



MAIN LINE FOR EUROPE

Policy paper

Main Line

2030+

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Who are we?

The Main Line for Europe initiative, founded in 1990, is committed to the rapid and continuous expansion of the Paris-Budapest/Bratislava rail axis. In the meantime, 24 cities, regions, federal states and chambers of industry and commerce have joined the Main Line for Europe initiative and are committed to "their" Main Line for Europe for reasons of location policy.

The players in the initiative are united by the conviction that an efficient connection to the high-level rail network for passenger and freight transport is a central location factor. Attractive rail connections such as the Main Line for Europe strengthen competitiveness, increase the quality of life and make an important contribution to climate protection.

The designation Main Line for Europe underlines the high transport importance of the European rail link Paris - Budapest/Bratislava as a main transport axis. As an artery in East-West traffic, the Main Line for Europe links important economic areas for Europe and at the same time contributes to environmentally friendly mobility. The high speed road enables 35 million inhabitants and 16 million employees to enjoy fast cross-border mobility in Europe.



Challenges

Since its foundation, the initiative has made a central contribution to the development of the Paris - Budapest/Bratislava railway axis. The most important infrastructure projects along the route are under construction or in planning. A generation after its foundation, the framework conditions of the Main Line for Europe have changed massively. Technological and social change, the reorganisation of transport policies and an increasing political awareness of climate protection are leading to new demands on the European "rail system".

Climate change is becoming increasingly noticeable in Europe as well. Public pressure on politics and business on climate protection issues is increasing and forcing action. Successful climate protection is becoming a trademark for municipalities and chambers of commerce and an integral part of their own self-image. The Main Line for Europe provides an important and visible building block for this. A Europe that is growing together requires a close-knit, fast and seamless rail network.

The prerequisite for this is an increasing standardisation and unification of standards and interfaces. This applies to the infrastructure and the train systems. The continuous digitalisation of the railways will be decisive for the performance of European corridors in the future. This includes the area-wide control of high-performance lines by the European Train Control System (ETCS) as well as the introduction of corresponding operational regulations. In rail freight transport, the Digital Automatic Coupling (DAK) will be a central component of sustainable, environmentally friendly freight transport. Increasing automation will lead to a reduction in the costs of train and infrastructure operation. In addition, an improved logistical link between inland waterways and rail via the expansion of multimodal terminals will be necessary.



Standardisations in the railway industry, but also a multitude of new players, lead to new and more cost-effective solutions. These cost advantages increase the attractiveness of train transport. The optimal linking and networking of the individual means of transport and their visualisation on mobility platforms (SPNV/SPFV) sustainably support this trend.

Rail is becoming more attractive for logistics as well as for shippers and is causing an increasing demand for multimodal transport solutions. Attracting highly qualified skilled workers is one of the major challenges facing companies. In order to assert oneself in the competition between regions as an attractive place to work and live for skilled workers and as an attractive business location, it is also elementary to have good connections to the high-level rail network, good local rail passenger transport and effective synchronisation of local and long-distance transport.

In order to ensure this, the transport hubs are becoming increasingly important as service providers of rail-bound mobility. In addition, the importance of the car and its role as a status symbol is decreasing. The internalisation of external costs in air traffic also makes rail travel more attractive and leads to an increasing demand for rail-bound transport services. With the strategy paper presented, the 'Main Line for Europe' initiative is reacting to the change in the framework conditions and the diverse challenges in the coming years.



Development axis for economy and transport in Europe

The Main Line for Europe initiative is an interest group. It represents its members vis-à-vis political decision-makers at regional, national and European level.

We see ourselves as a source of impetus and active lobbyists for rail-based infrastructure development along and operation on the Main Line for Europe development axis.

With an overall perspective on the individual projects of the axis and against the background of current and future challenges, we develop recommendations for action for political decision-makers.

In this sense, the Main Line for Europe initiative is the forum for the further development of the Main Line for Europe. We bundle the know-how of our members, network old and new players from administration, business, (civil) society and science and thereby create additional added value.



Impulse generator and forum for the development of the 'Main Line for Europe' axis

As a high-speed rail link, the Main Line for Europe connects the metropolises Paris - Strasbourg - Stuttgart - Munich - Vienna - Bratislava/Budapest and links high-tech locations and some of the most important economic areas in Europe.

It is the artery of east-west traffic. Its catchment area is home to 35 million people and 16 million employees. In order to meet the resulting mobility requirements, we are committed to a modern, attractive, cross-border rail connection for passenger and freight transport.

In this sense, we see ourselves not only as an open forum and dialogue partner around the Main Line for Europe, but also as an active companion of the economy along the development axis.



Pioneer in climate-friendly rail transport

The reduction of greenhouse gas emissions poses particular challenges for the transport sector in order to meet the climate targets.

According to the European Commission's targets, transport-related greenhouse gas emissions are to be reduced by at least 60 % compared to the base year 1990.

Against the background of the politically set climate targets, we are committed to implementing and promoting environmentally friendly, rail-based mobility along the development axis and raise awareness of the need for rail expansion. In this way, we are making an active contribution to shifting traffic from road to climate-friendly rail.



Network for rail-based integration between Western and Eastern Europe

As a transnational alliance for the development axis Paris - Budapest/Bratislava, the members of the Main Line for Europe initiative are driving the process of European integration forward through their work and commitment.

The growing together of regions across national borders and the associated strengthening of Europe requires a beneficial and intelligent cooperation between the administrations as well as transport and tourism companies along the development axis.

Through the multifaceted networking of the initiative with civil society, political and economic actors, the Main Line for Europe also makes it possible to set new impulses for European integration.

This work contributes to European cohesion, lasting stability and increased economic prosperity and progress in the European Union.



OUR STRATEGIC FIELDS OF ACTION

Improving operational processes

We are committed to optimising operational processes in order to create and exploit added value. This includes a sustainable improvement of operational processes on the existing infrastructures as well as better networking between the means of transport and the modes of transport. Our goals are in detail:

01

Implementing the "Deutschlandtakt" and increasing the line speed in long-distance traffic.

02

Implementing integrated interval timetables and enabling precise connections.

03

Optimising long-distance transport connections and their links to the regions.

04

Promoting cross-modal timetable information and e-ticketing.

05

Improving the conceptual coordination of freight transport and regional transport.

06

Improving technical and systemic interoperability in rail freight.



OUR STRATEGIC FIELDS OF ACTION

Further developpement of the Main Line for Europe axis in an environmentally friendly way

Fast, trans-European trains are an environmentally sound and sensible alternative to growing car and air traffic. Sustainable rail transport takes into account both the mobility needs of people living today and the responsibility towards future generations. With this attitude, we want to advance the further development of rail-based mobility along the development axis Paris - Budapest/Bratislava together with and for the people. Our goals are in detail:

- 01 **Contribution to the implementation of the European "Strategy for Sustainable and intelligent mobility" (European Commission) along the Main Line for Europe axis.**
- 02 **Actively promoting a modal shift from road to rail and making this transparent through open communication so that the importance of rail for achieving climate protection targets becomes visible.**
- 03 **Expanding night train services between Paris and Budapest/Bratislava.**
- 04 **Improving accessibility to combined transport terminals and freight loading points.**
- 05 **Exchange with scientific and (civil) society actors along the development axis Main Line for Europe on the topics of modal shift and environmentally friendly rail transport, among others.**



OUR STRATEGIC FIELD OF ACTIONS

Cooperation along the Main Line for Europe as a component of European integration

We see our cooperation along the Main Line for Europe as an active contribution to deepening European integration. Through our initiative, we contribute in many ways to interlinking and networking in Europe. We are committed to broad-based cooperation that has a positive impact on the economic, ecological and social development of the regions along the axis. Furthermore, the exchange of knowledge among our members and with other Trans-European Network corridors is one of our core activities. Our goals in detail are:

01

Establishing and maintaining a database of all service providers along the Main Line for Europe development axis and an information platform on multimodal transport.

02

Attract new partners in Hungary and Slovakia and promote exchange between the countries.

03

Expanding and strengthening cooperation with the private sector and promote active information exchange between businesses, administration and political actors along the development axis.

04

Strengthening the visibility of the 'Main Line' development axis for Europe.

05

Offers on the Main Line for Europe with the "tourism marketing" of the municipal members.



IMPLEMENTATION OF OUR GOALS

The following overview shows which individual measures and stakeholders are to be used to achieve the strategic goals of the Main Line for Europe initiative (cf. p. 9 ff.). In addition, the individual measures were prioritised (cf. p. 17). They are categorised as **high**, **medium** and **low** priority and show both the urgency in terms of time and the thematic importance of the individual measures.

Goal: Impulse generator and forum

Destination	Strategic fields of action				
	Infrastructures	Operational processes	Environmentally sound development	Integration	Stakeholder
Impulse generator and forum	<p>High Achieve cross-administrative coordination of expansion planning.</p>	<p>Medium Optimise long-distance transport connections and their links to the regions.</p>	<p>High Actively promote the modal shift from road to rail and make this transparent through open communication so that the importance of rail for achieving climate protection targets becomes visible.</p>	<p>High Attract new partners in Hungary and Slovakia and promote exchange between the countries.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members MfE Covenant Countries Regions Local political actors Corridor Forum RDC/DG MOVE DB/ÖBB/SNCF /MAV/ZSR Transport associations Local transport companies Passenger associations Private sector Actors (Logistics) Associations/N GO
	<p>High Eliminate rail bottlenecks and secure infrastructural capacities.</p>	<p>Low Improve the conceptual coordination of freight transport and regional transport.</p>	<p>Low Intensify the exchange with scientific and (civil) society actors along the development axis <i>Main Line for Europe</i> on topics such as modal shift and environmentally friendly rail transport.</p>	<p>Low Expand and strengthen cooperation with the private sector and promote an active exchange of information between businesses, administration and political actors along the development axis.</p>	
	<p>High Advance network expansion for goods trains with a standard train length of 740 metres.</p>				
	<p>Medium Expand multimodal terminals.</p>				
	<p>Medium Introduce and implement ERTMS along the <i>Main Line for Europe</i> development axis.</p>				
	<p>High Integrate infrastructure requirements from regional passenger transport and regional urban railways (especially in and around hubs).</p>				

Legende:

hoch ■

mittel ■

gering ■





IMPLEMENTATION OF OUR GOALS


Pioneer in climate-friendly rail transport

Destination	Strategic fields of action				
	Infrastructures	Operational processes	Environmentally sound development	Integration	Stakeholder
Pioneer in climate-friendly rail transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eliminate rail bottlenecks and secure infrastructural capacities. Advance network expansion for goods trains with a standard train length of 740 metres. Expand multimodal terminals. Integrate infrastructure requirements from the SPNV as well as from regional urban railways (especially in and around junctions). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement integrated interval timetables and enable precise connections. Promote cross-modal timetable information and e-ticketing. Improve the conceptual coordination of freight transport and regional transport. Improve technical and systemic interoperability in rail freight. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contribute to the implementation of the European "Sustainable and Intelligent Mobility Strategy" along the <i>Main Line for Europe</i> axis. Actively promote the modal shift from road to rail and make this transparent through open communication so that the importance of rail for achieving climate protection targets becomes visible. The expansion of night train services between Paris and Budapest/Bratislava. Improve accessibility to combined transport terminals and freight loading points. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen the visibility of the <i>Main Line for Europe</i> development axis. Link offers on the <i>Main Line for Europe</i> with the "tourism marketing" of the municipal members. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members MfE DB/ÖBB/MAV/SNCF/ZSR (Private) RU Terminal-operators/ports Municipal tourism societies/associations Provider travel portals Environmental associations Night train-initiatives Environmental associations/initiatives Civil society

Legend:

high 

medium 

low 



UMSETZUNG UNSERER ZIELE

Cooperation along the Main Line for Europe as a A component of European integration

Destination	Strategic fields of action				
	Infrastructures	Operational processes	Environmentally sound development	Integration	Stakeholder
Cooperation along the Main Line as a component of European integration	<p>High</p> <p>Achieve coordination of expansion planning across administrative levels.</p>	<p>Low</p> <p>Promote cross-modal timetable information and e-ticketing.</p>	<p>Medium</p> <p>Contribute to the implementation of the European "Sustainable and Intelligent Mobility Strategy" along the <i>Main Line for Europe</i> axis.</p> <p>High</p> <p>Expand night train services between Paris and Budapest/Bratislava</p> <p>Low</p> <p>Intensify the exchange with scientific and (civil) society actors along the <i>Main Line for Europe</i> development axis on topics such as modal shift and environmentally friendly rail transport.</p>	<p>High</p> <p>Attract new partners in Hungary and Slovakia and promote exchange between the countries.</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Strengthening the visibility of the <i>Main Line for Europe</i> development axis</p> <p>Medium</p> <p>Establish and maintain a database of all service providers along the <i>Main Line for Europe</i> development axis and an information platform on multimodal transport.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Members MLfE DB/ÖBB/MAV/SNCF/ZSR Passenger associations/Initiatives Night train initiatives Corridor Forum RDC/DG MOVE Transport research Civil society Associations/NGOs
	<p>Legend:</p> <p>high</p> <p>medium</p> <p>low</p>				



IMPLEMENTATION OF OUR GOALS

Overview of measures & prioritisation

Priority	Measure	Strategic field of action
high	Eliminate rail bottlenecks and secure infrastructural capacities.	Infrastructure
	Achieve cross-administrative coordination of expansion planning.	Infrastructure
	Implement the "Deutschlandtakt" and increase the line speed in long-distance traffic.	Btl. processes
	Expand night train services between Paris and Budapest/Bratislava.	Environmentally sound development
	Attract new partners in Hungary and Slovakia and promote exchange between the countries.	Integration
	Link offers on the <i>Main Line for Europe</i> with the "tourism marketing" of the municipal members.	Integration
	Actively promote the modal shift from road to rail and make this transparent through open communication so that the importance of rail for achieving climate protection targets becomes visible.	Uwg. development
	Integrate infrastructure requirements from SPNV as well as from regional light rail (especially in and around nodes).	Infrastructure
	Advance network expansion for goods trains with a standard train length of 740 metres.	Infrastructure
medium	Expand multimodal terminals.	Infrastructure
	Introduce and implement ERTMS along the <i>Main Line for Europe</i> development axis.	Infrastructure
	Implement integrated interval timetables and enable precise connections.	Btl. processes
	Optimise long-distance transport connections and their links to the regions.	Btl. processes
	Improve technical and systemic interoperability in rail freight.	Btl. processes
	Contribute to the implementation of the European "Sustainable and Intelligent Mobility Strategy" along the <i>Main Line for Europe</i> axis.	Conversion. Development
	Improve accessibility to combined transport terminals and freight loading points.	Uwg. development
	Establish and maintain a database of all service providers along the <i>Main Line for Europe</i> development axis and an information platform on multimodal transport.	Integration
low	Strengthen the visibility of the <i>Main Line for Europe</i> development axis.	Integration
	Promote cross-modal timetable information and e-ticketing.	Btl. processes
	Improve conceptual coordination of freight transport and regional transport	Btl. processes
	Intensify exchange with scientific and (civil) societal actors along the development axis <i>Main Line for Europe</i> on topics such as modal shift and environmentally friendly rail transport.	Uwg. development
	Expand and strengthen cooperation with the private sector and promote active information exchange between businesses, administration and political actors along the development axis.	Integration



Summary and outlook

The framework conditions of the Main Line for Europe have changed massively in recent years. Technological and social changes such as the digitalisation of rail, the increasing awareness of climate protection or the reorganisation of transport policies have led to complex new challenges for the European "rail system".

As a driving force and active lobbyist for rail infrastructure development along and operation on the Main Line for Europe development axis, we are responding to these challenges and setting ourselves new goals with this strategy. In order to achieve these, we are committed first and foremost to removing rail bottlenecks and securing infrastructural capacities.

The elimination of bottlenecks and the securing of capacities are fundamental for the implementation of the "Deutschlandtakt" and the associated increase in line speed in long-distance traffic. Together with our partners, we advocate for coordinated expansion planning and thus take into account our goal of increasing the modal shift from road to climate-friendly rail. The importance of the railway for climate protection is to be made more visible by strengthening our public relations work. In doing so, we are focusing on gaining new partners in Hungary and Slovakia as well as on linking the offers on the Main Line for Europe with the tourism marketing of the municipal members. In response to the increasing demand for environmentally friendly, time-efficient and comfortable (arrival) travel options, we are committed to expanding night train services on the Main Line for Europe.

The strategy of the Main Line for Europe is implemented by the office and the members of the initiative. The further development of the Main Line for Europe axis is a cooperative task for which a broad, heterogeneous spectrum of actors is a prerequisite. As a network-oriented initiative, it is therefore important to build on the constructive discussion culture between the members as well as on the efficient dialogue with all relevant partners. In this way, the concerns of the Main Line for Europe can continue to be given weight in the political and public debate.



