

EPF-BULLETIN 1 - AUGUST 2007

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INTRODUCTION

Soyez les bienvenus au premier numéro du Bulletin d'Activités de la Fédération Européenne des Voyageurs. Nous espérons le produire 2 ou 3 fois par an pour vous renseigner de ce que nous faisons pour les clients des transports publics en Europe. Nous vous invitons aussi à visiter notre site web www.epf.eu, où vous trouverez aussi des liens aux sites de nos 25 associations et organismes adhérents qui s'engagent en 15 pays pour les passagers des trains, bus et tramways.

Trevor Garrod, Président

Willkommen zur ersten Ausgabe des Tätigkeitsrundschreibens des Europäischen Fahrgastverbands. Wir hoffen, dieses zwei- oder dreimal pro Jahr herauszugeben, um Ihnen mitzuteilen, was wir für die Kunden des öffentlichen Verkehrs in Europa tun. Wir laden Sie auch ein, unsere Webseite www.epf.eu zu besuchen. Dort werden Sie auch Links zu den Seiten von unseren 25 Mitgliedsvereinen finden, die sich in 15 Ländern für die Fahrgäste in Zug, Bus und Strassenbahn engagieren.

*Trevor Garrod,
Vorsitzender*

Welcome to the first issue of the activity bulletin of the European Passengers' Federation. We hope to issue this two or three times a year in order to inform you of what we are doing for public transport customers in Europe. We also invite you to visit our website www.epf.eu. There you will find links to the sites of each of our 25 member associations and organisations, which campaign in 15 countries for the passengers in trains, buses and trams.

Trevor Garrod, Chairman

With this first bulletin EPF wants to communicate on the one hand with the individual members of its member organisations (i.e. the European citizens interested in the European dimension of public transport) and on the other hand with the politicians and policy advisors dealing with European transport policy.

PASSENGER RIGHTS

On June 20th, the European Parliament and the Council have finally reached an agreement on the Third Railway Package. This legislative package contains a set of regulations which prepare the liberalisation of international rail travel in 2010. Trevor Garrod, President of the European Passengers Federation, strongly welcomes the adoption of the Third Railway Package: *"This is good news for passengers. It will give passengers a better deal and, by making the railways more competitive, help ensure their future. The EU has taken on board a lot of what we have been saying on behalf of long-suffering rail passengers. It must now extend these protections to all modes of public transport, including buses, coaches and ferries."*

As public transport users we welcome the introduction of basic passenger rights on national and international trains, which clearly define the liability of train operators in case of death, injury or loss of luggage, the non-discriminatory obligations towards persons with reduced mobility, the availability of tickets, proper insurances and the procurement of personal safety in stations and on trains.

The agreement also stipulates a number of extended rights on international railway journeys, which enter into force in 2010. In principle, EU member states can choose to implement these rights on national, regional and urban rail travel. They include compensations in case of delays (25% of the ticket in case of one hour delay, 50% in case of two hours), advanced financial compensation to victims (or their families) in case of accidents, guaranteed assistance and maximal accessibility of stations and trains for persons with reduced mobility, the possibility to transport bikes and the setting up of a complaints handling

system. Station managers and train operators are also obliged to effectively communicate the rights of passengers.

EPF is satisfied with most basic and extended rights, although some items are still missing, for example passenger consultation. It further regrets that - due to the lobbying of the railway operators and the Eastern European countries - member states have the possibility to delay the implementation of the extended rights in national, urban and regional rail journeys up to 15 years. EPF urges all railway operators not to limit themselves to the scope of the regulation, but to actively improve the quality of their services in consultation with their passengers.



Eurostar at Ashford, picture by FreeFoto

PUBLIC TRANSPORT USERS'

ORGANISATIONS: EPF Chairman Trevor Garrod has produced a 4-page paper in English on how to form a local public transport users' organisation and what sort of actions such associations undertake. The paper draws mainly on the experience of such local associations in Great Britain but also refers readers to the EPF website www.epf.eu from which the reader can access the websites of all the

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national and regional train and bus users' organisations which form EPF. The paper was written for colleagues in Poland and Latvia who may be interested in forming associations, but is also available for other countries. Send request for a copy to Trevor Garrod, 15 Clapham Rd South, Lowestoft, NR32 1RQ, Great Britain.

INTERNATIONAL TICKETING: EPF has always pressed to better information and easier ticketing for passengers who want to make international journeys by train. Members of one of our British associations, the RDS / Railfuture, have been trying out the present system. At Bristol, there were prominent posters on the main station inviting people to fly to the Continent but no adverts for Eurostar. When our member asked at the travel centre, he was told that they had not sold Eurostar tickets for five years but the official did manage to find him a Eurostar leaflet. Another member, in the East Midlands, failed to find any Eurostar publicity at his Midland Main Line station. He therefore visited the Midland Main Line website, typed in "Paris" and was given advice on travelling to Paisley (a suburb of Glasgow). On November 14th, the Midland Main Line (from London to Sheffield) will share London St Pancras station with Eurostars to Paris and Brussels! Let us hope that, by then, the train operators will be giving passengers more encouragement to travel by train to Continental Europe. Certainly, we have been assured by the Association of Train Operating Companies that several companies are now in discussion with Eurostar about joint ticketing and joint marketing in the autumn. We look forward to hearing more. The recently created Railteam cooperation between Europe's leading high-speed rail operators may be a step forwards in the improvement of travel through Europe. EPF will follow up this initiative. See also: <http://www.railteam.com>

CROSS-BORDER LINKS: Good progress has been made with a 32-page report

which EPF is preparing on cross-border rail links between EU countries (also including Switzerland and Norway). The report describes existing links and puts them into three categories: excellent, good and poor. A fourth category has been created for links which should be reopened, sometimes by reintroducing passenger trains on a freight line, or sometimes by rebuilding a section of line. Buses are also included where relevant. In some cases, for example, there is a good bus link across a border where, perhaps, there has never been a railway. Our report also points to some success stories - such as the Rhine/Maas Euregio of Belgium, Germany and the Netherlands where the operators and local authorities of the three countries have co-operated to make it easier to travel between them by public transport. Much of the work is currently being done by Ian McDonald of our British member association RDS/Railfuture, but he has received input from many EPF members from Spain to Sweden, from Ireland to Bulgaria. It is hoped to have the report printed and on line during October.



The Benelux cross-border train at Antwerpen-Centraal - Picture by Stefan Stynen

EPF expects a lot of the new cross border cooperation instrument, the "European Grouping of Territorial Cooperation

(EGTC)", that shall apply by August 1st of 2007. See more on:

<http://www.cor.europa.eu/en/activities/egtc.htm>

With the EGTC regional and local authorities from different member states dispose of a new instrument to create an organizational structure behind the cross border public transport.

EPF SPEAKING: EPF Chairman Trevor Garrod gave a presentation to the annual seminar of the European Training Centre for Railways, in Brugge, Belgium, on July 6th. EPF members will be very welcome at this year's Salzburger Verkehrstage (Salzburg Transport Days) in Austria September 12th - 14th.

See also http://www.regionale-schienen.at/3_Verkehrstage.asp?bereich=3

EPF is willing to provide speakers to meetings of other organisations. Please contact our Secretariat.

TEN-T PROGRAMME FOR 2007-2013:

The European Commission organised in May 2007 a two-day information event to present the new Trans-European Transport Network Programme for the years 2007-2013. The TEN programme is one of the most important European financing means for transport infrastructure projects. It allocates approximately € 600 million annually to the construction of cross-border transport routes and other bottlenecks. The total TEN-T budget for the period 2007-2013 is € 8,013 billion. Well-known projects from the recent past include the Øresund bridge, the Paris-Brussels-Köln-Amsterdam-London High Speed rail line, and the TGV-Est. Extensive information about the TEN-T's is available on the following website of DG TREN of the European Commission:

http://ec.europa.eu/ten/transport/events/2007_05_10_tent_days_en.htm

In the opinion of EPF the TEN-T programme correctly pays a lot of attention to the rail network. EPF hopes the train operators will follow by offering train services at the European scale level. Special attention is necessary because last decades a lot of the so-called international trains - that we better should name Transeuropean trains as long as they are running through more than one Member State but without leaving the territory of the Union – have disappeared. EPF would like the Commission to take responsibility in the planning of a equally distributed network of Transeuropean long distance trains (completed where needed by long distance coaches). Europe needs a fast and safe and environmentally friendly terrestrial alternative for the continually expanding passenger transport by air.



Picture by Layla Aerts

EUROSTAR MEETING: Each year EPF members hold a detailed discussion with Eurostar managers – the most recent of which took place on June 15th in Brussels. Much of the discussion centred on the new British high-speed line which is due to come into use on November 14th; and the controversy over Ashford International which is due to lose many of its trains. We were pleased to learn that measures have been introduced to deal better with disruption to services; and that passenger numbers have risen by 32 % over the past year.

GREEN PAPER ON URBAN

TRANSPORT: In Autumn 2007 a so-called green paper (a discussion paper addressed to interested parties that may precede a white book that is a policy document with proposals for Community action) on urban transport will be publicised on the authority of transport commissioner Jacques Barrot. Cities, rather than the EU, are organising sustainable mobility policies to reduce accidents, congestion and pollution. But the EU wants to support the cities with an action plan that will be based on the green paper. Among other items, the Commission is thinking at harmonisation of systems for urban congestion charge and harmonisation of a tendering frame for buying clean vehicles. For more information:

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/clean/green_paper_urban_transport/index_en.htm

EPF awaits with interest this consultation document promised by the European Commission in September. We shall study it and submit comments on it.

SOME EPF-ACTIVITIES

On June 26th, Josef Schneider and Christopher Irwin represented EPF at a Community of European Railways meeting on climate change.

On June 28th, Christopher Irwin represented EPF at a European Commission meeting on social inclusion.

Conference - 70 delegates from 14 European countries gathered in Ismaning, near Munich on March 10th for the 5th Annual General Meeting and Conference of EPF. A full report is available from Trevor Garrod, 15 Clapham Rd South, Lowestoft, NR32 1RQ, Great Britain. You can also read the speakers' presentations on the EPF website.



Hosts, speakers and conference visitors in Ismaning - Picture by Rudy De Ceunynck

EPF HIS MANIFESTO

- Public transport must play a bigger role in domestic and international travel in Europe, and is especially important for regional regeneration.
- Fares, ticketing and financial policies should actively encourage rail use.
- Environmentally friendly public transport options should be prioritised and championed.
- Journeys should be seamless where possible, with easy and guaranteed connections - or viable alternatives if things go wrong.
- Buying tickets should be simple, with seat or sleeper reservations able to be made in any country, from any country.
- Information must be easy to obtain and easy to understand on both domestic and international services.
- Passengers should be properly consulted by operators when planning services and facilities.
- Basic rights to compensation and redress should be harmonised throughout Europe and should apply to all forms of public transport.

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- Operators should be encouraged to cooperate more effectively to promote long distance international rail travel.
- Public transport should be accessible to all sections of society.
- Short distance cross border travel must be made easier and be priced at a realistic level.
- Rail, air and ferry services must be properly integrated, with improved rail links to major airports and seaports.
- International and domestic high-speed lines must be further developed; but not at the expense of services on other routes.

This manifesto text is available also in French, German, Dutch, Italian and Esperanto on our website.



Picture by Layla Aerts

We plan to publish our next bulletin at the end of November. To receive it electronically, please send an e-mail to secretariat@epf.eu. Everyone on epf-list-plus will receive the bulletin automatically.