

# Eurostar celebrates 18 years of service



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Author: [Eurostar](#)

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LONDON, November 15, 2012, 10:13 am -- /[EPR NETWORK](#)/ -- Eurostar customers and crew at St Pancras International today celebrated the 18th anniversary of the start of high-speed passenger services which since 1994 have revolutionised travel between the UK and mainland Europe.

The Secretary of State for Transport, Patrick McLoughlin MP, joined Eurostar chief executive Nicolas Petrovic on the Eurostar platforms, to mark the occasion with the cutting of a special birthday cake, the first of many to be shared with customers throughout the day.

As well as being Eurostar's 18th birthday, November 14 also marked both the 5th anniversary of the move from Waterloo International to its new home at St Pancras International, and the opening of HS1, the UK's first high-speed rail line, in 2007.

Commenting on the landmark moment in Eurostar's history, The Secretary of State for Transport, Patrick Loughlin MP, said: "This important milestone marks the coming of age of Eurostar and it is testament to its success that we now think nothing of hopping on a train in London and getting off in Paris or Brussels. The last five years have also given the UK its first real taste of high speed rail. From the splendour of the redesigned St Pancras to the mouth of the [channel tunnel](#) itself, HS1 shows what a difference such projects can make. That is why I am determined to press ahead with HS2 - a network that will build on the success of HS1 to deliver jobs, growth and much-needed extra rail capacity."

Nicolas Petrovic, Eurostar Chief Executive, said: "What once seemed like the stuff of science fiction is now part of our everyday lives. This is a very special day in our history and we're proud to have changed the way people think about travelling between the UK and the Continent.

"Everyone from business travellers and holiday makers to day trippers and second home-owners now enjoys the speed, ease and convenience of city centre to city centre high-speed rail. We have our eyes firmly set on the future and with many exciting projects in the pipeline our customers can look forward to the next chapter in Eurostar's story."

When the first Eurostar trains left London in 1994, they carried a total of 38,000 in the first month of operation. Now, 18 years later, passenger numbers in 2012 average more than 830,000 a month. Over the course of those 18 years Eurostar has carried more than 130 million travellers more than doubling the total number of passengers travelling (by air or rail) between London and Paris, Lille and Brussels.

In 1994 journey times between London and Paris were 3h00 and Brussels 3h15. Since then, as successive sections of the high-speed line in the UK have been completed those journey times have fallen considerably. With the completion of HS1 five years ago today, the London-Paris journey time was slashed again to 2h15 and London Brussels to 2h00.

- Ends -

### **About Eurostar**

Eurostar is the high-speed train service offering travellers from St Pancras International, Ebbsfleet International and Ashford International a convenient way to [travel to the Alps](#), enjoy [Disneyland Paris packages](#) and [Amsterdam city breaks](#).

Eurostar was established in 1994 as a partnership between three railway companies: SNCF, SNCB and LCR (London and Continental Railways). On 1 September 2010, Eurostar became a single, unified corporate entity owned by three shareholders: SNCF, SNCB and LCR.

The current Eurostar train was first introduced into service in 1994 carrying 750 passengers and operating at speeds of up to 300kph. Since then, the fleet of 28 trains has carried more than 115 million passengers between London and the Continent.

Special offers, including [cheap Paris tickets](#), can be found on the Eurostar website.

PR Contact:  
Aude Criqui  
Senior Press Officer  
Eurostar Press Office  
Times House  
Regent Quarter  
Bravingtons Walk  
London  
N1 9AW  
020 7843 5500  
[www.eurostar.com](http://www.eurostar.com)

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