**DB to start London services in 2013**

German rail operator Deutsche Bahn has reportedly confirmed that it will begin services to London from 2013.

According to reports by ABTN, the German state railway network will run three services a day between London St Pancras and Brussels, beginning in December 2013.

The high-speed trains will then divide, with one half going north to Amsterdam via Rotterdam and another to Frankfurt via Cologne, reports ABTN.

At the moment, passengers to Amsterdam must use Eurostar to Brussels before changing for the Thalys high-speed train, and passengers to Frankfurt must change for Deutsche Bahn's ICE service.

The report suggests that a journey from London to Frankfurt by train will take just over five hours, and London to Amsterdam will be just under four hours.

Deutsche Bahn first tested its trains in the Eurotunnel last year, hinting that before long it would look to break the long-held monopoly of cross-channel rail services prized by Eurostar.

The Siemens-built ICE3 train was the first passenger train not run by Eurostar to enter the tunnel, although it passed through at a sedate 30 kilometers per hour, a world away from the blistering 300km/h-plus speeds the ICE3 and Eurostar trains are capable of.

Now, it looks like German trains will become a regular fixture on the iconic underseas route - although it seems they won't be in place in time for the London 2012 Olympic Games, Deutsche Bahn's initial target.

The Independent

20 September 2011