

Dear Members of the Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER),

On behalf of the Youth on Track Coalition, a pan-European network of youth, consumer, and environmental organisations, we are calling for a fundamental shift in how the European rail industry connects with its next generation of passengers. **We urge CER to prioritise the negotiation of an improved youth fare structure that reflects the economic reality of young Europeans**, while also advancing stronger passenger rights and a more inclusive and seamless travel experience.

Across Europe, young people consistently express a clear preference for travelling by train. However, for many, opting for trains over planes is not an easy choice, mostly because of **inaccessible prices**. [Our data is clear](#): 71% of 15–24-year-olds identify high ticket prices as the primary obstacle to choosing rail. Whether they are students, trainees, or in entry-level positions, young travellers are currently being excluded from rail travel, turning a sustainable option into a luxurious one.

This systemic failure is most evident in European mobility programmes. Currently, thousands of Erasmus+ students, including the 100,000 expected to benefit from the UK's return to the program, are effectively forced to fly. When trains are more expensive and more difficult to book than a budget flight, all the efforts to incentivise passengers to travel by train become meaningless.

The Youth on Track Coalition calls on CER to work closely with national railway operators and policymakers to develop and implement a comprehensive and improved system of **youth fares** across the European rail network.

Specifically, we urge to work collectively to implement the following:

- **Expanding youth fares and discounts** covering each country's legal definition of "youth", ensuring that young travellers can realistically choose rail over aviation.
- Ensuring that young people can access all ticket categories across all rail providers through the ticketing platforms they primarily use and can travel without fear of additional costs in the event of a missed connection. We also encourage CER to embrace and support the proposed provisions in the European Commission's Passenger Rights Package that aim to guarantee these protections across the European rail network.
- **Better support for Erasmus+ and other mobility programmes**, including dedicated rail offers for students travelling across borders, where youth fares conditions change.

- **A commitment to inclusivity**, ensuring that rail remains accessible regardless of socioeconomic background, geographic location, or disability, including by improving assistance for passengers with reduced mobility throughout the travel journey.

We stand ready to engage constructively with CER and its members to help shape solutions that make rail the obvious choice for young people across the continent.

Sincerely,

The Youth on Track coalition

