

FRENCH RAIL OPERATOR WANTS TO TAKE MARKET SHARE IN AIRLINES



With traffic up 1.8% in 2013, French rail operator Thalys carried 6,694,000 passengers, making a combined turnover of €487 million (+1.9% per year). Thalys' growth was driven by long bonds, with Paris and Paris-Amsterdam-Cologne-Essen showing a steady increase in traffic (+0.6% and +3.3% this year). Between Paris and Amsterdam, signs of recovery in the second half (+1.2%) after a steady start to the year portend great results for 2014.

The objective of the rail operator is threefold: to support the growth of trade, to encourage mutual cultural discovery, and to continue to gain market share vis-à-vis the aircraft (currently holding 80% of the point-to-point market share according to Lata). Regarding German operations, optimizing the Thalys network and success of new distribution channels has helped to boost the growing market in the heart of the Ruhr. Five daily flights from Paris to Cologne, extended to three times per day up until Düsseldorf, Duisburg, and Essen, are becoming increasingly popular for individuals and businesses.

It is important to emphasize the opening of the first Thalys & More store in Cologne thanks to online sales and tickets dematerialized by the German vote by professionals in the distribution of Thalys Amadeus. Also, recall that a new service, Lille Amsterdam, starting on April 12, will feature new e-press services and e-restorations (currently tested by frequent customers). The opening of the new Thalys & More Stores in Aachen and Dusseldorf, and finally the transformation of the rail company Thalys, are on the horizon in 2015.

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