

# THALYS

## QUALITY REPORT 2021

BIENVENUE CHEZ NOUS  
VAN HARTE WELKOM  
WILLKOMMEN BEI UNS  
WELCOME TO OUR WORLD



# **SUMMARY**

**1. INTRODUCTION**

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

In application of Regulation (EC) N°1371/2007 on the rights and obligations of passengers ("the Regulation"), and notably, Article 28, railway companies operating in the territory of a Member State of the European Union must publish an annual quality report (the "Quality Report").

This report follows the format of Annex III of the Regulation - Minimum Service Quality Standards

1. Information & Tickets
2. Punctuality and general principles for handling service disruptions
3. Service cancellations
4. Cleanliness of rolling stock and station facilities (air quality in carriages, sanitary facility hygiene, etc.)
5. Customer satisfaction survey
6. Management of complaints, refunds and compensation for non-compliance with service quality standards
7. Assistance to disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility

## **About Thalys**

### **A European challenge**

Thalys has a clear vision on rail traffic in Europe paired with a huge ambition: stimulating exchanges via direct international rail connections that are both fast and easy.

Thalys was launched in the early nineties. From the outset it was developed to the scale of its 4 countries: Belgium, France, the Netherlands and Germany. The company was established in 1995 as a cooperation between SNCB, SNCF, DB and NS. A few months later, in June 1996, our very first red train left the station with the first Thalys-passengers on board.

To master this challenge, our teams managed to concentrate the best of railroad technology: Thalys trainsets are industrial innovations that can adapt to as many as nine different signage systems and four types of electrification. Our train drivers and train managers are specially trained and adhere to often complex sets of national norms and regulations.

Mission accomplished: more than 7.5 million travelers per year choose Thalys!

### **A culture of service**

Promoting mobility in Europe means that train journeys not only have to be faster, but also easier and more pleasant for travelers. That is why at Thalys we focus on the needs of travelers. This is also apparent in our motto "Welcome to our world". The fact that all our onboard personnel have chosen to learn the different languages spoken across our network to make every customer feel welcome, illustrates our customer-centered approach.

With 50% leisure and 50% business travelers aboard our trains, Thalys serves a wide audience. Thalys was amongst the first trains in the world to introduce Wi-Fi on board (2008). Just like the comfort and the warm reception, free Wi-Fi is now part of our standard service.

If desired, travelers can enjoy a tasty meal at the seat, a digital press offer and taxis/private chauffeur booked online.

Especially looking for a low fare? Thalys aims to offer the best rates: our entry prices have been stable for several years and in total about one third of our tickets are offered for less than € 40.

### **Meeting challenges runs in our DNA**

Seamlessly crossing numerous national borders several times a day is a major challenge, so operational and technological excellence are an absolute must. By incorporating these values into our company DNA, Thalys has been able to play a leading role in many areas, from Wi-Fi to ERTMS (the European signaling and management system for trains). The "CO", our operational center based in Brussels, constantly monitors all train movements on the 4 national infrastructures and accurately tracks the train frequencies per route. Customer service answers questions from travelers in four languages every day.

Within this framework, the transformation of Thalys into an independent railway company in 2015 was an important step. Thanks to the confidence of our shareholders SNCB and SNCF, Thalys is now directly active in France and Belgium. In Germany, We have also changed our approach since December 2016, with improved management of the operational processes with the support of SNCF Voyages Deutschland (SVDE) and Keolis Deutschland. Finally, the quality of the Thalys service is also the result of a very good cooperation with the NS in the Netherlands.

## 2. INFORMATION & TICKETS

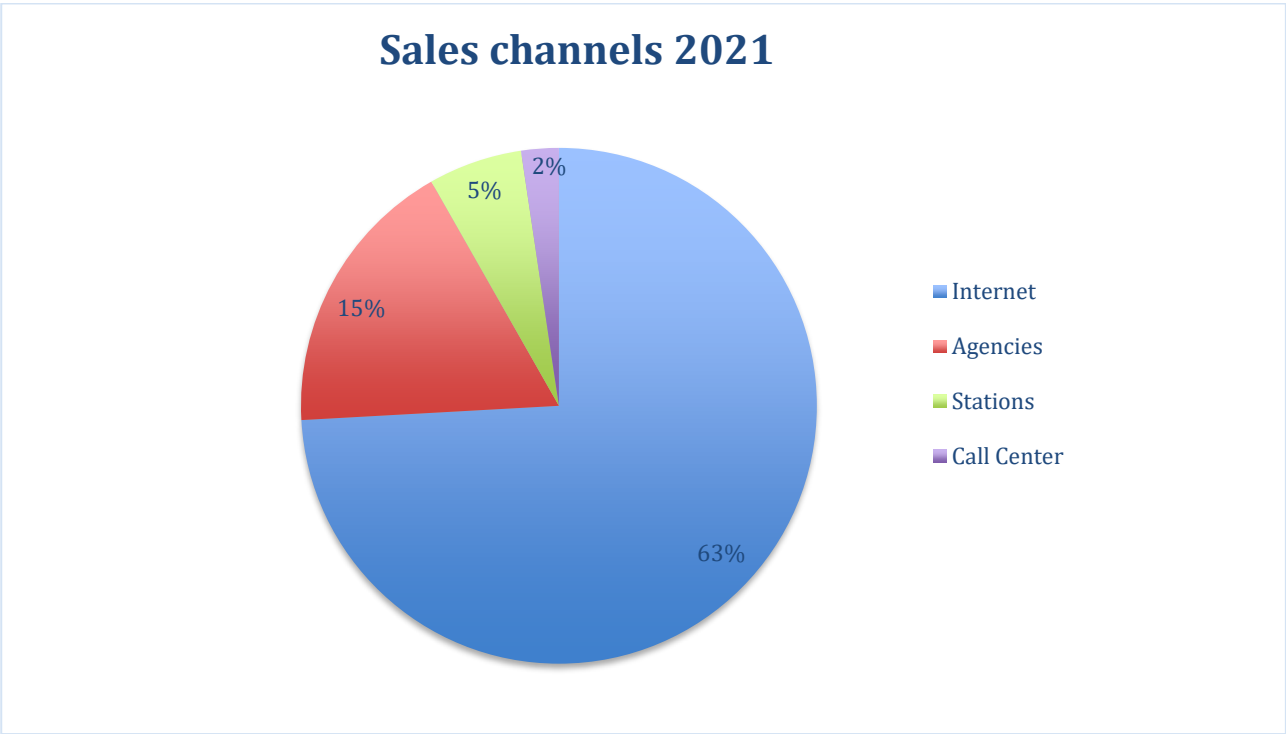
In 2020, for the first time in its history, Thalys became distributor of the tickets sold on its Thalys.com site. Thanks to this major step, our customers benefit from unified and homogeneous sales and after-sales process, regardless of their country.

By the way, ticket issuing is still handled by Thalys'shareholder railway undertakings (SNCF, SNCB) and partner (NS) through their distribution channels, as well as through other contractual distributors, using the information systems of Thalys' shareholders and partner.

Information about the service offer (i.e. information about schedules, fares, seat availability, contractual conditions, etc.) is available on the thalys.com website.

The documentation is also available at the points of sale of each distributor (stations, call centres and Internet sites).

The graph below provides the overall distribution of sales in 2021, all distributors combined:

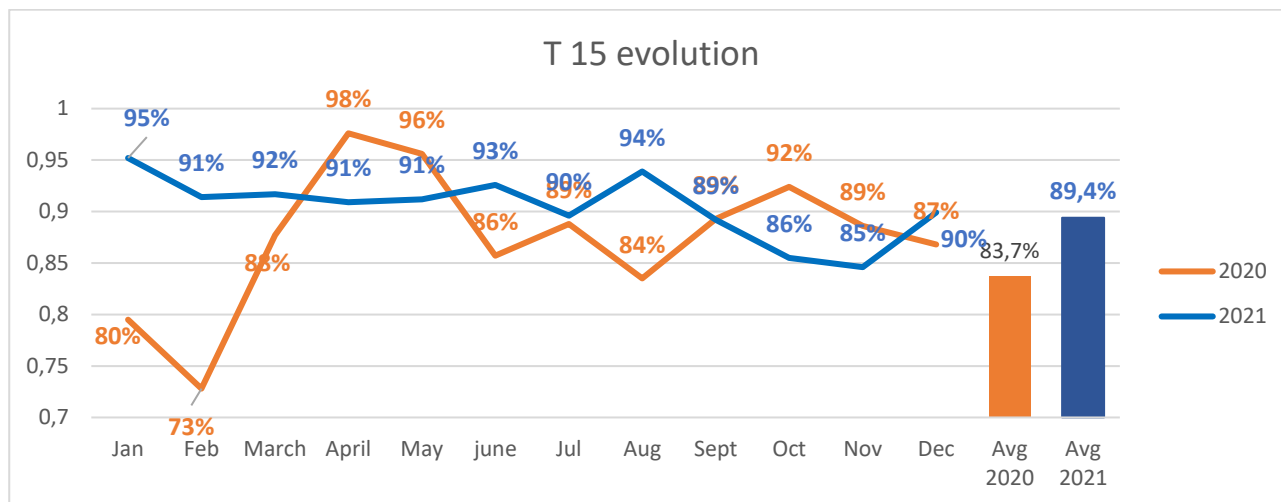


# 3. PUNCTUALITY AND DISRUPTION/CANCELLATION MANAGEMENT

## Overall results

Concerning the punctuality, 2021 was significantly better than 2020.

The overall punctuality within 15 minutes improved significantly to reach an annual average of 89.4% (+5.7 vs 2020).



## Service disruption management <> Traveller information

For each train suffering a delay equal to or greater than 10 minutes, Thalys sends an SMS message or email to all train passengers who requested the option and provided their contact information when they purchased a ticket.

In addition, the thalys.com website is updated based on the same criteria. A "traffic information" banner appears on the homepage. By clicking on the banner, travellers can see a list of trains affected by the incident.

The information is available in four languages (French, Dutch, German and English).

Thalys strives to provide the most up-to-date information to passengers.

For example, Thalys provides information on the delays at each station with Thalys train service.

The information is available on both visual and audio media in all of the stations with Thalys service.

On board the trains, the "train managers" (ticket inspectors) are responsible for providing the information to passengers, either orally or via a system of pre-recorded digital announcements.

All of the people involved and tools used are updated by operators at the Thalys Operations Center in Brussels.



# 4. CLEANLINESS OF ROLLING STOCK AND STATION FACILITIES

Thalys does not manage train stations. It is therefore not responsible for station cleanliness and facilities.

With regard to Thalys rolling stock, the train fleet is cleaned by the teams of the various networks.

### On-site procedure

The trains are cleaned prior to each departure, either in the maintenance workshops or in the departure station. In addition to "everyday" cleaning, thorough cleanings are also done at less frequent intervals.

In addition, in the specific context of the COVID crisis, Thalys has stepped up its cleaning and disinfection operations for its equipment and passenger areas.

### 2021 results

In normal days, the conformity of Thalys cleaning and train cleanliness is measured via "mystery shoppers". They check the cleanliness on board during the travel and at their seats (about 140 inspections every quarter).

That being said, in order to respond to the financial challenges caused by the sanitary situation, Thalys was forced to freeze these performance surveys in 2021. We therefore do not have performance figures for the year 2021.

The fact remains that an even greater attention has been paid to the cleaning of our trains. Sanitary requirements have thus led us to reinforce cleaning and disinfection operations.

These efforts have been rewarded by a strong increase in customer satisfaction with cleanliness:

- Satisfaction with cleanliness at the place = 87% (+ 5 points vs 2019)
- Satisfaction with toilet cleanliness = 69% (+ 13 points vs 2019)

# 5. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION SURVEYS

### A reminder about the methodology

Since 2014, Thalys measures the satisfaction level of its customers via online surveys. The survey criteria are as follows:

- ✓ Questionnaires are answered online after travel
- ✓ The surveys are conducted continuously, throughout the quarter
- ✓ In case of a delay exceeding 10 minutes, a special questionnaire is sent to each customer to determine their satisfaction level following the service disruption
- ✓ Customers have a scale from 0 to 10 to express their satisfaction level (0 means that the customer is completely dissatisfied and 10 that he is completely satisfied). **Travellers are considered satisfied when they enter a score equal to or greater than 7:**
  - ~ From 0 to 4: they are considered dissatisfied
  - ~ From 5 to 6: they are considered moderately satisfied
  - ~ From 7 to 8: they are considered satisfied
  - ~ 9 and 10: they are considered completely satisfied
- ✓ The satisfaction level for a given topic is, therefore, the proportion of customers who entered a score from 7 to 10.

### Principal lessons for 2021

In “normal situation”, the overall satisfaction (86.7%, +0.5 vs 2019) and especially the NPS (51, +8 points vs 2019) are clearly improving.

In “disrupted situation”, the overall satisfaction (54%, +8 vs 2019) and NPS (4, +18 points vs 2019) also improve very markedly.

In the detail of the offer, Thalys remains ever more attentive to the fundamentals of travel (comfort & cleanliness) as well as to the “caring” dimension of the service, especially in this period of health crisis.

Thus, clear increases can be observed in terms of satisfaction related to cleanliness (see §4) and service staff on board (89%, +3 vs 2019). WiFi also saw a significant improvement in its perception (70%, +4 vs 2019).

## 6. COMPLAINT MANAGEMENT

### Compensation policy

For any delays equal to or greater than 30, 60, or 120 minutes, excluding those due to external causes, Thalys compensates customers with Thalys travel vouchers (valid for 12 months) with a value of 20%, 50% or 100% of the ticket price, respectively.

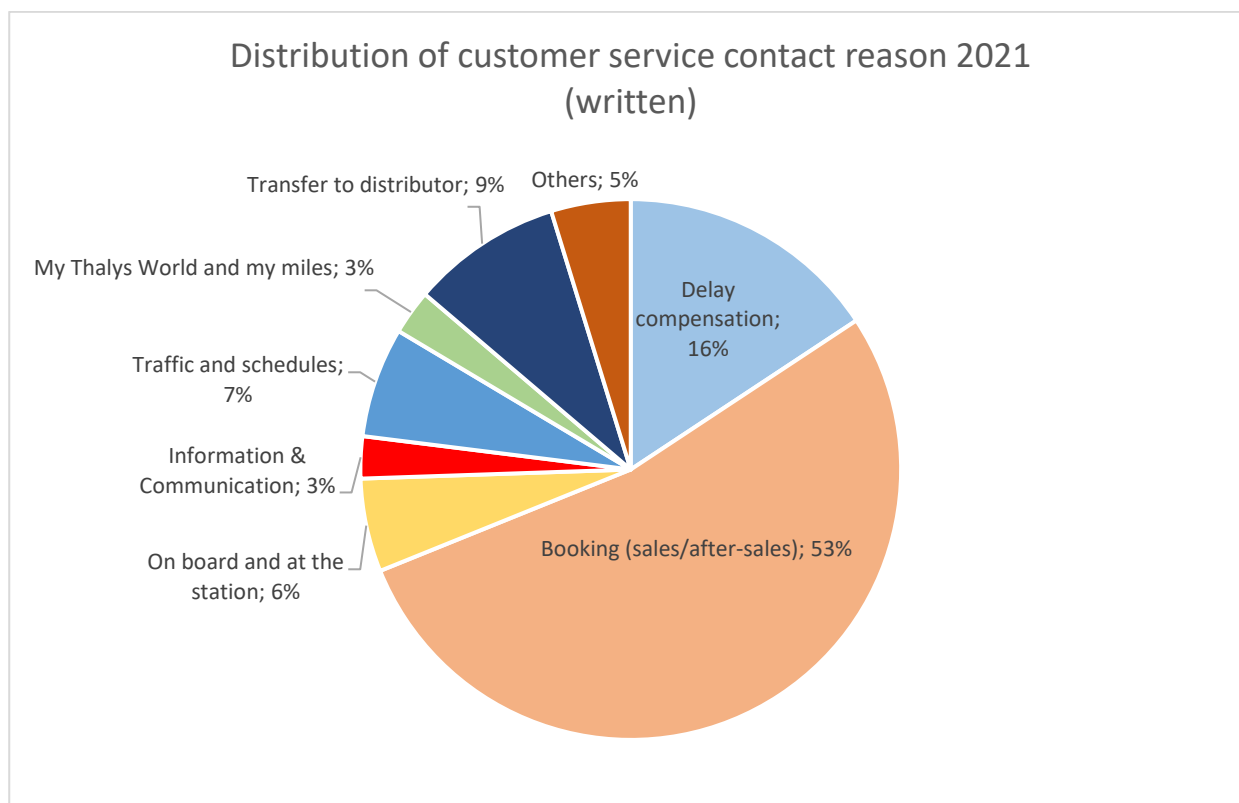
Passengers who prefer to be compensated by bank transfer receive 25% or 50% of the fare as of the 60th and 120th minute of the delay, respectively.

Thalys has decided to thank its passengers for their loyalty by exceeding the minimum requirements of Regulation (EC) n° 1371/2007 for passengers who choose to be compensated in Thalys vouchers.

### A few figures

In 2021, due to the health crisis, Thalys still observed a profound change in the reasons of contacts managed by the Thalys customer service. Indeed, sales and after-sales issues have still far outstripped compensation for delays.

The following graph shows the distribution of the different types of contacts (complaints & info/help desk) managed by the Thalys customer service in 2021:



# 7. ASSISTANCE FOR PERSONS WITH REDUCED MOBILITY

Thalys offers various solutions to assist people with disabilities or reduced mobility:

- ✓ Travellers can put in a request 48 hours in advance for assistance to board and get off the train on arrival. They can also request that an adapted taxi or car be booked or hired for them.
- ✓ On board of each Thalys train, 2 places are specially equipped for wheelchairs in coaches 1, 11 and 21 (first class). These places have an alarm button to call the Train Manager if assistance is required. Wheelchair accessible toilet is located nearby.
- ✓ A special fare is also available for persons travelling with a passenger with a disability or reduced mobility and for people travelling in a wheelchair: they are entitled to a Comfort 2 fare and travel in Comfort 1.