

INTERNATIONAL

Eurostar has amended its advice for when passengers should arrive at the station before departure of their train. The minimum check-in time at London St Pancras and Lille remains at 30 minutes, but has increased to 45 minutes at Paris, Brussels and Amsterdam. However, Eurostar recommend that travellers should arrive between 90 and 120 minutes before departure. We have amended certain Eurostar connections in our international tables to reflect the new advice.

GREAT BRITAIN

Taking on board a reader's suggestion, we have added a list of local connecting trains between Didcot Parkway and Oxford (located in the notes section of Table 132) to aid journey planning between Oxford and the west of England.

TransPennine Express has introduced a revised timetable valid from August 1 and so Tables 188 and 188a have been fully checked and updated where necessary.

FRANCE

A new local TER service between Avignon and Pont-Saint-Esprit is due to commence from August 29 with five services per day running in each direction. Trains will utilise the southern section of the Rhône Valley right bank line, a dedicated freight route which actually runs all the way from Lyon to Nîmes and roughly parallels the main passenger route on the opposite side of the River Rhône. Regular passenger trains last used this route in 1973, although services shown in Table 351 are occasionally diverted along sections of line when engineering work is taking place. The proposed timings are shown in a new Table 357 and we hope to confirm them in time for the Autumn edition. There are plans to extend the service south to Nîmes in the future.

Readers should note that most of our tables in this edition covering northern and western France are only valid for the high-summer period until August 28 – schedules from August 29 will be published in the Autumn seasonal edition.

ITALY

Engineering work in the Milano area from August 8 to 26 will result in timing alterations for many long-distance services. Readers travelling to, from or via Milano during this period are advised to confirm timings locally as trains may depart earlier than usual.

SPAIN

Following the completion of engineering work between Teulada and Gata, through rail services were reinstated between Benidorm and Gata from July 13. Engineering work between Gata and Dénia is continuing and so a bus replacement service will continue on this section until the work is completed in early 2023 (Table 667).

Ouigo services between Madrid and València are due to commence from October 7 and timings have now been included in Table 668. Official train numbers were not available as we closed for press, but ticket sales have been open since June 30.

Spanish Railways withdrew all rail services between Aranjuez and Utiel via Cuenca from July 20, replacing them a thrice daily bus service in each direction. Convenient rail connections are provided at either end of the route (between Madrid and Aranjuez and between Utiel and València). The total journey between Madrid and València via this route is now between 8½ and 9½ hours (Table 669). Note that bus services also stop at Cuenca Fernando Zóbel station to enable connections with high-speed services.

Further to last month's report on the opening of the high-speed line between Badajoz and Plasencia, various amendments have been made to services in Table 677. The early morning service from Cáceres to Sevilla has been retimed, now running to the same schedule every day of the week and extended to start from Plasencia on Mondays to Saturdays. In the opposite direction the service departs Sevilla 36 minutes earlier than before and continues to Plasencia daily except Saturdays. The daily *Media Distancia* service between Madrid and Sevilla no longer conveys a three times weekly through portion to Huelva, although an alternative connecting train between Zafra and Huelva is still provided. A bus service (free for rail passengers) is operating between Plasencia and Monfragüe–Plasencia stations to provide connections with the *Alvia* and *InterCity* trains which call at the latter station en route between Madrid and Badajoz.

Shortly before we closed for press, Portuguese media were reporting a possible retiming of the service between Entroncamento and Badajoz from August 1 so that it connects at Badajoz with the *Intercity* service to and from Madrid instead of the *Media Distancia* train (Table 677). It has also been reported that an additional Entroncamento – Badajoz service may commence soon. We will make further enquiries and make any necessary updates in next month's Autumn edition.

As expected, the high-speed line between Venta de Baños and Burgos opened on July 22 and the new *Alvia* services shown last month in a special table have now been incorporated into the regular Table 689.

Most *Alvia* services between Madrid and Irún are currently terminating at San Sebastián/Donostia due to engineering works (Table 689).

FINLAND

Our Finnish section has been fully updated with schedules valid from August 15 to December 10. Readers should consult earlier editions for timings until August 14.

GERMANY

All services between Lübeck and Puttgarden will be operated by bus from August 31 as work continues to upgrade the route as part of the future Fehmarn Belt fixed link between Germany and Denmark. Amended timings will be found in a special version of Table 825 on page 566. Note that services between Lübeck and Neustadt (Holst) will continue to be operated by train.

ALPEN-SYLT nachtexpress, the independently operated overnight service between Westerland (Sylt) and Salzburg/Basel, ended its summer season much earlier than planned, on July 23 (Table 927a). Originally due to finish on October 23, the company cite supply chain difficulties and higher energy prices among the reasons for ending the service early. We await further information regarding the future of this service.

Timings in the German section are only valid until September 22 as engineering work on various routes has resulted in some significant alterations to long-distance services. Updated timings, valid from September 23, will be published in the Autumn seasonal edition.

CZECH REPUBLIC

Due to engineering work in Austria, services between Rybnik and Linz are replaced in part by buses from August 8 to 21. The amended international service for this period will be found in a special version of Table 1130 on page 560.

Long-distance trains between the Czech Republic and Hungary (Table 1150) will return to their normal timetable from July 30. Since June 10 their operation had been limited by a large-scale landslide on the track between Szob and Nagymaros-Visegrad in Hungary. Also in Table 1150, Regiojet has extended a small number of its trains between Praha and Wien to serve Flughafen Wien Schwechat.

BALTIC STATES

Following our improved coverage of Lithuania in the July edition, this month we have also expanded our coverage of services in Latvia and Estonia.