FLYING CHEAP, PAYING DEAR: HOW AIRLINES UNDERCUT RAIL AND FUEL THE CLIMATE CRISIS

TICKET PRICES OF PLANES VS TRAINS- A EUROPE-WIDE ANALYSIS

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GREENPEACE



Analysis by Greenpeace Central and Eastern Europe

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INTRODUCTION

Aviation remains one of Europe's most climate-damaging and unjust forms of transport. Despite its heavy environmental impact, flying is often much cheaper than taking the train – not because it is more efficient, but because airlines benefit from unfair advantages such as tax exemptions and subsidies, while rail is burdened with high fares, fragmented ticketing systems and underfunded infrastructure.

This report reveals the extent of Europe's distorted travel pricing. By analysing 142 routes across 31 countries, it shows that for most cross-border trips, rail remains more expensive than air – even though it is the far more climate-friendly choice. Low-cost airlines continue to undercut rail fares through aggressive pricing, enabled by a political system that still rewards polluters.

Citizens deserve access to clean, affordable and fair transport options. To make the shift from air to rail possible, Greenpeace is calling for the introduction of climate tickets all across Europe, the end of airline subsidies, and a pricing system that puts people and the planet first.

KEY FINDINGS

- **Only 39% of the 109 cross-border routes analysed were cheaper by train – despite rail's significant climate advantages. In contrast, the results for the 33 domestic routes analysed were promising for the environment – with 70% being cheaper by train.[1]**
- **The analysis found vast differences across European countries. The most expensive country for cross-border rail travel compared to flights is France, where 95% of all routes were more expensive by train on at least 6 out of 9 days. For Spain, the figure is 92%; for the UK, 90%; and for Italy, 88%.**
- **Airlines pay no kerosene tax and no VAT on international tickets, whereas rail operators are subject to energy taxes, VAT and high track access charges in many countries.**
- **There is a slightly positive trend: compared to a similar Greenpeace analysis from 2023, the share of routes where the train was cheaper than flying on at least 6 out of 9 days has risen from 27% to 41%. This is partly due to more direct rail connections and fewer ultra-cheap connecting flights via low-cost hubs such as London and Dublin. However, the trend is too slow, and a full overhaul of the pricing system is needed to effectively tackle the climate crisis and to make rail cheaper than flying on all routes.**
- In the three Baltic countries (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania), the train was always cheaper than the plane. In Poland, 89% of cross-border routes were predominantly cheaper by train, as were 80% of routes in Slovenia.
- In the three German-speaking countries (Germany, Austria, Switzerland), roughly half of the cross-border routes were cheaper by train and half by plane, depending mainly on the destination country.
- With a train ticket costing up to 26 times the price of the flight for a trip on the same day, Barcelona–London is the route showing the largest price difference in the analysis (€14.99 for the plane vs €389 for the train on one mid-term trip).
- With their unfair and aggressive pricing strategies, low-cost airlines such as easyJet, Ryanair, Wizz Air and Vueling often offer the lowest fares and are predominantly cheaper than rail travel. They frequently offer extremely low fares, presumingly even below the cost of airport and ticket fees. The cheapest ticket found cost €12.99 and was sold by easyJet on the Barcelona–London route.
- Rail travel tends to become more expensive when multiple operators and separate tickets are involved, with fares varying between companies. While rail fares generally increase with distance, flight fares do not follow the same pattern – making air travel often cheaper than rail on longer routes.

[1] The overall climate impact of flying can be over 80 times worse than taking a train. Planes emit, on average, 4.85 times more greenhouse gases than trains, according to data from the European Environment Agency, which is a conservative low estimate. The figures vary by country, railway company, route and type of train, and national data is available for most countries.

- Since night trains involve fewer transfers and train operators, their basic fares are often lower than those of day trains. However, they are usually still more expensive than low-cost airlines.
- Funds to make rail travel cheaper and better could be raised by introducing a fair taxation scheme for aviation – starting with taxes on business-class and first-class flights – and by introducing a moderate tax on billionaires and centi-millionaires.

METHODOLOGY–IN BRIEF

This report aims to provide a comprehensive comparison of flight and rail fares across 31 European countries, identify the reasons behind the observed price differences, and propose solutions to make rail travel cheaper than flying on all routes. A total of 142 one-way routes were analysed, including 111 routes that were analysed in 2023 using a very similar methodology. Of the 142 routes, 33 are domestic.

All routes were analysed for trips on 9 different days across 3 time frames:

Short-term: trips occurring 2, 4 and 7 days from the day of research
Mid-term: trips occurring exactly one month, and plus and minus 2 days from the day of research
Long-term: trips occurring exactly 3 months, and plus and minus 4 days from the day of research

All routes were defined as “reasonably” travelable by train – meaning either within the same day or with a night train and connecting trains, provided the total travel time did not exceed 24 hours. Routes with rail travel times under 4 hours were only included if flight availability and pricing indicated that these routes are commonly used for direct travel between the 2 cities (rather than primarily serving as part of longer connecting flights).

The routes were selected along the following criteria:

- The geographic focus of the research is Europe, excluding Russia, Belarus and Ukraine. All routes analysed are below 1,500 km air distance (short-haul flights). All destinations have an international airport and a railway station.

- First priority: routes between capitals and other major cities with over 1 million inhabitants, such as Barcelona, Milan or Hamburg. For capitals with reasonable rail connections to no more than 4 of these cities, all such routes were analysed. For capitals with good rail connections to more than 4 of these cities, at least 4 routes were selected to ensure a balanced geographic mix.
- Second priority: the most frequently used short-haul flight routes with a reasonable train alternative, including connections to other cities, such as Edinburgh–London.
- Third priority: routes to or from highly popular tourist hotspots, such as Venice, Nice, Split or Valencia.
- Fourth priority: selected night train routes, such as Bratislava–Split, Stockholm–Narvik or London–Inverness.
- For larger countries: inclusion of domestic flights and cross-border routes to or from other cities[2] to ensure a balanced geographic mix.
- For countries on the periphery of Europe or with limited international rail connections, such as Portugal, Romania or the Baltic countries, the decisive criterion was the availability of routes that could be travelled by both plane and train.

For more methodological details, please refer to Annex I.

In total, 142 routes were analysed between 8 April and 17 June 2025, including 109 cross-border and 33 domestic routes. The following table shows the total number of routes analysed per country. The number of domestic routes is shown in brackets. For example, for Austria, 14 routes were analysed in total, one of which was domestic.

Austria	14 (1)	Hungary	7	Portugal	4 (2)
Belgium	10	Ireland	1 (1)	Romania	6 (1)
Bulgaria	2 (1)	Italy	19 (3)	Serbia	1
Croatia	9 (1)[3]	Latvia	2	Slovakia	5
Czechia	9	Lithuania	4	Slovenia	5
Denmark	7	Luxembourg	5	Spain	19 (6)
Estonia	2	Moldova	1	Sweden	9 (2)

[2] Such as Marseille (FR), Toulouse (FR), Salzburg (AT), Gothenburg (SE), Geneva (CH), Bergen (NO) and Košice (SK).
[3] The route from the EuroAirport to Zagreb was analysed as 3 separate routes – Basel–Zagreb, Freiburg–Zagreb and Mulhouse–Zagreb – but counted as a single route in the statistics for Croatia.

Finland	1 (1)	Montenegro	1	Switzerland	8
France	26 (4)	Netherlands	9	UK	14 (4)
Germany	31 (2)	Norway	7 (2)		
Greece	1 (1)	Poland	10 (1)		

The following table shows the number (%) of routes by availability of direct air and rail connections. Routes were considered to have direct connectivity if they were served by direct connections at least twice per week and for more than 3 months per year. The train routes between Poland and Lithuania, which are offered as direct connections but require a change of trains at the border due to different track gauges, were also counted as direct rail connections.

Routes with direct flights, total	135 (95%)
Routes with direct rail connections, total	72 (51%)
Routes without direct flights, but with direct rail connections	3 (2%)
Routes without direct flights and without direct rail connections	4 (3%)

All routes were classified according to the following colour code (extended traffic light system):

Dark green	Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days
Green	Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days
Yellow	Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days
Orange	Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days
Red	Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days

Methodology for incomplete data sets:

If all 9 trips on a given route could not be analysed – e.g., if a flight was unavailable or if train tickets were not sold well in advance – the colour code was adjusted accordingly.

The following table shows the adjusted criteria:

Number of trips analysed	Number of days the train was cheaper (colour indicates classification)				
8	7 and 8	5 and 6	4	2 and 3	0 and 1
7	6 and 7	5	3 and 4	2	0 and 1
6	5 and 6	4	3	2	0 and 1
5	5	4	2 and 3	1	0
4	4	3	2	1	0
3	3	2	N/A	1	0

E.g., if all 3 long-term tickets were unavailable, a route was classified as “dark green” when the train was cheaper on 5 or 6 out of the remaining 6 days.

Important note on statistics:

In all statistics throughout this report, the actual number of trips analysed per route was not taken into consideration. This means that data such as “on x routes, the train was cheaper on x out of 9 days” may include routes for which fewer than 9 days were analysed.

Disclaimer

Greenpeace has conducted this research using the described methodology to the best of its knowledge and belief, with the aim of providing the most realistic picture of the situation possible. In total, thousands of prices were obtained from almost 100 different online ticket shops for flights and rail. It is therefore possible that some individual data may not be 100% accurate. The following cases, in particular, might have been inadvertently excluded from the data-gathering process:

- Flights operated by certain airlines on a weekly basis or during specific seasons only.
- Rail connections operated on a weekly basis or during specific seasons only, especially those run by private railway companies not listed in the timetables of incumbent railway companies.
- Some flight routes are operated by 5 or more airlines and may even include different airports serving the same city. In some cases, when low-cost carriers were clearly much cheaper on the first days analysed, traditional airlines were not checked for all days. Therefore, it is possible that an exceptionally low fare offered by a traditional airline on a specific day was not captured in the analysis.

- For some routes, there are dozens of rail connections available. Some online ticket shops only display prices upon opening a connection and entering personal data. In such cases, it cannot be ruled out that the cheapest rail fare for a given day has been missed, since not every possible connection could be checked.

This is not an exhaustive analysis. The selection of routes was in line with the methodology described. However, in some cases, Greenpeace had to make decisions between cities with a certain degree of arbitrariness due to the number of possible combinations – e.g., choosing Nice–Munich and Marseille–Berlin, rather than Nice–Berlin and Marseille–Munich. Greenpeace is convinced that such decisions did not affect the overall findings of the report.

Last but not least, Greenpeace cannot guarantee the absence of typos in the Google Sheet, especially regarding flight and train numbers. This is partly due to the fact that some travel data cannot be rechecked for past travel dates.

OVERALL RESULTS

Cross-border vs domestic routes

The analysis found substantial differences between domestic and cross-border routes. While 70% of all domestic routes analysed were cheaper by train on all or most of the days, this was the case for only 39% of the cross-border routes.

Cross-border routes

A total of 109 cross-border routes across Europe were analysed. Only 43 of them were cheaper by train on at least 6 out of 9 days analysed, while 59 were more expensive by train on at least 6 days.

109 CROSS-BORDER ROUTES	Number of routes	Percentage
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	29	26.6%
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	14	12.8%
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	7	6.4%
Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days	9	8.3%
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	50	45.9%

Domestic routes

A total of 33 domestic routes in 16 countries were analysed. 23 of them were cheaper by train on at least 6 out of 9 days analysed, while 7 were more expensive by train on at least 6 days.

33 DOMESTIC ROUTES	Number of routes	Percentage
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	16	48.5%
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	7	21.2%
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	3	9.1%
Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days	2	6.1%
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	5	15.2%

“Red” domestic routes were found in the UK and France (2 out of 4 routes each), as well as one in Ireland. The 2 “orange” routes were found in Spain and Italy.

How countries compare: Share of cross-border train routes that are more or less expensive than flights

The following Scorecard shows the share of cross-border routes per country where the train was more expensive than the flight on at least 6 out of 9 days. The higher a country appears in the table, the more routes are predominantly more expensive by train than by plane. Only countries for which at least 4 cross-border routes met the methodological criteria are included in the Scorecard.

Scorecard 1 showing the share of cross-border routes where trains are more expensive than flights – by country:

	Share of red and orange routes
France	95%
Spain	92%
UK	90%
Italy	88%
Hungary	71%

Romania	60%
Belgium	60%
Norway	60%
Denmark	57%
Switzerland	50%
Germany	48%
Austria	46%
Luxembourg	40%
Slovakia	40%
Czechia	33%
Sweden	29%
Croatia[4]	25%
Netherlands	22%
Poland	11%
Slovenia	0%
Lithuania	0%

This means, e.g., that 95% of all cross-border routes to and from France analysed were more expensive by train than by plane on at least 6 out of 9 days. The colour coding serves only to provide a clearer illustration.

The following Scorecard shows the share of cross-border routes per country where the train was cheaper than the flight on at least 6 out of 9 days. The higher a country appears in the table, the more routes are predominantly cheaper by train than by plane. Only countries for which at least 4 routes met the methodological criteria are included in the Scorecard.

Scorecard 2 showing the share of cross-border routes where trains are cheaper than flights – by country:

	Share of dark green and green routes
Lithuania	100%
Poland	89%
Slovenia	80%
Croatia[5]	63%

[4] The route from the EuroAirport to Zagreb was analysed as 3 separate routes – Basel–Zagreb, Freiburg–Zagreb and Mulhouse–Zagreb – but counted as a single route in the statistics for Croatia.

[5] The route from the EuroAirport to Zagreb was analysed as 3 separate routes – Basel–Zagreb, Freiburg–Zagreb and Mulhouse–Zagreb – but counted as a single route in the statistics for Croatia.

Slovakia	60%
Sweden	57%
Czechia	56%
Netherlands	56%
Switzerland	50%
Austria	46%
Germany	45%
Romania	40%
Norway	40%
Luxembourg	40%
Belgium	30%
Denmark	29%
Hungary	29%
Spain	8%
Italy	6%
France	5%
UK	0%

The remainder of the sum of both Scorecards for each country corresponds to "yellow" routes. This also explains why the 2 Scorecards are not exact mirror images of each other. E.g., the UK ranks third-worst in the first Scorecard, but comes out worst in the second, as there is not a single route to or from the UK where the train was predominantly cheaper than the flight.

Important note: *These Scorecards are based on the routes included in the analysis. Greenpeace has made every effort to select a representative mix of routes. However, a slightly different selection of the 142 routes could moderately affect the ranking of some countries – especially those in the mid-range and in cases where routes between the same countries show differing results. E.g., all routes between Germany and Austria were predominantly cheaper by train, while routes between Germany and Croatia were partly cheaper by train and partly by plane. Therefore, the selection of routes between Germany and Austria is unlikely to influence the ranking, whereas the selection of routes between Germany and Croatia may have an effect.*

The 10 most and least expensive cross-border train trips compared to flights

The 10 most expensive train trips compared to climate-harming flights:

Route No.*	Route	Time frame and weekday	Rail fare compared to flight fare (x times as much**)	Flight fare (€)	Rail fare (€)
54	Barcelona–London	Mid-term (Tue)	26.0	14.99	389
77	London–Bratislava	Mid-term (Sun)	23.3	21.23	494.99
115	Paris–Copenhagen	Short-term (Wed)	21.7	14.99	326
38	Manchester–Cologne	Short-term (Wed)	15.2	19.71	300.46
78	London–Vienna	Mid-term (Wed)	12.6	21.11	266.90
107	Marseille–London	Short-term (Tue)	12.5	14.99	188
123	Paris–Prague	Short-term (Thu)	12.3	14.99	184.99
96	Luxembourg–Milan	Mid-term (Mon)	11.6	18.49	214
66	Madrid–Brussels	Mid-term (Thu)	11.5	21	240.50
105	Barcelona–Milan	Long-term (Sat)	10.8	19.99	215.50

*Greenpeace's internal reference

**This means, e.g., that travelling from Barcelona to London by train on a mid-term Tuesday cost 26 times as much as travelling by air on the same day, – the largest negative price difference found across all routes and time frames.

All routes listed in the table above were classified as "red", meaning that rail travel was more expensive than flying on at least 8 out of 9 days.

None of these 10 routes is served by a direct train.

The 10 cheapest train trips compared to climate-harming flights

The following table includes only those routes where the train was found to be cheaper than the plane on at least 8 out of 9 days.

Route No.*	Route	Time frame and weekday	Rail fare compared to flight fare (% of the flight fare**)	Flight fare (€)	Rail fare (€)
76	Vilnius–Warsaw	Short-term (Sun)	7.4%	336.94	25
31	Košice–Prague	Short-term (Sat)	8.8%	238.53	20.90
121	Ljubljana–Vienna	Short-term (Thu)	10.1%	295.77	29.90
82	Prague-Budapest	Short-term (Tue)	13.3%	145.66	19.40
52	Berlin–Graz	Long-term (Tue)	17.5%	312.83	54.90
125	Amsterdam–Luxembourg	Mid-term (Sun)	17.8%	287	51.20
130	Prague–Warsaw	Short-term (Sat)	18.6%	186.24	34.56
139	Riga–Vilnius	Short-term (Tue)	19.7%	78.99	15.60
2	Berlin–Prague	Long-term (Tue)	21.2%	117.87	24.99
39	Vilnius–Kraków	Short-term (Fri)	23.6%	126.99	30

*Greenpeace's internal reference

**This means, e.g., that travelling from Vilnius to Warsaw by train cost only 7.4% of the flight fare on a short-term Sunday – the largest positive price difference found across all routes and time frames.

Direct trains operate on 9 out of these 10 routes (excluding Amsterdam–Luxembourg).

The need to buy separate tickets

The rail ticketing system in Europe is overly complicated and not unified. For 44 out of the 109 cross-border routes analysed (40%), it was not – or not always – possible to purchase a through ticket, i.e. a single ticket covering the entire journey. On most of these routes, a through ticket was unavailable on any of the days analysed; on others, it was only available on certain days, depending on the train schedule.

Routes requiring the purchase of 2 separate tickets include the following examples:

- Madrid–Paris: one ticket is needed for the Spanish section from Madrid to Barcelona, and a separate ticket for the French high-speed train (TGV) from Barcelona to Paris.

- Venice–Budapest: 2 separate tickets are needed for the Venice–Vienna and Vienna–Budapest legs of the journey.
- Zagreb–Prague: 2 separate tickets are needed for the Zagreb–Vienna and Vienna–Prague legs of the journey.

Through tickets not only have the potential to make train journeys cheaper, but they also significantly enhance passenger rights. In the case of delays, passengers with through tickets are entitled to be rebooked onto alternative trains or accommodated in hotels at no extra cost. Such rights do not apply when separate tickets are purchased.

Night trains

Night trains are the best option for climate-friendly journeys over longer distances. The analysis includes 29 routes (out of 142) for which a reasonable rail connection would not exist without a night train. These routes are:

- Stockholm–Berlin
- London–Vienna
- London–Bratislava
- Nice–Munich
- Rome–Berlin
- Budapest–Brussels
- Budapest–Paris
- Warsaw–Ljubljana
- Ljubljana–Amsterdam
- Zagreb–Luxembourg
- Zagreb–Rome
- Amsterdam–Stockholm
- Oslo–Hamburg
- Warsaw–Paris
- Paris–Prague
- Bergen–Stockholm
- Stockholm–Narvik
- Basel–Zagreb
- Mulhouse–Zagreb
- Freiburg–Zagreb
- Vienna–Bucharest
- Vienna–Copenhagen
- Oslo–Bodø
- Milan–Prague
- Palermo–Turin
- Bratislava–Split
- Bucharest–Budapest
- Prague–Amsterdam
- Bucharest–Chișinău

Night trains are often cheaper than day trains, especially when compared to high-speed trains in France and Italy (such as the TGV and Frecciarossa). One reason is that night trains typically require fewer transfers and/or involve fewer different train operators. This price analysis considered only the cheapest night train options, which in most cases are seat carriages or couchettes. Supplements for couchettes or sleepers can range from €10 to several hundred euros. Compared to the fares of low-cost airlines, night trains are rarely cheaper – no wonder, since airlines pay neither kerosene tax nor value-added tax (VAT), whereas railway operators are subject to energy taxes, VAT and high track access charges in many countries.

The analysis also identified many routes that currently lack a reasonable rail connection. Some of them could become viable with the introduction of a night train, such as:

- Madrid–Rome (via Barcelona)
- Athens–Bucharest (via Sofia)
- Tallinn–Berlin (via Riga, Vilnius, Warsaw)
- Oslo–Berlin
- Oslo–Amsterdam
- Lisbon–Barcelona (via Madrid)
- Sofia–Vienna (via Budapest)
- Sofia–Ljubljana (via Belgrade, Zagreb)
- Amsterdam–Madrid (via Brussels, Paris, Barcelona)

Comparison with 2023

In 2023, Greenpeace CEE carried out a very similar analysis covering 112 routes. The 2025 edition includes all of these routes again, with the exception of Toulouse–Barcelona, which no longer met the methodological criteria (rail travel time of under 4 hours and no more point-to-point flight available).

In 2025, Greenpeace added 31 new routes for reasons such as:

- Including routes that could not yet be reasonably travelled by train in 2023 (such as Lisbon–Madrid and Tallinn–Vilnius)
- Expanding the geographic scope (including countries such as Ireland and Serbia)
- Including more domestic routes to allow for separate statistics for cross-border and domestic routes
- Considering feedback from stakeholders who felt that some important routes were missing in 2023 (such as Paris–Copenhagen and Rome–Zurich)

In the Google Sheet, the 2023 routes can be found under the numbers 1–112, except for number 105 (now used for Barcelona–Milan instead of Toulouse–Barcelona).

Compared to 2023, there was a significant shift towards routes that were predominantly cheaper by train. While in 2023, only 27% of the 111 analysed routes were cheaper by train on at least 6 out of 9 days, this figure increased by 14 percentage points to 41%.

While pricing systems remain highly complex and difficult to analyse in detail, Greenpeace has identified some factors behind this positive development:

One is that in 2023, extremely cheap connecting flights were frequently found to be the lowest-priced travel option. E.g., the cheapest way to travel from Venice to Budapest was to take 2 Ryanair flights via London, and the cheapest way to travel from London to Brussels was to take 2 Ryanair flights via Dublin. In 2025, such high-emission connecting flights were far less commonly identified as the cheapest travel option. Another is that, despite high inflation, many rail fares

increased only moderately – or even remained stable on some routes. Additionally, train services have improved on some routes, e.g. through the introduction of new or more frequent direct rail connections, or additional services offered by another railway company.

111 ROUTES REPEATED FROM 2023	2025	2025	2023	2023
	Number of routes	Percen-tage	Number of routes	Percen-tage
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	30	27%	23	21%
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	15	14%	7	6%
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	10	9%	20	18%
Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days	10	9%	16	14%
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	46	41%	45	41%

Examples for routes with better train results in 2025 compared to 2023:

Greenpeace internal No.	Route	2025	2023
1	Vienna–Warsaw		
14	Glasgow–London		
43	Porto–Faro		
45	Rome–Vienna		
42	Brussels–Zurich		
48	Copenhagen–Stockholm		
55	Toulouse–Paris		
72	Berlin–Brussels		
74	Berlin–Copenhagen		
79	Bratislava–Zagreb		

A few routes showed a negative trend, with train tickets being more often more expensive than flights. Examples include:

Greenpeace internal No.	Route	2025	2023
3	Zurich–Berlin		
5	Budapest–Berlin		
13	Bucharest–Budapest		
69	Copenhagen–Oslo		
73	Copenhagen–Brussels		

RESULTS PER COUNTRY

Austria

A total of 14 routes were analysed, including one domestic route. The following table shows the distribution of these routes according to the extended traffic light scheme, based on the number of days the train was found to be cheaper than the flight. This is shown separately for cross-border and domestic routes.

AUSTRIA (14 ROUTES)	Number of cross-border routes	Percentage of cross-border routes	Number of domestic routes
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	4	31%	1
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	2	15%	
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	1	8%	
Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days	0	0%	
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	6	46%	

The following table shows all routes analysed for Austria. The colour code indicates the overall result per route, showing on how many days the train was cheaper than the flight. The route number is Greenpeace's internal reference. Using this number, all route details can be found in the public Google Sheet linked in Annex III.

	Route No.	Origin	Destination
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	30	Salzburg	Düsseldorf
	52	Berlin	Graz
	63	Zurich	Vienna
	121	Ljubljana	Vienna
	129	Innsbruck	Vienna
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	1	Vienna	Warsaw
	50	Vienna	Berlin
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	43	Rome	Vienna
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	56	Vienna	Bucharest
	78	London	Vienna
	111	Paris	Vienna
	41	Vienna	Venice
	44	Brussels	Vienna
	51	Vienna	Copenhagen

The analysis of routes to, from and within Austria presents a diverse picture. On a positive note for climate-friendly travel, the only domestic flight analysed – the longest possible one, from Innsbruck to Vienna – was always and significantly cheaper by train than by plane.

For cross-border routes, the analysis revealed significant differences among the countries of origin and/or destination. All 3 routes to and from Germany were always or predominantly cheaper by train – as were the routes from Zurich and Ljubljana as well as the one to Warsaw.

The largest difference between rail and flight fares was found on the London–Vienna route, with the train costing 12.6 times as much as the flight for a mid-term trip (€266.90, vs €21.11 for a Ryanair flight). The routes involving Paris, Copenhagen, Venice, Bucharest and Brussels were also predominantly more expensive by train. All of these routes are served by the low-cost airline Ryanair, which uses Vienna Airport as one of its home bases and benefits from very low airport fees there.

In the 2 Scorecards (share of cross-border routes per country where the train was either predominantly more or predominantly less expensive than the flight), Austria ranks close to the middle – with 46% of its cross-border routes being predominantly more expensive by train and 46% being predominantly cheaper. This result is very similar to that of the other German-speaking countries, Germany and Switzerland.

Baltics (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania)

A total of 5 cross-border routes were analysed. The following table shows the distribution of these routes according to the extended traffic light scheme, based on the number of days the train was found to be cheaper than the flight.

BALTICS (5 ROUTES)	Number of cross-border routes	Percentage of cross-border routes
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	5	100%
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	0	0%
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	0	0%
Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days	0	0%
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	0	0%

The following table shows all routes analysed for the Baltic countries. The colour code indicates the overall result per route, showing on how many days the train was cheaper than the flight. The route number is Greenpeace's internal reference. Using this number, all route details can be found in the public Google Sheet linked in Annex III.

	Route No.	Origin	Destination
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	39	Vilnius	Cracow
	64	Tallinn	Riga
	76	Vilnius	Warsaw
	117	Vilnius	Tallinn
	139	Riga	Vilnius

Rail connectivity in the Baltic countries improved in 2024, when it became possible to travel by train between Latvia and Lithuania and cross-border train services were better coordinated. All 5 routes analysed to, from and within the Baltic countries were always cheaper by train than by plane. However, the rail network in these 3 countries is currently outdated and slow. It is expected to improve as part of the ongoing Rail Baltica project.

Due to the low number of routes in Estonia and Latvia meeting the methodological criteria, only Lithuania was included in the 2 Scorecards showing the share of cross-border routes per country where the train was either predominantly more or predominantly less expensive than the flight. In both Scorecards, Lithuania achieved the best possible result.

Belgium

A total of 10 cross-border routes were analysed. The following table shows the distribution of these routes according to the extended traffic light scheme, based on the number of days the train was found to be cheaper than the flight.

BELGIUM (10 ROUTES)	Number of cross-border routes	Percentage of cross-border routes
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	3	30%
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	0	0%
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	1	10%
Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days	1	10%
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	5	50%

The following table shows all routes analysed for Belgium. Since almost all flights to and from Belgium operate via Brussels, no other Belgian city was included in the analysis. The colour code indicates the overall result per route, showing on how many days the train was cheaper than the flight. The route number is Greenpeace's internal reference. Using this number, all route details can be found in the public Google Sheet linked in Annex III.

	Route No.	Origin	Destination
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	7	Brussels	Hamburg
	45	Brussels	Zurich
	72	Berlin	Brussels
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	65	London	Brussels
Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days	81	Brussels	Prague
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	44	Brussels	Vienna
	57	Bratislava	Brussels
	66	Madrid	Brussels
	73	Copenhagen	Brussels
	90	Budapest	Brussels

Belgium and its capital, Brussels, can be reached from most other European capitals by train within a day, or by taking a night train followed by a connecting train – including from Madrid, Rome, Stockholm and Zagreb. Brussels' main airport

is primarily served by traditional airlines, while low-cost carriers operate from the nearby Charleroi Airport.

6 out of the 10 routes analysed for Brussels – Copenhagen, Vienna, Madrid, Bratislava, Prague, and Budapest – are predominantly cheaper by plane. 3 routes – to Berlin, Hamburg and Zurich – were found to be predominantly cheaper by train. Despite a very short train journey of 2 hours to London, the flight was found to be cheaper on about half of the days.

The largest difference between rail and flight fares was found on the Madrid–Brussels route, with the train costing 11.5 times as much as the flight for a mid-term trip (€240.50 for 2 separate tickets from the Spanish state railway company Renfe and the French SNCF, vs €21 for a Ryanair flight).

In Scorecard 1, which shows the share of cross-border routes per country where the train was predominantly more expensive than the flight, Belgium ranks as the 6th-worst country in Europe – clearly performing worse than the other 2 BENELUX countries, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. It shares this position with Romania and Norway.

Bulgaria

A total of 2 routes were analysed, including one domestic route. The following table shows the distribution of these routes according to the extended traffic light scheme, based on the number of days the train was found to be cheaper than the flight. This is shown separately for cross-border and domestic routes.

BULGARIA (2 ROUTES)	Number of cross-border routes	Percentage of cross-border routes	Number of domestic routes
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	1	100%	1
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	0	0%	
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	0	0%	
Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days	0	0%	
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	0	0%	

The following table shows both routes analysed for Bulgaria. The colour code indicates the overall result per route, showing on how many days the train was cheaper than the flight. The route number is Greenpeace's internal reference. Using this number, all route details can be found in the public Google Sheet linked in Annex III.

	Route No.	Origin	Destination
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	21	Bucharest	Sofia
	132	Sofia	Varna

Bulgaria is poorly connected by train to its neighbouring countries. The only year-round direct international rail connection is a daily night train from Sofia to Istanbul. Tickets for this train cannot be purchased online, so this route could not be included in the analysis. A direct rail connection to Bucharest exists only from June to September. There is currently no rail connection to either Greece or Serbia. Therefore, for Bulgaria, the route from Bucharest to Sofia is the only relevant international connection within the scope of this analysis that can be travelled by both d train and plane. In addition, the only year-round domestic route, Sofia–Varna, was included in the analysis.

Both routes analysed were always cheaper by train than by plane. Unlike in 2023, Ryanair no longer operates direct flights on the Bucharest–Sofia route, making the climate-friendly train a more financially attractive option.

Due to the low number of routes meeting the methodological criteria, Bulgaria was not included in the 2 Scorecards showing the share of cross-border routes per country where the train was either predominantly more or predominantly less expensive than the flight.

Croatia

A total of 11 routes were analysed, including one domestic route. In the statistics for Croatia, the 3 separate routes from EuroAirport (Basel, Mulhouse, Freiburg) were counted as a single route. The following table shows the distribution of these routes according to the extended traffic light scheme, based on the number of days the train was found to be cheaper than the flight. This is shown separately for cross-border and domestic routes.

CROATIA (9 ROUTES)*	Number of cross-border routes	Percentage of cross-border routes	Number of domestic routes
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	3	38%	1
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	2	25%	
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	1	13%	
Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days	1	13%	
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	1	13%	

*The 3 routes from EuroAirport (Basel, Mulhouse and Freiburg) were counted as a single route.

The following table shows all routes analysed for Croatia. The colour code indicates the overall result per route, showing on how many days the train was cheaper than the flight. The route number is Greenpeace's internal reference. Using this number, all route details can be found in the public Google Sheet linked in Annex III.

	Route No.	Origin	Destination
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	15	Bratislava	Split
	40	Zagreb	Prague
	79	Bratislava	Zagreb
	142	Split	Zagreb
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	86	Zagreb	Munich
	109	Munich	Split
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	84	Zagreb	Luxembourg
Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days	83	Zagreb	Rome
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	58	Basel (EuroAirport)	Zagreb
	59	Mulhouse (EuroAirport)	Zagreb
	60	Freiburg (EuroAirport)	Zagreb

Croatia is quite poorly connected by train to other countries. Only 2 daily direct day trains stop in Slovenia's capital, Ljubljana; one daily train runs to Graz, Austria's second-largest city, which is located in the south-east of the country. There is currently no passenger rail connection to Serbia. However, there are at least 2 daily night trains to Stuttgart and Zurich, allowing reasonable access to many other European countries.

67% of all routes analysed were predominantly cheaper by train, including the only domestic flight analysed. The only route classified as "red" is the one from EuroAirport, which was analysed for Basel, Mulhouse and Freiburg. This route is operated by Ryanair, with fares starting as low as about €16. The average price for a train ticket on this route was approximately €88, which is lower than on many other routes but still up to 5.7 times as much as the flight (€90.80 vs €15.98 for a short-term trip).

The only other route analysed where the train was predominantly more expensive than the plane was Zagreb–Rome. This is another low-cost Ryanair route. Unlike the EuroAirport route, however, the train was cheaper for all 3 short-term trips (while the plane was cheaper for all mid- and long-term trips).

In Scorecard 2, which shows the share of cross-border routes per country where the train was predominantly cheaper than the flight, Croatia ranks 4th-best among all European countries included, thanks to its high share of "green" classified routes.

Czechia

A total of 9 cross-border routes were analysed. The following table shows the distribution of these routes according to the extended traffic light scheme, based on the number of days the train was found to be cheaper than the flight.

CZECHIA (9 ROUTES)	Number of cross-border routes	Percentage of cross-border routes
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	5	56%
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	0	0%
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	1	11%
Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days	1	11%
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	2	22%

The following table shows all routes analysed for Czechia. Since almost all flights to and from Czechia operate via Prague, no other Czech city was included in the analysis. The colour code indicates the overall result per route, showing on how many days the train was cheaper than the flight. The route number is Greenpeace's internal reference. Using this number, all route details can be found in the public Google Sheet linked in Annex III.

	Route No.	Origin	Destination
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	2	Berlin	Prague
	31	Košice	Prague
	40	Zagreb	Prague
	82	Prague	Budapest
	130	Prague	Warsaw
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	62	Prague	Amsterdam
Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days	81	Brussels	Prague
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	35	Milan	Prague
	123	Paris	Prague

Due to its central location, Czechia has reasonable rail connections to many European countries and cities. All neighbouring countries are easily accessible by day and night trains; e.g., there are 11 direct trains a day to and from Vienna. Even Barcelona can be reached by night train followed by connecting trains in under 24 hours. Apart from 2 very small regional airports in eastern Czechia, almost all flight traffic goes through Prague airport, which is also frequently used by the largest low-cost airlines.

The analysis of 9 routes to or from Czechia presents a diverse picture. All 4 routes to or from other CEE countries (Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Croatia), as well as the route from Berlin, were always cheaper by train, with one exception. By contrast, the routes from Milan, Paris and Brussels were found to be predominantly – and often significantly – cheaper by plane.

The European Sleeper connection to Amsterdam, introduced in 2024, offered low to relatively low ticket prices ranging from €40 to €120. However, on half of the days, these could not compete with easyJet's ultra-low fares, starting at €35.

In Scorecard 2, which shows the share of cross-border routes per country where the train was predominantly cheaper than the flight, Czechia ranks joint 7th-best among all European countries included, sharing this position with the Netherlands thanks to its high share of "green" classified routes.

Denmark

A total of 7 cross-border routes were analysed. The following table shows the distribution of these routes according to the extended traffic light scheme, based on the number of days the train was found to be cheaper than the flight.

DENMARK (7 ROUTES)	Number of cross-border routes	Percentage of cross-border routes
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	0	0%
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	2	29%
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	1	14%
Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days	0	0%
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	4	57%

The following table shows all routes analysed for Denmark. The colour code indicates the overall result per route, showing on how many days the train was cheaper than the flight. The route number is Greenpeace's internal reference.

Using this number, all route details can be found in the public Google Sheet linked in Annex III.

	Route No.	Origin	Destination
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	18	Amsterdam	Copenhagen
	48	Copenhagen	Stockholm
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	74	Berlin	Copenhagen
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	51	Vienna	Copenhagen
	69	Copenhagen	Oslo
	73	Copenhagen	Brussels
	115	Paris	Copenhagen

Thanks to its fairly central position in Europe, a wide range of countries can be easily reached by train from Denmark. Although the Danish state holds a minority stake in the traditional carrier Scandinavian Airlines (SAS), Danish airports have become quite popular with low-cost carriers such as Ryanair and easyJet due to their aggressive pricing policies. All routes analysed, except Copenhagen–Brussels, are operated directly by low-cost carriers.

With 4 out of 7 routes (57%) being predominantly more expensive by train than by plane, Denmark ranks as the 9th-worst country in Europe in Scorecard 1, which shows the share of cross-border routes per country where rail travel was predominantly more expensive than flying. It is also one of the few countries where no route was classified as “dark green”. At least, the 2 routes – to Amsterdam and from Stockholm – were mostly cheaper by train.

On the Berlin–Copenhagen route, relatively cheap prices were found for both rail and air travel. All tickets cost between €36 and €102, so the cheaper mode of transport depends entirely on the day.

Finland

Only one route was analysed for Finland. The following table shows how this route performed in the extended traffic light scheme, based on how many days the train was found to be cheaper than the flight. The route number is Greenpeace’s internal reference. Using this number, all route details can be found in the public Google Sheet linked in Annex III.

	Route No.	Origin	Destination
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	19	Helsinki	Oulu

Due to geography and the geopolitical situation, there is currently no rail connection leaving Finland, not even to Sweden. However, trains within Finland operate frequently and are quick. Even the northernmost city with a train station, Rovaniemi, can be reached from Helsinki within 8 hours. There is a network of domestic flights, all operated by Finnair, which is majority-owned by the Finnish state.

The only route analysed was the domestic connection from Helsinki to Oulu. The train was always found to be cheaper than the flight, averaging just 38% of the flight price. The cheapest train ticket found cost €17.90 – this is the same minimum price as in 2023. Similar results can be expected for other domestic routes, such as the one from Helsinki to Rovaniemi.

Due to only a single route meeting the methodological criteria, Finland was not included in the 2 Scorecards showing the share of cross-border routes per country where the train was either predominantly more or predominantly less expensive than the flight.

France

A total of 26 routes were analysed, including 4 domestic routes. The following table shows the distribution of these routes according to the extended traffic light scheme, based on the number of days the train was found to be cheaper than the flight. This is shown separately for cross-border and domestic routes.

FRANCE (26 ROUTES)	Number of cross-border routes	Percentage of cross-border routes	Number of domestic routes
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	0	0%	0
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	1	4.5%	2
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	0	0%	0
Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days	1	4.5%	0
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	20	90.9%	2

The following table shows all routes analysed for France. The colour code indicates the overall result per route, showing on how many days the train was cheaper than the flight. The route number is Greenpeace's internal reference. Using this number, all route details can be found in the public Google Sheet linked in Annex III.

	Route No.	Origin	Destination
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	34	Geneva	Paris
	55	Toulouse	Paris
	113	Paris	Nice
Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days	104	Marseille	Berlin
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	4	Lyon	Madrid
	16	Bordeaux	Strasbourg
	22	Paris	Milan
	24	Paris	Berlin
	26	Madrid	Paris
	27	Paris	Rome
	37	Paris	London
	59	Mulhouse (EuroAirport)	Zagreb
	89	Budapest	Paris
	94	Nice	Amsterdam
	103	Nice	Munich
	106	Paris	Venice
	107	Marseille	London
	108	Valencia	Paris
	110	Marseille	Rome
	111	Paris	Vienna
	114	Barcelona	Paris
	115	Paris	Copenhagen
	116	London	Nice
	118	Marseille	Nantes
	120	Warsaw	Paris
	123	Paris	Prague

In Scorecard 1, which shows the share of cross-border routes per country where the train was predominantly more expensive than the flight, France ranks as the worst-performing country in Europe. 95% of all cross-border routes analysed (21 out of 22) were almost always more expensive by train than by plane. The only exception was the relatively short route from Geneva to Paris.

In France, even 2 out of 4 domestic routes were predominantly more expensive by train than by plane.

The largest difference between rail and flight fares was found on the Paris–Copenhagen route, with the train costing 21.7 times as much as the flight for a short-term trip (€326, vs €14.99 for a Ryanair flight).

Rail travel to, from and within France is expensive – not only compared with flight fares, but also relative to rail fares across Europe. The average ticket price of a short-term trip on the 142 routes analysed across Europe is about €123, whereas the corresponding figure for the 26 French routes is about €187 – roughly 52% higher.

Last but not least, it should be emphasized that France's poor ranking for rail travel to, from and within the country is based solely on fares. The French state railway company SNCF is generally rated highly on other criteria, such as travel comfort.

Germany

A total of 31 routes were analysed, including 2 domestic routes. The following table shows the distribution of these routes according to the extended traffic light scheme, based on the number of days the train was found to be cheaper than the flight. This is shown separately for cross-border and domestic routes.

GERMANY (31 ROUTES)	Number of cross-border routes	Percentage of cross-border routes	Number of domestic routes
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	7	24%	2
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	6	21%	0
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	2	7%	0
Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days	4	14%	0
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	10	34%	0

The following table shows all routes analysed for Germany. The colour code indicates the overall result per route, showing on how many days the train was cheaper than the flight. The route number is Greenpeace's internal reference. Using this number, all route details can be found in the public Google Sheet linked in Annex III.

	Route No.	Origin	Destination
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	2	Berlin	Prague
	7	Brussels	Hamburg
	11	Hamburg	Munich
	30	Salzburg	Düsseldorf
	52	Berlin	Graz
	72	Berlin	Brussels
	75	Warsaw	Berlin
	97	Hamburg	Luxembourg
	100	Stuttgart	Berlin
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	3	Zurich	Berlin
	50	Vienna	Berlin
	86	Zagreb	Munich
	87	Ljubljana	Hamburg
	93	Berlin	Amsterdam
	109	Munich	Split
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	70	Stockholm	Berlin
	74	Berlin	Copenhagen
Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days	5	Budapest	Berlin
	28	Munich	Gothenburg
	46	Timișoara	Munich
	104	Marseille	Berlin
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	20	Naples	Düsseldorf
	24	Paris	Berlin
	38	Manchester	Cologne
	60	Freiburg (EuroAirport)	Zagreb
	71	Oslo	Hamburg
	92	Rome	Berlin
	98	Cologne	Barcelona
	101	Cologne	Venice
	102	Berlin	London
	103	Nice	Munich

The analysis of routes to, from and within Germany presents a diverse picture. On a positive note for climate-friendly travel, both domestic flight routes analysed – Hamburg–Munich and Stuttgart–Berlin – were always and significantly cheaper by train than by plane. For the 9 trips analysed on the first route, the median rail fare

amounted to 30% of the corresponding plane fare. For the 9 trips on the second route, it was approximately 23%. Similar results can be expected for all other domestic routes.

For cross-border routes, the analysis revealed significant differences among the countries of origin and/or destination. All routes to and from Austria, the BENELUX countries, Switzerland, Poland, Czechia and Slovenia were always or predominantly cheaper by train.

While the 2 routes between Munich and Croatia were predominantly cheaper by train, the route from Freiburg to Zagreb was always cheaper by plane – likely because flights on this route depart from Freiburg's nearest airport (the EuroAirport), which is located across the border in France, where flight taxes are significantly lower than in Germany.
On the routes involving Sweden and Denmark, the cheaper option – train or flight – depended on the day of travel.

All routes to France, Italy, Spain, the UK and Norway were found to be predominantly more expensive by train.

The largest difference between rail and flight fares was found on the Manchester–Cologne route, with the train costing 15 times as much as the plane for a short-term trip (approximately €300, vs €20 for a Ryanair flight).

Generally, thanks to the German ticket tax, ultra-cheap flights from Germany are not available, with flight prices rarely falling below €30. This tax helps to reduce the unfair tax imbalance between air and rail travel and contributes to making train trips in Germany more competitive.

In the 2 Scorecards (share of cross-border routes per country where the train was either predominantly more or predominantly less expensive than the flight), Germany ranks close to the middle – with 48% of its cross-border routes being predominantly more expensive by train and 45% being predominantly cheaper. This result is very similar to that of the other German-speaking countries, Austria and Switzerland.

Compared to 2023, the grading got better for rail fares on 10 routes. The biggest change in grading was found on the Berlin–Brussels and Salzburg–Düsseldorf[6] routes, which both changed from "red" to "dark green". Also, the Stockholm–Berlin and the Berlin–Copenhagen routes clearly improved, from "orange" and "red" to both "yellow". Better results for the train were also found on Berlin–Graz, Ljubljana–Hamburg, Berlin–Amsterdam, Munich–Split and Munich–Gothenburg. On the other hand, the results were found slightly worse for the train on 7 routes, with the worst change for the train on Budapest–Berlin.

[6] In 2023, Salzburg–Cologne was analysed. This slight change was made following the equivalent shift in the Eurowings flight schedule.

Greece

In 2019, all international train connections to and from Greece, including those to Sofia and Bucharest, were suspended until further notice. Only one route in Greece met the methodological criteria for this analysis: the domestic route from Athens to Thessaloniki.

	Route No.	Origin	Destination
Train was always cheaper	23	Athens	Thessaloniki

The train was always cheaper than the plane on this route. It was not possible to analyse the long-term trips because train tickets in Greece are not sold 3 months in advance. The current Greek railway network is so limited that it can realistically serve as a reasonable alternative to only this one major flight connection. For it to become a reasonable alternative to multiple flight routes in the future, massive investments in infrastructure and services are required.

Hungary

A total of 7 cross-border routes were analysed, all of them to and from Budapest. The only other international airport, in Debrecen, handles fewer than 500,000 passengers a year, and routes to or from Debrecen were excluded as they did not meet the methodological criteria. The following table shows the distribution of the Budapest routes according to the extended traffic light scheme, based on the number of days the train was found to be cheaper than the flight.

HUNGARY (7 ROUTES)	Number of cross-border routes	Percentage of cross-border routes
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	2	29%
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	0	0%
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	0	0%
Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days	3	43%
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	2	29%

The following table shows all routes analysed for Hungary. The colour code indicates the overall result per route, showing on how many days the train was cheaper than the flight. The route number is Greenpeace's internal reference. Using this number, all route details can be found in the public Google Sheet linked in Annex III.

	Route No.	Origin	Destination
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	82	Prague	Budapest
	140	Budapest	Warsaw
Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days	5	Budapest	Berlin
	13	Bucharest	Budapest
	33	Venice	Budapest
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	89	Budapest	Paris
	90	Budapest	Brussels

Hungary is the home country of Wizz Air, one of the airlines with the most aggressive pricing policies. Wizz Air operates flights to dozens of destinations from Budapest, covering all routes analysed except the one from Prague, which is served by Ryanair.

5 out of 7 routes analysed were found to be predominantly more expensive by train, thanks to affordable rail fares offered by the Czech railway company RegioJet and the Hungarian state rail operator MÁV.

Wizz Air's dominance was identified as the main reason why Hungary ranks as the 5th-worst country in Europe in Scorecard 1, which shows the share of cross-border routes per country where the train was predominantly more expensive than the flight. This result also makes Hungary the worst-ranked CEE country in this Scorecard.

Ireland

Only one route in Ireland met the methodological criteria for this analysis: the domestic route from Dublin to Kerry (Killarney).

The following table shows how this route performed in the extended traffic light scheme, based on the number of days the train was found to be cheaper than the flight. The route number is Greenpeace's internal reference. Using this number, all route details can be found in the public Google Sheet linked in Annex III.

	Route No.	Origin	Destination
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	137	Dublin	Kerry (Killarney)

The train was always more expensive than the plane, except for one short-term trip. However, the absolute price difference was relatively small, with a Ryanair fare starting at €19.99 and rail fares at €24.99. When factoring in the typically more expensive transfer to the airport, the overall difference is likely to be minimal.

Due to only a single route meeting the methodological criteria, Ireland was not included in the 2 Scorecards showing the share of cross-border routes per country where the train was either predominantly more or predominantly less expensive than the flight.

Italy

A total of 19 routes were analysed, including 3 domestic routes. The following table shows the distribution of these routes according to the extended traffic light scheme, based on the number of days the train was found to be cheaper than the flight. This is shown separately for cross-border and domestic routes.

ITALY (19 ROUTES)	Number of cross-border routes	Percentage of cross-border routes	Number of domestic routes
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	1	6%	1
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	0	0%	0
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	1	6%	1
Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days	2	13%	1
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	12	75%	0

The following table shows all routes analysed for Italy. The colour code indicates the overall result per route, showing on how many days the train was cheaper than the flight. The route number is Greenpeace's internal reference. Using this number, all route details can be found in the public Google Sheet in Annex III.

	Route No.	Origin	Destination
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	12	Ljubljana	Milan
	134	Milan	Rome
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	32	Palermo	Turin
	43	Rome	Vienna
Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days	33	Venice	Budapest
	83	Zagreb	Rome
	133	Rome	Palermo

Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	20	Naples	Düsseldorf
	22	Paris	Milan
	27	Paris	Rome
	35	Milan	Prague
	41	Vienna	Venice
	92	Rome	Berlin
	96	Luxembourg	Milan
	101	Cologne	Venice
	105	Barcelona	Milan
	106	Paris	Venice
	110	Marseille	Rome
	124	Rome	Zurich

Thanks to Italy's well-functioning high-speed rail network, domestic night trains and frequent rail connections to all neighbouring countries except Slovenia, many destinations are reasonably accessible by train, even to and from the southern part of the country.

However, travelling to and from Italy by train is significantly more expensive than by plane. 88% of all cross-border routes were predominantly more expensive by train – the 4th-worst result among all European countries listed in Scorecard 1, which shows the share of cross-border routes per country where the train was predominantly more expensive than the flight. The result is only slightly worse in the UK (90%), Spain (92%) and France (95%).

The largest difference between rail and flight fares was found on the Luxembourg–Milan route, with the train costing 11.6 times as much as the flight for a mid-term trip (€214, vs €18.49 for an easyJet flight).

Only the Ljubljana-Milan route was found to be cheaper by train than by plane. However, for this route it is not possible to purchase a through ticket; instead, separate tickets need to be purchased from Slovenian Railways (SŽ) for the Slovenian section and from Trenitalia for the Italian section.

There is also only one cross-border route where the train was cheaper on 5 out of 9 days analysed: Rome–Vienna, where Ryanair and the direct night train operated by the Austrian railway company ÖBB offered the lowest fares. Both trains and flights were found to be either cheaper or more expensive across all 3 time frames analysed.

Even domestic routes in Italy are more frequently more expensive than the European average. While 23 out of all 33 domestic routes analysed across Europe were predominantly cheaper by train, in Italy only one out of 3 domestic routes (Milan–Rome) showed this pattern. For Palermo–Turin, the price advantage depended on the day, with the train always cheaper for all 3 short-term trips and one long-term trip. The Rome–Palermo route was found to be predominantly more expensive by train.

Luxembourg

A total of 5 cross-border routes were analysed. The following table shows the distribution of these routes according to the extended traffic light scheme, based on the number of days the train was found to be cheaper than the flight.

LUXEMBOURG (5 ROUTES)	Number of cross-border routes	Percentage of cross-border routes
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	2	40%
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	0	0%
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	1	20%
Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days	0	0%
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	2	40%

The following table shows all routes analysed for Luxembourg. The colour code indicates the overall result per route, showing on how many days the train was cheaper than the flight. The route number is Greenpeace's internal reference. Using this number, all route details can be found in the public Google Sheet linked in Annex III.

	Route No.	Origin	Destination
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	97	Hamburg	Luxembourg
	125	Amsterdam	Luxembourg
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	84	Zagreb	Luxembourg
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	9	Luxembourg	Barcelona
	96	Luxembourg	Milan

The analysis of routes to and from Luxembourg presents a diverse picture. As in neighbouring Germany, whether the train or the plane is cheaper largely depends on the country of destination.

The routes from Germany and to the Netherlands were always and significantly cheaper by train. For the 3 short-term trips from Amsterdam, the flight even cost more than 5 times as much as the train (€262 vs €51).

For the Zagreb–Luxembourg route, the cheaper mode of transport – train or flight – depends entirely on the day of travel. This is one of only 7 out of 142 routes analysed that does not have a direct flight. Travelling by train on this route requires 2 transfers.

The routes to Spain and Italy were always and significantly more expensive by train. The largest difference between rail and flight fares was found on the Luxembourg–Milan route, with the train costing 11.6 times as much as the plane for a mid-term trip (€214, vs €18.49 for an easyJet flight).

Although no connections from Luxembourg to the UK were analysed, it is likely that rail travel would be more expensive than flying, due to Ryanair's typically very low fares to London.

In the 2 Scorecards (share of cross-border routes per country where the train was either predominantly more or predominantly less expensive than the flight), Luxembourg ranks slightly below the middle – with 40% of its cross-border routes predominantly more expensive by train and 40% predominantly cheaper. This is a result similar to that found for Germany.

Moldova

Only one route in Moldova met the methodological criteria for this analysis: the cross-border route from the Romanian capital, Bucharest, to the Moldovan capital, Chișinău.

The following table shows how this route performed in the extended traffic light scheme, based on how many days the train was found to be cheaper than the flight. The route number is Greenpeace's internal reference. Using this number, all route details can be found in the public Google Sheet linked in Annex III.

	Route No.	Origin	Destination
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	136	Bucharest	Chișinău

The direct night train operated by the Romanian state railway company CFR was always cheaper than the flight. The night train had a fixed fare of about €26, while Wizz Air fares amounted to about €31 for all mid- and long-term trips.

Due to only a single route meeting the methodological criteria, Moldova was not included in the 2 Scorecards showing the share of cross-border routes per country where the train was either predominantly more or predominantly less expensive than the flight.

Montenegro and Serbia

Only one route in Montenegro and Serbia meets the methodological criteria for this analysis: the cross-border route between the capitals of the 2 countries, Belgrade and Podgorica.

At present, Serbia cannot be reached by train from any neighbouring country, except via local trains from Hungary. However, these local services do not allow for a same-day trip between Budapest and Belgrade.

The following table shows how this route performed in the extended traffic light scheme, based on how many days the train was found to be cheaper than the flight. The route number is Greenpeace's internal reference. Using this number, all route details can be found in the public Google Sheet linked in Annex III.

	Route No.	Origin	Destination
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	135	Belgrade	Podgorica

The direct night train was always cheaper than the flight. The night train had a fixed fare of about €22, while the Air Montenegro flight cost on average about €57.

Due to only a single route meeting the methodological criteria, Montenegro and Serbia were not included in the two Scorecards showing the share of cross-border routes per country where the train was either predominantly more or predominantly less expensive than the flight.

Netherlands

A total of 9 cross-border routes were analysed, all of them to and from Amsterdam. The following table shows the distribution of these routes according to the extended traffic light scheme, based on the number of days the train was found to be cheaper than the flight.

NETHERLANDS (9 ROUTES)	Number of cross-border routes	Percentage of cross-border routes
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	2	22.2%
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	3	33.3%
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	2	22.2%
Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days	0	0.0%
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	2	22.2%

The following table shows all routes analysed for the Netherlands. The colour code indicates the overall result per route, showing on how many days the train was cheaper than the flight. The route number is Greenpeace's internal reference. Using this number, all route details can be found in the public Google Sheet linked in Annex III.

	Route No.	Origin	Destination
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	29	Amsterdam	Warsaw
	125	Amsterdam	Luxembourg
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	18	Amsterdam	Copenhagen
	80	Amsterdam	Stockholm
	93	Berlin	Amsterdam
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	62	Prague	Amsterdam
	85	Ljubljana	Amsterdam
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	6	Amsterdam	London
	94	Nice	Amsterdam

The Netherlands has excellent rail connections to its neighbouring countries. There are even direct rail services to London, Zurich and Vienna, the latter 2 served by night trains. Additionally, a night train runs to Prague via Berlin 3 nights a week. As a result, most of the countries covered by the overall analysis can be reached from the Netherlands within a reasonable time by train.

56% of all routes analysed were predominantly cheaper by train than by plane, including those involving Warsaw, Luxembourg, Copenhagen, Stockholm and Berlin. Compared to 2023, there were improvements in favour of rail fares on 4 routes. The biggest improvement was found on the Amsterdam–Stockholm route, whose grading improved from "orange" to "green". Likewise, the grading on the Amsterdam–Copenhagen and Berlin–Amsterdam routes improved from "yellow" to "green". The Amsterdam–Warsaw route also saw its grading improve from "green" to "dark green". The situation did not worsen on any route involving Amsterdam.

The routes involving the UK and France remain significantly more expensive by train than by plane, due to the high rail fares charged by Eurostar, the high-speed train service connecting the UK with mainland Europe, and the French state railway company SNCF.

In Scorecard 2, which shows the share of cross-border routes per country where the train was predominantly cheaper than the flight, the Netherlands ranks joint 7th-best among all European countries included, with a 56% share, sharing this position with Czechia.

Norway

A total of 7 routes were analysed, including 2 domestic routes. The following table shows the distribution of these routes according to the extended traffic light scheme, based on the number of days the train was found to be cheaper than the flight. This is shown separately for cross-border and domestic routes.

NORWAY (7 ROUTES)	Number of cross-border routes	Percentage of cross-border routes	Number of domestic routes
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	1	20%	1
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	1	20%	0
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	0	0%	1
Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days	0	0%	0
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	3	60%	0

The following table shows all routes analysed for Norway. The colour code indicates the overall result per route, showing on how many days the train was cheaper than the flight. The route number is Greenpeace's internal reference. Using this number, all route details can be found in the public Google Sheet linked in Annex III.

	Route No.	Origin	Destination
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	68	Stockholm	Narvik
	112	Trondheim	Oslo
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	8	Oslo	Stockholm
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	36	Oslo	Bodø
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	67	Bergen	Stockholm
	69	Copenhagen	Oslo
	71	Oslo	Hamburg

Norway has a relatively dense rail network, with frequent services in the more populated southern regions. A main line connects the south to the north up to Bodø, which is also served by night trains. The northernmost city accessible by train is Narvik, which can only be reached via Sweden. Reasonable international rail connections are relatively rare and limited to Sweden, Denmark and the far north of Germany. There are 5 daily direct trains to Stockholm, while travel to Copenhagen requires at least one transfer. Although Berlin is roughly the same distance from Oslo as Stockholm, it cannot be reached by a reasonable rail connection (unlike Stockholm, which has a direct night train to the German capital).

60% of all cross-border routes analysed (3 out of 7) were predominantly cheaper by plane. This places Norway in the 6th-worst position among all European countries listed in Scorecard 1, which shows the share of cross-border routes per country where the train was predominantly more expensive than the flight. All other Scandinavian countries scored better. Norway shares this position with Belgium and Romania.

The only 2 cross-border routes that were predominantly cheaper by plane than by train are Stockholm–Narvik and Oslo–Stockholm. Both routes are operated by the Swedish state railway company SJ.

According to the analysis, travelling from Oslo to Copenhagen or Hamburg (or vice versa) is significantly more expensive by train than by plane.

While one of the 2 domestic routes analysed, Trondheim–Oslo, was almost always cheaper by train, the other route, Oslo–Bodø, was cheaper by train and by plane on roughly half of the days each.

Poland

A total of 10 routes were analysed, including one domestic route. The following table shows the distribution of these routes according to the extended traffic light scheme, based on the number of days the train was found to be cheaper than the flight. This is shown separately for cross-border and domestic routes.

POLAND (10 ROUTES)	Number of cross-border routes	Percentage of cross-border routes	Number of domestic routes
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	7	78%	0
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	1	11%	1
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	0	0%	0
Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days	0	0%	0
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	1	11%	0

The following table shows all routes analysed for Poland. The colour code indicates the overall result per route, showing on how many days the train was cheaper than the flight. The route number is Greenpeace's internal reference. Using this number, all route details can be found in the public Google Sheet linked in Annex III.

	Route No.	Origin	Destination
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	29	Amsterdam	Warsaw
	39	Vilnius	Kraków
	75	Warsaw	Berlin
	76	Vilnius	Warsaw
	88	Warsaw	Ljubljana
	130	Prague	Warsaw
	140	Budapest	Warsaw
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	1	Vienna	Warsaw
	138	Kraków	Gdańsk
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	120	Warsaw	Paris

International rail connections to and from Poland are relatively well-developed, with many countries and cities reasonably accessible by both day and night trains. There are direct rail services to all neighbouring EU capitals. The most efficient

connection is Warsaw–Berlin, with 6 train pairs per day. The only notably weak link is with Lithuania, where just one train crosses the border in each direction per day.

89% of all cross-border routes analysed (8 out of 10) were always or predominantly cheaper by train than by plane. This places Poland in the 2nd-best position among all European countries listed in Scorecard 2, which shows the share of cross-border routes per country where rail travel was predominantly cheaper than flying. Only Lithuania achieved a better result, with a perfect score of 100% – although it should be noted that international rail options from Lithuania are far more limited than from Poland.

The results for the routes from Amsterdam and Vienna to Warsaw have improved compared to 2023. On the Amsterdam route, the train was always cheaper, except for one short-term trip, where it cost just €0.71 more. On the Vienna route, the train was more expensive on 2 days (one short-term and one mid-term trip), by only a few euros each.

The only domestic route analysed, Kraków–Gdánsk, was also predominantly cheaper by train.

The only cross-border route involving Poland where the train was found to be more expensive was Warsaw–Paris. Except for one long-term trip, the plane – operated by both Wizz Air and Ryanair – was always cheaper. Some rail fares on this route – 3 mid-term trips – ranked among the highest in the entire analysis, amounting to €414.

Portugal

A total of 4 routes were analysed, including 2 domestic routes. The following table shows the distribution of these routes according to the extended traffic light scheme, based on the number of days the train was found to be cheaper than the flight. This is shown separately for cross-border and domestic routes.

PORTUGAL (4 ROUTES)	Number of cross-border routes	Percentage of cross-border routes	Number of domestic routes
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	0	0%	1
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	1	50%	0
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	0	0%	1
Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days	1	50%	0
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	0	0%	0

The following table shows all routes analysed for Portugal. The colour code indicates the overall result per route, showing on how many days the train was cheaper than the flight. The route number is Greenpeace's internal reference. Using this number, all route details can be found in the public Google Sheet linked in Annex III.

	Route No.	Origin	Destination
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	17	Porto	Lisbon
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	141	Lisbon	Madrid
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	42	Porto	Faro
Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days	47	Porto	Madrid

Rail connections between Portugal and Spain remain limited, but there have been some improvements since 2023. It is now possible to travel between Lisbon and Madrid within a single day, although the journey still requires 2 transfers and takes considerably longer than flying.

Of the 2 routes connecting Portugal and Spain, Lisbon–Madrid was found to be predominantly cheaper by train, while the other, Porto–Madrid, was predominantly more expensive by train. For the latter, only short-term train tickets were available at the moment of research for unknown reasons, and the absolute price differences were relatively small. In any case, this journey requires the purchase of 2 separate Renfe tickets – for the Porto–Vigo and Vigo–Madrid legs. In 2023, this route was always more expensive by train, so the situation has improved somewhat.

Of the 2 domestic routes, Porto–Lisbon was always and significantly cheaper by train, while on the other, Porto–Faro, the cheaper mode of transport depended on the day.

Due to the low number of routes meeting the methodological criteria, Portugal was not included in the 2 Scorecards showing the share of cross-border routes per country where the train was either predominantly more or predominantly less expensive than the flight.

Romania

A total of 6 routes were analysed, including one domestic route. The following table shows the distribution of these routes according to the extended traffic light scheme, based on the number of days the train was found to be cheaper than the flight. This is shown separately for cross-border and domestic routes.

ROMANIA (6 ROUTES)	Number of cross-border routes	Percentage of cross-border routes	Number of domestic routes
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	2	40%	1
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	0	0%	0
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	0	0%	0
Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days	2	40%	0
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	1	20%	0

The following table shows all routes analysed for Romania. The colour code indicates the overall result per route, showing on how many days the train was cheaper than the flight. The route number is Greenpeace's internal reference. Using this number, all route details can be found in the public Google Sheet linked in Annex III.

	Route No.	Origin	Destination
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	21	Bucharest	Sofia
	122	Cluj	Bucharest
	136	Bucharest	Chișinău
Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days	13	Bucharest	Budapest
	46	Timișoara	Munich
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	56	Vienna	Bucharest

Romania's rail network is dense and affordable, but generally old and slow. The only permanent long-distance, direct international connections are the routes to Budapest (and onwards to Vienna) and to Chișinău, the capital of Moldova. From mid-June to mid-October 2025, a direct night train operates from Bucharest to Istanbul. During the same period, there is also a direct day train service from Bucharest to Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria.

The domestic route Cluj–Bucharest was always and significantly cheaper by train. Similar results can be expected for other domestic routes, given the generally very low rail fares throughout Romania.

The night train to Chișinău was always cheaper than the flight, despite Wizz Air offering fares below €32 on most days analysed.

Unlike in 2023, the Bucharest–Sofia route is now also always cheaper by train, following the suspension of direct Ryanair flights. Still, the lack of a direct train outside the summer season remains a major disadvantage on this route.

On the downside for climate-friendly travel, all 3 routes involving countries west of Romania (Hungary, Austria and Germany) were predominantly more expensive by train. These routes are either served by Wizz Air or Ryanair, mostly at extremely low prices.

In Scorecard 1, which shows the share of cross-border routes per country where the train was predominantly more expensive than the flight, Romania ranks as the 6th-worst country in Europe – clearly performing worse than all other CEE countries except Hungary. It shares this position with Belgium and Norway.

Slovakia

A total of 5 cross-border routes were analysed. The following table shows the distribution of these routes according to the extended traffic light scheme, based on the number of days the train was found to be cheaper than the flight.

SLOVAKIA (5 ROUTES)	Number of cross-border routes	Percentage of cross-border routes
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	2	40%
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	1	20%
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	0	0%
Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days	0	0%
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	2	40%

The following table shows all routes analysed for Slovakia. The colour code indicates the overall result per route, showing on how many days the train was cheaper than the flight. The route number is Greenpeace's internal reference. Using this number, all route details can be found in the public Google Sheet linked in Annex III.

	Route No.	Origin	Destination
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	31	Košice	Prague
	79	Bratislava	Zagreb
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	15	Bratislava	Split
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	57	Bratislava	Brussels
	77	London	Bratislava

Due to their proximity to Vienna, Bratislava and other locations in western Slovakia are well connected by train to many countries. Bratislava's airport is small, offering little more than a dozen regular destinations. In line with the methodology, the nearby Vienna International Airport was included in the analysis for Bratislava, with public transport costs to and from Vienna added to the respective fares. This applied in part to the routes to Zagreb, Split and Brussels.

All routes analysed for Slovakia were either always more expensive by train or almost always cheaper. Both routes involving Western Europe were found to be substantially more expensive by train. The largest price difference between rail and flight fares involving Slovakia was found on the London–Bratislava route, with the train costing 23.3 times as much as the flight for a mid-term trip (€494.99 for 3 separate tickets from the UK-Europe high-speed train service Eurostar, the French state railway company SNCF and the German state railway company DB, vs €21.23 for a Wizz Air flight). This was the second-largest price difference identified among all 142 European routes analysed.

In contrast, the 3 routes within Central and Eastern Europe were found to be almost always cheaper by train. Whereas in 2023 the Bratislava–Zagreb route was predominantly cheaper by plane, it is now almost always cheaper by train – marking a significant shift towards climate-friendly travel.

In the 2 Scorecards (share of cross-border routes per country where the train was either predominantly more or predominantly less expensive than the flight), Slovakia ranks above average – with 40% of its cross-border routes being predominantly more expensive by train and 60% being predominantly cheaper. Slovakia's result falls short of Poland's, where 89% of the routes analysed were dominantly cheaper by train.

Slovenia

A total of 5 cross-border routes were analysed, all of them to and from Ljubljana, as it is the only international airport in Slovenia with regular flight connections The following table shows the distribution of these routes according to the extended traffic light scheme, based on the number of days the train was found to be cheaper than the flight.

SLOVENIA (5 ROUTES)	Number of cross-border routes	Percentage of cross-border routes
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	3	60%
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	1	20%
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	1	20%
Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days	0	0%
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	0	0%

The following table shows all routes analysed for Slovenia. The colour code indicates the overall result per route, showing on how many days the train was cheaper than the flight. The route number is Greenpeace's internal reference. Using this number, all route details can be found in the public Google Sheet linked in Annex III.

	Route No.	Origin	Destination
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	12	Ljubljana	Milan
	88	Warsaw	Ljubljana
	121	Ljubljana	Vienna
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	87	Ljubljana	Hamburg
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	85	Ljubljana	Amsterdam

With 80% of its cross-border routes being predominantly cheaper by train than by plane, Slovenia ranks as the 3rd-best country in Europe in Scorecard 2 showing the share of cross-border routes per country where rail travel was predominantly cheaper than flying – behind Lithuania (100%) and Poland (89%).

The train was always found to be cheaper on the 3 routes involving Milan, Warsaw and Vienna. On the route to Hamburg, the train was more expensive on 2 mid-term trips, with relatively moderate price differences of about 15% and 30%.

The only route where the train was not predominantly cheaper was Ljubljana–Amsterdam. Here, the cheaper option – train or flight – depended entirely on the day of travel, with substantial price differences. On one short-term trip, the train cost 3.4 times as much as the flight (approximately €355 vs €104), while on a mid-term trip, it cost only about 45% of the flight fare (approximately €80 vs €176).

Spain

A total of 19 routes were analysed, including 6 domestic routes. The following table shows the distribution of these routes according to the extended traffic light scheme, based on the number of days the train was found to be cheaper than the flight. This is shown separately for cross-border and domestic routes.

SPAIN (19 ROUTES)	Number of cross-border routes	Percentage of cross-border routes	Number of domestic routes
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	0	0%	4
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	1	8%	1
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	0	0%	0
Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days	1	8%	1
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	11	85%	0

The following table shows all routes analysed for Spain. The colour code indicates the overall result per route, showing on how many days the train was cheaper than the flight. The route number is Greenpeace's internal reference. Using this number, all route details can be found in the public Google Sheet linked in Annex III.

	Route No.	Origin	Destination
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	25	A Coruña	Barcelona
	61	Madrid	Barcelona
	126	Bilbao	Madrid
	127	Madrid	A Coruña
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	128	Sevilla	Barcelona
	141	Lisbon	Madrid
Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days	10	Bilbao	Málaga
	47	Porto	Madrid

Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	4	Lyon	Madrid
	9	Luxembourg	Barcelona
	26	Madrid	Paris
	49	Geneva	Barcelona
	54	Barcelona	London
	66	Madrid	Brussels
	91	Madrid	Zurich
	98	Cologne	Barcelona
	105	Barcelona	Milan
	108	Valencia	Paris
	114	Barcelona	Paris

On a positive note for climate-friendly travel, 5 out of 6 domestic routes were predominantly cheaper by train than by plane. This includes the A Coruña–Barcelona route, which was almost always more expensive by train in 2023 – marking a significant shift.

The only cross-border route that was predominantly cheaper by train was Lisbon–Madrid, which, however, requires at least 2 rail transfers. A direct connection between these 2 capitals is one of the most urgently needed rail links in Europe.

All other cross-border routes were found to be predominantly more expensive by train. More precisely, all of these connections – except Porto–Madrid – were always more expensive.

The largest difference between rail and flight fares involving Spain was found on the Barcelona–London route, with the train costing 26 times as much as the flight for a mid-term trip (€389 for a ticket from the French state railway company SNCF, vs €14.99 for a Ryanair flight). This was also the largest price difference identified among all 142 European routes analysed.

In Scorecard 1, which shows the share of cross-border routes per country where the train was predominantly more expensive than the flight, Spain ranks as the 2nd-worst country in Europe. 92% of all cross-border routes analysed (12 out of 13) were almost always more expensive by train than by plane.

One reason for this is that all routes to and from Spain, except those involving Portugal, use the relatively expensive high-speed rail network in France.

A second reason is that many routes to and from Spain require the purchase of 2 separate tickets, making the total journey more expensive compared to routes where a through ticket is available. The only through tickets available from Spain

are for the Madrid–Marseille and Barcelona–Lyon Renfe services, as well as for the Barcelona–Paris SNCF connection, which also includes connecting trains from Paris. This means that even for the Madrid–Paris journey, 2 separate tickets are required: one for the Madrid–Barcelona leg (which can be purchased from Renfe, Iryo or Ouigo) and another SNCF ticket for the Barcelona–Paris leg.

Strangely enough, even for the Porto–Madrid route, two separate Renfe tickets are required: one for the Porto–Vigo leg and another for the Vigo–Madrid leg.

Sweden

A total of 9 routes were analysed, including 2 domestic routes. The following table shows the distribution of these routes according to the extended traffic light scheme, based on the number of days the train was found to be cheaper than the flight. This is shown separately for cross-border and domestic routes.

SWEDEN (9 ROUTES)	Number of cross-border routes	Percentage of cross-border routes	Number of domestic routes
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	1	14%	1
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	3	43%	1
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	1	14%	0
Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days	1	14%	0
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	1	14%	0

The following table shows all routes analysed for Sweden. The colour code indicates the overall result per route, showing on how many days the train was cheaper than the flight. The route number is Greenpeace's internal reference. Using this number, all route details can be found in the public Google Sheet linked in Annex III.

	Route No.	Origin	Destination
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	68	Stockholm	Narvik
	95	Gothenburg	Stockholm
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	8	Oslo	Stockholm
	48	Copenhagen	Stockholm
	80	Amsterdam	Stockholm
	119	Stockholm	Luleå

Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	70	Stockholm	Berlin
Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days	28	Munich	Gothenburg
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	67	Bergen	Stockholm

The Swedish state railway company SJ is among the more progressive operators in Europe – e.g., by maintaining night train services and using 100% renewable electricity. Sweden has a dense and fast rail network, both domestically and towards Copenhagen. Thanks to relatively new night train connections from Stockholm via Copenhagen to Berlin, the Netherlands and parts of its neighbouring countries can now be reasonably reached by train. At present, there is no active rail connection to Finland.

The 9 routes analysed fell into all 5 extended traffic light categories. However, 57% of the cross-border routes (4 out of 7) were predominantly cheaper by train: the route to Narvik in northern Norway, as well as the routes connecting Stockholm with Oslo, Copenhagen, and Amsterdam. This places Sweden in the 6th-best position among all European countries listed in Scorecard 2, which shows the share of cross-border routes per country where the train was predominantly cheaper than the flight. This is a significantly better result than that of the other Scandinavian countries, Denmark (29%) and Norway (40%).

The 2 cross-border routes involving Germany were only cheaper by train on some of the 9 days analysed. On the Stockholm–Berlin route, the train was found to be cheaper on about half of the days, while on the Munich–Gothenburg route, it was cheaper on only 3 days. On one long-term trip on this route, the train cost only about a third of the cheapest available flight (approximately €78 vs €226). However, putting together this rail journey is a real challenge, as the best connection requires purchasing 3 separate tickets.

The only cross-border route that was always more expensive by train is Bergen–Stockholm. One possible reason for this is that this rail journey also requires separate tickets: one for the night train from Bergen to Oslo (operated by the Norwegian railway company Vy), and another for the connection from Oslo to Stockholm (operated by the Swedish SJ).

Both domestic routes analysed were predominantly cheaper by train. On the Gothenburg–Stockholm route, the train was always found to be cheaper this time, whereas in 2023 this was the case on only about half of the days analysed.

Switzerland

A total of 8 cross-border routes were analysed. The following table shows the distribution of these routes according to the extended traffic light scheme, based on the number of days the train was found to be cheaper than the flight.

SWITZERLAND (8 ROUTES)	Number of cross-border routes	Percentage of cross-border routes
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	2	25%
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	2	25%
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	0	0%
Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days	0	0%
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	4	50%

The following table shows all routes analysed for Switzerland. The colour code indicates the overall result per route, showing on how many days the train was cheaper than the flight. The route number is Greenpeace's internal reference. Using this number, all route details can be found in the public Google Sheet linked in Annex III.

	Route No.	Origin	Destination
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	45	Brussels	Zurich
	63	Zurich	Vienna
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	3	Zurich	Berlin
	34	Geneva	Paris
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	49	Geneva	Barcelona
	58	Basel (EuroAirport)	Zagreb
	91	Madrid	Zurich
	124	Rome	Zurich

Thanks to its central location in Europe, most of the countries analysed can be reasonably reached by train from Switzerland. There are also night trains from Zurich to destinations such as Berlin, Amsterdam, Vienna/Budapest and Ljubljana/Zagreb. However, Geneva, as Switzerland's second-largest city and home to the UN, is far less well connected by train than Zurich. E.g., there is not a single night train to or from Geneva.

The analysis of routes to and from Switzerland presents a diverse picture. On the one hand, it revealed significant differences among the countries of origin and/or destination. The 3 routes connecting Zurich with Brussels, Vienna and Berlin, as well as Geneva–Paris, were found to be predominantly cheaper by train. The results for the Zurich–Berlin rail connection worsened slightly compared to 2023, presumably due to the cancellation of direct day trains between the 2 cities.

On the other hand, the 4 routes to Italy, Croatia and Spain were always found to be more expensive by train. No route between Switzerland and the UK was included in the analysis, but it can be assumed that rail travel would be more expensive than flying, as all cross-border routes to and from the UK were almost always more expensive by train – except for the shortest one, London–Brussels (classified as “yellow”).

The largest difference between rail and flight fares was found on the Madrid–Zurich route, with the train costing 6.1 times as much as the flight for a mid-term trip (€306.77 for 2 separate tickets from the private Spanish high-speed rail operator Iryo for Madrid–Barcelona and the French state railway company SNCF vs €50.52 for an Air Europa flight). Unlike in 2023, the Madrid–Zurich route can no longer be reasonably travelled at weekends due to a later first train departure from Madrid – a clear setback for climate-friendly travel.

In the 2 Scorecards (share of cross-border routes per country where the train was either predominantly more or predominantly less expensive than the flight), Switzerland ranks right in the middle – with 50% of its cross-border routes being predominantly more expensive by train, and 50% being predominantly cheaper. This result is very similar to that of the other German-speaking countries, Germany and Austria.

UK

A total of 14 routes were analysed, including 4 domestic routes. The following table shows the distribution of these routes according to the extended traffic light scheme, based on the number of days the train was found to be cheaper than the flight. This is shown separately for cross-border and domestic routes.

UK (14 ROUTES)	Number of cross-border routes	Percentage of cross-border routes	Number of domestic routes
Train was cheaper on 8 or 9 out of 9 days	0	0%	0

Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	0	0%	2
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	1	10%	0
Train was cheaper on 2 or 3 out of 9 days	0	0%	0
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	9	90%	2

The following table shows all routes analysed for the UK. The colour code indicates the overall result per route, showing on how many days the train was cheaper than the flight. The route number is Greenpeace's internal reference. Using this number, all route details can be found in the public Google Sheet linked in Annex III.

	Route No.	Origin	Destination
Train was cheaper on 6 or 7 out of 9 days	14	Glasgow	London
	131	Cardiff	Edinburgh
Train was cheaper on 4 or 5 out of 9 days	65	London	Brussels
Train was cheaper on 0 or 1 out of 9 days	6	Amsterdam	London
	37	Paris	London
	38	Manchester	Cologne
	53	Edinburgh	London
	54	Barcelona	London
	77	London	Bratislava
	78	London	Vienna
	99	London	Inverness
	102	Berlin	London
	107	Marseille	London
	116	London	Nice

Thanks to Eurostar – the high-speed train service that runs through the Channel Tunnel and links the UK with mainland Europe – the UK is well connected by train to many countries and cities. Even Barcelona and Bratislava can be reached within a single day, requiring just one and 2 transfers respectively. Of all train routes analysed, Eurostar recorded the highest fares.

This is the main reason why all 10 cross-border routes – except the shortest one to Brussels (classified as "yellow") and a long-term trip starting in Amsterdam – were always more expensive by train than by plane. On the London–Brussels route, Eurostar was cheaper for all 3 long-term trips, but only for one of the 3 short- and mid-term trips each. On a positive note, at least for the London–Brussels route, the number of days when the train was cheaper has increased since 2023.

With 90% of its cross-border routes being predominantly more expensive by train than by plane, the UK ranks as the 3rd-worst country in Europe in Scorecard 1 showing the share of cross-border routes per country where rail travel was predominantly more expensive than flying – just behind France (95%) and Spain (92%). In Scorecard 2, which shows the share of cross-border routes per country where rail travel was predominantly cheaper than flying, the UK ranks as the worst-performing country in Europe, with not a single cross-border route being predominantly cheaper by train.

The largest difference between rail and flight fares involving the UK was found on the Barcelona–London route, with the train costing 26 times as much as a flight for a mid-term trip (€389 for a ticket from the French state railway company SNCF, vs €14.99 for a Ryanair flight). This was also the largest price difference identified among all 142 European routes analysed. The second-largest price difference at both the British and European levels was found on the London–Bratislava route, with the train costing 23.3 times as much as the flight for another mid-term trip (€494.99 for 3 separate tickets from Eurostar, the French state railway company SNCF and the German state railway company DB, vs €21.23 for a Wizz Air flight).

Of the 4 domestic routes analysed, at least 2 showed that the train was predominantly cheaper than the flight: one involving Scotland (Glasgow–London) and the other running from the capital of Wales to the capital of Scotland (Cardiff–Edinburgh).

On the other 2 domestic routes analysed, the train was almost always more expensive than the flight: the Edinburgh–London route, one of the busiest short-haul flight routes in Europe, and London–Inverness, which serves Scotland.

Most UK railway companies do not offer long-term tickets, which puts rail at a disadvantage.

AN UNFAIR REGULATORY PLAYING FIELD

With trains being predominantly more expensive on 54% of all cross-border routes, and predominantly cheaper on only 39%, it is clear that citizens are being encouraged to fly across Europe – even when a reasonable rail connection exists. Trains are evidently too expensive in many countries, while planes are sometimes outrageously cheap – such as €12.99 for Barcelona–London and €14.99 for Paris–Milan. One explanation lies in the unfair pricing systems that favour air travel over rail: while airlines pay neither kerosene tax nor VAT on international flights, and benefit from subsidies funded by taxpayers, rail operators are subject to energy taxes, VAT and high track access charges in many countries.

Why low-cost carriers are cheaper

Low-cost airlines sell tickets at prices that fail to reflect their true environmental or social cost. Their business model externalises costs onto people, the planet and future generations. The resulting price gap is not a natural market outcome – it is a political failure.

From reducing working conditions to the legal minimum to externalising costs and introducing a host of extra fees, not to mention receiving subsidies from local authorities, low-cost airlines have exploited every loophole and trick in the book to be as competitive as possible – at the expense of the planet and the climate, but also of workers and passengers.

Here is a non-exhaustive list of reasons why low-cost airlines manage to keep ticket prices so low:

- The **number of staff** is reduced to the legal minimum. Service staff are no longer available.
- **Lower wages.** Low-cost carriers typically pay lower wages and offer poorer working conditions than traditional airlines. This becomes particularly

evident when traditional airlines downsize or go bankrupt, and low-cost carriers take on their staff.

- **Freelancers instead of employed staff.** Pilots, in particular, are often required to work as sole traders, offering their services as self-employed contractors (rather than as salaried employees).
- **Loopholes in labour laws.** Low-cost carriers often choose to hire their staff in countries with less stringent labour regulations, such as Malta.
- **Lack of workers' representation.** Low-cost carriers often actively resist the formation of organised workers' representation, such as works councils.
- **Lower corporate taxes.** Through complicated corporate structures and registrations in low-tax countries such as Malta and Ireland, low-cost carriers are able to minimise their tax burden on profits.
- **Low compensation.** If a flight is seriously delayed, all airlines are legally obliged to pay compensation. However, low-cost carriers often try to evade this obligation or minimise the amount they pay out.
- **No liability for missed connections.** Low-cost carriers do not sell official connecting flights. When a passenger books a journey involving 2 flights, these are treated as separate bookings. This means that if the first flight is delayed and the second is missed, the passenger bears the entire risk and cost. By contrast, when an airline sells an official connecting flight, it is liable for missed connections and therefore has to provide compensation, rebooking or hotel accommodation.
- **Limited inclusion.** The ticket price only includes online check-in. If passengers are unable to use this service due to age, disability or other reasons, an extra fee is charged, which is often higher than the ticket price.
- **Costs for additional services.** Customers have to pay an additional fee for each and every extra service.
- **Zero tolerance for inconsequential mistakes.** If a passenger inadvertently arrives with luggage that marginally exceeds the weight allowance, the resulting fees can amount to several times the cost of the ticket.
- **Maximise profits.** Low-cost airlines generally focus on highly profitable routes and peak seasons. E.g., Ryanair only flies from Athens to the Greek island of Corfu from May to October, whereas Aegean Airlines operates daily flights year-round to serve the local population. The same pattern can be found on routes to destinations such as Ibiza in Spain, where only traditional airlines like Iberia operate during the off-season.

KEY GREENPEACE DEMANDS

- **Rail travel, as the climate-friendly alternative to flying, must become systematically cheaper on all routes across Europe. No one should be forced to take a flight simply because the fare is lower.**
- **Flights and rail travel must be taxed fairly. This should begin with a tax on business and first-class flights, while international train tickets should be exempt from VAT.**
- **Europe needs a unified rail ticketing system that allows passengers to buy one affordable ticket for an entire journey, rather than having to purchase 2 or more separate tickets for the different legs of a route.**

Greenpeace demands (in detail)

Demands for fair pricing of flights and trains

- Introduce or expand taxes on flight tickets to cover the climate and environmental impact of air travel, starting with taxes on business and first-class flights.
- Phase out VAT exemptions on cross-border flights and the kerosene tax exemption.
- End all subsidies for airports and airlines.
- Introduce national, simple and affordable climate tickets for all public transport, including the domestic sections of cross-border rail connections – a model pioneered by Austria and since then adopted by other European countries such as Germany, Hungary and Slovenia.
- Introduce a Europe-wide public transport ticket that is simpler and more affordable than the Interrail Global Pass. Following the successful model of national climate tickets (see previous bullet point), it should be offered as a subscription or monthly pass valid for all modes of public transport.
- Make rail travel more affordable, starting with reducing or waiving VAT on train tickets. This should be followed by introducing or expanding family and social fares for low-income travellers.
- Reduce or waive track access charges for trains, particularly night trains.
- Improve workers' rights, with a particular focus on low-cost airlines. This includes improving employment contracts, union relations, collective bargaining and work-life balance.

Demands for the rail ticketing system

- Introduce a single, EU-wide ticketing and payment system to make it easier for passengers to book train journeys across different rail companies. Rail operators should also be required to offer through tickets for the entire journey to ensure passenger rights are protected. The European Commission is currently working on a regulation that is expected for autumn 2025.
- Make tickets for long-distance trains available for purchase further in advance, ideally at least 6 months before travel.
- Make sure that online tickets are accepted in all countries and by all railway companies.
- Make sure that all operators' ticket platforms offer the same prices and deals for a given trip.
- Make sure that the ticketing system remains in the hands of railway companies to prevent a significant share of the revenue from flowing to private travel agencies.

Demands for better rail connections

- Establish more direct rail connections between major European cities, such as Lisbon–Madrid, Madrid–Paris, Vienna–Zagreb, London–Cologne or Copenhagen-Oslo.
- Introduce passenger rail services between all countries where cross-border rail infrastructure exists but remains unused, such as Greece–Bulgaria, Serbia–Croatia, Serbia–Bulgaria or Sweden–Finland.
- Invest massively in upgrading and modernising the rail infrastructure to increase capacity and speed up services, especially in Central and Eastern European (CEE) countries.

Other demands to facilitate the shift from air to rail

- Ban all airline advertising.
- Ban short-haul flights and replace them with reasonable train alternatives.

Where will the funding come from?

To make rail cheaper and better, billions of euros will be needed to subsidise fares and invest in improved infrastructure. Greenpeace advocates for 2 main approaches to allocating these funds:

The first approach is fairer and higher taxation of aviation.

Short-term: As an immediate measure, introducing **taxes on business and first-class flights** could be a good starting point, as these would not affect low-income travellers who only fly once or twice a year to visit friends and family or go on holiday.

Long-term: To create a level playing field, rail and aviation must be taxed fairly. This would involve phasing out environmentally harmful subsidies and ensuring that both sectors contribute appropriately – including introducing an effective kerosene tax on aviation fuel and applying VAT to international flights, while waiving it for all cross-border train journeys.

The second approach is **fair taxation of the super-rich**.

A recent Greenpeace analysis has shown that a global minimum tax on billionaires and centi-millionaires could raise up to €185 billion per year in Europe alone. Therefore, we demand the introduction of a wealth tax on the super-rich to fund affordable, climate-friendly rail travel – and to correct the extreme inequality between those *who cause* and those *who pay for* the climate crisis.

CONCLUSION

In a positive development for climate action, the analysis found a slight shift in favour of rail: compared to 2023, more routes were cheaper by train than by plane. However, air travel still remained the cheaper option on more than half of the cross-border routes – and on many trips, the train cost more than 10 times as much as the plane.

One main reason for this is the absurdly low fares offered by low-cost airlines such as Ryanair and easyJet, starting from as little as €12.99. At these price levels, railway companies simply cannot compete. Unlike airlines, rail operators in most European countries are subject to various taxes, including energy taxes, track access charges and VAT. Moreover, in contrast to low-cost airlines, they tend to uphold significantly higher labour standards – e.g., by employing all staff directly rather than relying on freelancers.

For this positive trend to become a reality, where rail is systematically cheaper than flying, policymakers must address the unfair regulatory imbalance between rail and aviation. A meaningful first step would be to introduce taxes on business and first-class flights. Secondly, policymakers must significantly increase subsidies for public transport tickets, including the introduction of affordable climate tickets at both national and European level. Funding for this could come in part from aviation taxes and a wealth tax on the super-rich. The latter could generate enormous public funds, particularly if it were introduced at a global level, as is currently being discussed under the proposed UN Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation.

Annex I: Details of the methodology

- The geographic focus of the research is Europe, excluding Russia, Belarus and Ukraine.
- All routes analysed are below 1,500 km air distance (short-haul flights).
- All destinations have an international airport with more than 500,000 passengers a year and a railway station.
- The selected routes represent a mix of geographies, including both typical business and leisure destinations. The following were included: routes with both direct flight and rail connections; routes with only one type of direct connection (either flight or rail); and routes with no direct connection (neither flight nor rail, which is rare).
- The trips could be made either with trains and flights arriving on the same day (departing no earlier than 4:30 a.m. and arriving no later than 1 a.m. of the following day), or with night trains, including connecting trains where necessary, with a total travel time of no more than 24 hours (excluding boarding or transfers between 1 a.m. and 4:30 a.m.). Rail connections falling under these definitions were described as “reasonable” in the report. For night train connections, the given date was the departure date, unless the night train was unavailable and there was no other reasonable rail connection, in which case the given date was the arrival date.
- Routes with rail travel times below 4 hours were excluded when flights mostly function as connecting flights (such as Budapest–Vienna). Routes under 4 hours were included when point-to-point flights are readily available and competitively priced, indicating frequent direct travel between the 2 cities (such as London–Brussels).
- Fares were only taken from the official websites of airline and railway operators. If a through ticket is available for a route operated by more than one railway operator, the fare was usually taken from the website of the public railway operator in the departure country (e.g., the Brussels–Hamburg fare was taken from the SNCB-NMBS website), or from any railway operator able to sell the through ticket.[7] When the fare appeared to be unreasonably high, fares from the other railway operators involved were also checked (e.g., for Venice–Budapest, fares from Trenitalia, ÖBB and MÁV were checked). It was not always possible to check all the railway operators selling tickets for a particular route.
- Greenpeace always chose the cheapest ticket option available (second class, economy class, no extra reservations, no luggage fees, non-refundable

[7] E.g., for Naples–Düsseldorf, ÖBB is the only railway company selling a ticket for the full route; neither Trenitalia nor Deutsche Bahn do.

tickets, etc.). Discount cards, individual subscriptions and long-term tickets were not taken into consideration.

- All routes were analysed for one-way trips occurring at different intervals from the day of research: 2, 4 and 7 days later (short-term); one month later (exactly one month, and plus and minus 2 days – mid-term); and 3 months later (exactly 3 months, and plus 4 and minus 4 days – long-term). This selection ensures a mix of weekdays.
- Only flights with a maximum of one connection were considered. Train routes were also limited to a maximum of one additional transfer to that required on the analysed day. (If there is a direct train, only one transfer was considered. If one transfer is required, 2 transfers were considered at most.)
- For connecting flights requiring the purchase of 2 separate tickets, a minimum connection time of one hour was used. For train journeys involving 2 separate tickets, a minimum connection time of 30 minutes was used where possible.
- Changes between railway stations within a city (such as Paris) were not counted as separate transfers. However, if this change requires public transport, the price of a local single public transport ticket was included.
- If the day train connection takes more than 12 hours and a night train is available, the night train was the first choice for this analysis. If the day train connection takes less than 8 hours and a night train is available, the day train was the first choice for this analysis.
- Connecting flights were only researched if there is no direct flight available or if the direct flight cost above €80. Connecting journeys, including both flights and train trips, were only considered if no direct option existed or if they were at least 10% cheaper than the direct option.
- For flights, all airports serving the same city (as commonly defined by airlines, e.g. Brussels Zaventem and Charleroi), were considered, as were direct flights between cities no more than an hour's drive apart (e.g. Bratislava and Vienna). In the latter case, the cost of public transport between the 2 cities was factored in.
- If a train ticket was not sold for mid- or long term trips, but the fare is fixed, all trips were included in the analysis. This applied to only a few railway companies, such as the Romanian CFR and all operators in the Baltic countries.

Annex II: Sources and Links

The following table lists the main sources used to obtain data on ticket prices.

	Railway companies	Airlines
Austria	https://shop.oebbtickets.at/en/ticket https://westbahn.at/en/	https://www.austrian.com/at/en/homepage
Belgium	https://www.b-europe.com/EN	https://www.brusselsairlines.com/at/en/homepage https://www.tuifly.be/en
Bulgaria	https://www.bdz.bg/en	https://www.air.bg/en
Croatia	https://www.hzpp.hr/en	https://www.croatiaairlines.com/
Czechia	https://www.cd.cz/en/ https://regiojet.com/	https://www.smartwings.com/en/
Denmark	https://www.dsb.dk/en/	
Estonia	https://elron.ee/en	
Finland	https://www.vr.fi/en	https://www.finnair.com/at-en
France	https://www.sncf-connect.com/en-en/	https://wwws.airfrance.fr/en https://www.transavia.com/home/en-eu
Germany	https://int.bahn.de/en https://www.flixtrain.com/	https://shop.lufthansa.com/booking/ https://www.eurowings.com/en.html https://www.condor.com/eu
Greece	https://www.hellenictrain.gr/en	https://www.skyexpress.gr/en https://en.aegeanair.com/
Hungary	https://jegy.mav.hu/	https://www.wizzair.com/en-gb
Ireland	https://www.irishrail.ie/en-ie/	https://www.ryanair.com/at/en https://www.aerlingus.com/html/en-AT/home.html
Italy	https://www.trenitalia.com/en.html https://biglietti.italotreno.com/Booking_Acquisto_SelezioneTreno_A.aspx	/https://www.ita-airways.com/en_it https://www.aeroitalia.com/en
Latvia	https://www.ldz.lv/en	https://www.airbaltic.com/
Lithuania	https://ltglink.lt/en	
Luxembourg	https://www.cfl.lu/en-gb	https://www.luxair.lu/en
Moldova		https://hisky.aero/en/
Montenegro	https://zpcg.me/en/medjunarodni-prevoz/cij	https://airmontenegro.com/en/

	ene	
Netherlands	https://www.nsinternational.com/en https://www.europeansleeper.eu/	https://www.klm.com/
Norway	https://www.vy.no/en	https://www.norwegian.com/uk/ https://www.wideroe.no/en https://www.ethiopianairlines.com[8]
Poland	https://www.intercity.pl/en/	https://www.lot.com/at/en
Portugal	https://www.cp.pt/passageiros/en	https://www.flytap.com/en-at/
Romania	https://mersultrenurilor.infofer.ro/en-GB/Itineraries	https://www.tarom.ro/en
Serbia		https://www.airserbia.com/en/
Slovakia	https://www.zssk.sk/en/	
Slovenia	https://potniski.sz.si/en/	
Spain	https://www.renfe.com/es/en https://iryo.eu/en/booking/travels https://www.ouigo.com/es/en	https://tickets.vueling.com/booking/flightSearch https://www.iberia.com/es/?language=en https://www.volotea.com/en/ https://www.aireuropa.com/ot/en/home
Sweden	https://www.sj.se/en https://www.snalltaget.se/en	https://www.flysas.com/en/ https://www.braathens.com/
Switzerland	https://www.sbb.ch/en	https://www.swiss.com/at/en/homepage
UK	https://www.nationalrail.co.uk/ https://www.eurostar.com/rw-en https://www.sleeper.scot/ https://www.avantiwestcoast.co.uk/ https://www.londonnorthwesternrailway.co.uk/ https://www.lner.co.uk/ https://www.lumo.co.uk/	https://www.ryanair.com/at/en https://www.easyjet.com/en https://www.britishairways.com/travel/home/public/en_at/ https://www.loganair.co.uk/

Annex III: Public Google Sheet

The data set is accessible online here.

[8] Operates flights between Oslo and Stockholm