for multimodal transportation systems and hubs, exploit the potentials of mobility as a service (MaaS).
<b>TOURISM SECTOR</b>	Embrace the potentials of international leisure travel by train. Invest in service provision via the delivery of ICT systems, booking systems, facilitate OTAs. Enhance tourism product development in terms of routes and packages, initiate collective marketing campaigns.
<b>EU INSTITUTIONS</b>	<p>Engage in strategic visioning about desirable futures states of international leisure travel by train – making use of the scenarios presented in this white paper. Shape conditions and accelerate best practices aiming to remove barriers and enhance experience levels. Design policies that create equal playing fields for equal competition amongst modalities. Launch investment schemes geared towards enhancing social and physical infrastructures:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. bring communities proactively together to stimulate cross border cooperation and multidisciplinary coalitions;</li><li>2. compatible ICT systems for enhanced services provision such as better information, easy bookable single tickets, dynamic pricing;</li><li>3. interconnect modalities to stimulate a multimodal system of transportation networks and hubs; and</li><li>4. research and development of new tourism products and experiences.</li></ol>

All stakeholders are challenged to seek collaborations and collectively manage the transition of fully embracing the values of international leisure travel by train. Clearly, this transition is a complex one due to the many stakeholders, many factors, many levels, many domains. Above all, it requires long term visions combined with concrete pilots and experiments to make stepwise improvements guided by perspectives on desirable future states. In line, this white paper offers different ideas, proposals, options by means of scenarios through 2030, aiming to open a debate without presenting definitive decisions at this stage. Subsequently, open debates about desirable future states need follow-ups on topics as policy support and funding schemes for experiments, system improvements (infra, ICT), improving organisational structures and stimulating productive cross border and multidisciplinary coalitions.

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