

Rail and tram across the border

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Basel's rail network has been trinational since the nineteenth century. Part D has described the Badischer Bahnhof, the German railway station on Swiss soil, which was built under the treaty of 1852 between the Swiss Confederation and the Grand Duchy of Baden.¹ The station still serves as the terminus of German regional and long-distance lines. Basel SBB station, on the other hand, includes a French section where the trains of the French railways arrive. The city's main stations thus reflect its position at the meeting point of three national networks.

The regional rail network was reorganised in the 1990s as a trinational suburban railway, the Regio-S-Bahn, which links Basel with the Wiese valley, the Fricktal, the Laufen valley and Alsace. The network depends on cooperation between the Swiss, German and French railways and the regional authorities that order and finance services.² The major planned project is the *Herzstück*, an underground connection between Basel SBB and the Badischer Bahnhof, which would allow through services across the city and significantly improve the regional network.³

The trams have also crossed the border again. After line 8 had been extended to Weil am Rhein in December 2014, line 3 reached the railway station of Saint-Louis in December 2017.⁴ The extensions required agreements between the canton of Basel-Stadt, the German and French authorities and the respective municipalities on financing, operation and the applicable legal rules. Cross-border tram lines had existed before the Second World War, but they were closed in the post-war decades. Their return symbolises the renewed integration of the trinational region.

The legal questions of cross-border public transport are numerous. They concern the application of technical rules, the approval of vehicles, the liability for accidents, the collection of fares and the employment of drivers. They were resolved in each case by agreements tailored to the specific project.⁵ The Dreiländerbrücke, a footbridge across the Rhine between

Weil am Rhein and Huningue opened in 2007, completes the network of links for pedestrians and cyclists.⁶

1 Notes

1. See Part D, Chapter I, on the Badischer Bahnhof and the treaty of 27 July 1852 between Switzerland and Baden. ↩
2. On the trinational Regio-S-Bahn Basel, introduced in 1997, and the role of the cantonal, German and French authorities in ordering services, see the publications of the Trinationaler Eurodistrict Basel and the cantonal transport departments. Date to be verified. ↩
3. On the planned underground rail link Herzstück Regio-S-Bahn Basel, its planning and financing, see the publications of the cantons of Basel-Stadt and Basel-Landschaft and the Federal Office of Transport. Status to be verified. ↩
4. On the extension of tram line 8 to Weil am Rhein (opened in December 2014) and of tram line 3 to Saint-Louis Gare (opened in December 2017), see the publications of the Basler Verkehrs-Betriebe and the cantonal transport department. Dates to be verified. ↩
5. On the legal framework for the cross-border tram lines in Basel, including the agreements on financing, operation and safety, see the agreements between the canton of Basel-Stadt and the German and French authorities. To be verified. ↩
6. On the Dreiländerbrücke (Passerelle des Trois Pays) between Weil am Rhein and Huningue, opened in 2007, see the publications of the two municipalities. Date to be verified. ↩

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