

# The true value of rail

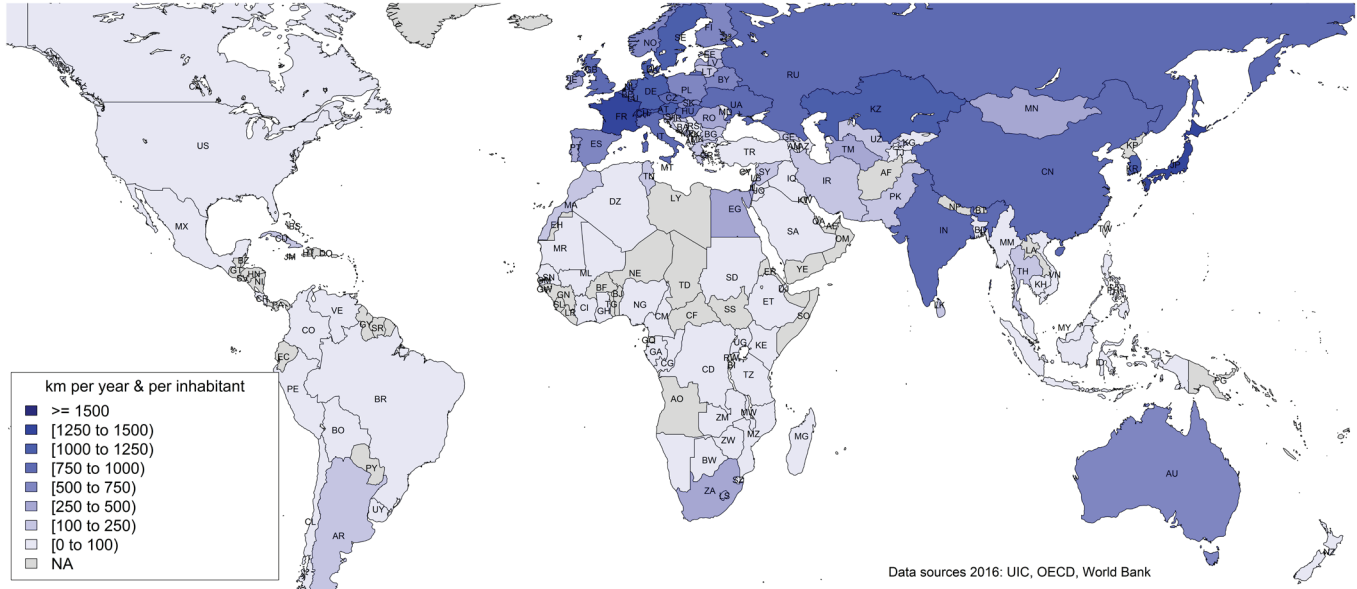


INTERNATIONAL UNION  
OF RAILWAYS

## UIC Member Railways at the heart of the chain of mobility

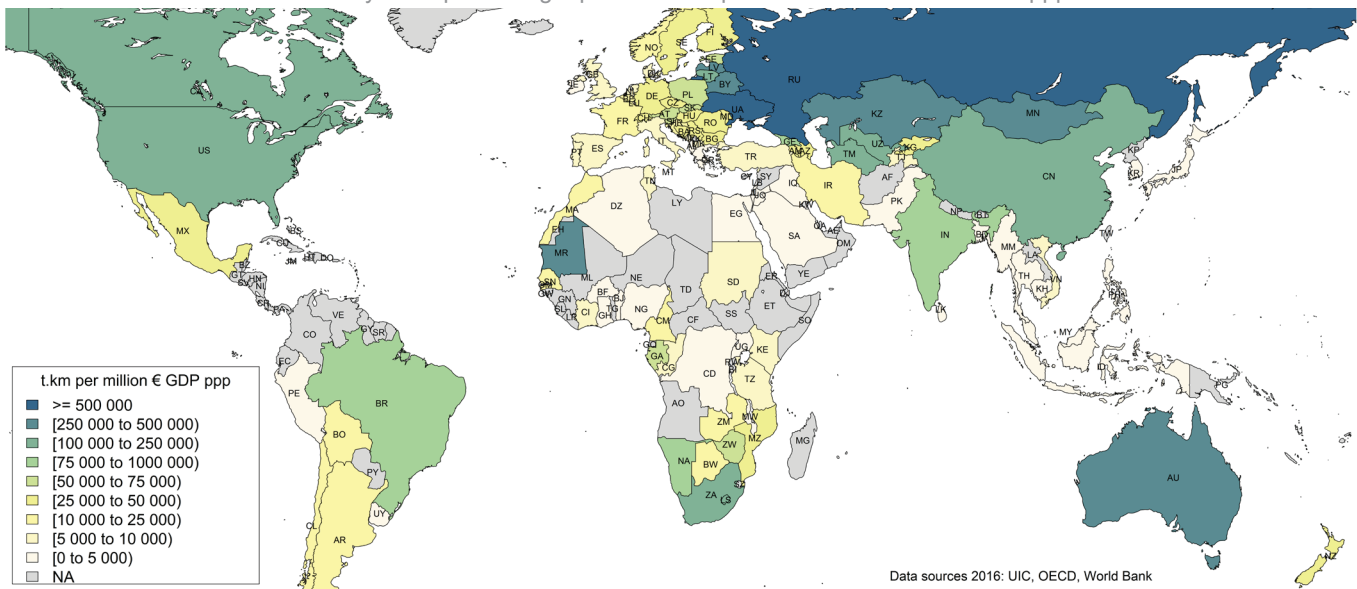
Rail is an important transport mode for passengers, worldwide. It adapts itself successfully to a variety of situations. Each region has its specificity: the Japanese and the Swiss travel, on average, more than 1500 km by train, per year and inhabitant!

Railway Transport: Annual distance run per inhabitant



Rail freight is a significant contributor to the economy. The worldwide demand for rail freight remains very high, in spite of the decline of manufacturing industry in certain regions.

Railway Transport: Freight performance per Gross Domestic Product ppp



## Rail contributes to sustainability

**No transport mode is innocuous.** All modes generate external costs, i.e. adverse effects that the society has to pay for. External costs include the effects and consequences of accidents, congestion, pollution, biodiversity losses, and climate change. Most external costs are produced by the road sector (94% of total external costs in EU 27\*).

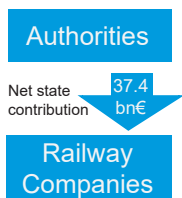
**Rail is the most environmentally-friendly transport mode.** Average external costs (total costs related to traffic volumes) allow modal comparison: Society saves 50€ (around 56\$) each time 1000 passenger.km, or 1000 ton.km, are transported by rail instead of road vehicles\*. Despite its low external costs, rail is further working on their reduction.

# Rail is good for public accounts

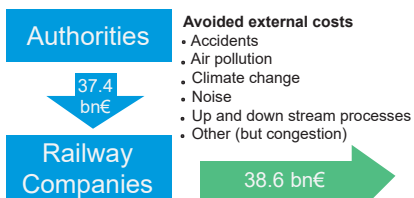
Rail, like every other transport mode, competes and struggles for achieving best economic efficiency. Nevertheless, many railways receive net contributions from the public hand, with notable exceptions. This fact should be an incentive towards even better efficiency, and sometimes gets misused by political agendas. But let us look at the complete picture:

**Fact is, rail provides more benefits to society than it receives from the public hand.** Our assertion: locally (in place and time), rail strikes a balance between population and industry needs, other transport modes, and the environment. This assertion seems to be confirmed by facts!

## What people see



## The complete picture



- Avoided external costs**
- Accidents
  - Air pollution
  - Climate change
  - Noise
  - Up and down stream processes
  - Other (but congestion)

While the European rail sector in EU 2012 perimeter, received 37 billion Euros from the public hand, **it saved an even bigger amount (38 billion €) given its outstanding sustainability!**

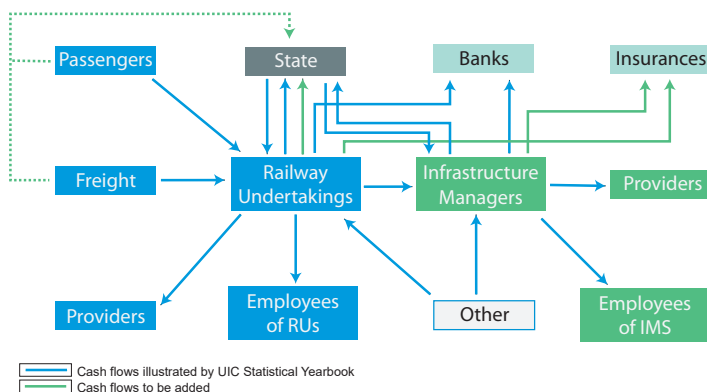
And this does not even take into account congestion – without rail, our urban lifestyles would be severely degraded.

All figures are yearly cashflows, 2012 values, from various sources, incl. RMMS 4th report, Steer Davies Gleave 2015

# So let us talk about economics... firmly established on your data

The UIC statistical yearbook can provide and monitor the overall balance of cashflows, year after year. The Statistical Yearbook is being completed for fully documenting yearly cashflows between all economic stakeholders, with an increased focus on taxation. UIC Members and Representative Bodies may find interest in the overall balancing. Inside Europe, the track access charges are especially worth investigating, since it is the main internal factor that regulates the rail transport market.

RAILISA, the UIC online statistics data request, makes the Statistical Yearbook data accessible to all, while enforcing the confidentiality restrictions established by the data owners – UIC Members. Statistical data series are published progressively, after careful consistency checks in view of high reliability. While some data items may remain strictly confidential, UIC statistical services are able, and allowed, to publish anonymised or synthetic indicators: every data item is valuable! Link to RAILISA: <http://uic-stats.uic.org/>

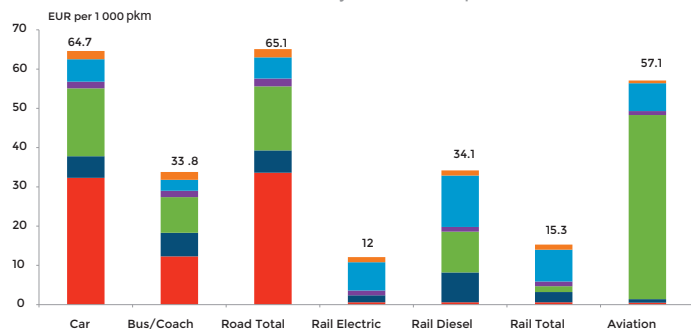


# ... and watch out for updated evaluation of externalities!

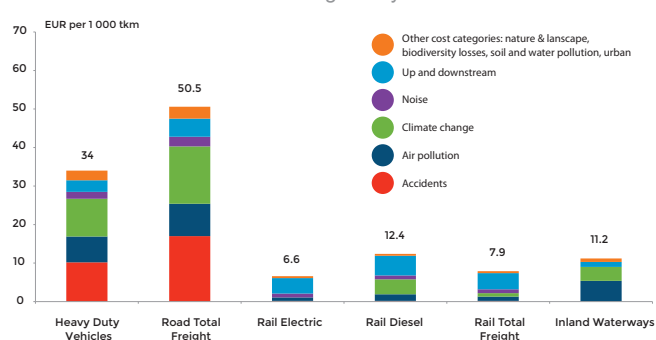
Valuation of positive or negative externalities, as illustrated below, depends on the technologies used. It also depends on understanding of long term, or cumulative, effects of emissions and pollutants. The UIC Environment, Energy and Sustainability platform cooperates with other recognised organisations worldwide to make sure that the potential of railway technologies is well understood and correctly appreciated.

## Average external costs for EU-27

**Passenger transport (excluding congestion)**  
Without motorcycles and mopeds



**Freight transport (excluding congestion)**  
Without light duty vehicles



More information: UIC Data, Statistics, Geography and Economics Unit –

Contact: [stats@uic.org](mailto:stats@uic.org)

\* Source: *Greening Transport Reduce External Costs*, June 2012

Brochures available at: <https://uic.org/spip.php?action=telecharger&arg=1522>

See also:

<https://uic.org/sustainable-development>

<https://uic.org/economics>

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#UICrail

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