



Press Release

Record ridership on the ICE to Brussels: over 1 million passengers to be transported this year

20 years of ICE to Belgium or Germany - More space and improved comfort with the ICE 3neo from 2024 - Richard Lutz: "Setting the right course 20 years ago is paying off"

(Brussels, 16 November 2022) Deutsche Bahn (DB) is celebrating 20 years of the Brussels ICE line. More and more passengers are using cross-border high-speed rail between Germany and Belgium. For the first time, DB expects over one million passengers to use the ICE Brussels to travel to Belgium or Germany in 2022.

At a celebration to mark the 20th anniversary in Brussels with employees and guests from the government and business community, Dr Volker Wissing, German Minister for Transport, Georges Gilkinet, Belgian Minister for Transport, Dr Richard Lutz, CEO of Deutsche Bahn, and Sophie Dutordoir, CEO of SNCB/NMBS (Société nationale de chemins de fer belges), paid tribute to the successful record of long distance transport between Belgium and Germany.

DB CEO Richard Lutz: "Never have so many people chosen climate-friendly rail to travel between Germany and Belgium as this year. With one million travellers to and from Brussels, we are heading for a record. Setting the right course twenty years ago is paying off today. And from 2024, we will make rail travel to Brussels even more attractive with new trains and more comfort."

SNCB CEO Sophie Dutordoir: „Pioneer at that time, the ICE high speed train has become a pillar of sustainable mobility. It is an adventure that we share on a daily basis with Deutsche Bahn: for 20 years, our teams have been working together and ICE connects Brussels directly to Frankfurt via Aachen and Cologne. And now up to 7X/day. Trains provide safe, sustainable and comfortable transportation and offer an essential tool for achieving climate goals. And with more than 3,600 international destinations, of which more than 1,000 are less than 6 hours away, Brussels is positioning itself as an international rail hub.“

German Minister of Transport Dr Volker Wissing: "If we want to achieve our climate targets in transport, we have to convince a lot more people to travel by climate-friendly rail, by offering high-speed services, a regular-interval timetable, attractive journey times and modern comfort. The new ICE 3neo trains will help us to do this,

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because, as multi-system vehicles, they should significantly improve punctuality on this route again in the future. It's really good news for all travellers."

Georges Gilkinet: "The cooperation between the German and Belgian railways on the ICE line is a success story that I am delighted about. Whether it is for business trips, family visits or a city trip, 1 million passengers have made the choice of sustainability, comfort and user-friendliness with these high-speed trains since the introduction of this line. Twice as many places for bicycles as the European minimum required and a law to show the federal government's strong support for night trains: as Minister of Mobility, I want Belgium to play a leading role, both at the national and European levels, for the redeployment of night trains. One ICE on tracks means 2 planes less in the sky! Happy birthday to the ICE, and to this fruitful collaboration that I hope will last for a long time and will continue to attract hundreds of thousands of passengers between our two countries."

DB and SNCB/NMBS are extending their successful partnership on the Brussels ICE line for another five years. SNCB is responsible for operating the ICE to Brussels on the Belgian section of the route and also offers onward travel options in its own country. It is also a partner for ticket sales and customer service.

Starting in 2024, the ICE 3neo will carry passengers between Germany and Belgium. The new ICE has 439 seats and offers even more space and comfort for passengers; this includes frequency-transparent windows for stable mobile phone reception, eight bicycle spaces in each train, newly designed luggage racks, lighting with colour tones that change depending on the time of day, tablet holders on the seats and power points at all seats, including in coach class. Extra doors speed up boarding and disembarking at stations. A new lift facilitates access for wheelchair users.

DB currently offers a total of seven direct connections per day in each direction between Frankfurt/Main and Brussels. The journey time of around three hours is unrivalled. In addition, there is also a pair of trains on Sunday evening that connects Brussels and Cologne even after 8 pm.

More information on ICE services to and from Belgium is available at bahn.de/belgien

You can find photos of the event starting at 6 pm at: mediaportal.deutschebahn.com/marsDB-Mediaportal/ko/de/7018201

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