

HKX launches Hamburg-Frankfurt services

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GERMAN open-access operator Hamburg-Cologne (HKX) officially launched its new service from Frankfurt to Hamburg on December 15.

The new Frankfurt services complement existing trains on the Hamburg to Cologne route which have been operating since 2012.

HKX has restructured and reduced its timetable between Cologne and Hamburg, operating just one train pair daily from Thursday to Sunday although the operating days will be expanded to include Monday from Easter 2016.

The new Frankfurt service operates from Frankfurt on Thursday and Saturday with southbound trips from Hamburg-Altona to Frankfurt on Friday and Sunday. The Frankfurt services use the conventional and scenic Rhine Valley route and serve Bingen, Koblenz and Bonn. The journey time is 6h 51min for the fastest trains, compared with four hours for German Rail's (DB) high-speed ICE services, but is up to three-and-a-half hours faster than the bus.



Reflecting the journey time, HKX is pricing fares between those offered by long-distance buses and ICE. The lowest HKX fare Frankfurt to Cologne is €9, half the cheapest DB fare.

HKX has swapped operating partner company and rationalised its fleet. Former operating partner NOB (Transdev) has been replaced by Nuremberg-based charter specialist BTE. HKX intends to use Tuesday and Wednesday each week for maintenance, so expects to be able to operate all services using just one locomotive.

BTE is providing 10 former East German long-distance coaches which are being refurbished for HKX and most trains will use all of these vehicles. A coach suitable for wheelchair users also including some first class seating will be included in each train.

<http://www.railjournal.com/index.php/main-line/hkx-launches-hamburg-frankfurt-services.html?channel=524>