

Transport Secretary hails new horizons for rail travel across Europe

- Transport Secretary Grant Shapps welcomes new direct Eurostar rail connection between London and Amsterdam
- passengers will no longer have to disembark in Brussels to clear passport control before continuing their journey to London
- new non-stop journey will have environmental benefits and increase efficiency

Grant Shapps today (4 February 2020) welcomed a new direct Eurostar rail connection between the Netherlands and the UK which will help improve journeys for passengers and businesses.

Speaking after watching the first return journey arrive from Amsterdam to London St Pancras station this morning, Mr Shapps praised the new service, which will mean passengers returning from Amsterdam or Rotterdam will no longer have to interrupt their journey and get off the train at Brussels to go through UK border controls.

The more efficient route will also bring benefits for the environment by incentivising passengers to choose the greener option, with Eurostar estimating their trains produce between 80 and 90% fewer emissions than the equivalent short haul flight.

Secretary of State for Transport Grant Shapps said:

We're continuing to invest in modern, efficient transport links with the continent so our businesses and tourism industry can flourish.

The days of passengers being forced to decamp from the train at Brussels to file through passport control will soon be over, as we look forward to direct, return, high-speed services to Amsterdam and beyond.

The announcement comes on the day that the [government launches the next UN climate conference COP26](#) with a year of climate action and announces new action to reach its legally binding target of net zero UK emissions by 2050.

Eurostar has carried over half a million passengers (570,000) from London to Rotterdam and Amsterdam since first launching the service 2 years ago. This number is expected to grow significantly following the launch of the return service and will mean that the UK will have seamless high-speed rail links with 3 major European cities.

Minister for Security, Brandon Lewis, said:

I'm very pleased to see today's announcement from Eurostar. Our new agreement with our EU neighbours will make the journey from Amsterdam as quick and seamless as possible, while keeping borders secure.

The UK's ongoing cooperation with international partners shows, without doubt, that the UK is open for business with Europe and the rest of the world.

Eurostar has had direct services from London to Amsterdam and Rotterdam since April 2018 but the government is finalising an agreement with France, Belgium and the Netherlands to enable passport checks to be conducted at juxtaposed border controls on departure in the Netherlands.

Juxtaposed border controls are reciprocal arrangements, underpinned by bilateral treaties that deliver a high level of border security. They enable border fluidity, maintain security and allow goods and passengers to undergo entry checks prior to arrival at their destination.