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The Changing and Contrasting Geographies of Railways in Europe

Railways in Europe are undergoing an ongoing evolution from national systems comprised primarily of conventional mixed use (passenger and freight) routes to more heterogeneous systems with an increasingly fragmented and differentiated nature. At the same time, they are exhibiting a series of paradoxes which operate unevenly over space. EU frameworks aim to increase interoperability and access to networks for all operators, but increasingly complex homologation requirements increase the difficulty and cost of introducing new trains. Regulators are focused on increasing competition in the market and open access operators with the aim of widening passenger choice and reducing fares, but in practice this often has the consequence of reducing service levels in certain areas and increasing ticket prices and complexity for many users, with negative impacts for spatial and social equity. In the European Union there is a continued shift away from state ownership and national monopolies, while in Great Britain railways are being brought back into public control. There are ongoing efforts to increase rail use for environmental reasons, for example by introducing discounted tickets, while at the same time spiralling costs and limits on capacity are in some contexts resulting in proposals to increase fares to limit demand. In this context, this session will explore the geographical impacts of the changes being experienced by European railway systems in a range of contexts. The scope of the session includes papers on both passenger and freight traffic and many kinds of networks and services (high-speed, conventional, light rail, overnight, etc.). Potential topics could include (but are not limited to): Railway systems planning and regulatory changes Spatial impacts of changes in railway ownership Spatial/social equity perspectives derived from the changing geographies of railways Open access operations Railway liberalisation implications: network effects, public services obligations, etc. Social and spatial impacts of discounted railway fare initiatives. The evolving geography of night trains in Europe Changing influences and impacts on railway services and mobility Causes and impacts of changing patterns of international railway networks and services Interactions between railways and urban/regional development

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Catégorie

Conference session

Date de début

Mon, 09/08/2025 - 09:00 - Thu, 09/11/2025 - 17:00

Ville

Vienna

Lieu (salle, adresse)

Austrian Academy of Sciences Dr. Ignaz Seipel-Platz 2 1010 Wien

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Informations pratiques

Both quantitative and qualitative approaches are welcome, as are papers from any disciplinary background, as long as there is a focus on the geographic aspects of railway systems. Papers which study the contrasts between railway geographies in different geographic areas would be particularly welcome.

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