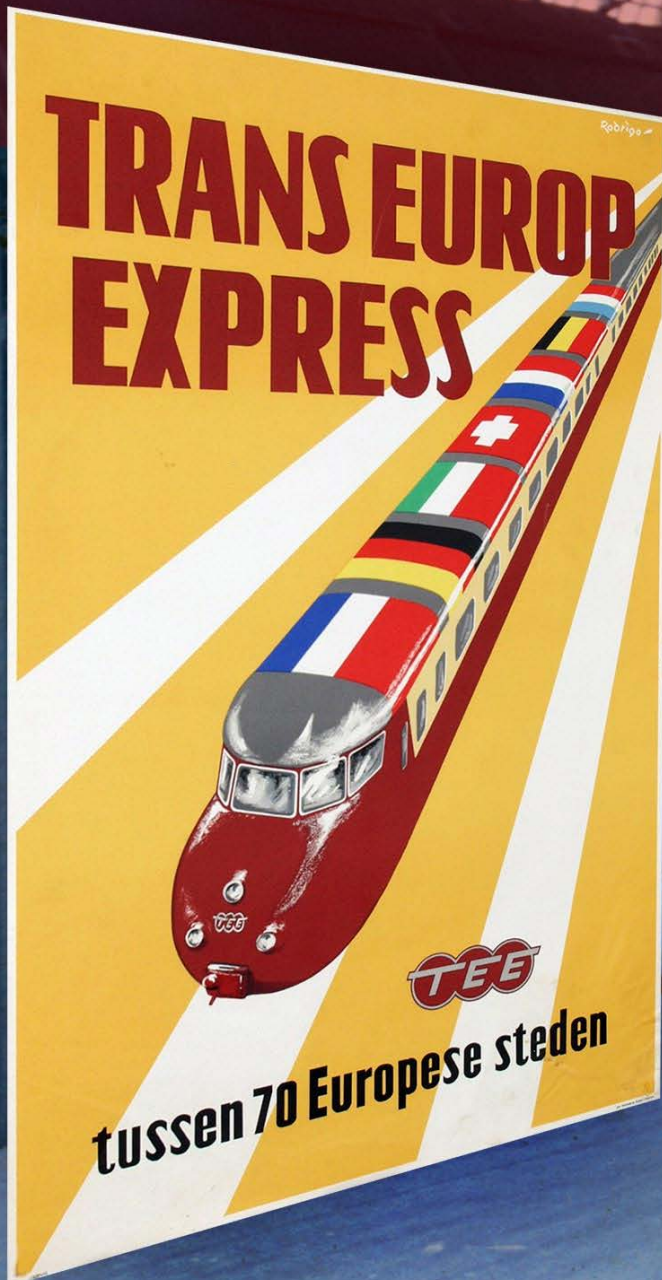


Railcars on Trans Europ Express posters

TEE Design

The *Trans Europ Express* was the most legendary episode of postwar European railway history. Eight railway companies cooperated to compete against emerging air travel. The modern and fast trains with only first-class seats — at a surcharge — were primarily aimed at business travelers. In 1957, the TEE network connected 70 European cities and no less than 130 cities twenty years later.

The TEE was innovative not only technically, but also in terms of design. The strikingly designed trains in red and cream livery contributed to the legend. The recognizable shapes of the railcars were very suitable to depict on posters promoting the TEE service.



retours January 2014

by Arjan den Boer

Genesis

It was not a coincidence that the TEE emerged at the same time as the EEC. The spirit of the times called for European cooperation.

Technically, the TEE drew on the streamlined diesel railcars that were constructed since the 1930s. Electrification was still too fragmented for international traffic, so new TEE diesel units were ordered: Dutch-Swiss, French and German. All three can be seen on a 1958 poster by Jan de Haan.

F.Q. den Hollander

Originator and inventor of the TEE was F.Q. den Hollander, president of the Dutch Railways (NS). In 1953 he introduced the idea of a Europe Express, which eventually became TEE after consultations within the International Railway Union UIC.



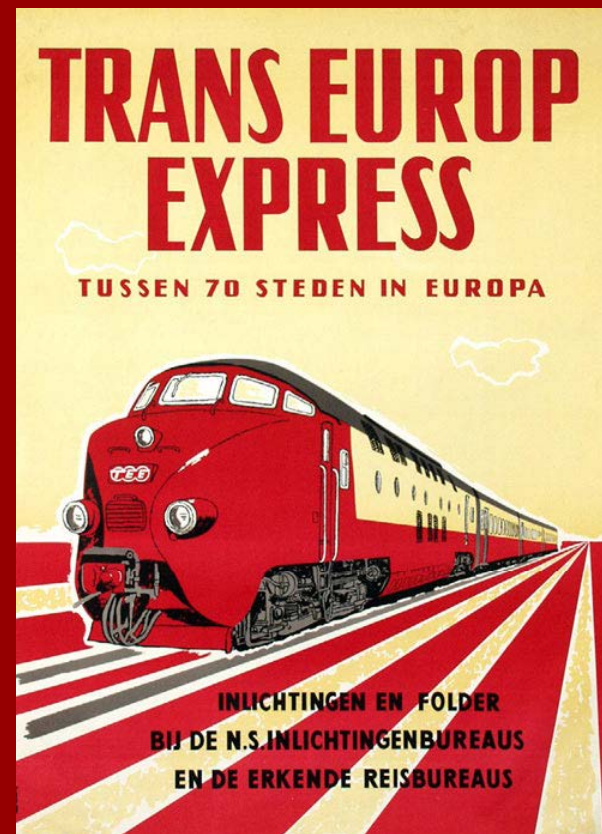
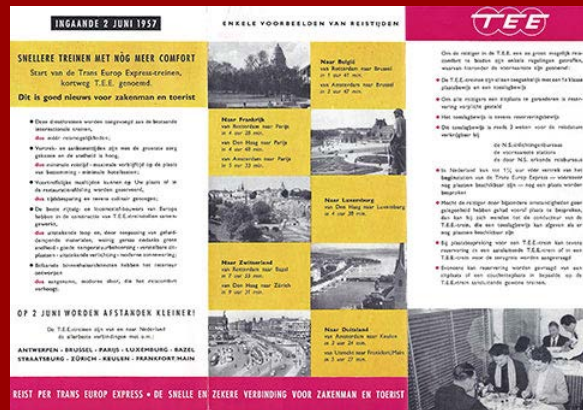
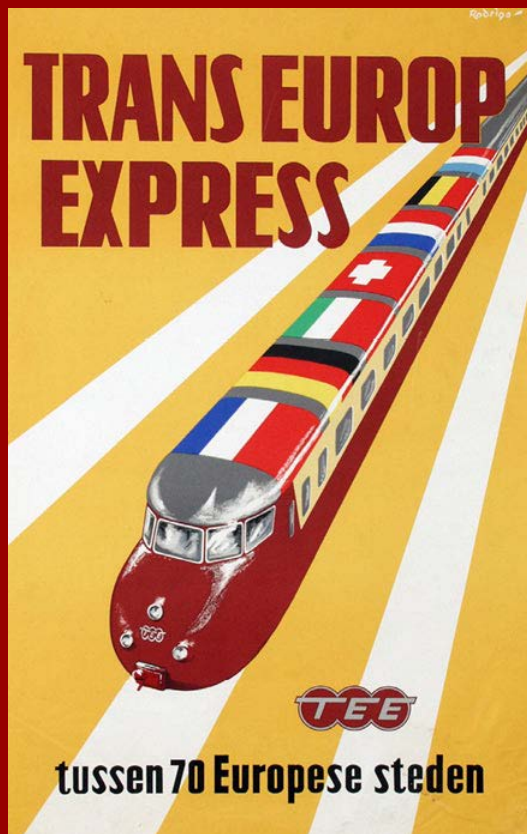


TEE I "Edelweiss"

The Swiss and Dutch railways together developed a new diesel-electric trainset: RAm TEE I, called DE 4 in the Netherlands. It consisted of a motor car, two intermediate cars for 114 passengers and a control car.

The striking front is designed by industrial designer Elsebeth van Blerkom (1919-2009). She previously designed train interiors for Werkspoor, manufacturer of the motor cars. She studied aerodynamics, resulting in an egg shape made up of single-curved surfaces.

In 1957 the trains ran amongst others as *TEE Edelweiss* from Amsterdam to Zurich and as *TEE Étoile du Nord* from Amsterdam to Paris.



First posters

In 1957 the Utrecht painter and illustrator Jan Rodrigo (1921-) created the first TEE poster. He succeeded in capturing the trains's velocity and its international character. However, its sharp 'nose' is not very accurate, making it look more like a Hondekop. A brochure contains the same illustration with a better front.

A 1960 poster draws on Rodrigo in terms of typeface, colors and lines, but the TEE trainset is much more detailed. The poster was created by Jan de Haan (1917-1975), who was employed as an advertising artist at the Dutch Railways from 1946 until the 1960s.



937 F.B.

BRUXELLES-BALE EN 6 HEURES

(B)



EDELWEISS



Predecessors

The legendary Edelweiss and Étoile du Nord trains existed long before the TEE. They had been running since the 1920s with luxury Wagons-Lits Pullman carriages. These classic cars were replaced by modern TEE luxury in the 1950s. The same happened a few years later with the Rheingold in Germany.

Belgium

The participating railway companies took turns in providing the publicity for the Trans Europ Express. As the initiator, the Dutch railways were responsible for the kick-off. The Belgian railways had their turn in the 1960s.

In 1962 Paul Funken (1932-) depicted the TEE Edelweiss below a Swiss mountain massif. A one-way ticket from Brussels to Basel was priced 937 Belgian francs according to this poster.

A few years later the French-Belgian designer André Pasture (1928-2006) created the perhaps finest TEE poster. He captured the 'head of Elsebeth van Blerkom' in a few minimalist shapes.

Brussel-Bazel in 5 u.50

TEE EDELWEISS

AMSTERDAM
ANTWERPEN
BRUSSEL
NAMEN
AARLEN
LUXEMBURG
METZ
STRAATSBURG
BAZEL
ZURICH





TEE "Saphir"

The German railways also presented a new Diesel multiple unit for TEE service in 1957, called VT 11.5. The train with its large round front and 'big smile' is sometimes called the flagship of the German economic miracle.

This train's services included the *TEE Saphir* from Frankfurt to Ostend and the *TEE Helvetia* from Hamburg to Zurich. Unlike the Dutch-Swiss trainset, the VT 11.5 had two motor cars. In between were a bar car, a dining car, a lounge car and two compartment cars.

The train was designed by architect Klaus Flesche (1907-1997), head of industrial design at MAN machine manufacturing. His work, including the TEE train, was shown at the 1964 art exhibition *documenta III*.



verbinden über 90 Städte Europas

Hamburg Zürich Luxemburg Basel München Brüssel Mailand Na
Straßburg Hannover Metz Frankfurt Amsterdam Mar
Düsseldorf Aachen Innsbruck Toulon Rotterdam
Bonn Genua Köln Utrecht Essen
Bremen Paris Dortmund
Lyon Brüssel



Informationen bei den
Reisebüros und den
Auskunftsstellen der
Deutschen Bundesbahn

...elegant sicher schnell fashionable bequem schnell elegant si
...Europ-Express-Züge Trans-Europ-Expres
...elegant sicher schnell elegant be
...Europ-Exp

Elegance

A 1961 poster for the German TEE was created by Stiller, who worked as a designer for the Bundesbahn in the 1950s. The VT 11.5 train is instantly recognizable by its shape and color. Prominent use of the TEE emblem indicates that this logo had become familiar in only a few years time.

Rows of words positioned above and below the train suggest speed. Above are the names of about 30 of the 90 cities connected by TEE. Below are promotional keywords like fast, secure, fashionable and elegant.

Elegance is also manifest on promotional photographs of the crew and passengers, made in the 1960s by Reinhold Palm (1913-1984), the Bundesbahn press officer and company photographer.



From the moment of boarding, DB hostesses stood ready to take passengers under their care. They had the red TEE emblem pinned on their lapels.

Aboard the VT 11.5 travelers could relax in the bar car, decorated with wood and floral fabric. The TEE logo was also printed on the drinks menu.



Belgium

Belgium did not have its own TEE trainsets, but was connected to the network by several trains, including the German TEEs. The TEE Saphir ran to Ostend and the TEE Parsifal connected Paris to Hamburg via Liege.

The Belgian railways not only issued TEE posters in French and Dutch, but also in English for the United Kingdom, in view of the Dover-Ostend connection

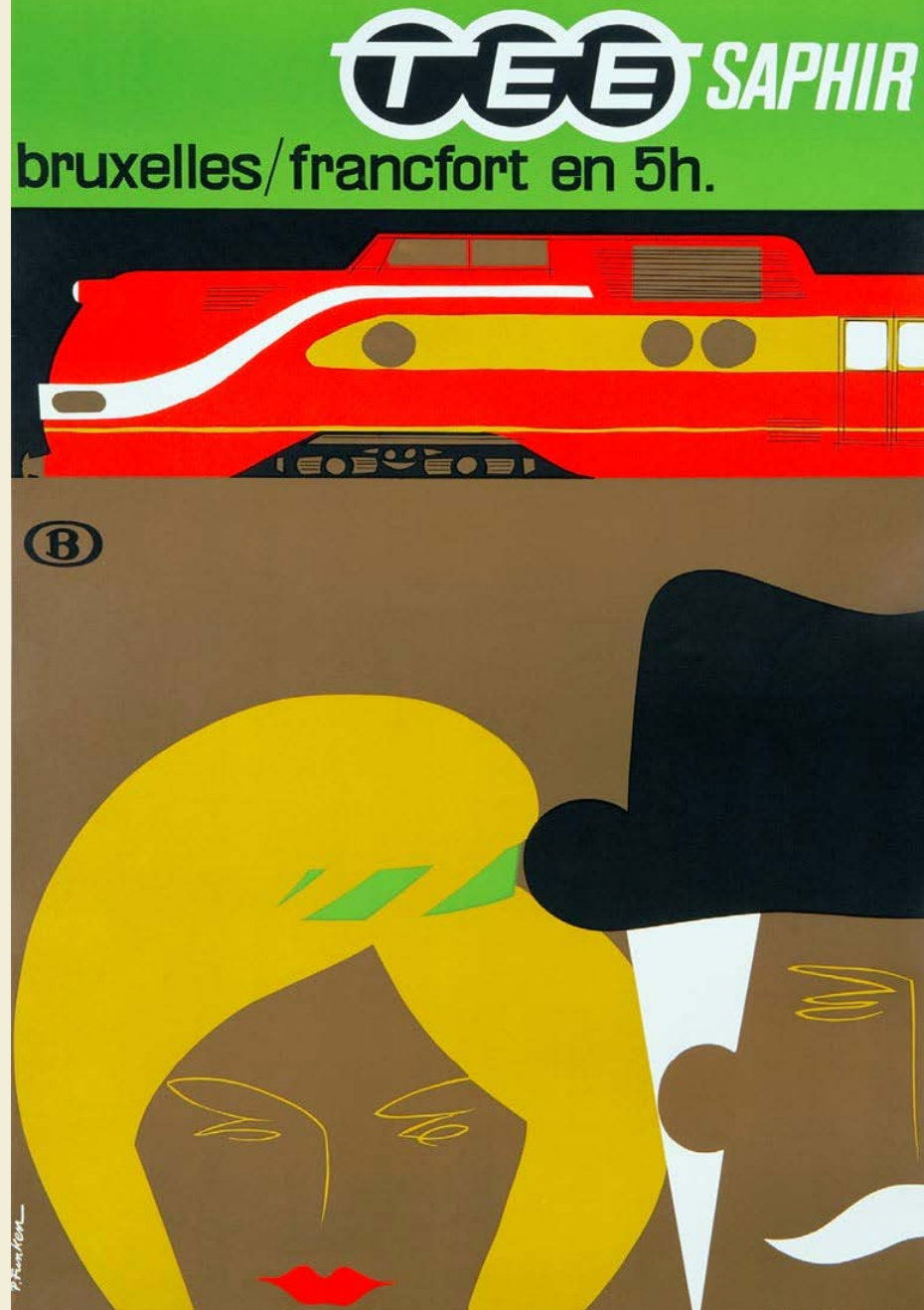


Contrast

The difference between two Belgian TEE posters, both created in 1962 and depicting the same train, could not be greater.

Armand Moussiaux (1899-1978), who after his retirement as an illustrator for the Belgian railways continued to make posters under the pseudonym Arthal, was a landscape painter by origin. His poster has a scenic-realistic style.

In contrast, Paul Funken was trained as an architect. His poster is highly abstracted and uses remarkably fresh colors. Funken depicted passengers below the train with playful strokes as faces. Just like the 1958 TEE poster by De Haan (p.2), it shows a lady with lipstick and a gentleman with a hat.





TEE II "Cisalpin"

In 1961 a new Swiss train series was completed, called RAe TEE II. It was the first electrical TEE train. The innovative trainsets were the first that could handle the different power systems in Western Europe.

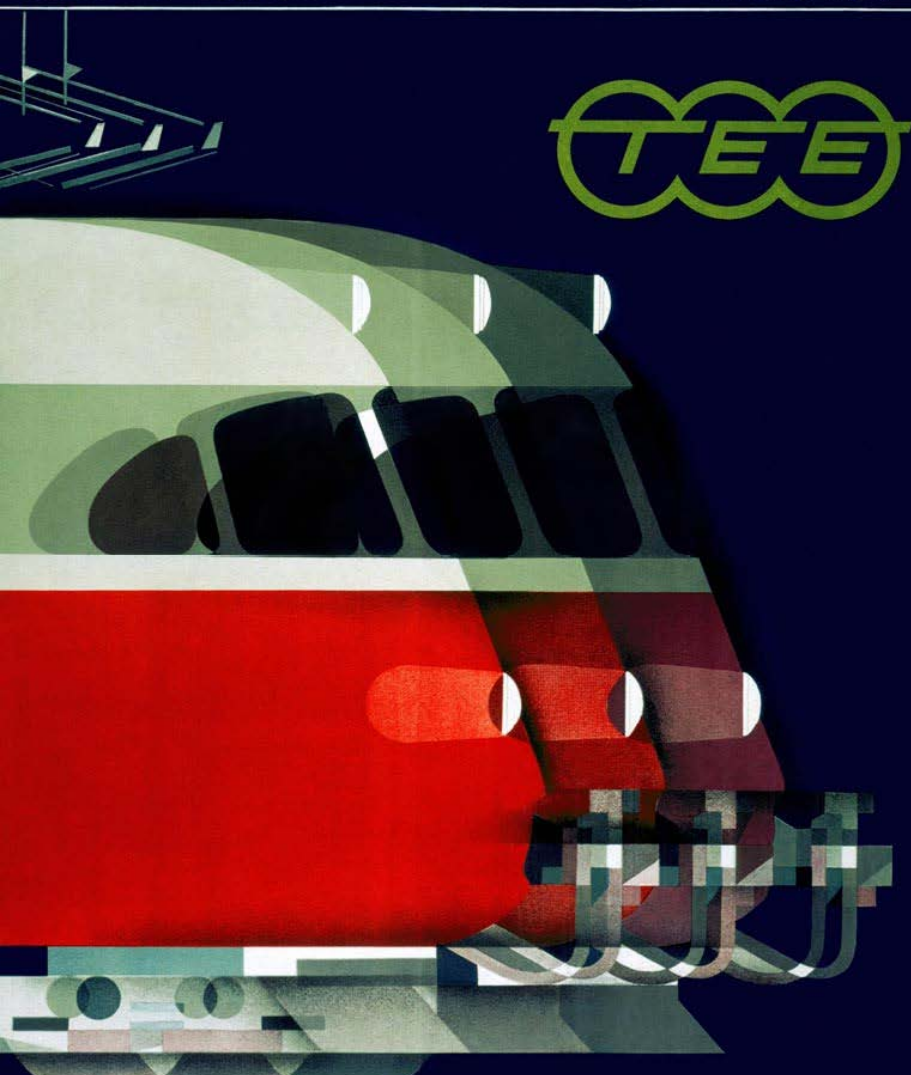
The services of the five-car trainsets included the *TEE Cisalpin* from Paris to Milan via the Simplon Tunnel. They also ran as *TEE Gottardo* from Basel to Milan via the Gotthard Tunnel. In the 1970s they ran as *TEE Edelweiss* to Amsterdam.

The look of the RAe TEE II was not very different from earlier French and Italian TEE diesel multiple units. Despite the absence of a pronounced front these TEE-colored trains were very recognizable.

en 8 heures

de Paris

à Milan



Speed

Kurt Wirth (1917-1996) created a nice poster for the TEE Cisalpin around 1961. In addition to his work as an abstract painter he designed posters for Swissair and the Swiss railways.

His poster conveys the speed of the TEE by showing after-images of the RAe TEE II front, giving the impression of three movie frames. The poster also features a current collector to emphasize electric traction.

The tight typography uses the Helvetica typeface, designed in 1957 by Max Medinger. It had quickly become the symbol of Swiss Style.

The Helvetica font is also used on an anonymous poster of 1965, issued on the occasion of Bern being connected to the TEE network. The use of photographs was becoming more common on Swiss posters, but the round shape is unusual.



Trans-Europ-Express
verbindet 100 Städte Europas
jetzt auch Bern ab 30. Mai 1965



Prospekte und Platzreservierung in den Reisebüros
oder an den Bahnschaltern



Inox

From 1964 onwards the French railways switched over to locomotive-drawn coaches for TEE services. Advanced electrification allowed for faster running speeds than diesel units. Following the domestic *Mistral* long-distance train, the Paris-Brussels-Amsterdam line also got Inox coaches. These stainless steel cars were named after the French *acier inoxydable*. The design was based on American streamliners.

Along with the coaches the new CC 40100 electric locomotive appeared. It was quadri-current: it could use four power systems, which differed by country. Such locomotives with Inox coaches remained iconic for TEE trains like the *Étoile du Nord* until the end.



LOCOMOTIVE QUADRICOURANT CC 40100

TRANS EUROP EXPRESS

PARIS - BRUXELLES - AMSTERDAM

Power

The French painter Albert Brenet (1903-2005) convincingly captured the raw power of the new CC 40100 on a poster. Brenet frequently worked for French railway and airline companies, but was foremost a navy painter. Typical of his style is the alternation of near-photorealism with sketchy brushstrokes.

The Belgian posters by André Pasture are totally different. He was a follower of the Swiss minimalist style, as can be seen on his 1968 poster with Inox coaches. The stainless steel ridges, the red band with Trans Europ Express lettering and the overhead wires were simplified to a few straight lines.

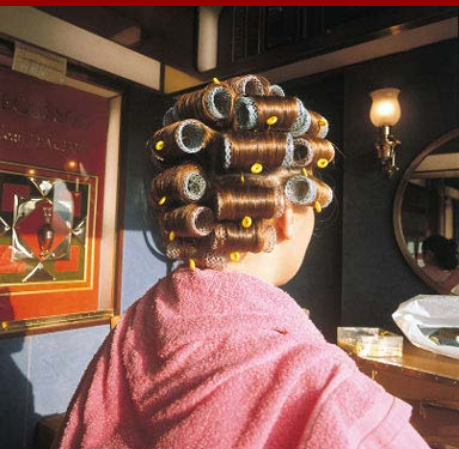
Bruxelles - Paris en 2 h. 20 par





Hairdresser

TEE trains with Inox coaches consisted of compartment and lounge cars, a bar car and a kitchen car, from which meals were served at the seats. Additionally, the *Mistral* had a special on-board service: a hairdressing salon, which was given a place inside the bar car.



Mistral

In the mid 1960s the international criterion was abandoned for the TEE. Domestic long-distance trains were added to the TEE network. The most famous one was the *Mistral*, which had connected Paris, Marseilles and Nice since 1950. With an average of nearly 130 km/h it was the fastest train in Europe until the *TGV*.

In 1969, the *Mistral* was given new Inox coaches that were even more comfortable than its predecessors. The prolific French designer Philippe Foré (1927-) created a poster for the new *Mistral*. He succeeded even better than Pasture in depicting the essence of Inox coaches. His typography was much more playful than his 'strict' Belgian colleague was using.

1969 un nouveau MISTRAL





TRANS EUROP EXPRESS



**voyages de tourisme et d'affaires
en europe**

Dedine

Around 1975 the TEE network reached its greatest extent. A few years later the decline started. In 1979 the German railways converted a number of TEEs into Intercity trains with two classes, other countries followed suit. In 1987 most TEEs were replaced by two-class EuroCity trains.

Air traffic increased and became more affordable. TEE trains were relatively expensive, Intercity trains with a choice between two classes proved more popular. At the same time high-speed trains arrived, firstly the French TGV in 1981 and the German ICE from 1985 onwards. In many respects these trains were a continuation of the TEE, but the 'error' to offer first-class only was not made again.

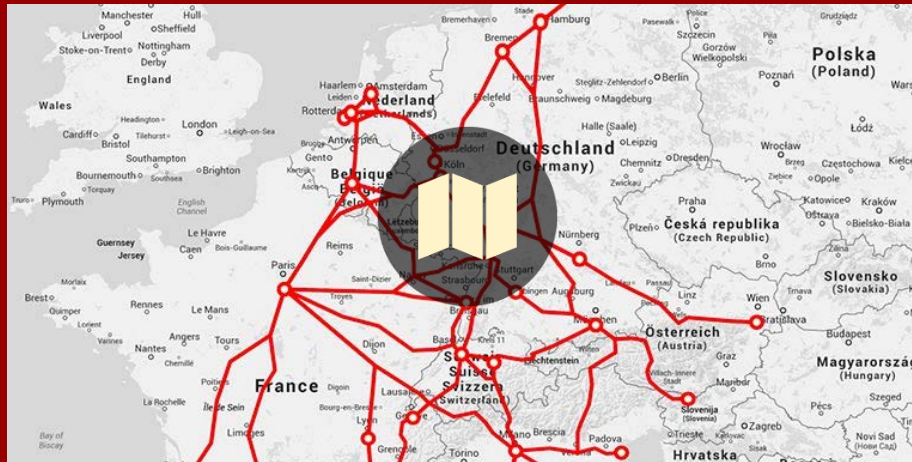
TEE Foundation

In 1974 the Swiss-Dutch diesel multiple units of the TEE Edelweiss were taken out of service. The service was now electrically hauled. The units were sold to a Canadian railway company, which abolished them in 1996. A group of railway enthusiasts brought five cars back to Europe, including two control cars. The motor cars had already been demolished.

The Trans Europ Express Netherlands Foundation is committed to refurbishing the trains. For now they are parked near Amsterdam Central Station, easily visible from regular trains.



TEE Design – Railcars on Trans Europ Express posters



Special thanks to Udo Boersma, Roel ter Voort, Nico Spilt, Han Timmer and Jean Vernet.

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- [European railway posters from the early 1970s](#)



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