



EUROPEAN TRAIN NETWORK OF THE FUTURE

ADOPTED AT THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF FEDERATION OF YOUNG EUROPEAN GREENS
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Cross borders, meet people, get together.

European citizens are becoming more and more mobile. We are going out more often, we are going on holiday more frequently and further than ever. That is really amazing from a social and cultural perspective. However, there is a downside to this: the frequency and the impact of flying, notably, is increasing significantly over the years.

We could challenge this, both from a social perspective as an environmental point of view. Less than 10% of the global population actually ever had the possibility to take a flight, which means that only a small part of society is responsible for the environmental impact of flying. Nonetheless, health issues due to pollution by aircrafts, as well as global warming, affect everyone.

Another example is the policy of commercial flights; how employees of (mostly low-cost) airline companies are being underpaid and are taken for granted, meanwhile the health risks of working as a flight attendant is significantly high (according to data from the Department of Labor, it's number 8 out of the top 47 most damaging jobs in the United States)!

Here are some facts, to put the environmental impact of flying into perspective:

- Total CO₂-emission of flying is approx. 2% of the total world emission and even 3% within the EU (Climate Action - European Commission, 2016)
 - That's similar to the total yearly CO₂-emission of Germany (CO₂ emissions from aviation, 2018)
 - If the airplane sector would be compared to a country, it would be the 6th most polluting country in the world in terms of CO₂ emissions between Japan and Germany (Corsia: The UN's plan to 'offset' growth in aviation emissions after 2020, 2019)
- A grow of up to 300% is expected according to Transport & Environment (Aviation emissions and the Paris Agreement, 2016)
- But hopefully: the (domestic) aviation industry actually is included within the Paris Climate Agreements (Top 3 misconceptions about CORSIA., ICAO checked July 2019)

Even with these few numbers, we are facing a serious issue. How can we as (united) young greens continue engaging with each other, without damaging our Mother Earth as much?

Travelling by train is a viable and sustainable option, even if it is sometimes a slower way of travelling. It connects passengers in Europe with the countries they are passing through, with their landscapes and the people they meet. When we choose the train over the plane, the distances we travel are no longer abstract.

We would like to make short distance travel by train more appealing and optional. Night trains and a proper European train network will be a solution.

We therefore propose the following four key elements of a modern and international train network:

(1.)

Night trains should become a major way of travelling in between European cities. Many European cities, including important capital cities, are not served by national or international night trains. Night services have been a trademark and key component of intra-European rail transport for over 100 years and this feature characteristic of European travel culture should be preserved. FYEG stands for a revival of the night trains in Europe to be a viable and affordable alternative for travellers to European destinations as it has been in the past, retaining or reactivating routes as necessary. The few existing night trains should not compromise on services and investments in wagons and booking services are to be encouraged. Passengers now experience outdated wagons and difficulties booking a correspondent train which operates in another country. Night trains should become a major way of travelling in between European cities that are close by (<1000km).

(2.)

FYEG pledges for a well-organised European mobility where trains connect European cities, towns and rural areas. We are convinced that we can change the system drastically, without impacting our freedom of movement significantly. We can work this out, as long as we work together as a union. The European Union should play a leading role in promoting this way of transport by investing in the improvement of infrastructure, supporting train companies with coordination and expertise and by creating a harmonised European legislative frame. This could be financed by implementing a tax on kerosene, flight tickets and via the contributions of their respective members.

There is a great inequality in investments in European mobility: while low cost airlines expand with the help of taxpayers' money, train companies face budget cuts from their governments. Tax money seems to be mostly going to the airplane sector. As an example: a recent study revealed that the European Union subsidised the Airbus A380 with approximately 6.5 billion dollar. This is exactly the plane that was recently taken off the market due to low demand. This indicates that this money could have been spent on other mobility issues, as for example establishing a competitive European train network.

FYEG stands for travelling by train to become cheaper than by plane for distances less than 1000 kilometres (approx. 621.4 miles) over land. We are convinced that this is a good way of redistributing tax money, promoting social interactions throughout Europe and keeping our air clean. We propose a tax on kerosene or flight tickets with an ecological and social aim. These taxes could be used to establish and maintain a European ticketing system, a European Train Union and finally more equal mobility opportunities for European citizens.

(3.)

FYEG supports the founding of a European Train Union. This union works together with national railway networks to build a European train strategy: a shared view on routes, infrastructure and investments. Secondly it increases cooperation between train companies on delays and assures exchange of information. Furthermore the union simplifies and harmonises different national legislations for train travelling. Eventually it supports the procurement of night and international train wagons. A decent European rail network also requires a significant budget, by combining all these companies into one organisation for international journeys, we will both have the means as a cheaper, more efficient organisation.

(4.)

FYEG calls for a moratorium on the privatisation of railways companies or train lines. These privatisations often come at the expense of workers' rights working conditions and at the expense of the passengers living in rural areas and using small lines. Instead of fostering competition, the European Union should encourage cooperation between the different train companies.

(5.)

It is currently impressively harder to plan and book itineraries by train across Europe than by flight, with some train companies not allowing the online booking of international tickets or seat reservation or making mandatory the fact physical collection of tickets. FYEG therefore pledges firstly for an EU managed route planner and open booking system, very similar to the national ones most of the countries already have. This does not necessarily change anything about the tickets and the individual companies involved as the fees will still go to them.

It would, however, give two important advantages:

- A very smooth and user friendly interface, similar to the existing national train companies
- A better overview for train connections, a harmonised refund system for tickets and better communication towards passengers in case of delay.

(6.)

FYEG supports regional governments, local governments, the European Union and a European Train Union in efforts to withdraw costs of usage from their services. FYEG also supports efforts to introduce fare-free local public transport throughout Europe.

The facilitator of this could be a European Train Union as described in (3).

We are convinced that a well-organised European Train Union is part of the future of Europe. A future we want to embrace.

