

The number of high-speed passengers grew by 76% and reached 23.7 million in 2022

- The entry of Ouigo and Iryo doubled the number of passengers on the Madrid-Valencia corridor.
- Four out of five users of the Madrid-Barcelona route chose the train over the plane.
- Subsidies to lines with public service obligations, such as Cercanías (commuter trains), boosted train use.

Madrid, 31 July 2023.- The entry of new operators in the railway sector boosted the modal share of rail over aviation in 2022: 78.3% of passengers on the Madrid-Barcelona route preferred to travel by train; of these, 26.4% travelled with Ouigo. In total, 23.7 million passengers used high speed in 2022, 76% more than during the previous year, according to the 2022 Annual report of the railway sector ([INF/DTSP/112/23](#)).

Liberalisation of passenger transport

The number of users on the Madrid-Valencia route doubled (+110%, reaching 2.9 million), and increased significantly on the Madrid-Barcelona route (+80%, reaching 10.2 million) and on the rest of the corridors (60%).

Passenger rail transport in Spain was opened to competition in December 2020, although it was not until May 2021 and November 2022 that Ouigo and Iryo, respectively, started operating on the Madrid-Barcelona high-speed line. In October and December 2022, both companies entered the Levante corridor (Valencia and Alicante) to compete with Renfe's AVE and Avlo trains.

Passenger transport

Rail transport recorded 440 million passengers, 36% more than in 2021, but 14% less than in 2019. The vast majority of these passengers (85%) used the Cercanías (commuter train) service.

The subsidies established by [Royal Decree-Law 14/202](#) for lines with public service obligations boosted passenger numbers. Cercanías (totally free of charge), recorded 31% more passengers than in 2021. Medium-distance trains (also free of charge) exceeded pre-pandemic levels, with almost 26 million passengers, 68% more than in 2021.

High-speed medium-distance trains (with a 50% discount for recurrent users) transported 8.5 million passengers, 90% more than in 2021 and only 3.5% less than in 2019. Long-distance trains recorded 9.5 million passengers, 45% more than in the previous year.

Freight transport

Freight transport, which in 2021 had already recovered pre-pandemic levels, remained stable with 10,527 million net t.km transported (1% more than in 2021) and 24 million net tonnes transported (6% less than in 2021). The market share of Renfe Mercancías (Renfe's freight operator) followed the trend of recent years and fell to 52.8%.

Infrastructure usage costs

Infrastructure access fees and railway charges reached 1,166.43 million euros in 2022, 21 % more than in the previous year. Traction energy costs grew to €376 million (90.5 % more than in 2021 and 126.9 % more than in 2019), driven by higher energy prices.

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- [Blog](#) (30/11/2022): High-speed rail and railway liberalisation reduce traffic in the Madrid-Barcelona air shuttle
- [Video](#) (29/05/2023): CNMC Conference | Assessment of the liberalisation of the passenger rail sector