

What's new this month

Since publication of our December edition and the start of the new timetable period, many of our tables have been rechecked and any necessary updates made. In certain countries, particularly Italy and Sweden, only partial information was available in time to be included last month, but most tables have now been updated with the outstanding timings.

ROUTE OF THE MONTH

In our regular *Route of the Month* feature, Nicky Gardner and Susanne Kries, editors of *hidden europe* magazine, review the reinstated direct service between Russia and Bulgaria. Previously this train ran via Ukraine but was withdrawn due to the political situation in the region. The new train now runs via Belarus and Poland and serves seven European capital cities en route which we believe is a record for an individual train. Our brief description of a typical journey on this new service will be found on page 35 and timings are shown in Table 95.

TIP OF THE MONTH

On page 36 our *Tip of the Month* offers some advice on the best places to book train tickets for European rail journeys.

CAR TRAINS

For the first time we now show Russian car-carrying trains in Tables 1 and 2.

INTERNATIONAL

An item not mentioned last month was the introduction of a daily through sleeper service between Praha and Kyiv (train 443KJ/143SH), timings for which will be found in Table 96. The through sleeping cars from and to Bratislava, which combine with the Praha cars between Košice and Kyiv, have been diverted to run via Zvolen instead of Žilina and now run just five days a week. Please note that the Budapest to Kyiv train 34KJ combines with the Praha/Bratislava service between Chop and Kyiv, but in the reverse direction train 81DJ from Kyiv to Budapest runs in a separate path. The Budapest – Kyiv trains have now been incorporated into Table 96, having previously been shown in a separate Table 97.

Table 97 has been reassigned to show a new direct sleeper service that has been introduced between Warszawa and Kyiv.

FRANCE

The most significant rail event in France in 2016 was originally planned to take place on April 3 with the opening of the TGV Est high-speed line extension to Strasbourg. However, following the tragic accident on November 14 when a test train derailed at high speed, the opening is expected to be delayed. As yet, no revised opening date has been given although sometime in July has been reported as a possibility. Hopefully the situation will become clearer over the next few weeks but, for the time being, most of our French tables remain valid until April 2.

BELGIUM

Services through the Schuman-Josaphat tunnel in Brussels are now expected to start on February 8. This will enable a half-hourly service on Mondays to Fridays from Brussels Airport to the European quarter, served principally by Brussels Luxembourg station (Table 401). Trains will continue from there to Namur and Dinant hourly (Table 440), with the remaining hourly trains forming a slow service to Charleroi, not shown in our tables.

NETHERLANDS

The cross-border regional service between Groningen and Leer has been disrupted due to a severely damaged bridge near Weener, across the border in Germany. Reports suggest that it may take months, or even years, to rebuild the structure. A replacement bus service is now in operation between Winschoten or Zuidbroek and Leer and Table 495 has been updated with the revised schedules. A fast bus service running every two hours between Groningen and Leer is also provided, although this is currently advertised as only running until January 10.

ITALY

Additional information has been received from Trenitalia, and further updates have been made to our tables. However, local services on some routes remain subject to alteration.

New schedules valid until February 29 have now been received for the *Italo* services of Nuovo Trasporto Viaggiatori (NTV). Of note, services now use Milano Centrale station instead of Porta Garibaldi (Table 600).

MALTA

There are changes to principal bus services in Malta and Table 649 has been updated to reflect these.

SPAIN

The latest stretch of high-speed line to open in Spain is between Olmedo (near Medina del Campo) and Zamora. One return service a day is operating between Madrid and Zamora and timings for these will be found in Table 680. We understand the existing *Alvia* services on the Madrid – Zamora – Ourense route will start using the new line sometime in January.

Three new *Alvia* services have also been introduced between Madrid and Salamanca via Segovia Guiomar and timings for these will be found in Table 679 (which has been temporarily relocated to page 336).

DENMARK AND SWEDEN

From January 4 identity checks will take place at Kastrup airport for passengers travelling from Denmark to Sweden. Consequently, in order to maintain timekeeping, eastbound Øresundståg services will start at Kastrup and passengers from København will be required to catch other services from the capital to Kastrup. There will be no identity check if travelling westbound from Sweden to Denmark and Øresundståg services will continue through to København, but there may be fewer trains at peak times (Tables 703, 735, 737, 745 and 746).

These new arrangements will also affect *Snabbtåg* (Sn) services operated by Swedish Railways which will not run between Malmö and København (Table 730).

It is unclear just how long these procedures will remain in place, and as they may change at any time readers are advised to check locally or on www.skanetrafiiken.se for the latest information.

GERMANY

The fire damaged signal box at Mülheim continues to affect services between Duisburg and Dortmund, although there are fewer alterations since the start of the new timetable and services are now expected to return to normal from March 21. In our tables we are only able to show normal timings but we have included a panel on page 367 with a summary of the latest alterations.

Since the timetable change it is no longer necessary to pay a supplement and reserve a seat to use the limited stop *ICE Sprinter* trains. Regular *ICE* fares now apply for travel on these services.

A special table has been added on page 367 to show the proposed services of new operator *derschnellzug.de* which are due to start running from March 18. Two services a week will run in each direction between Stuttgart and Hamburg together with a single return service on Mondays between Stuttgart and Aachen.

The line between Bamberg and Lichtenfels will be closed from January 11 to September 3 which will result in some major alterations to both local and long-distance services that use this stretch of line. Services between Berlin and München in Table 851 will run every two hours and are diverted via Erfurt and Fulda. Alternative train/bus connections are available via the Saalfeld route and these are shown in Table 851. All regional services will be replaced by bus over the affected section resulting in extended journey times. Tables 851 and 875 show the amended timings valid from January 11, although versions of these tables valid until January 10 will be found on page 572. There will be a knock-on effect to services in many other tables and, where this occurs, the service from January 11 is shown. Table 851 also includes details of some extra express bus services which will run during the disruption on the routes Jena – Nürnberg and Erfurt – Bamberg – Erlangen.

AUSTRIA

A late change that was not included in the December edition is the addition of a call at Tullnerfeld station for most *Westbahn* services. Departure and arrival times at Wien have been adjusted slightly to accommodate this extra stop.

POLAND

Direct services are once again running between Wrocław and Dresden. Koleje Dolnośląskie will operate three services in each direction completing the journey in a little under four hours (Table 1085).

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What's new this month *(continued from page 3)*

SLOVENIA, CROATIA and BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA

Full schedules have now been received for Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia and our tables have been updated. However, readers should note that timings for some local services in the Bosnian Republic were not available at press date.

It is reported that two cross-border routes between Croatia and Hungary are currently suspended; Koprivnica – Gyékényes (Table 1340) and Beli Manastir – Magyarbóly (Table 1345).

SERBIA and MONTENEGRO

Similarly, full schedules including local services for Serbia and Montenegro are now available and all tables have been updated accordingly.

We understand that services on the Szeged to Röske route (actually wholly within Hungary but shown in this section) are, once again, suspended (Table 1377).

TURKEY

There have been alterations to the high-speed service shown in Table 1570 including extra trains to and from Eskişehir.

BEYOND EUROPE

This month's Beyond Europe section covers India with tables numbered from 5000 to 5450.

There have been a number of amendments to Indian schedules since the last time this section appeared. These include the introduction of limited ticketing stops on some *Duronto* express trains.

Table 5220 has reverted back to its regular timetable, with the Monsoon schedules restarting in early June.

Please note that during January and February trains to and from northern India are subject to cancellation because of fog.

HAPPY NEW YEAR

from the European Rail Timetable team

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