



From the Mountains to the Thames: how the Swiss want to travel to the UK

Polling results in Switzerland – YouGov Plc



25 October 2026

New rail services can give Switzerland its first high-speed direct trains to the UK

- **Currently, no direct train links Switzerland and the UK.** A train journey to London takes eight to nine hours from Zurich and seven to eight hours from Geneva. Due to security checks at Gare du Nord, catching the Eurostar on time can be challenging.
- **On average 50 flights a day link Switzerland and London:** around 23 from Geneva, 21 from Zurich and six from Basel.
- **Eurostar is planning to launch new direct trains to connect Switzerland and the UK.** These new direct services can link the two countries within five to six hours.
- **Will these connections be popular in Switzerland?** YouGov Plc conducted a survey for T&E, to gauge Swiss opinion on these new direct connections.

Polling in Switzerland

This survey has been conducted using an online interview administered to members of the YouGov Plc CH panel of individuals who have agreed to take part in surveys. An email was sent to panellists selected at random from the base sample according to the sample definition, inviting them to take part in the survey and providing a link to the survey. The responding sample is weighted to the profile of the sample definition to provide a representative reporting sample. The profile is normally derived from census data or, if not available from the census, from industry accepted data.

YouGov plc make every effort to provide representative information. All results are based on a sample and are therefore subject to statistical errors normally associated with sample-based information. Total sample size was 1,048 adults. Fieldwork was undertaken between 11th - 24th September 2026. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all adults in Switzerland (aged 18+).

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc.

Key findings from the survey

Nearly half

Of Swiss people use rail for other international destinations at least once a year. When asked about journey duration, six in ten rail users said they would use rail for journeys of up to six hours

58%

Respondents support developing direct rail connections to the UK. More than half respondents think developing international rail is the right priority

61%

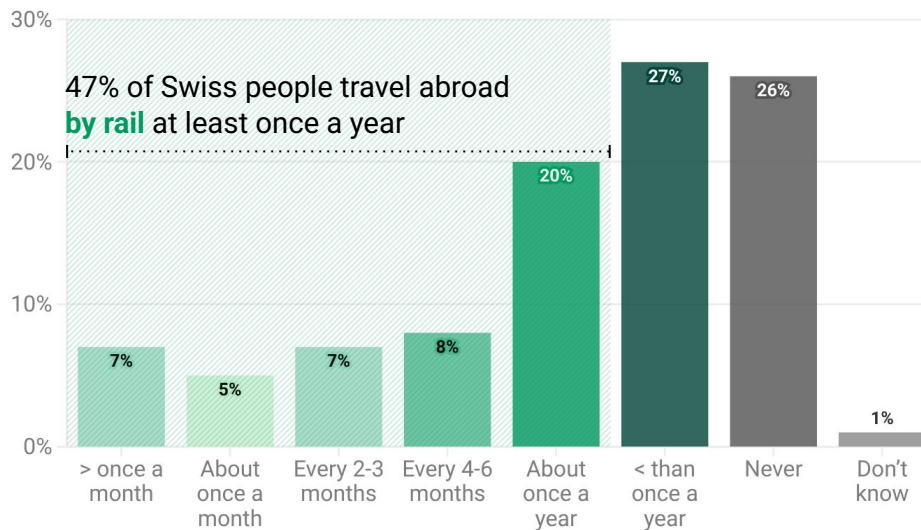
Of people that would fly to London would chose rail instead if prices were lower. Direct trains and shorter journeys would also make them prefer rail

Answers from all Swiss respondents



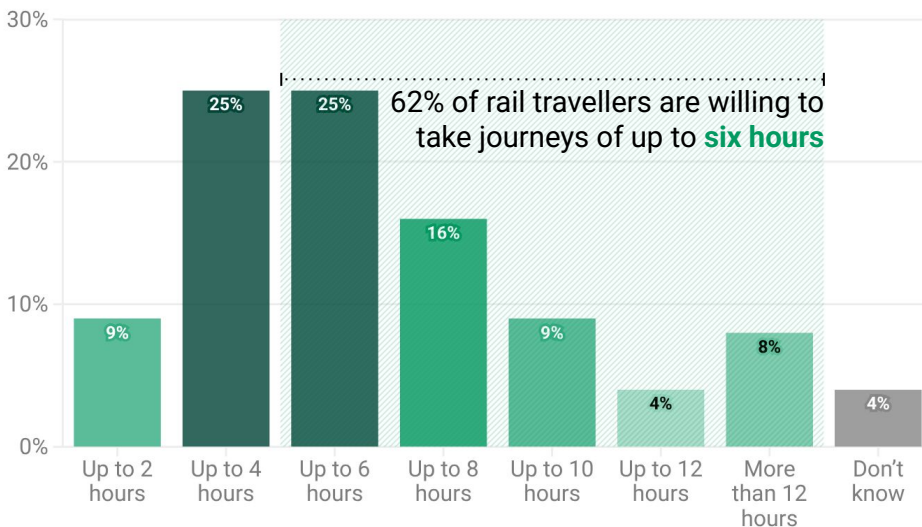
Close to half Swiss people take the train to travel abroad at least once a year. Six in ten rail travellers would choose the train for journeys of up to six hours

In a typical year, how often, if at all, do you travel from Switzerland to other European countries by rail?



Source: T&E, YouGov Plc • Sample size : 1048 respondents in Switzerland

When travelling from Switzerland to another European country by rail, what is the longest train journey you would generally be willing to make?

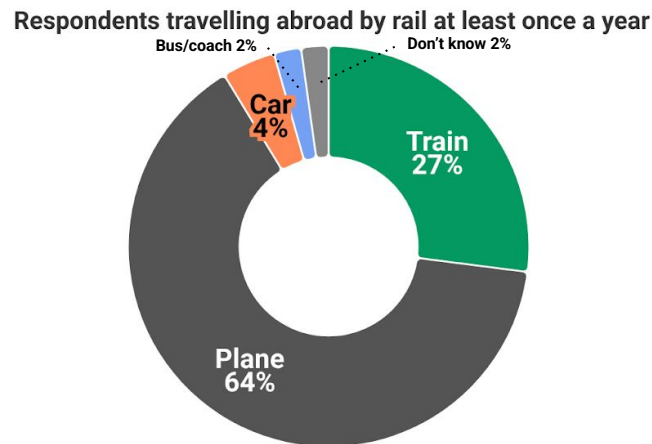
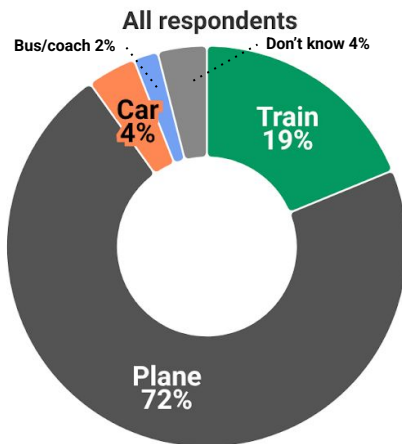


Source: T&E, YouGov Plc • Sample size : 490 Swiss respondents travelling abroad by rail at least once a year

Despite this enthusiasm for rail travel, seven in ten Swiss people travelling to the UK would currently fly

Even frequent rail travellers would currently fly to London

If you had to travel from Switzerland to London within the next few days or weeks, which of the following would be your preferred mode of transport?

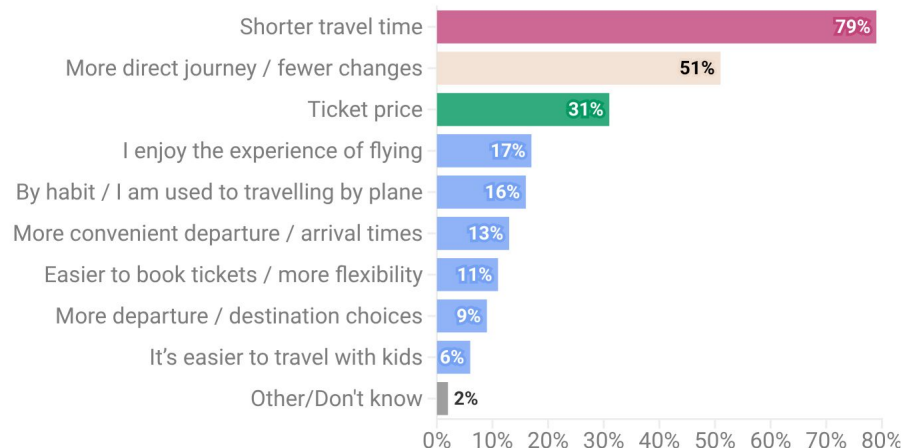


Source: T&E, YouGov Plc • Sample size : 1048 respondents in Switzerland and 490 respondents travelling at least once a year by rail

Swiss travellers choose to fly because it is faster, more direct and cheaper. Fixing this can make them switch to rail more often

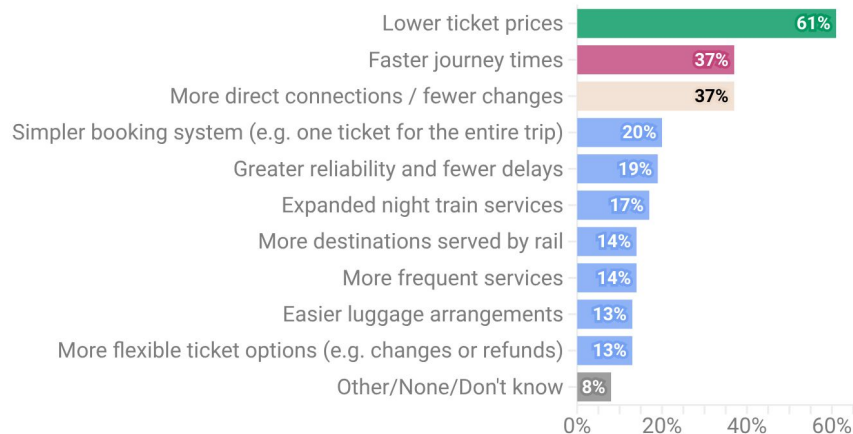
Answers from people who would currently chose plane to travel to the UK:

*Which of the following reasons, if any, explain why you would prefer to travel to London by **plane**? Please select all that apply.*



Source: T&E, YouGov Plc • Sample size : 762 respondents in Switzerland who chose plane over rail to travel to London. Multiple-choice question

Which of the following changes, if any, would make you more likely to choose rail for international journeys?

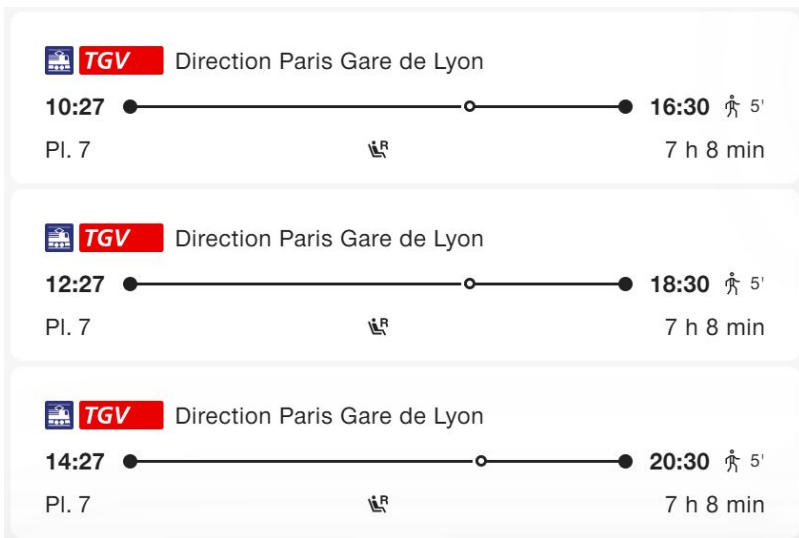


Source: T&E, YouGov Plc • Sample size : 762 respondents in Switzerland who chose plane over rail to travel to London. Respondents could select up to three answers.

Fast and direct rail connections between Switzerland and the UK could encourage people to travel less by plane

Travelling between Switzerland and UK requires long and indirect journeys

Genève → London St. Pancras Eurostar



Eurostar has announced **new direct services connecting London to Switzerland**. These trains can link the two countries in five to six hours, offering **a fast, direct and environmentally friendly way to travel**.

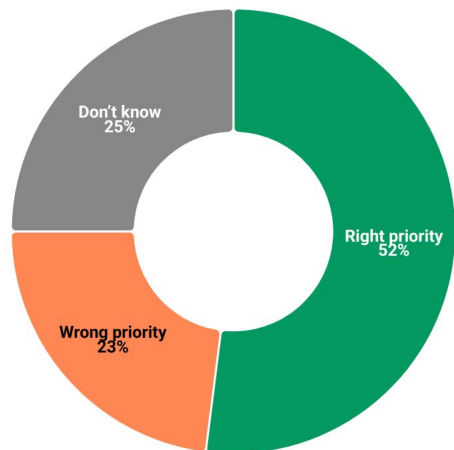
10 June 2025

Eurostar to offer direct services to Frankfurt and Geneva with new fleet

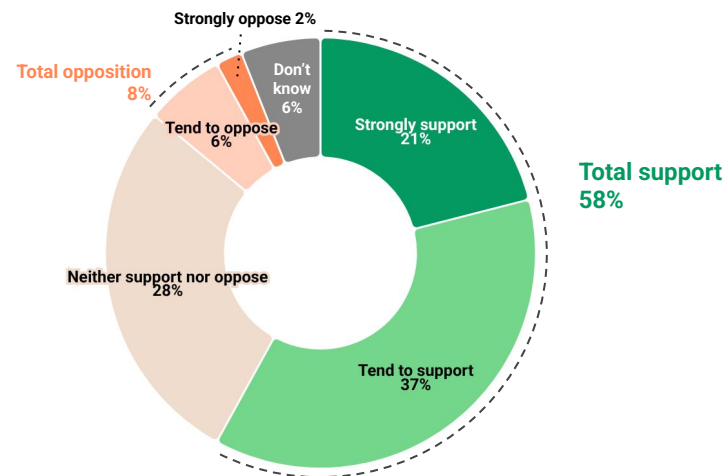
Eurostar has announced positive year-end results and growth for the third year running, alongside brand-new destinations the business intends to serve with its new trains.

Most Swiss people think developing international rail is the right priority, and nearly six in ten respondents support direct trains to the UK

Do you think developing more international rail connections between Switzerland and UK and Europe is the right or wrong priority for the Swiss government at the current time?



To what extent would you support or oppose introducing direct rail connections between Switzerland and the UK?



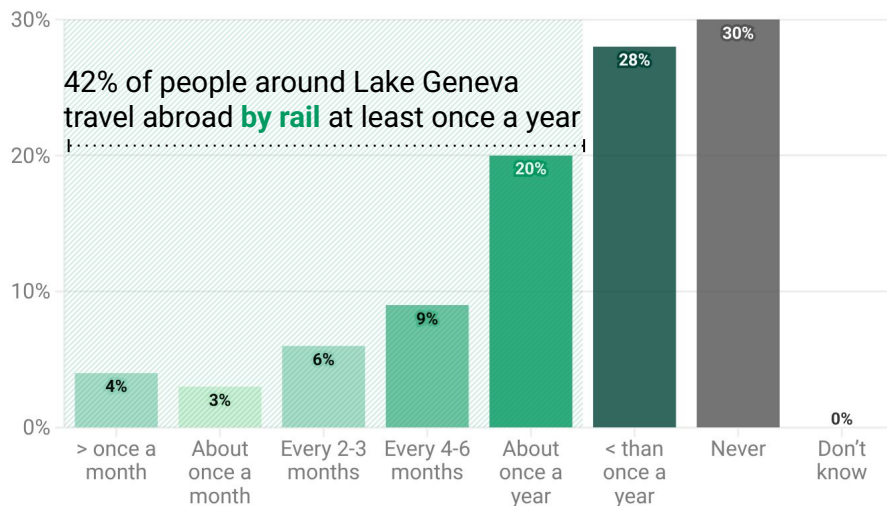
Source: T&E, YouGov Plc • Sample size : 1048 respondents in Switzerland

Answers from the Lake Geneva region



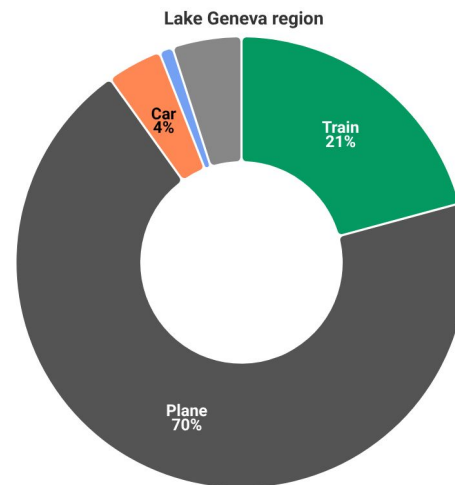
Four in ten people around Lake Geneva take the train abroad, but seven in ten would fly to the UK

In a typical year, how often, if at all, do you travel from Switzerland to other European countries by rail?



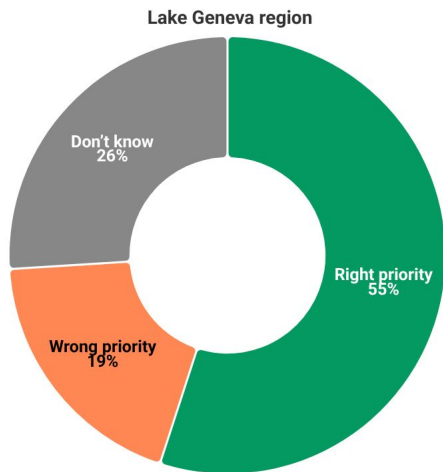
Source: T&E, YouGov Plc • Sample size : 243 respondents in Lake Geneva region

If you had to travel from Switzerland to London within the next few days or weeks, which of the following would be your preferred mode of transport?

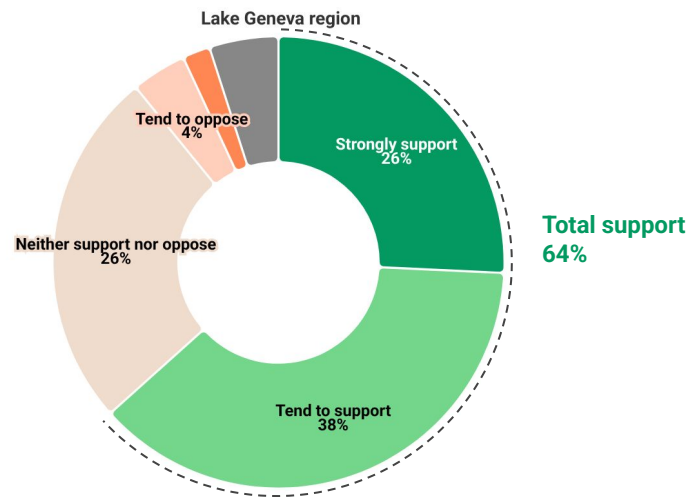


Most people around Lake Geneva believe international rail is the right priority, with six in ten supporting direct trains between Switzerland and the UK

Do you think developing more international rail connections between Switzerland and UK and Europe is the right or wrong priority for the Swiss government at the current time?



To what extent would you support or oppose introducing direct rail connections between Switzerland and the UK?

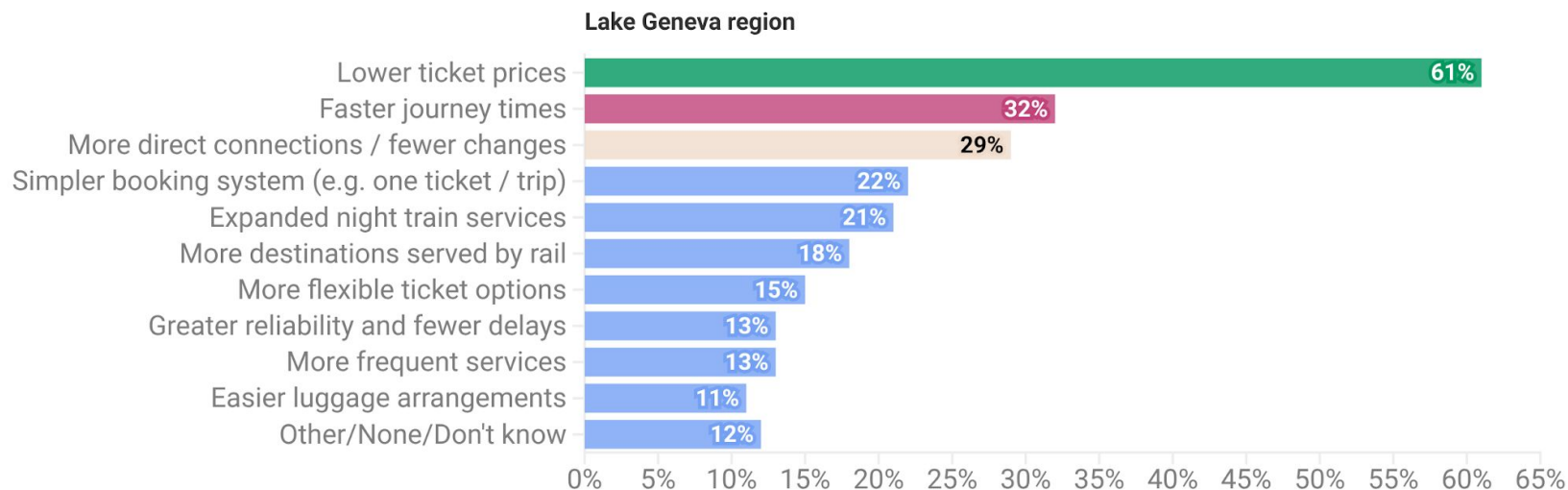


Source: T&E, YouGov Plc • Sample size : 243 respondents in Lake Geneva region

Most people from the Lake Geneva region think ticket prices are the main barrier to international travel

Improving travel conditions such as developing more direct and faster connections would also promote rail usage

Which of the following changes, if any, would make you more likely to choose rail for international journeys?



Source: T&E, YouGov Plc • Sample size : All respondents in Lake Geneva region (243 respondents)

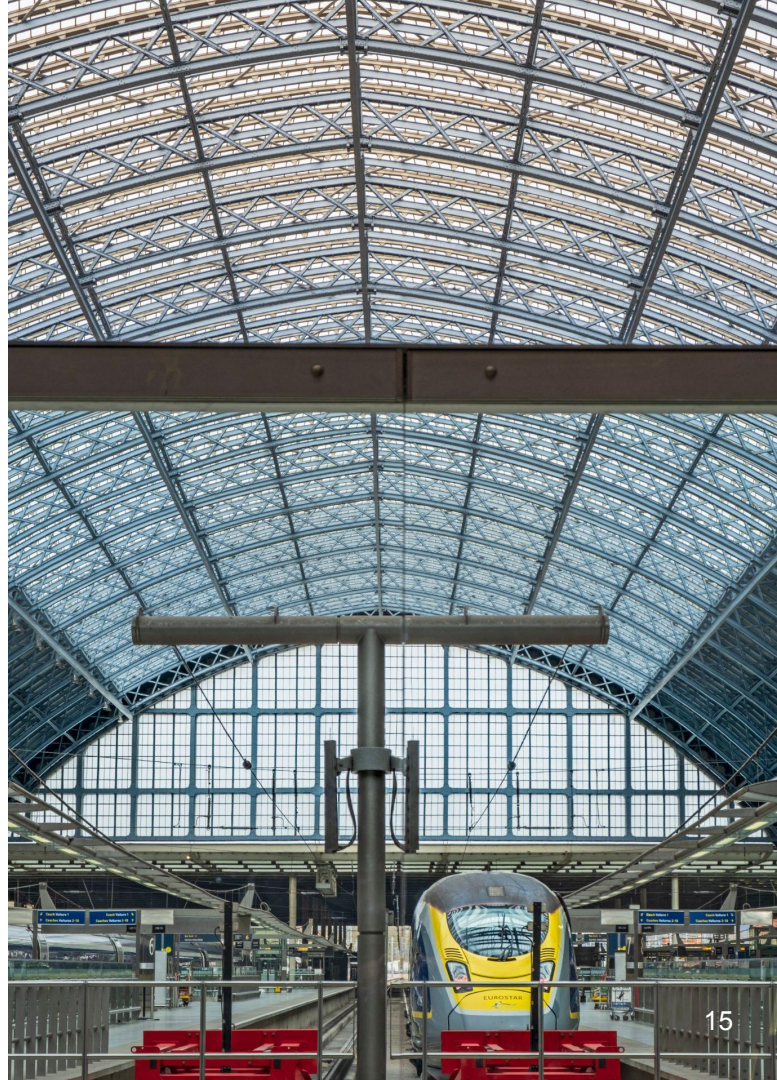
Conclusions

The Swiss want to travel by train, but are being held back because no fast, direct rail connection exists today. Our survey shows a clear path to change this.

Our results show that nearly half of Swiss people take an international train at least once a year, and six in ten rail travellers would take the train for journeys of up to six hours. Yet the vast majority would fly to the UK because the plane is faster and more direct.

When asked why they would fly to the UK, the Swiss answer that this is because the plane is faster and more direct. They also highlight these two points as the fixes they are waiting for to switch to rail.

Eurostar's upcoming direct services to Switzerland can deliver exactly that. Public support is strong: most Swiss see international rail as the right priority and support the new services.



Priority next steps to develop international rail between Switzerland and the UK

01

Federal, Regional authorities and rail operators (CFF/SBB, Eurostar, SNCF) shall make these services a priority.

These direct trains to the UK can shift many passengers from air to rail, cutting significantly greenhouse gas emissions.

02

The Swiss federal government shall secure the necessary investments to adapt the train stations to cross-Channel trains.

We call on the Swiss government to earmark investments in train stations to host direct London–Geneva and London–Basel/Zurich services.

03

The authorities should work with transport operators (CFF/SBB, Eurostar, SNCF) to ensure that train fares will be attractive and affordable.

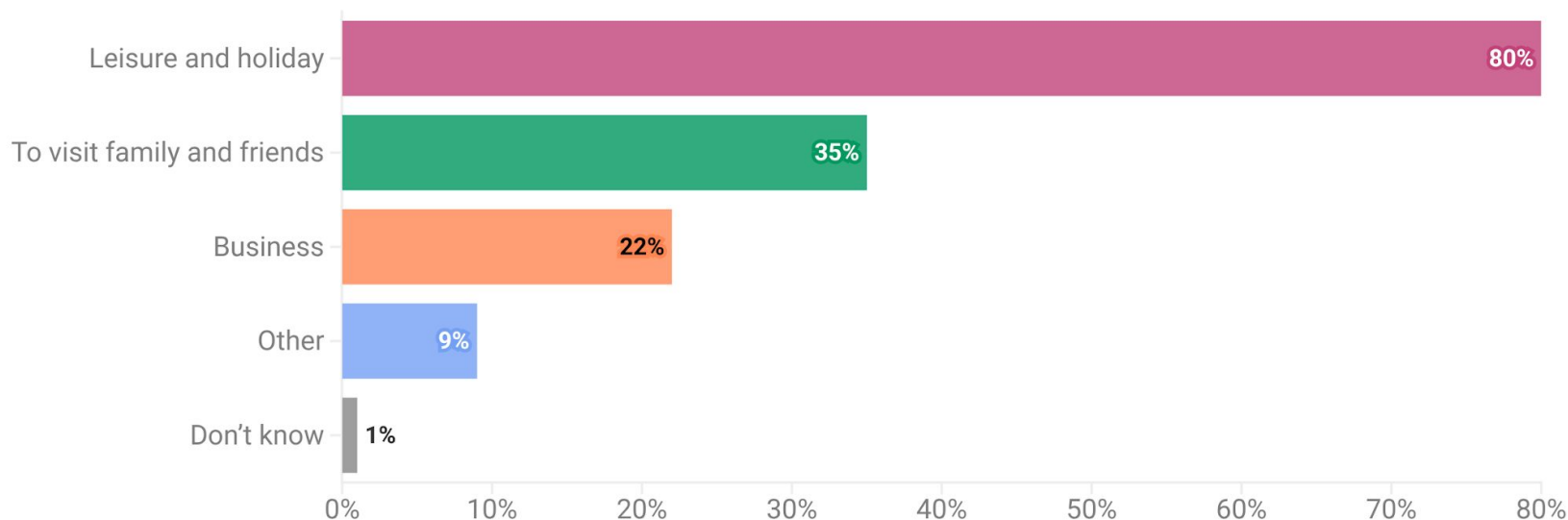
One of the key factors highlighted by the survey as to why passengers prefer the train to the aeroplane is the price of train tickets. This is why a proactive policy in this area is needed to identify ways of ensuring that ticket prices are attractive.

Supplementary results



Holidays and leisure are the main reason Swiss rail travellers visit other European countries

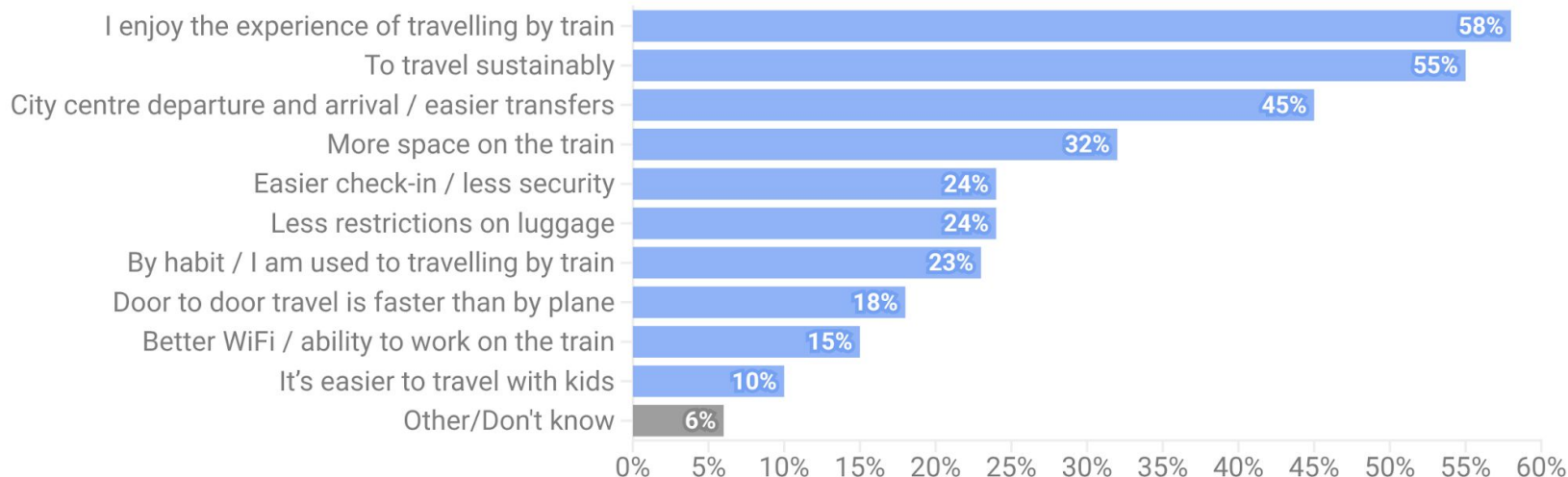
For which of the following purposes do you travel from Switzerland to other European countries by rail?



Source: T&E, YouGov Plc • Sample size : 490 respondents in Switzerland who travel abroad by rail at least once a year. Multiple-choice question

Swiss travellers choose the train for the experience, lower environmental impact and city-centre stations

*Which of the following reasons, if any, explain why you would prefer to travel to London by **train**? Please select all that apply.*



Source: T&E, YouGov Plc • Sample size : 189 respondents in Switzerland who chose rail over plane to travel to London. Multiple-choice question

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