

THE AVE IN TIMES OF CHOLERA

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[FEDEA](#) has prepared a study on the cost of high-speed rail in Spain and its social profitability. The report has been prepared by Ofelia Betancor (University of Las Palmas de Gran Canaria) and Gerard Llobet (CEMFI). It analyzes the [social and financial costs and benefits of high-speed lines currently operating in Spain](#). The analysis confirms and extends the results and conclusions of previous evaluations: **"all the existing high-speed lines in Spain present a negative social or financial profitability and, therefore, should not have been built"**.

According to the central forecasts of the authors, in financial terms the line that transports the most passengers, Madrid-Barcelona, will recover 46% of the investment costs in the long term. On the Madrid-Andalucía line this figure drops to 11% and on the Madrid-Levante line it does not even reach 10%. In the case of Madrid-Northern Spain, the expected income does not even cover the variable costs.

If the comparison is made in terms of social costs and benefits (regardless of whether or not these translate into costs or income for Renfe and Adif), the results are also negative. The line that presents the best results is the Madrid-Barcelona line, whose social benefits will offset 79.6% of the social cost of the investment in the long term. In the case of Madrid-Andalucía, 45%; Madrid-Levante 42.5%, and finally, Madrid-North Spain 19%.

The conclusion, in the opinion of its authors, is unequivocal: "no line should have been built".

Despite this, since the lines already exist and most of them cover their variable costs, it is reasonable to continue operating them. The exception is the line that connects Madrid with the north of Spain (which for now reaches Valladolid but also serves other cities) whose operating income is insufficient to cover variable costs, an extremely delicate situation because all the investment made and also requires a constant injection of public money to keep it open.

In the case of the Basque Country, we invite political leaders, in light of this general academic report, to consider the need to analyze the balance between the imposing cost of infrastructure and the eventual social benefit of a And Vasca still half done. Basically, we say this because the costs of its construction are being covered at times of greatest social and economic suffocation in the country in the last 20 years. We thought that no one would make the gesture ugly. Quite the opposite.

There are no comments yet.