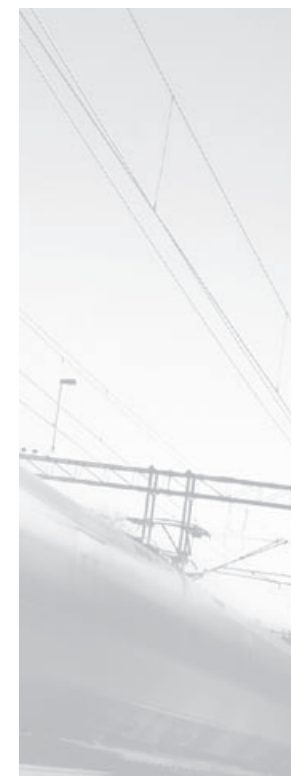
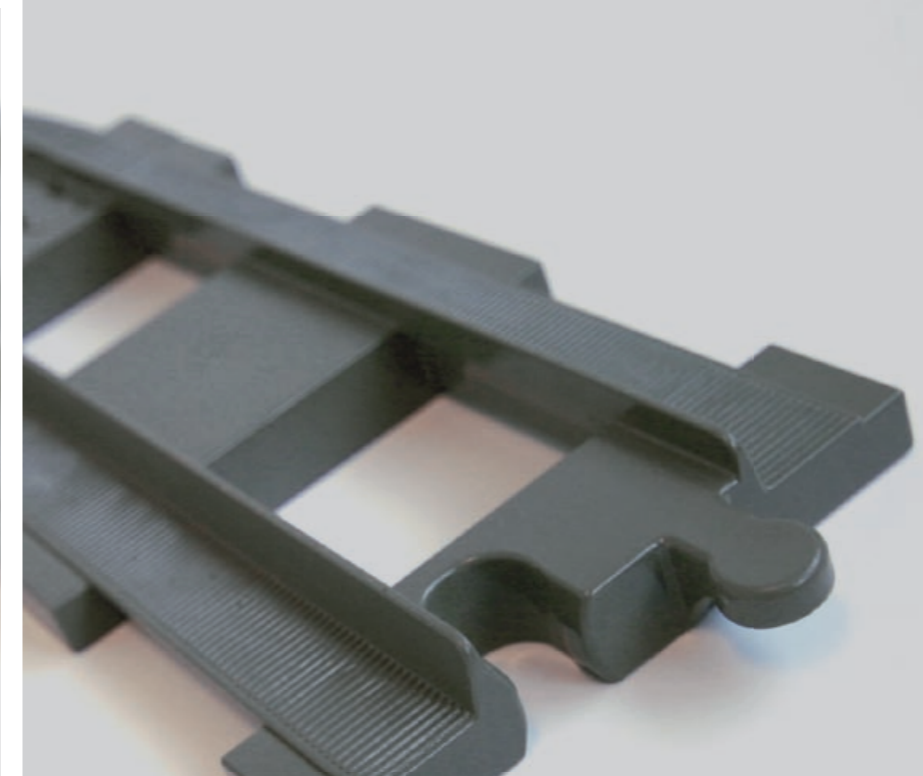




Connecting knowledge by rail

Why international, interoperable and consumer-friendly rail services are so important for knowledge regions.

Regions of Connected Knowledge (RoCK)



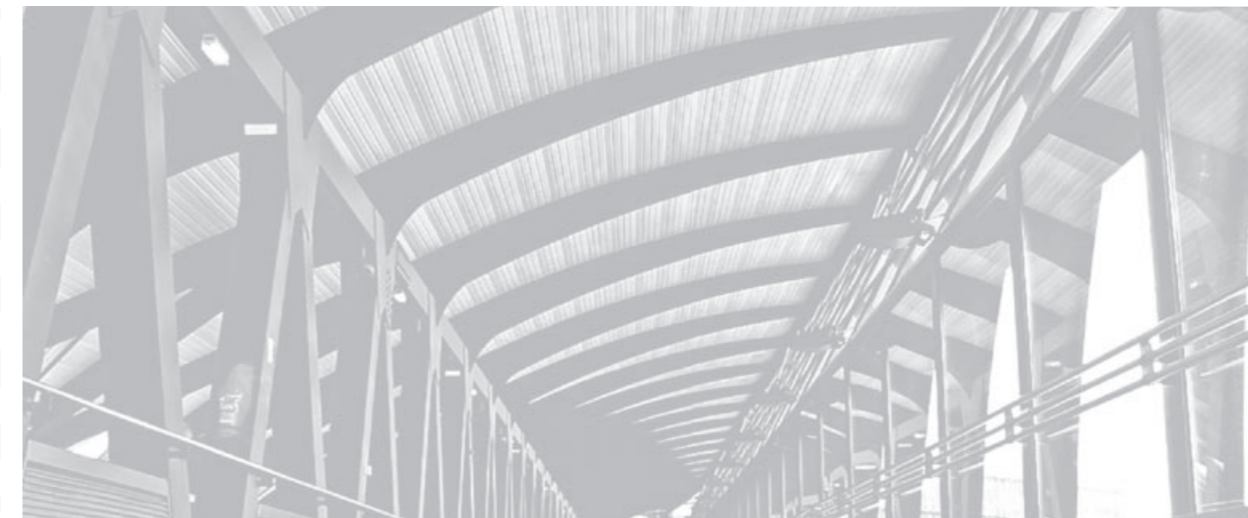
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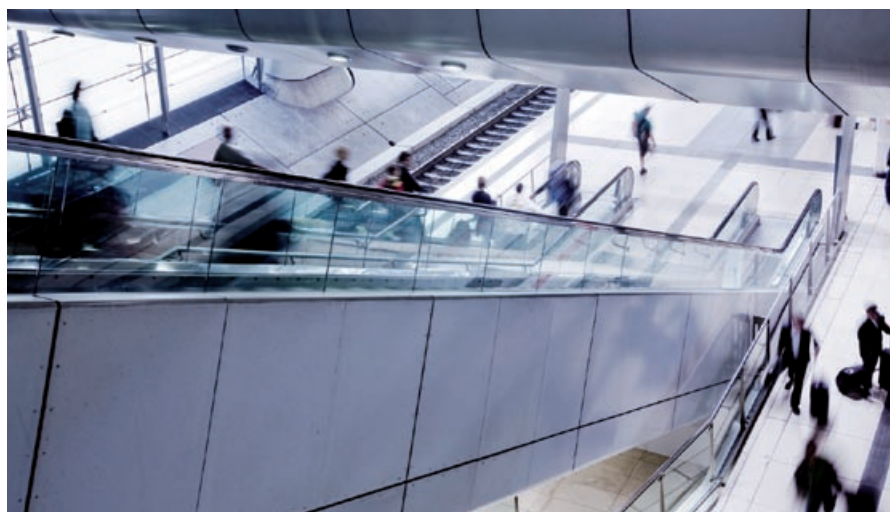
"Smooth circulation of knowledge workers
is crucial for knowledge regions"



RoCK is a major European project which has secured € 5.9 million of European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) under the EU INTERREG IVB North West Europe programme. The lead partner City of Eindhoven, together with 10 partners from the Netherlands, France, Belgium, Germany and the UK, is encouraging cooperation between innovative knowledge regions. In addition to the partners, a large number of strategically important organisations are associated with the project and have signed a letter of support. Strategic partners include local and regional governments, chambers of commerce, development organisations, regional cooperatives and transport bodies/ organisations.

Together they have the critical mass to build on North West Europe's economic strength.





PARTNER INFORMATION

Direct project partners are:

- City of Eindhoven, Lead Partner (NL)
- Parkstad Limburg (NL)
- City of Maastricht (NL)
- City of Venlo (NL)
- City of Aachen (DE)
- Aachener Verkehrsverbund (DE)
- City of Mönchengladbach (DE)
- Vlaamse Vervoermaatschappij De Lijn (BE)
- Région Nord-Pas-de-Calais (FR)
- Reading Borough Council (GB)

“Any train running in more than one European country will have to deal with different sets of national regulations.”



RoCK focuses on getting the most out of the existing infrastructure and developing smart rail services to improve the transport networks between centres of knowledge regardless of national borders. National borders are still a bottleneck for the free flow of people and ideas, which is an essential prerequisite for a single European knowledge economy. Transnational public transport connections are more expensive to build, carry fewer passengers and tickets are more expensive than on national networks. Today, only high-speed rail links can compete with travel by air and road.

Smooth circulation of knowledge workers is crucial for knowledge regions, and face-to-face contact is still a vital business requirement. A strong national and international transport infrastructure is a prerequisite for business. As the RoCK partners come from different knowledge regions, cooperation is essential for each of those areas. Together, they can form enough critical mass to improve transportation at a high level of scale, both cross-border and transnational. In general, RoCK seeks to make smart small-scale investments with a large impact on connectivity. The project addresses technical barriers to quality improvement, but also barriers relating to institutional contexts.

ROCK REMOVES OPERATIONAL BARRIERS

This addresses issues such as differences in rolling stock and national safety regulations, resulting in the need for time-consuming changes at the border, infrequent schedules and speed limitations. Together, the RoCK partners can implement mobility measures that have a high impact at a relatively small budget.

LOBBYING

RoCK builds political support at EU level by organising European conferences and showcasing the project at international events, influencing policymakers to simplify rail regulations. All trains running in more than one European country have to deal with different sets of national regulations, such as safety certifications for rolling stock, cross-border taxes etc. The trains have to be recognised by different national organisations such as network managers, and tickets will be distributed through different channels. These are competitive disadvantages that negatively impact the business case and quality of international rail links.

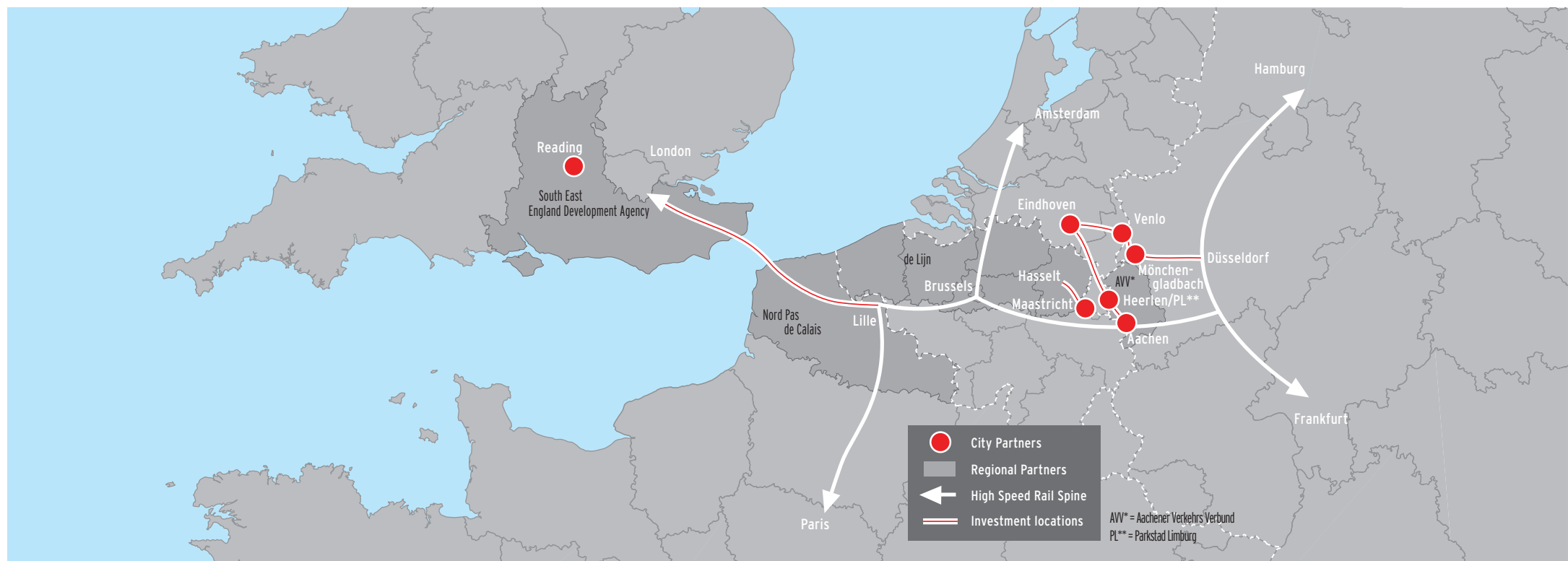
INFRASTRUCTURE ACTIONS

- Eindhoven - Venlo - Mönchengladbach - Düsseldorf
- Eindhoven - Heerlen - Aachen

The existing operational and technical barriers need to be removed to establish efficient and attractive Intercity connections feeding into the German HST network via Aachen and Düsseldorf.

- Maastricht - Hasselt (Light Rail)

This is a new passenger route using part of an old freight line to connect the two university cities. The signalling and safety systems need to be updated to allow Belgian light rail rolling stock to operate on Dutch tracks.



PUBLICITY AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

RoCK exchanges knowledge within the partnership and beyond through international working groups, sponsoring conferences and publications, and by actively expanding and managing its international network.

IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY AND STIMULATING USE

Activities include a feasibility study for an innovative 'people mover' between Aachen HST station and Aachen University, international integration of ticketing systems, marketing of cross-border rail links, mobile passenger travel information on the PDA using WiMaX and GPS, and the assessment of the specific needs and demands of the target audience, which consists largely of knowledge workers.

- Transmanche Metro

This new inter-regional rail service uses existing high-speed rail infrastructure to connect cities and regions in Kent (UK) and Nord-Pas-de-Calais (France) not served by Eurostar with each other and with the existing transnational point-to-point services to London, Paris and Brussels.