

ANNUAL REPORT 2022

INITIATIVE
MAIN LINE FOR EUROPE





FAREWELL 'MAGISTRALE' WELCOME 'MAIN LINE'

Dear readers

2022 was a very special year for the Main Line for Europe initiative. Together with our members, we have made all the necessary preparations to transfer the initiative to the newly founded Main Line for Europe association in the coming year.

e.V. association. This was not always easy, but our members' commitment to 'their' Main Line for Europe is so strong that all local councils and plenary assemblies have so far voted by a large majority to join the association. I am particularly pleased about this and would like to thank you for your trust in our work!

Another first was the 'Rail Day', which took place for the first time as part of European Mobility Week, and in which we were of course heavily involved. It is precisely this kind of public relations work, as well as our numerous discussions and events, that repeatedly remind European governments of the great importance of rail for our economic prosperity and quality of life.

You can read about what else we have achieved together with our members and partners in 2022 to improve rail transport between Paris and Budapest/Bratislava in this annual report.

We hope you enjoy reading this publication.

Dr Frank Mentrup

Mayor of the City of Karlsruhe Chairman of the Main Line for Europe Initiative



THE INITIATIVE

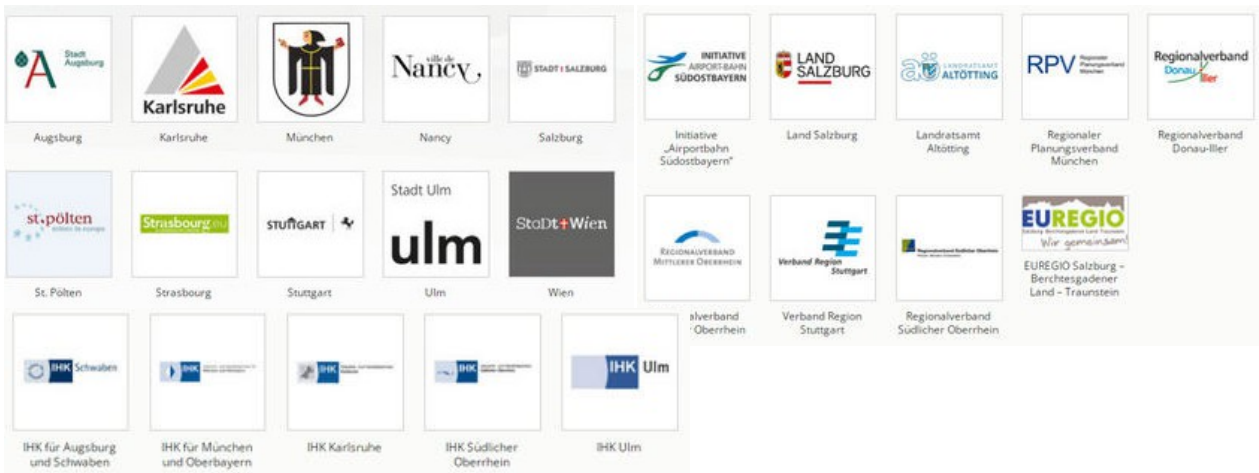
Founded around 30 years ago, the Main Line for Europe initiative is committed to the rapid and consistent expansion of the Paris-Budapest/Bratislava rail axis.

The Main Line for Europe initiative now includes 24 cities, regions, federal states and chambers of industry and commerce, which are committed to

"their" Main Line for Europe for reasons of location policy. Our members are united by the conviction that an efficient connection to the high-speed rail network for passenger and freight transport is a key location factor. This means that attractive rail connections such as the Main Line for Europe are becoming increasingly important in times of skilled labour shortages.

The name Main Line for Europe underlines the high transport significance of the Paris-Budapest/Bratislava rail link as one of the most important main transport axes in Europe. As the artery of east-west traffic, the Main Line for Europe connects important economic areas and enables 35 million residents and 16 million employees to enjoy fast cross-border mobility in Europe.

OUR MEMBERS



OUR EXECUTIVE BOARD

Since its re-election in June 2021, the current executive team led by Chairman Dr Frank Mentrup, together with Thomas Bopp and Michael Nuber, has been steering the fortunes of the Main Line for Europe initiative. Much has already been achieved since then: from supporting the process of changing the initiative's legal form in close cooperation with its members, to making comprehensive strategic decisions, to developing the future direction of Main Line for Europe. In close cooperation with the committees and management, the executive board is constantly driving forward the professional development of the initiative. The broad range of expertise among the board members is part of the recipe for success: municipal, spatial planning and economic perspectives are all incorporated into the initiative's strategic decisions.



DR FRANK MENTRUP

Mayor of the City of Karlsruhe



THOMAS BOPP

*Chairman of the Stuttgart
Region Association*



MICHAEL NUBER

*Former Managing Director of Spedition
Nuber GmbH*



MAIN LINE FOR EUROPE

Advantages of founding an association:

SOLIDIFYING COOPERATION

Intensification and consolidation of interregional cooperation along the Main Line for Europe transport axis and professionalisation of the work within the initiative.

INCREASING VISIBILITY

Improving the visibility of the Main Line for Europe as a central transport axis in Central Europe and making it easier to attract new members.

GREATER LEGAL CERTAINTY

Improving legal certainty, particularly with regard to liability issues, and closing regulatory gaps through a common set of statutes.

SUBSIDIES

Entitlement to receive and manage funding – particularly from EU funds – and better financial resources for the initiative.

A NEW ASSOCIATION FOR THE FUTURE

At the general meeting of the Main Line for Europe initiative on 23 June 2021, it was decided to explore the possibilities of developing the Main Line for Europe initiative into a registered association (e.V.). The aim of the new association is to intensify and realign existing interregional cooperation along the Main Line for Europe.

Although we would have preferred to establish a European association, this legal form is not currently possible. However, the current legal framework of German association law allows all current members of the initiative and other future partners to join. The initiative's office will also remain in Karlsruhe.

By choosing the name Main Line for Europe, we want to place greater emphasis on the European dimension of the initiative.

Die Welt der SCHIENE FEIERN!

16. & 17.
September

**RAIL DAY
2022**



PUBLIC TRANSPORT SCARVETCH OF THE MAIN LINE FOR EUROPE ON RAILWAY DAY

After a year of planning, the time had finally come: on 16 and 17 September 2022, we celebrated the first Germany-wide 'Rail Day' together with hundreds of railway stakeholders. Events focusing on rail and public transport took place in many locations, and the Main Line for Europe initiative was of course also involved. That's why we, as an initiative, teamed up with the Karlsruhe Transport Authority (KVV) to come up with something very special: a public transport scavenger hunt that not only allowed participants to demonstrate their knowledge of mobility, but also to explore the many activities taking place in the fan-shaped city of Karlsruhe during European Mobility Week. How? With the help of the KVV.regiomove local transport app, participants found their way to the individual scavenger hunt stations. In doing so, they had to use at least two different modes of transport (bus, S-Bahn, rental bike). Once they arrived at the stations, the participants answered quiz questions on the topic of railways and mobility, solved fun photo tasks and were able to take part in the various attractions surrounding European Mobility Week, which was taking place at the same time.

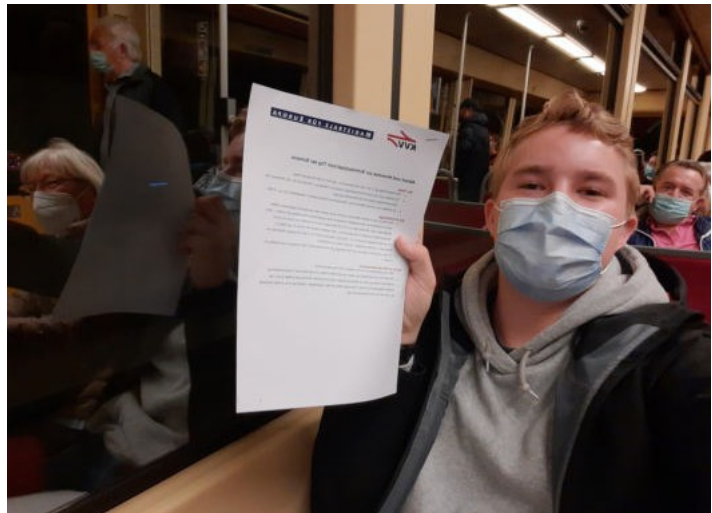
The final station of the scavenger hunt was Karlsruhe Central Station. There, participants learned many interesting facts about the station as an important transport hub for European rail traffic at the 'Allianz pro Schiene' exhibition. Everyone returned on a historic KVV suburban train. This brought smiles to the faces of the participating children in particular.

MAIN LINE WINS EUROPEAN MOBILITY WEEK AWARD WITH THE CITY OF KARLSRUHE

The event "Karlsruhe spielt!" (Karlsruhe plays!), organised by the municipal children's office of the city of Karlsruhe as part of European Mobility Week, has won a prize in the nationwide European Mobility Week (EMW) competition. The Main Line for Europe initiative made an important contribution to winning the prize: the public transport scavenger hunt we organised linked the individual activities of "Karlsruhe spielt!" and thus ensured the necessary attention.

The winner was "Karlsruhe spielt!" in the category "Most Innovative Activity". The prize is awarded annually by the Federal Environment Agency.

The aim of "Karlsruhe spielt!" was to offer children the opportunity to rediscover public spaces, improve the quality of their stay and get to know the city from a different perspective.



OPENING OF THE WENDLINGEN-ULM NEW BUSINESS STATION

*In future, only 30 minutes'
travel time between Stuttgart
and Ulm*

THE WENDLINGEN-ULM LINE IS A CENTURY-LONG PROJECT, A MILESTONE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE GERMAN RAILWAY TIMETABLE AND THE INTERNATIONAL TRANSVERSAL FROM PARIS VIA KARLSRUHE, STUTTGART, ULM, MUNICH AND ON TO VIENNA AND BRATISLAVA. THE NEW CONSTRUCTION WILL RELIEVE THE FILSTAL LINE, WHICH WILL THEN HAVE MORE CAPACITY FOR LOCAL TRAFFIC, BUT ABOVE ALL FOR FREIGHT TRAFFIC."

MICHAEL THEURER, FEDERAL GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONER FOR RAIL TRANSPORT

The opening of the new Wendlingen–Ulm line is a milestone in the completion of the entire 'Magistrale for Europe' development axis.

The new line will significantly speed up long-distance transport when the new timetable comes into effect on 11 December, thereby making an important contribution to increasing traffic on climate-friendly railways. In future, high-speed trains will be able to cross the Swabian Alb, significantly reducing travel time between Stuttgart and Munich.

The special significance of the new line for the 'Magistrale for Europe' development axis and rail transport between Paris and Budapest/Bratislava was emphasised by Deutsche Bahn CEO Richard Lutz, Rail Commissioner Michael Theurer and Minister President Winfried Kretschmann.



VIP EVENT, SPECIAL TRAINS AND PUBLIC CELEBRATION – A COLOURFUL PROGRAMME WITH THE 'MAIN LINE FOR EUROPE'

The 60-kilometre-long new line was opened with a ceremony at Ulm Central Station. In addition to the railway board, the Minister President and the Federal Government Commissioner for Railways, many other prominent figures from politics and business were invited – a wonderful opportunity to make important new contacts and also to promote the expansion of further Main Line railway projects, such as Ulm-Augsburg. Following the ceremony, two special trains took the guests back to Stuttgart via the new line.

The Main Line for Europe initiative also informed the public about our work in a joint tent with the Ulm Chamber of Industry and Commerce, the Swabian Chamber of Industry and Commerce and the DUSS, thus once again underlining the need for rapid rail expansion along the development axis. The initiative also took part in the programme of the station festival organised by the city of Ulm with a presentation and great travel tips – all in all, a successful day and an important milestone for Main Line for Europe.



CONNECTING EUROPE DAYS 2022

Key topics of the Rhine-Danube Corridor Form

EUROPEAN RAIL TRANSPORT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (ERTMS)

Germany is lagging far behind other European countries in terms of ERTMS expansion. While Belgium has already equipped 41% of its network with ERTMS and Italy around 24%, the percentage in Germany is zero. The Netherlands and Switzerland, on the other hand, have almost completely converted their networks.

SOLIDARITY LANES

Another focus was on Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine and the Solidarity Lanes implemented by the European Commission with a corresponding action plan. This involves a series of measures to support Ukraine in exporting its agricultural products – mainly by rail and via the Rhine-Danube corridor.

MILITARY USE OF RAILWAY INFRASTRUCTURE

Hasit Thankey, Head of Civil Preparedness Unit at NATO, emphasised that NATO is also considering making greater use of rail infrastructure for military purposes and for the defence of Europe in the future.

EXPANDING CAPACITIES

After a two-year hiatus, stakeholders in the trans-European networks gathered in Lyon from 28 to 30 June 2022 for this year's TEN-T Days.

Under the new label 'Connecting Europe Days', the future of the trans-European networks was discussed over three days. One thing became particularly clear: there is still a lot to do. Above all, this concerns capacity in the network and at hubs (railway stations, freight villages and ports).

Capacity constraints at railway stations in particular will prove to be a major problem for growth in the rail sector in the future. However, implementing the European Commission's targets will not be enough to achieve this.



CONNECTING EUROPE DAYS 2022

Key issues for the Rhine-Danube
Corridor

LACK OF COMPETITION IN THE EUROPEAN RAIL SYSTEM

Another panel dealt with the topic of cross-border rail transport. Here, the participants criticised above all the lack of competition in the EU. This is because the barriers to market entry for new operators and rail transport companies are very high in the EU. Private rail operators need guarantees from the European Commission, otherwise they will not receive any money from the European Investment Bank for the high investments they need to make, especially with regard to rolling stock. At the same time, the bureaucratic hurdles for applying for subsidies are so high that small and medium-sized enterprises often look for private equity capital rather than taking advantage of EU subsidies.

DRIVING DECARBONISATION FORWARD

The participants agreed that the transport sector must make an important contribution to both climate protection and reducing political dependence on fossil fuels. However, this can only be achieved if an integrated transport system is created and ports, railways and the energy industry work towards common visions and goals.

INCREASING RESILIENCE IN THE NETWORK

Rather, all rail stakeholders must find pragmatic solutions to improve rail transport operations in the short term – including operational solutions. At the same time, the resilience of the existing infrastructure must be improved.

At the same time, civil society must be made more aware that consumption is not possible without transport. For this reason, the infrastructure – above all the rail infrastructure – must be rebuilt in such a way that it can still accommodate future economic growth. Not least because EU citizens are becoming increasingly mobile and the demand for sustainable transport options is rising massively.

LOBBYING BY THE MAIN LINE FOR EUROPE INITIATIVE



CREATING A REDUNDANCY LINE TO THE RHINE VALLEY RAILWAY

One issue we have been working on intensively this year is the reactivation of the disused railway line between Rastatt and Haguenau. The connecting line between the German and French rail networks was used for military purposes during both world wars and later by NATO. Its reactivation for civilian use is therefore also a symbol of lasting Franco-German reconciliation. The tracks of the railway line are still in place, and the former railway bridge between Rastatt and Wintersdorf is now used for road traffic. A new study by the European Commission has classified the disused railway line as a European missing link, i.e. an important but missing cross-border connection with high potential.

The reactivation of the missing link is of great importance for the Main Line for Europe development axis. Once upgraded, the line could serve as an important backup route for the Rhine Valley Railway, which is operating at full capacity. However, this would require the simultaneous electrification of the line on the left bank of the Rhine between Haguenau and Strasbourg. There, the diverted traffic could then be looped back onto the Rhine Valley Railway via the Appenweier curve.

An initial feasibility study by the PAMINA Eurodistrict has already confirmed a positive cost-benefit ratio for local rail passenger transport. Further studies – including for freight and long-distance transport – are planned.

However, the financing of a possible reactivation has still not been clarified. For this reason, the Main Line for Europe initiative had campaigned in numerous discussions and through intensive lobbying for the line to be included in the Trans-European Network (TEN-T). The advantage of such an inclusion would have been the possibility of co-financing the reactivation through INTERREG funds. Although both the French side and the European Commission had advocated such an inclusion, the BMDV blocked it. Now other ways must be found, because the deadline for the inclusion of new routes in the TEN-T by the nation states was only possible within the framework of the revision of the TEN-T.

We are therefore currently working with the Baden-Württemberg Ministry of Transport to examine the possibilities of financing with funds from the Municipal Transport Financing Act (GVFG) – at least for the German section.

LOBBYING BY THE MAIN LINE FOR EUROPE INITIATIVE



ABS 38 MUNICH- MÜHLDORF-FREILASSING RAPID EXPANSION

Another issue that has kept us on tenterhooks this year is the expansion of the Munich-Mühldorf-Freilassing railway line (ABS 38). This section of track is not only one of the most important railway projects for southern Germany, but also involves the elimination of a significant bottleneck in the Trans-European Network (TEN-T).

In recent years, considerable progress has been made in expanding the German section of the Main Line for Europe. This makes the news from DB all the more alarming that the completion of ABS 38 will be delayed by several years, even though its importance is undisputed and the rail project is classified as a fixed project in the 2030 Federal Transport Infrastructure Plan. The new Measures Preparation Act (MgVG) was actually intended to accelerate the implementation of railway expansion projects. However, according to DB, this is not to be expected in the case of ABS 38 due to the planning stage already reached there.

Instead, the new procedural steps of the MgVG will lead to considerable delays. The inclusion of the Weidenbach railway overpass in the district of Mühldorf (ministerial decree) in the MgVG also reinforces this effect.

Germany is lagging far behind in many new and expansion projects for the European rail network. We cannot therefore afford further delays on one of the most important corridors of the TEN-T if we want to send a credible signal of modal shift to our European partners.

In numerous letters and discussions – including with partners from the regional economy such as Wacker AG and the ChemDelta Bavaria initiative – we have therefore approached Federal Transport Minister Wissing with a request to advocate for the acceleration of the expansion of the ABS 38 and to avert the impending delays. If necessary, this could also involve removing the ABS 38 from the MgVG.

We are convinced that only a strong rail network can guarantee the competitiveness of our domestic economy, achieve the climate protection targets that have been set and reduce geopolitical dependencies on fossil fuels in the long term.

INCREASING THE VISIBILITY OF THE INITIATIVE

Increasing the visibility of the initiative is not only one of the areas of action in our strategy, but also a key concern of the secretariat. We therefore take advantage of a wide range of opportunities to engage in dialogue with political representatives, civil society actors and media representatives, to report on the initiative and to communicate our positions.

One such opportunity arose this year, for example, during an exchange with school pupils in Karlsruhe and MEP Ms Deparnay-Grunenberg on the subject of European rail transport.

Media presence is also important. For example, the KRAVAG customer magazine published an editorial on trans-European networks and their stakeholders – and, of course, Main Line for Europe was featured.

The aim of a joint project with the 'Infoturm Stuttgart' initiative is to raise awareness, especially in places where people experience rail infrastructure on a daily basis. The Infoturm uses construction fences to draw attention to important rail projects such as the Main Line for Europe (see picture on the right).



Main Line for Europe initiative



THE MAIN LINE FOR EUROPE ON SOCIAL MEDIA



"European rail transport must become sexy again," as the chairman of the initiative, Lord Mayor Dr Frank Mentrup, once aptly put it. And what better way to achieve this goal than through clever social media campaigns? We believe that not only companies, but also initiatives and NGOs need to position themselves in the market, build their own brand and communicate in a way that is tailored to their target audience. That's why we no longer only provide information about the latest developments along the Paris-Budapest/Bratislava axis via our newsletter, but also via Instagram and Facebook.

During the summer holidays, for example, our Instagram and Facebook accounts provided exciting tips on the most beautiful sights in the Main Line cities, including information on climate-friendly travel by train.

Main Line for Europe initiative

SUMMER IS HERE!



MAIN LINE FOR EUROPE



No plans yet?



Explore some beautiful places along the

MAIN LINE FOR EUROPE



- Cycling tour along the Danube
- DAV-Climbing World
- Visiting the oldest social settlement in the world: Fuggerei



MAIN LINE FOR EUROPE



IMPRINT

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