

What are the consequences of having burdensome rail booking processes? Here's what people from 7 European countries think

An opinion poll by YouGov on behalf of T&E

07/10/2025



Executive summary

Barriers to booking are pushing passengers away from trains. This is according to an opinion poll responded by more than 10,000 citizens from seven European countries. The EU can fix this.

Currently rail operators are under no obligation to display competitors' journeys on their own booking platforms, or to provide their own on other platforms. The EU's Single Ticketing Package plans to unlock seamless rail ticket booking.

It will also decide if passengers should be allowed to jump on the next train without extra cost in case of a missed connection due to delays even if the trains are from competing operators, and whether or not to include the journey's climate footprint for all transport options in the engine search.

2 | Opinion poll - rail booking and ticketing

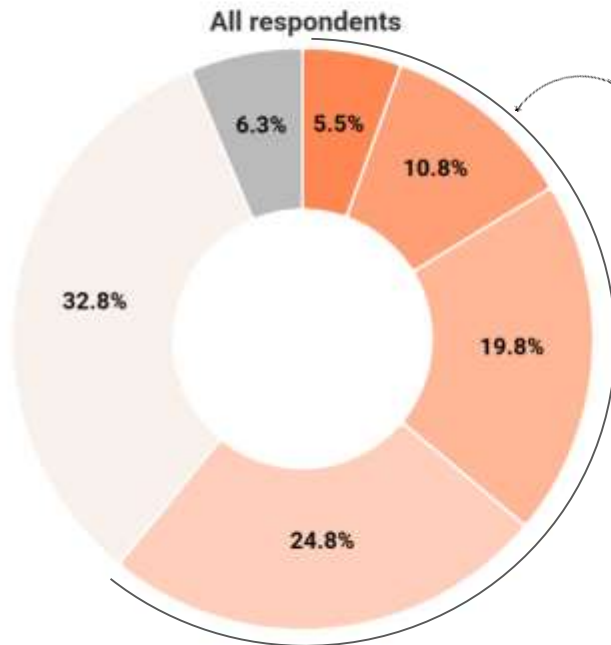
What are Europeans' preferences for rail:

- Almost two out of three long-distance rail users encountered difficulties while booking tickets.
- Guaranteed connections, ease of long-distance tickets reservation and visibility for all fare types in booking websites are top concerns of passengers.
- 43% of long-distance rail passengers would increase their travelling if ticket booking was easier.

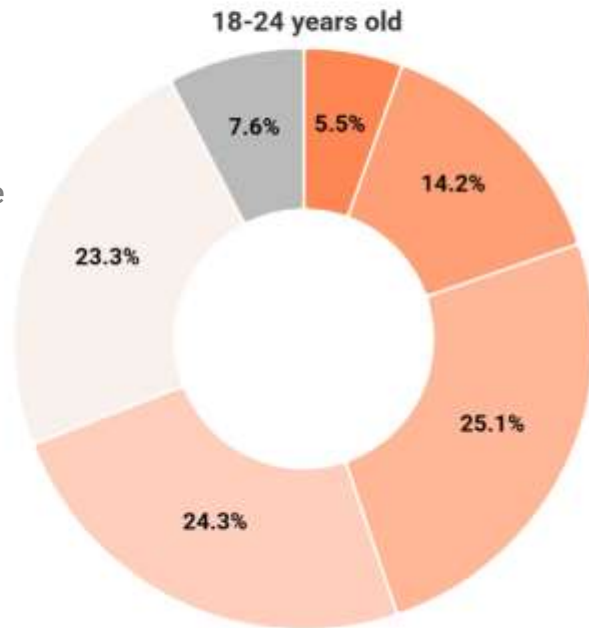
Almost two thirds of long distance rail travellers have avoided journeys due to booking hassle at least once

How often do you avoid using trains for long-distance because of booking difficulties?

Always Often Sometimes Rarely Never / Not applicable Don't know



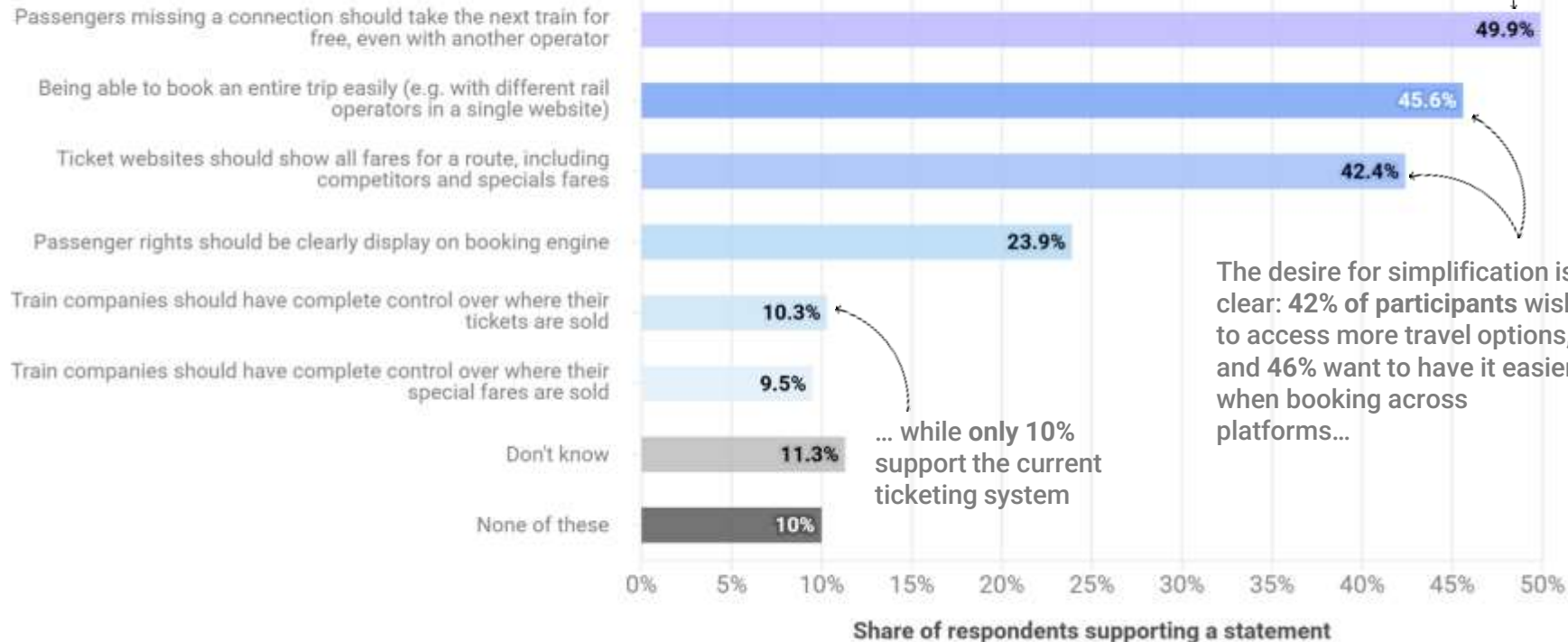
Online booking difficulties have stopped almost two in three respondents (61%) from taking the train



Source: T&E, YouGov Plc • Total sample size : 6 198 adults with long-distance train travel experience, split between UK, Spain, Italy, France, Germany, Romania and Poland.

Many respondents support improvements to passenger rights and booking experience

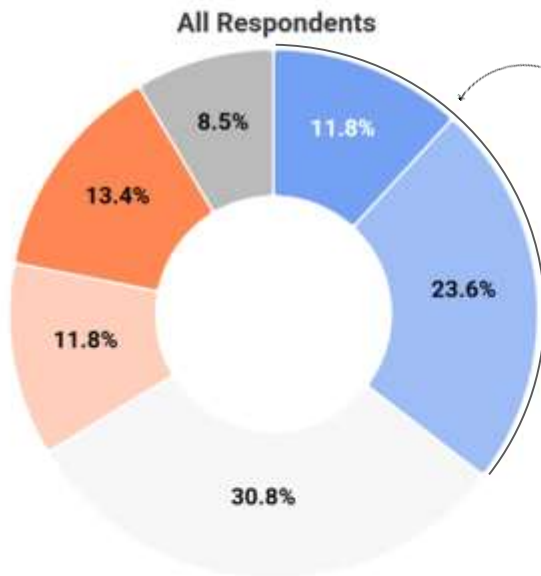
Which of the following would you support? (multiple answers)



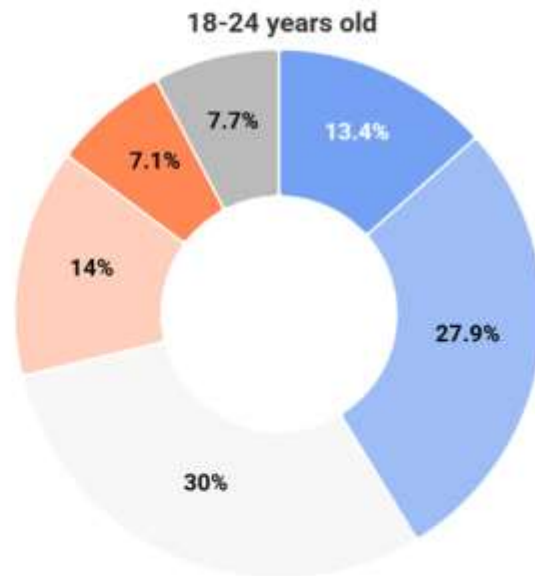
More than a third of respondents would increase their rail usage for long distance travel if booking was easier

To what extent do you agree with the following? If booking train tickets online was easier, I would be more likely to choose train travel for long-distance journey

Strongly agree Tend to agree Neither agree nor disagree Tend to disagree Strongly disagree Don't know



An easier booking process would get more people on trains. 35% of participants in the poll agreed that they would opt for rail more often if ticketing were simplified.

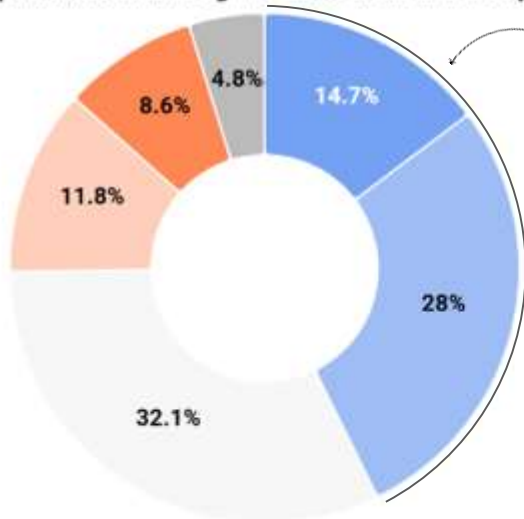


When it comes to long-distance train travelers, more than 40% of respondents would increase their rail usage if booking was easier

To what extent do you agree with the following? If booking train tickets online was easier, I would be more likely to choose train travel for long-distance journey

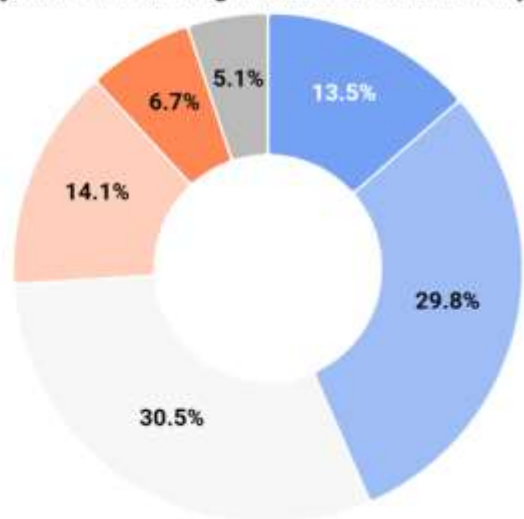
Strongly agree Tend to agree Neither agree nor disagree Tend to disagree Strongly disagree Don't know

All Respondents with long-distance train travel experience



This share is even greater for those respondents who already used rail for long distance journeys in the past. 43% of these would like to see that change happening.

18-24 years old with long-distance train travel experience



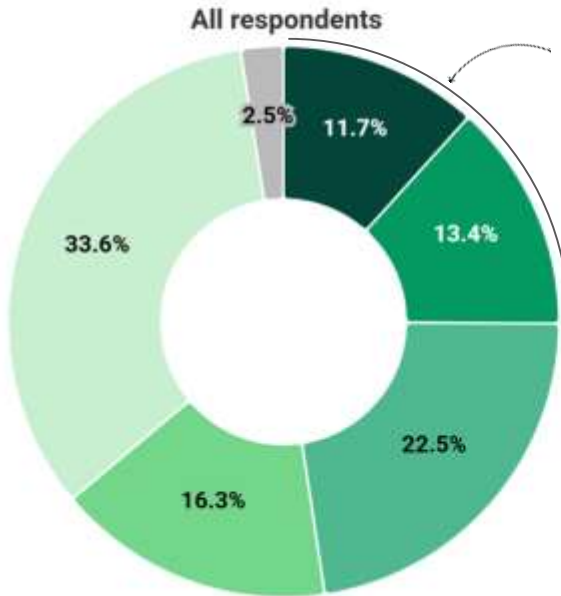
Source: T&E, YouGov Plc • Total sample size : 6 198 adults with long-distance train travel experience split between UK, Spain, Italy, France, Germany, Romania and Poland.

The majority of respondents are rail users, with nearly half travelling at least once a year

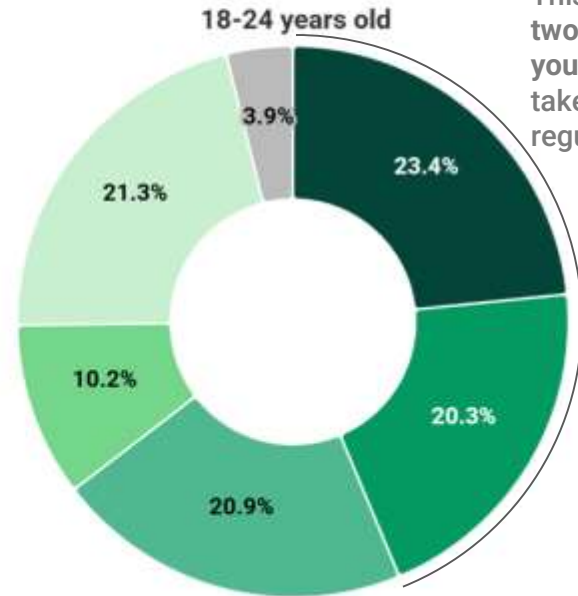
Youngest respondents are much more frequent rail users, with close to two thirds travelling at least once a year

How often do you travel by train for medium-distances?

- Very regularly ($\geq$ once a month)
- Regularly (every two-three months)
- Occasionally (once or twice a year)
- Rarely (once every few years)
- Never / Not applicable
- Don't know



One in four respondents use rail regularly for travelling medium distances.



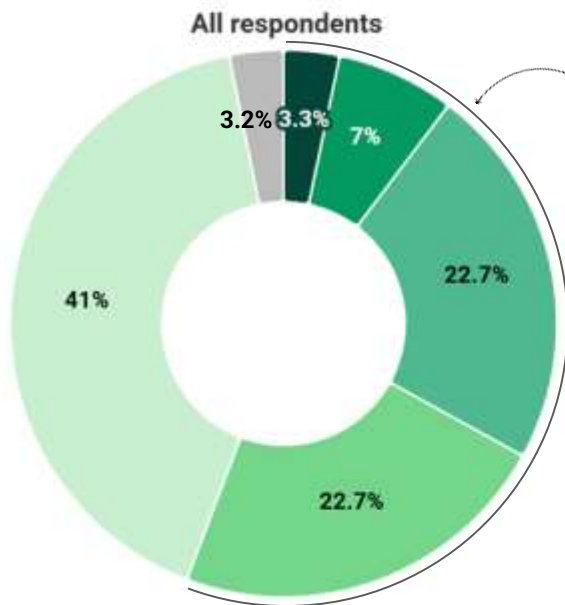
This goes up to two out of five young people who take the train regularly

A third of respondents use rail at least once a year for travelling long-distances

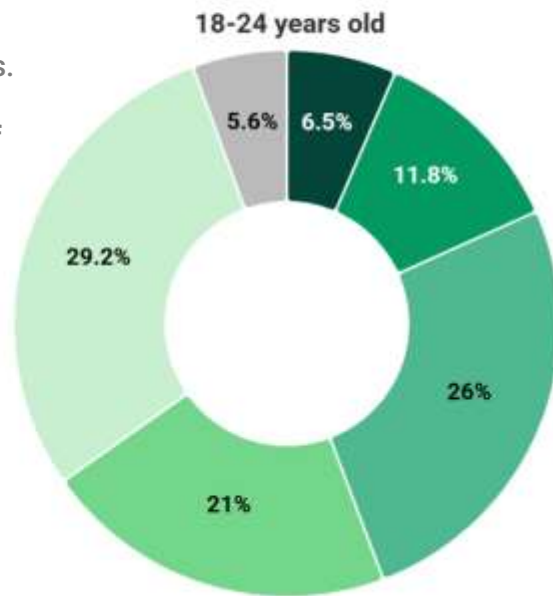
This goes up to almost half for people between 18-24 years old

How often do you travel by train for long-distances?

- Very regularly ($\geq$ once a month)
- Regularly (every two-three months)
- Occasionally (once or twice a year)
- Rarely (once every few years)
- Never / Not applicable
- Don't know



Rail travelling frequency decreases when it comes to long distances. Still, it is interesting to note that more than half of respondents (56%) already used rail for long-distance travel

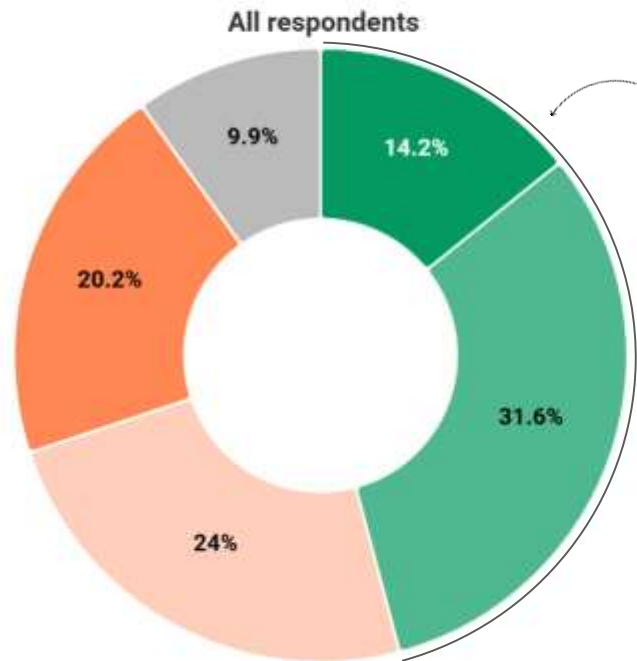


Displaying travel carbon footprints matters to almost half of travelers

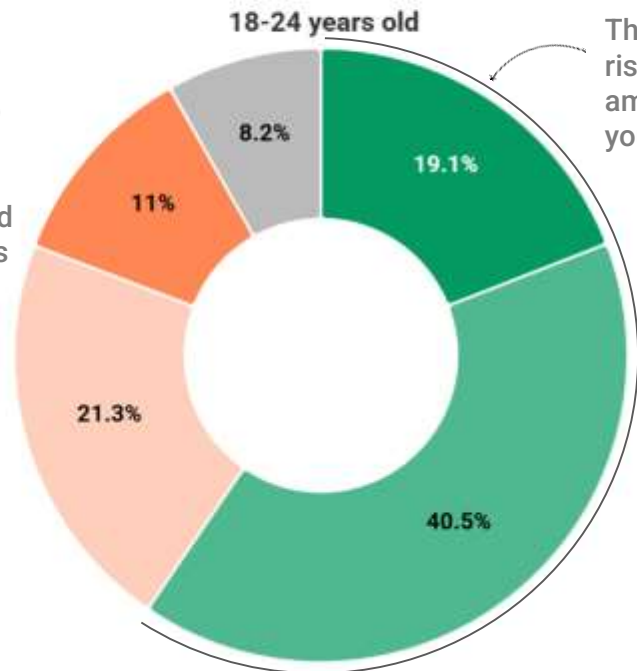
And this goes up to almost two thirds of people between 18-24 years old

How important do you think it is that the carbon footprint of all travel options is clearly shown at the booking stage?

Very important Fairly important Not very important Not at all important Don't know



Almost half of respondents (46%) think that travel carbon footprint should be displayed on booking engines



This demand rises to 60% among the youngest

Recommendations

The Single Ticketing Package is the window of opportunity to ease the life of European travellers and help them travel with rail. T&E calls to:

- 1 Set a **mandatory obligation for all rail operators to let all platforms resell their tickets** including all fares and extras (bike tickets, seat reservations etc.)
- 2 **Require major ticketing platforms to display all rail operators** in their geographical scope even if from competing rail operators
- 3 **Require all ticketing platforms to include the climate footprint** of the different transport modes in the engine search
- 4 Enshrine in law a **guarantee to be able to go on the next available train** if the traveller missed its connecting train due to the first one being delayed

Methodological note

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 10,514 adults in the UK, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Poland, and Romania. Fieldwork was undertaken between 4th - 16th September 2025. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been given an even weighting for each country to produce an 'average' value.

For the first question, respondents were asked about their rail travel habits for medium- and long-distance journeys. The distances were differentiated as follows:

- Medium-distances: 50-300 km
- Long-distances: > 300 km

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