

KLM and Thalys aim to make travel by train more appealing



Boet Kreiken (KLM, left) and Bertrand Gosselin (Thalys, right)

[KLM Royal Dutch Airlines](#) and [Thalys](#) announced they will continue developing their joint AirRail product to make it more appealing to travelers. The aim is to increase the number of passengers with connecting KLM flights at [Amsterdam Airport Schiphol](#), who travel from Brussels and back, by train.

[According to KLM](#), the airline has offered transfer passengers the option of boarding a Thalys high-speed train instead of a flight on the Brussels-Schiphol leg of their journey (or vice versa). Before the COVID-19 pandemic, 20 to 25 percent of these passengers chose this option.

KLM and Thalys want to increase this percentage so KLM is purchasing enough seats from Thalys for travelers so they can book them for travel starting mid-July.

"KLM is committed to reducing the impact of its operations on our living environment. In addition to upgrading our fleet, replacing more jet fuel with sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) and improving our operational efficiency, we aim to reduce emissions by offering the train as an alternative to short-haul flights," said KLM Executive Vice President of Customer Experience Boet Kreiken. "Developing the AirRail product in partnership with Thalys is a step in the right direction, and linking our two networks at Schiphol for quick, efficient and convenient transfers is a positive move."

Transfer passengers have specific demands and the majority continue to opt for air-air transfer. Several criteria vital to the success of any replacement rail service have been defined and are endorsed by both the railway and airline sectors:

- International trains must stop at Schiphol.
- Air and rail arrivals and departures must be coordinated.
- Airline and railway IT systems must be able to communicate with each other.
- Railway baggage handling must also be integrated.
- Passengers arriving at Schiphol by rail must have a separate transit route to the gate.

"Intermodality between air and rail plays an important role in achieving our growth ambitions," said Bertrand Gosselin, CEO Thalys. "The extension of the cooperation with KLM fits perfectly with this ambition. Together we are creating a product that combines rail and intercontinental flights to meet our customers' expectations of an environmentally friendly alternative."