

UNIQUE EXPERIENCE: TRAVELING BY TRAIN THROUGH 26 EUROPEAN COUNTRIES



2021 is the European Year of the Railroad, and among the ways to celebrate it is the Connecting Europe Express, a train that will cross almost the entire continent as a part of a campaign to promote traveling by train.

The special rail will not carry passengers: it will be a train that will travel through 26 countries for 36 days, going on railroads that cross over 70 cities inside and outside the EU.

20,000 Kilometers across Europe

At each of the scheduled stops, **activities will be organized that will revolve around the importance of the railway as continental transport**, its sustainability, safety, and economy.

The Connecting Europe Express will travel 20,000 kilometers. So far, details about the program for each city have not been revealed.

What the Journey Will Be Like

The starting point will be Lisbon on September 2, and two days later, on September 4, the train will arrive to Madrid. From there, it will move into France, and after going along the southern strip, the express train will visit the Italian cities of Milan, Genoa, Rome and Verona.

The journey will continue through the Alps and into Austria (by crossing Innsbruck, Salzburg and Vienna, among other cities), Slovakia, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, North Macedonia and Greece.

After reaching Athens on September 15, the Connecting Europe Express will turn back to the Carpathians to travel Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary and Slovakia, making its way to Poland.

Through Northern Europe

In the Polish city of Trakiszki, the express will detour and go along the southern fringe of the Baltic Sea, with scheduled stops in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

Upon returning, the train will turn south to head to Slovenia, the Czech Republic, Austria, Germany, Switzerland, and after stopping in Berlin, it makes another turn to reach Copenhagen, heading for Stockholm.

Modern Rail Network

The return to Hamburg marks the moment in which the express will visit the Netherlands, Belgium and Luxembourg, ending its journey on October 7 by arriving to Paris.

The entire journey represents the union of the different railway operators on the continent, which

are not all in the EU, but in a large network where three different types of track gauges are still used.

According to the European Commissioner for Transport, Adina Valean, the Connecting Europe Express is “a symbol for connectivity”, and this initiative is a reminder of the actions that are pending to make the railway “the transport of choice for Europeans.”

Sustainability and a Giant Network

The European Commission recalls that **Europe’s rail network, with its 201,000 kilometers, is one of the densest in the world**, and is just barely surpassed by that of the United States (with 203,000 kilometers).

Wagons and locomotives offer the most sustainable travel option, generating only 0.4% of gas emissions (while automobiles are responsible for 71.8%, civil aviation for 13.2%, and maritime transport for 14.1%). Traveling by train is thus popular among many eco-conscious holidaymakers.

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