

PRESS RELEASE

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GERMANY: climate activist Greta Thunberg sits on the floor in an overcrowded train

Two days ago, on Saturday, Time Magazine's Person Of The Year Greta Thunberg tweeted how she was sitting on the floor in an overcrowded long distance DB train in Germany¹, while returning home to Sweden from the World Climate Summit in Madrid.

As the world's leading climate activist, Greta Thunberg has a lot of patience for railways. However, most people do not. If the Europe is serious about achieving modal shift to rail, then it needs to introduce solutions that will make cross-border rail journeys like hers attractive to a wide range of people - **rather than sitting on the floor.**

Firstly, measures need to be taken that will enable more frequent departures. After all, the Status Quo clearly does not work: the state incumbent long distance operator DB is integrated with the infrastructure manager and has enjoyed over 99% market share for more than 70 years – resulting in frequencies of often just one per hour.

To achieve this, Germany needs more network capacity and new operators on the tracks. In the limited cases where long distance market opening has already occurred, results have benefited rail passenger growth and, in turn, **the environment too.** In order to encourage new operators, conditions are needed that will alleviate unnecessary risk:

First: newcomers need guaranteed access to existing & new state rail infrastructure, with the access fee being based on direct costs. Otherwise, private investors might buy rolling stock only to be told there is no capacity left or that fees are suddenly increasing.

Second: access to long distance rolling stock remains a big problem: The EU needs a new framework for securing fair financing conditions for private investors versus incumbents that benefit from the implicit backing of their owners, the governments. This should come in the form of state guarantees for all new, interoperable rolling stock from 2020 onwards.

Third: the route that Greta Thunberg took highlights a further market distortion. One of the few new long distance operators – FlixTrain, operating with 100% renewable energy (certified by Greenpeace)- is also active. Furthermore: FlixTrain offers guaranteed seating.

But how was Greta meant to know about this? With such little competition, DB's App & website enjoy 97% share in the downstream consumer rail ticket sales market as well. Its App & website are the default channels for all rail enquiries. Rather than refusing to sell newcomers like FlixTrain, these should show & sell all rail options in a neutral manner.

ALLRAIL Secretary General Nick Brooks says: "The EU Commission's Green Deal must encourage privately owned newcomers. Without competition in passenger rail, there will be more pollution. The next five years will be the last chance; otherwise it will be too late".

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¹ <https://twitter.com/GretaThunberg/status/1205969006982815751>