Railway axis Paris–Strasbourg–Stuttgart–Vienna–Bratislava

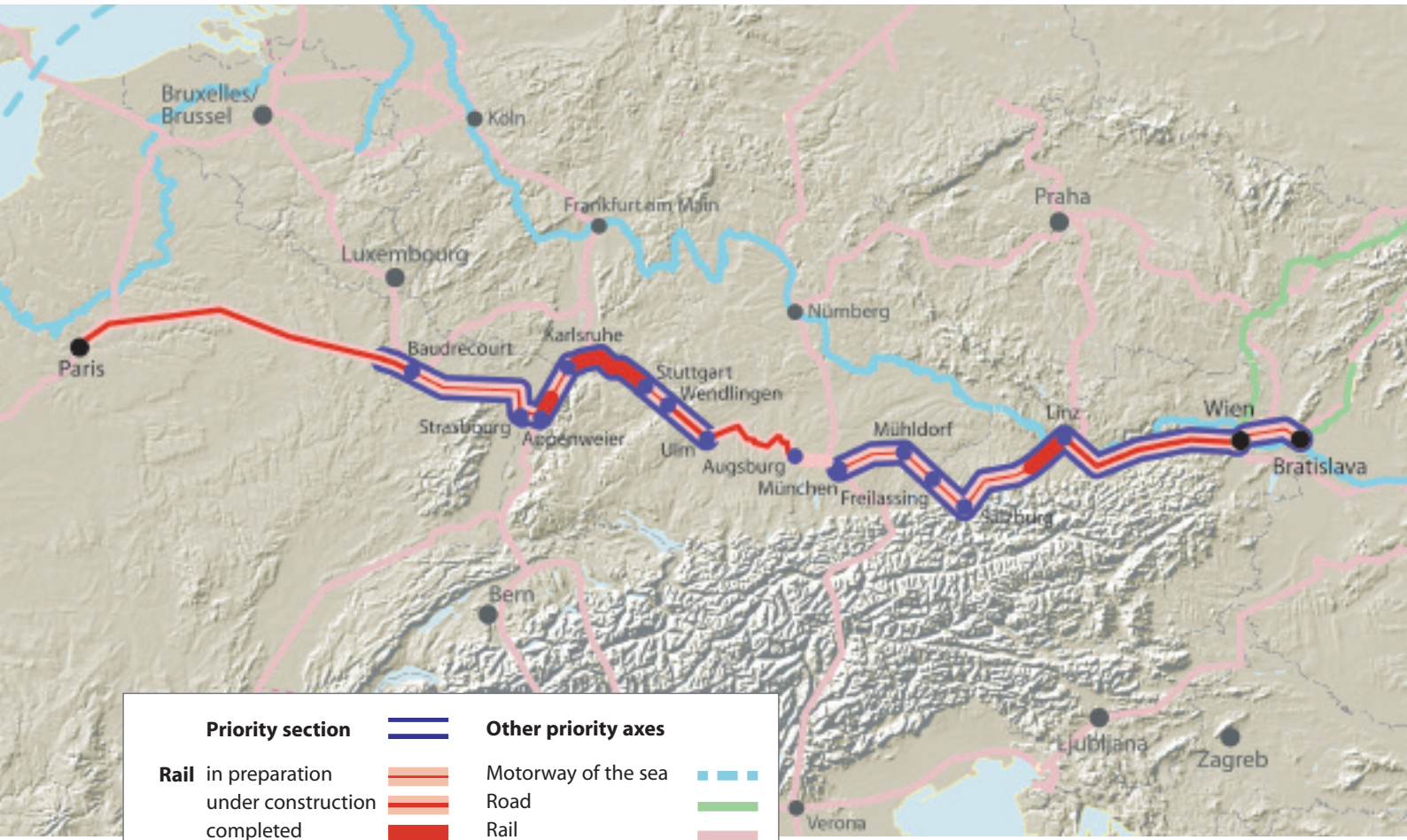
European citizens from west and east alike will benefit from new high-speed railway services on a route crossing heavily populated areas in the core of Europe. Freight operators will benefit from rail services on one of the most congested road axes.

What is the axis?

The western end overlaps with the high-speed train east *(see axis No 4)* and the eastern part with the Athens–Prague–Nuremberg rail line *(see axis No 22)*. New and upgraded high-speed lines will run all the way from Paris to Vienna, including in particular the construction of a second track on the Kehl bridge over the Rhine to improve interconnection between the French and German networks. Further east, existing lines – to be used for freight – will be upgraded, while major works will improve the connection between Vienna and Bratislava, both north and south of the Danube.

What are its expected benefits?

The project will provide a continuous rail axis for both passengers and freight from Paris to Bratislava. The development of this axis will contribute to the success of EU enlargement by better connecting the new Member States, and by providing alternatives to road for intra-EU traffic. Today, over half of the rail-freight traffic on several sections of the route is between Member States, and volumes will grow further following enlargement. This project will improve access to and from the many conurbations along its route.



Priority section	Type of work/status	Distance (km)	Timetable (1)	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)
Baudrecourt–Strasbourg–Stuttgart, with the Kehl bridge as cross-border section	New line and upgrade	265	2010–15	1 450	0	0
Stuttgart–Ulm	New line	91	2006–12	1 266		16.4
Munich–Salzburg cross-border section	Upgrade/electrification	141	2002–15	461	46.2	1
Salzburg–Vienna	Upgrade	315	1990–2012	6 600	2 334	63.7
Vienna–Bratislava cross-border section (2)	Upgrade	70	2004–12 (2010)	300	15.7	0
TOTAL		**882**		**10 077**	**2 395.9**	**81.1**

(1) In brackets, completion date listed in the 2004 guidelines, if different from the date notified in 2005 by the Member State.

(2) The completion date for the northern alignment via Marchegg is not yet decided. The southern alignment via Vienna airport should be finished in 2012.

What is its current status?

Works on all the domestic sections are scheduled in the national transport plans of the countries concerned. For the 104 km-long Baudrecourt–Vendenheim (suburb of Strasbourg) section in France, final technical studies should be completed in 2008, and completion of the line for 2015. Réseau Ferré de France (RFF) and Deutsche Bahn (DB) have set up a working group to coordinate planning for works on the Rhine bridge. It is not yet clear whether the bridge can be upgraded to twin-track, or if it needs to be completely rebuilt. The bridge, and the linked section to Appenweier (at 200 km/h) are planned to be finished by 2010. In Germany, design studies are under way on most of the other sections.

The Wendlingen–Ulm section of the Stuttgart–Ulm line is in the planning phase, with co-financing from the TEN-T budget. For the Stuttgart–Wendlingen section, the authorities have not yet decided on whether to upgrade the existing line, or to build a new line which would also connect with Stuttgart airport.

A critical link in Germany is the Munich–Mühldorf–Freilassing (Austrian border) section. Upgrading to twin-track and electrification works, giving a speed of 160 km/h, are scheduled to be finished in 2015, but delays could occur due to a lack of government funding. Substantial improvement of the Vienna–Bratislava link is of major concern for the two cities and their airports.

The regions and cities involved have established a framework for cooperation, to assess the opportunities for local development and economic integration ('Magistrale for Europe'). So far, the Community has contributed EUR 315 million to priority axes No 4 and No 17, with another EUR 66 million planned in 2005–06.

On 20 July 2005, the European Commission designated Mr Péter Balázs as European coordinator for priority axis No 17.