

EUROSTAR TRAINS DRAW TRAVELERS FROM AIRLINES



Eurostar, a company that started operating in 1994, provides the high-speed rail service that links Britain to France and Belgium. The trains go through the Channel Tunnel. The London-Paris journey takes 2 hrs 35 min, and London-Brussels takes 2 hrs 15 minutes.

The company recorded sales of £518 million in 2006 which is 11% more than in 2005. Eurostar transported a total of 7.86 million travelers in 2006 that is 5.4% more than in 2005. The trains attracted thousands of passengers that would use airlines otherwise.

There was also a 6% growth of sales in North America where the tickets are sold by Rail Europe, Eurostar's official North American representative. More than 200,000 of the 7.86 million tickets were sold in North America by Rail Europe. Interesting fact is that Rail Europe sold some 43% of Eurostar tickets through its Web sites.

Punctuality of Eurostar trains reaches 91.5% and it is some 5% better than in 2005. In contrast, according to UK's Civil Aviation Authority, punctuality at London's airports is around 70%. Because of troubles caused to air travel by recent foggy weather and security measures against possible terrorist threats many passengers switched from airlines to Eurostar. Present estimations suggest that some 1,000 business travelers who used to travel weekly by planes go now by Eurostar's trains. According to Richard Brown, CEO of Eurostar, "Travelers are discovering that international connections are easier than they imagined. I am delighted at the strong growth in the number of business travelers, who are discovering the punctuality and productivity advantages that Eurostar offers compared with the experience of flying."

Another important fact is that going by train produces less carbon dioxide emissions. Flying between London and Paris or Brussels generates ten times more carbon dioxide emissions than the same journey by train. Mr. Brown says: "Many more travelers are being attracted by the environmental benefits of using high-speed rail instead of short-haul air."

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