



'Eurocaprail' on the Brussels–Luxembourg–Strasbourg railway axis

This axis adds a valuable north–south link to the rail network in north-western Europe, forging better links for both freight and passengers between the Netherlands–London and south-western Germany, via Luxembourg and Brussels.

What is the axis?

The axis adds an important link to the European rail network. It will join existing infrastructure to improve north–south links through better connections between the North Sea and Italy, via Belgium, Luxembourg, eastern France and Switzerland.

Works will include linking the Brussels international airport axis and the Brussels–Antwerp–Amsterdam high-speed line (*see axis No 2*) via a new tunnel between Brussels Schuman and Josaphat. In Brussels, the creation of an additional twin-track line between Brussels Schuman and the Brussels North–South junction (for high-speed connections to London, France and the Dutch Randstad region) will create more direct traffic flows. The construction of a new line between Bettembourg (Luxembourg) and links with the TGV-Est (*see axis No 4*) and the Paris–Stuttgart–Vienna–Bratislava line (*see axis No 17*) will provide high-speed connections to and from the south and east. The upgrades will also facilitate the daily commuting of some 30 000 Belgians from southern Wallonia to their work in Luxembourg.

What are its expected benefits?

Apart from improving intra-Community cohesion, one of the main objectives of this axis is to improve connections between the EU's three main administrative centres and thereby also improve the efficiency and productivity of the EU.

In addition, by improving this key link in the TEN-T, upgrading this axis will increase the profitability and competitiveness of rail on the route, and relieve road traffic on the adjacent motorways. This will make a significant contribution to sustainable development and protecting the environment in areas of natural beauty such as the Ardennes.

Once complete, there will be significant savings in journey times. Following the completion of the second section of the TGV-Est (Baudrecourt–Strasbourg), Luxembourg–Strasbourg journeys will be reduced to 1 hour and 25 minutes (over 2 hours today). The major international objective is to achieve travel times between Brussels and Luxembourg of one and a half hours and Brussels and Strasbourg of three hours in combination with the TGV-Est. In total, completing the project will represent a saving of 2.5 million hours per year, of which more than 2 million would be accounted for by international traffic.

What is its current status?

A joint Belgian–Luxembourgish working group is examining the economic interest of this project. The Belgian railways are studying the feasibility of creating a private–public partnership structure to speed up the realisation of the project.

Investment to upgrade the rail line between Luxembourg and the Belgian border is planned from 2009 to 2012, and could be extended into 2013.

The 104 km Baudrecourt–Strasbourg section in France (*see axes No 4 and 17*) is currently at an advanced stage in planning, due to be completed in 2008. The line is expected to be opened in 2015.

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)
Brussels–Luxembourg border	Rail (upgrade)	176	2007–12	1 245	0	0
Luxembourg–French border	Rail (upgrade)	18	2009–13 (2012)	164	0	0
TOTAL		194		1 409	0	0

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

