



High-speed railway axis east

The new high-speed railway link between Germany and France will benefit European citizens from west and east alike, speeding up journey times and providing a more environment-friendly alternative to air travel on key routes.

What is the axis?

The project aims to interconnect the high-speed rail networks of France and Germany, as well as to improve the railway link between France and Luxembourg. Its three parts are a new 300 km long high-speed, passenger-only rail line from Paris to Baudrecourt (near Metz) with a commercial speed of 320 km/h; upgrading of the Saarbrücken–Mannheim section (on the Paris–Metz–Frankfurt–Berlin railway corridor, the improvement of which is subject to a bilateral ministerial agreement concluded in 1992), for 200 km/h running; and upgrading of the Metz–Luxembourg line.

The Paris–Baudrecourt section is the first phase of the French ‘TGV Est’ project which will link Paris with Strasbourg and, via Kehl/Appenweier, with the German high-speed rail network. The second phase of this project (Baudrecourt–Strasbourg) is also part of the Paris–Stuttgart–Munich–Vienna–Bratislava (*see axis No 17*) and Strasbourg–Luxembourg–Brussels (*see axis No 28*) projects.

What are its expected benefits?

The mixture of building new lines and upgrading existing ones will greatly improve transports link for passengers between France, Germany and Luxembourg. The project forms the first stage of an east–west corridor linking Europe’s major economic centres with the new Member States of central and eastern Europe.

Completion of the French part of this priority project (i.e. the first phase of the ‘TGV Est’ project) will cut journey times from Paris to Strasbourg to 2 hours and 20 minutes, from Paris to Metz and Nancy to 1 hour and 30 minutes, from Paris to Reims to 45 minutes and from Paris to Luxembourg to 2 hours and 15 minutes.

The new line will help to shift traffic from road and air transport to rail, and should boost economic and regional development.

What is its current status?

In France, construction of the new high-speed line between Vaires and Baudrecourt started in January 2002. Track-laying works started in October 2004. At that time, ground works for the new line had been fully completed, and about 70 % of the bridges and tunnels were in place. Infrastructure works should be completed in summer 2006, allowing test runs to start towards the end of 2006, and the new line to open in summer 2007.

The ‘TGV Est’ project includes the construction of three new railway stations of which Champagne–Ardenne and Meuse form part of the first phase, i.e. priority axis No 4 (the third station – Lorraine – belongs to priority axis No 17).

Plans for the connection between the new Paris–Baudrecourt line and the existing line to Luxembourg received government approval in April 2002, and it will be completed and opened for operation together with the new line.

In Germany, upgrading work on the Saarbrücken–Mannheim section, to allow the use of 200 km/h tilting trains, is planned to be finished by 2007.

The French and German railways are working together to equip this corridor with the European rail traffic management system (ERTMS), allowing German and French trains to operate on each others’ tracks with a single European train control system, the ETCS.

Priority section	Type of work/status	Distance (km)	Timetable	Total cost as of end 2004 (million EUR)	Investment up to 31.12.2004 (million EUR)	TEN-T contribution, including studies, up to 31.12.2004 (million EUR)
Paris–Baudrecourt; Metz–Luxembourg	New line and upgrade	365	2002–07	4 034	1 358	212.9
Saarbrücken– Mannheim	Upgrade	145	2003–07	339	176	18.5
TOTAL		510		4 373	1 534	231.4

