



MINISTÈRE
DE LA TRANSITION
ÉCOLOGIQUE
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Égalité
Fraternité*



GOBIERNO
DE ESPAÑA



RÉGION
Nouvelle-
Aquitaine



GOBIERNO
DE ARAGON



PN n° 60
Ligne de Pau
à Canfranc

Nouvelle-Aquitaine Region

Reopening of the Pau-Canfranc-Zaragoza cross-border rail line

EUROPEAN YEAR OF RAIL 2021

CROSS-BORDER RAIL CONNECTIONS:

fostering cohesion between regions and their citizens

10th & 11th June 2021

Interreg
POCTEFA



Con el Proyecto
Canfrancus

Avec le projet
Canfrancus



Co-financed by the Connecting Europe
Facility of the European Union

François Rebillard

Reopening of the Pau-Canfranc-Zaragoza cross-border rail line

A major missing link between Spain and Europe



- Response to the **need to connect** between the Iberian Peninsula and the rest of Europe, by connecting southwestern France to Spain by the most direct route, through the Pyrenees mountain range (a barrier of 350km) ;
- **Major international axis**, in particular for freight;
- **Strong partnership project** : at national level (French and Spanish Ministries); regional (Government of Aragon, Nouvelle-Aquitaine region), and with the infrastructure managers (ADIF, SNCF Réseau).

Reopening of the Pau-Canfranc-Zaragoza cross-border rail line

History of the railway line

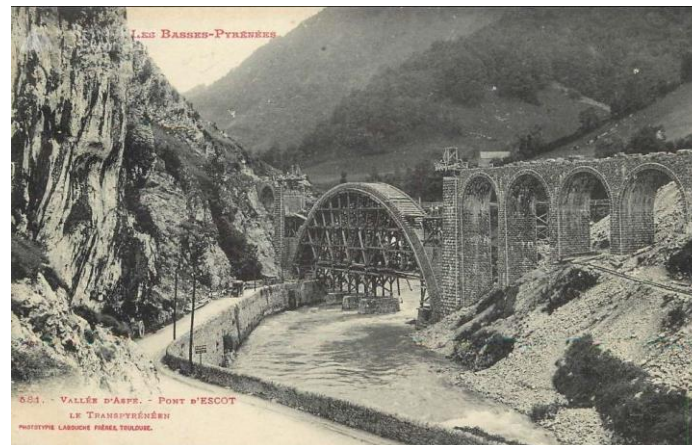
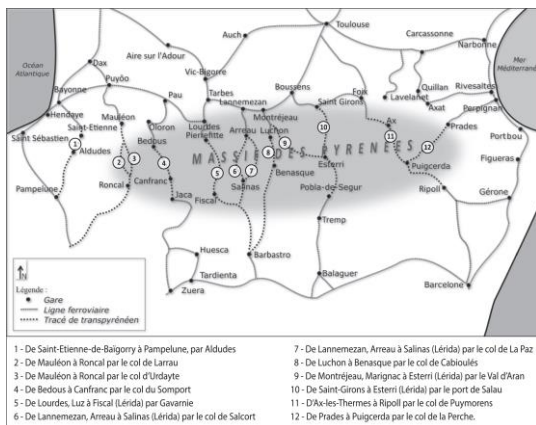
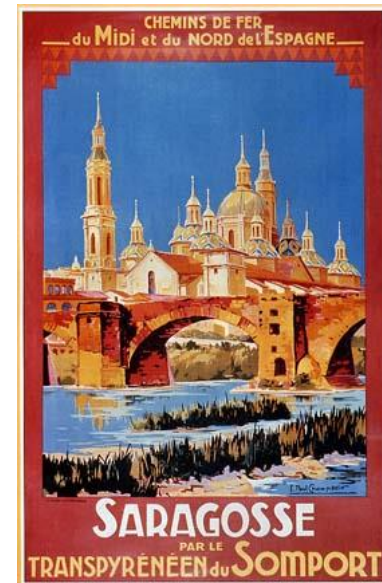
1853: birth of the railway line project between France and Spain, via Aragon

1904: signature of the international agreement for the construction of the "Western Trans-Pyrenees" Oloron-Zuera, by the Somport

1912: commissioning of the Oloron-Bedous section

1914: completion of the Somport tunnel works

1928: Inauguration of Canfranc station



Reopening of the Pau-Canfranc-Zaragoza cross-border rail line

History of the railway line



Official opening of the Somport

1912
Tunnel

1928
Official opening of the Canfranc station

Deraillment and destruction of the
Estanguet railway bridge

1970

Cooperation agreement between
Aquitaine and Aragon

2001

Project enters the State-Region
contract 2000-2006

2000

2011
Reopening of the Pau-Oloron section

2016
Reopening of the Oloron-Bedous
section

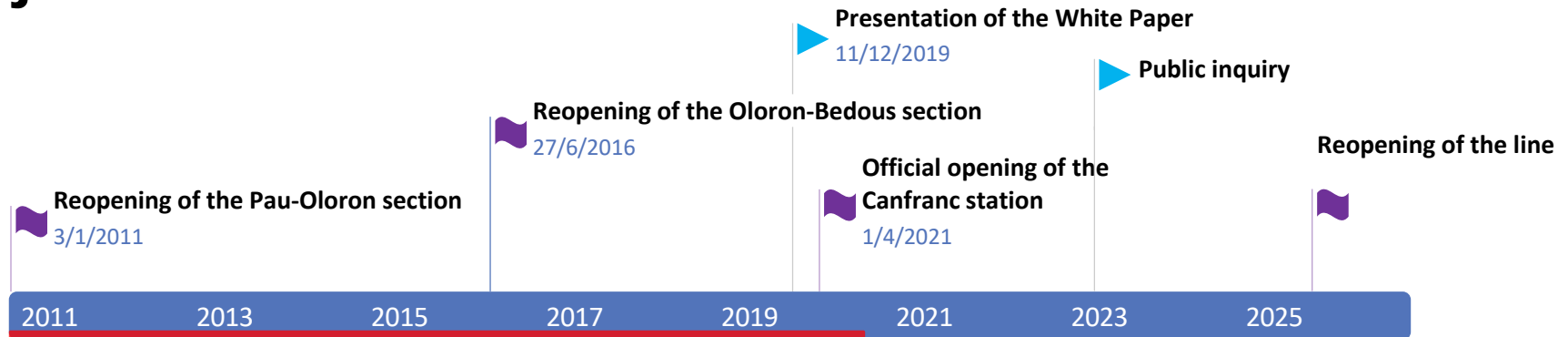
2021
Official opening of the
Canfranc station

1912 1922 1932 1942 1952 1962 1972 1982 1992 2002 2012



Reopening of the Pau-Canfranc-Zaragoza cross-border rail line

Project timeline



Canfraneus I project

Canfraneus II project

CEF project 2016

CEF project 2019

Interreg programme

CANFRANEUS II

556 420 euros

- Tunnel safety studies
- Optimization levers



65% of ERDF co-financing

CEF 2016

14 710 000 euros

- Convergence studies
- Governance structure



50% of CEF (Connecting Europe Facility)
co-financing

CEF 2019

8 600 00 euros

- Tunnel studies
- Works at Canfranc Station



32% of CEF
co-financing

Reopening of the Pau-Canfranc-Zaragoza cross-border rail line

Opportunities of the reopening



A low number of rail crossings through the Pyrenees:

Only 3 connections: 1 on the Atlantic side, 2 on the Mediterranean

The absence of a rail crossing over the 350 km of Pyrenean massif, which forms an insurmountable barrier, unlike the Alps, where there is a crossing every 50 km.



An unbalanced modal share:

Only 3% of modal share for rail freight

15 to 30% for the Alps, up to 70% in Switzerland



A reopening fully in line with the national freight plan:

Project promoting a significant shift of freight traffic to rail

Compatible with the creation of a short-distance, alpine-type rail motorway

Reopening of the Pau-Canfranc-Zaragoza cross-border rail line

5 major interests at the reopening

Economic

- Passenger traffic
- Movement of goods
- Link between the structuring nodes (Barcelona, Oloron, a freight and rail motorway crossroads)
- Restore / consolidate industry and logistic in Oloron, a freight and rail motorway crossroads

Environnemental

- Massive modal shift
- Pollution decrease
- Road safety improvement
- Biodiversity enhancement

Touristic

- Pyrenean valleys
- Hiking and pilgrimage routes
- Winter sport resorts
- Touristic train

Heritage

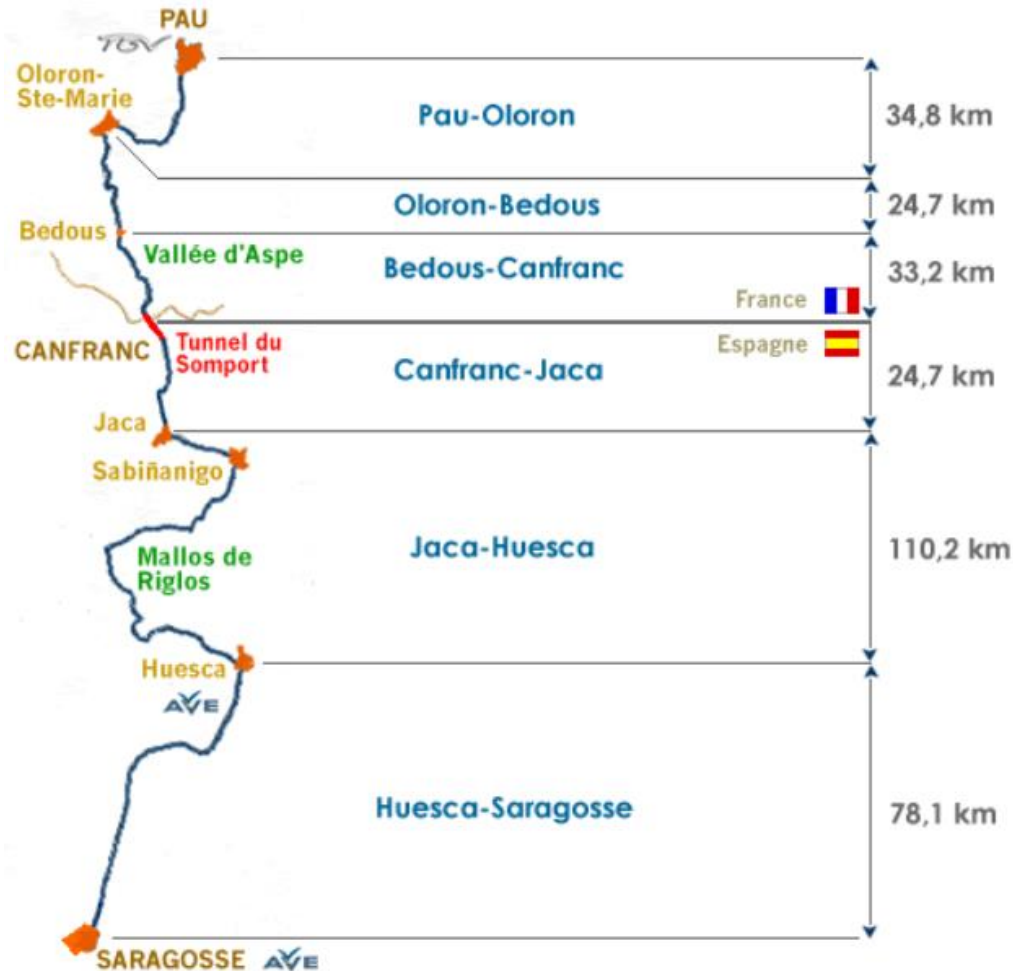
- Mountain line with remarkable landscape
- Canfranc station
- Century-old works of art

Societal

- Central permeability of the Pyrenees
- Social and cultural development
- Land use planning project

Reopening of the Pau-Canfranc-Zaragoza cross-border rail line

33km to reopen between Bedous (France) and Canfranc (Spain), out of 305km



French section: 90km of single track between Pau and the entrance to the Somport tunnel

8km of cross-border tunnel:
1/3 French, 2/3 Spanish;

Canfranc international station in Spain inaugurated on April 15, 2021.

Spanish section: 130km of single track with Iberian gauge between Canfranc and Huesca

Reopening of the Pau-Canfranc-Zaragoza cross-border rail line

A long-term project !

A partnership between France and Spain, a guarantee of cohesion and commitment

End of 1999: intergovernmental seminar between France and Spain. Ministers decide to study the possibilities of reopening the Pau-Canfranc-Zaragoza railway line

A dedicated organization structure, a tool to support the achievement :

- A concerted choice (competences, geographical coverage, timeline)
- A validation by the institutional “quadripartite group” dedicated to the project

Support from the European Commission, key to the success of the project :

- **2011 :** the line is identified on the TEN-T comprehensive network
- **2015 - 2020:** pre-feasibility studies co-financed by Interreg
- **2017-2023:** technical studies of rehabilitating of the cross-border railway Pau-Zaragoza and Somport tunnel, co-financed by the CEF
- **2023-2025:** Public inquiry (France) and detailed design studies
- **2025-2027:** Works

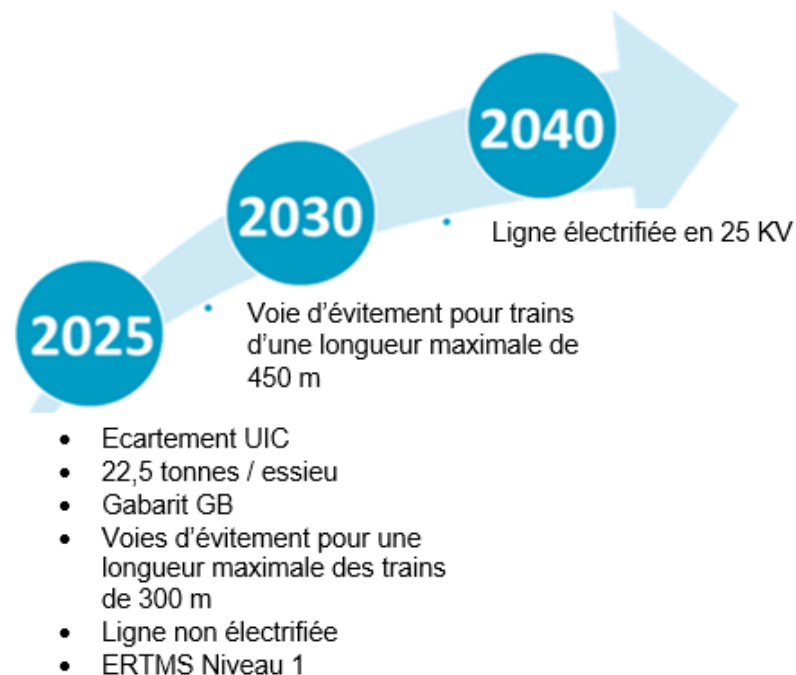
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Technical challenges



2 important technical issues:

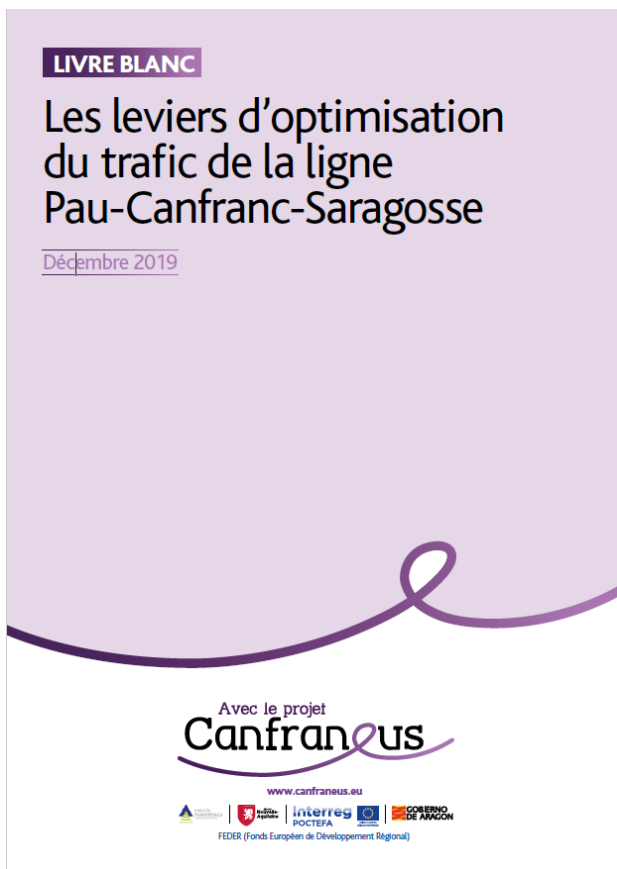
- Interoperability of railway systems and upgrade to European standards
- Environmental transition with the search for carbon-free solution (H2, electrification)



Reopening of the Pau-Canfranc-Zaragoza cross-border rail line

Financial challenges

A white paper has identified levers to maximise the traffic



150 stakeholders

- At all levels
- Institutions, NGOs, goods carriers, tourists

Analysis of previous studies

- INECO
- Systra
- Rail Concept

30 interviews

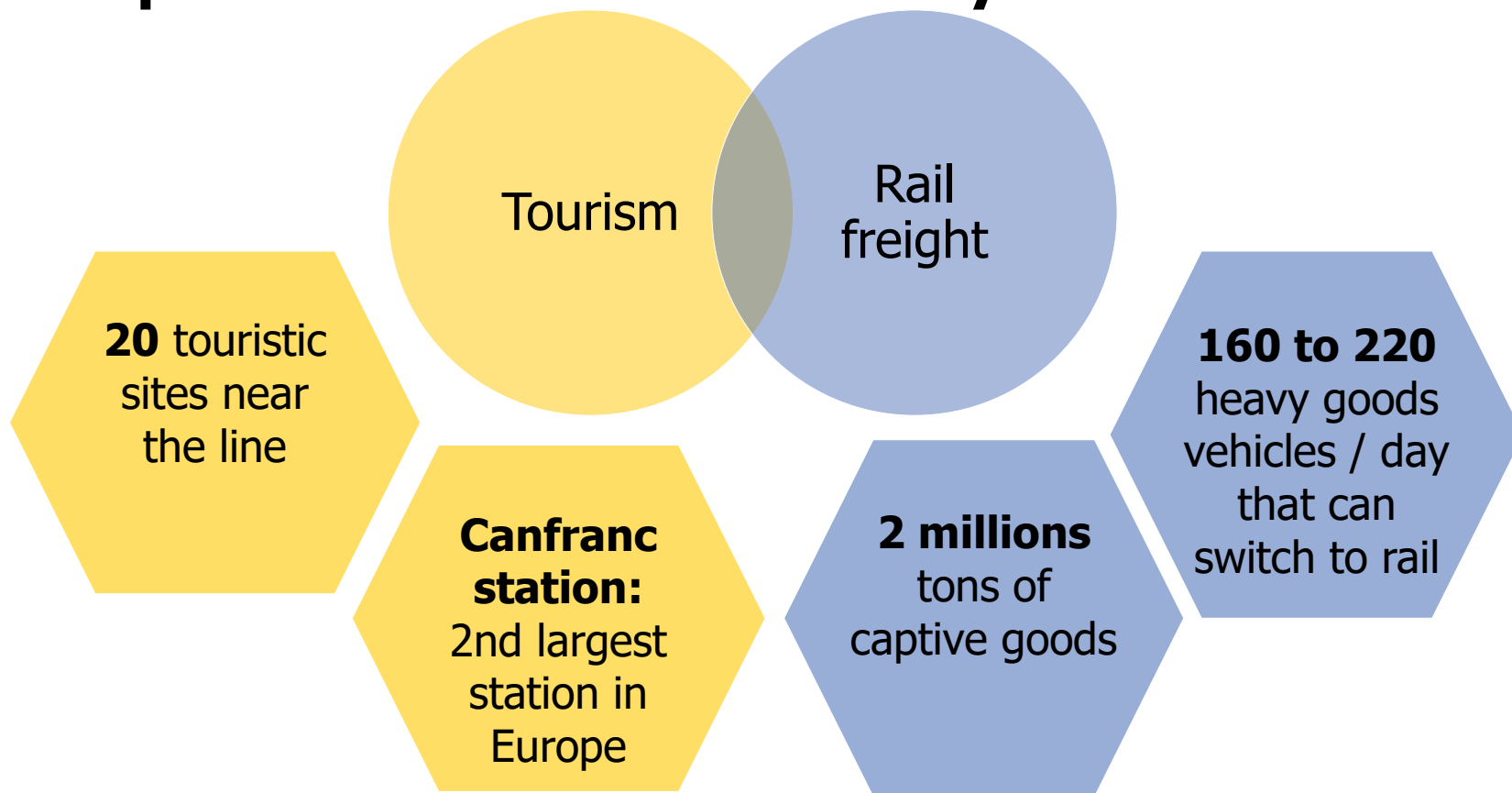
- Pyrenees National Office
- Somport station
- Tourist offices

2 study trips

- Bernina Express
- Treinino dei Castelli

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Development levers for the territory *



*initial data to be consolidated in subsequent studies

Reopening of the Pau-Canfranc-Zaragoza cross-border rail line

Focus on tourism development

Benchmarking carried out

- Success stories in France: Ligne des hirondelles (St-Claude - Dole), Train des Neiges / des Merveilles (Nice - Tende)
- Exemplary European cases: Bernina Express (Switzerland), Train des châteaux (Italy)

Study trips

- Bernina Express (Switzerland): fully integrated touristic offer, systemic approach
- Castle train (Italy): complete touristic offer, 80% coverage rate

Development with local partners

- Local partners deeply involved in the development of the offer (co-construction),
- Various stakeholders: NGOs, tourist offices, local businesses, etc.



Reopening of the Pau-Canfranc-Zaragoza cross-border rail line

Consultation and cooperation are key to turn a rail infrastructure project into a real regional project



Canfraneus.eu platform



Download the White Paper



To know more :

<https://www.canfraneus.eu/>



Thank you for your attention !