



Thalys is now a train operating company

On Monday 30 March, Agnès Ogier, CEO of Thalys, Jo Cornu, CEO of SNCB, and Rachel Picard, Managing Director of Voyages SNCF, signed the agreements to complete Thalys' formal transformation into a train operating company.

This transformation began back in July 2013, when the company's two shareholders, SNCB and SNCF, signed a memorandum of understanding, signalling a commitment to give Thalys additional resources in order to increase efficiency and responsiveness, and to deliver even greater improvements in terms of products, services and customer satisfaction.

In its new configuration as a train operating company, owned by SNCB (40%) and SNCF (60%), the company's workforce will rise from 200 to 550 staff. The new structure holds all Thalys activity management and production resources, enabling it to operate under its own responsibility in Belgium and France – its core territory.

This historic move will firmly cement Thalys' position as one of the leading high-speed rail operators in Europe – one that offers its customers a unique travel experience reflecting its slogan, "Welcome to our World".



Agnès Ogier, CEO of Thalys, Jo Cornu, CEO of SNCB and future Chair of the Board of Directors of Thalys, and Rachel Picard, Managing Director of Voyages SNCF and administrator of Thalys.

Agnès Ogier, CEO of Thalys: "This move underlines the trust and confidence placed in us by SNCF and SNCB, giving Thalys full and direct responsibility for rail transport activities and allocating the resources we need to deliver on this mission. Thalys is a uniquely multicultural organisation, faced with the daily challenge of addressing four different markets. This transformation represents a change of scale, through which we will reach the critical mass we need to shape our own future. We will now have direct control over all our personnel, allowing us to make best use of our talent and expertise and keep our ear closer to the ground. In turn, this will make us more effective, responsive and creative and enable us to continue improving our service."

Jo Cornu, CEO of SNCB and Chair of the Board of Directors of Thalys: "Thalys symbolises Belgium's position at the heart of Europe. We are extremely proud of the fact that the company is gaining its independence as a fully function train operating company. Through this transformation we will ensure that Thalys has the resources it needs to grow, as well as the decision-making flexibility that this increasingly competitive market demands. By cementing its position within this new, highly stable and ambitious partnership, SNCB will be well-placed to consolidate its reputation and expertise on the international stage."

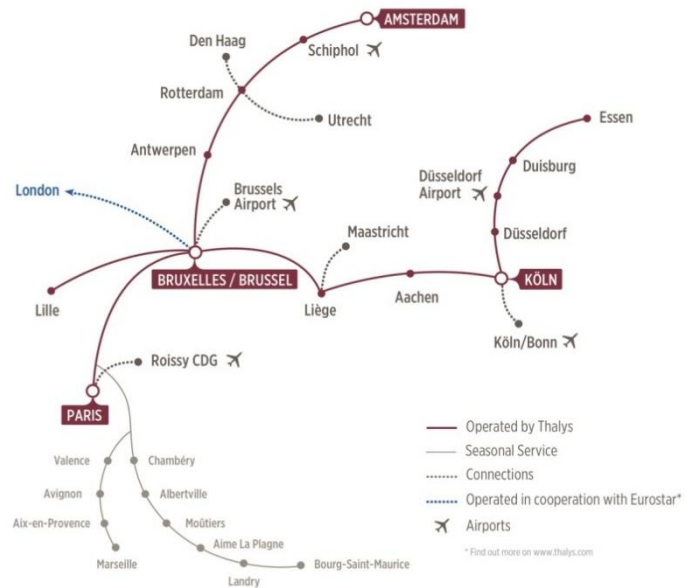
Rachel Picard, Managing Director of Voyages SNCF and Director of Thalys: "This new start for Thalys is an extremely positive step. The transformation will help to consolidate our partnership with SNCB. Thalys now has the structure and resources it needs to grow more quickly and continue delivering a better, more fluid service to passengers across all four countries. We would like to wish Thalys and its teams every success in the coming years!"

About Thalys

Thalys is the high-speed red train linking Paris to Brussels in 1 hour 22 minutes, and to Cologne and Amsterdam in just 3h14 and 3h16. Since 2011, Thalys also serves the three German cities of Dusseldorf, Duisburg and Essen, as well as Brussels Airport. Thalys provides a Lille to Amsterdam service since April 2014.

Thalys is a member of Railteam, a collaborative venture between the main European high-speed rail operators, the CER (Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies) and the UIC (International Union of Railways).

Since 1996, Thalys has been the only truly multicultural operator to achieve success in the international high-speed rail business in four countries. The Thalys success story is both commercial - 100 million rail passengers transported - and technical, with for example the successful introduction of on-board WiFi in 2008 and a new train management system, ERTMS, in 2009. For increased efficiency and fluidity, and even greater improvements in terms of customer service and satisfaction, Thalys will become a full-function train operating company by 2015.



A true innovator, Thalys has created an exceptional service which is today considered a benchmark for rail operators worldwide and where its signature slogan "Welcome to our world" is synonymous with passenger comfort, a warm multilingual welcome, high quality catering, the Comfort 1 service package, new communication technologies (all Thalys coaches offer on-board WiFi, a service provided by 21Net and activated by Nokia Siemens Networks)... Since 26 August 2013, Thalys has held NF Transport Service quality certification awarded by AFNOR Certification for its Paris-Brussels line, an international first.

Thalys' TheCard loyalty programme offers customers the opportunity to collect Miles and access a range of services. The programme is open to all rail passengers at thalys.com.

Thalys sur Twitter :  twitter.com/thalys_en  <http://instagram.com/thalys>

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