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Business case for Transmanche Metro

using spare capacity on the Channel Tunnel
Rail Link

RoCK (Regions of Connected Knowledge) is a major new European project which has secured € 5.9 million of European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) under the EU INTERREG IVB North West Europe programme. Innovation, future markets and economic growth need sustainable, highly connected transport networks regardless of national borders.

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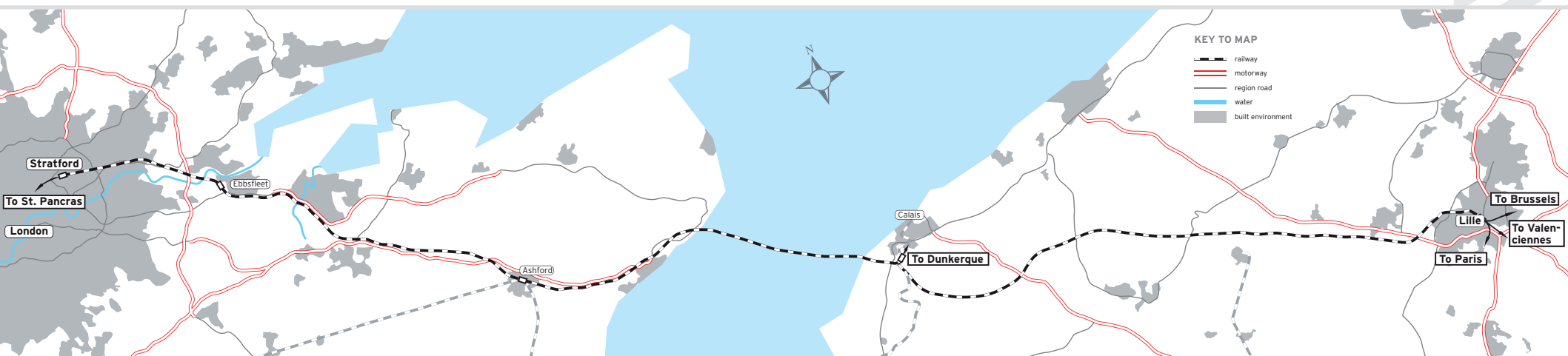
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RoCK looks at ways to improve railway links between international knowledge regions and make them more user-friendly, including cross-border and international routes. It focuses on getting the most out of the existing infrastructure and developing smart solutions to improve the current transport networks.

Through RoCK, Transmanche Metro looks at the feasibility of using existing high-speed rail infrastructure to complement Eurostar services and connect East London, North Kent, Ashford, Hastings, Calais and the Cote d'Opale, West Flanders and Lille Metropole with each other and with the existing transnational point-to-point services to London, Paris and Brussels. The business case will examine in detail the viability of interregional rail services between South East England and Northern France.

These regions are currently by-passed, have no interregional train links and very limited access to international HST services. Transmanche Metro is designed to fill this gap, thereby improving socio-economic connections. This investment is essentially transnational: it will improve connections between South East England and mainland Europe. Transmanche Metro addresses the single biggest bottleneck in Europe, and is likely to be successful in increasing its effective capacity. The European Commission has given its full support to this initiative!

Making better use of the existing transnational railway infrastructure is core to the RoCK project. Transmanche Metro aims to make better use of the HST Channel link by using its spare capacity. This investment is not an end in itself, but a pilot to test and prove the economic, legislative and technical feasibility of this regional cross-channel passenger rail service. The pilot should result in a sustainable transport service for secondary cities on the HST line, bringing far-reaching changes to the accessibility and economies of the cities and regions served. It will also provide more opportunities for businesses to compete.

RoCK wants to achieve its overall aim by a number of means: removing operational barriers, developing innovative arrangements and improved marketing. Transmanche Metro will address operational challenges (e.g. security, customs, modifying frontier controls for cross-border commuters) with special attention for European deregulation of the passenger rail market in 2010 and its consequences in different national contexts.

Responsible Partner:
Nord-Pas-de-Calais

