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DEAR READER,

Bienvenue au quatrième numéro de notre bulletin, dans lequel vous pouvez lire de nos activités qui se sont déroulées depuis juillet 2008.

Ceci a été une période pleine de débats et de réunions, d'études et d'expériences sur des thèmes divers, par exemple sur l'intégration rail/air, la sécurité, les voyages internationaux, la vente de billets et les droits des usagers des transports publics.

Dans ce bulletin nous ne vous donnerons qu'un goût de nos activités. Vous pouvez en lire davantage sur notre site web www.epf.eu

Nous recevons de plus en plus d'invitations pour donner des conférences et pour participer à des réunions et des congrès -

activités que nous espérons encore développer. Il y a aussi des projets de recherche que nous voudrions entreprendre ou bien auxquels nous voudrions participer. Nous espérons rencontrer beaucoup d'adhérents de nos associations membres le 14 mars 2009 à l'occasion de notre assemblée générale annuelle et surtout de notre septième congrès, qui auront lieu à Berne, en Suisse. Le thème sera l'intégration des transports destinés aux voyageurs.

Trevor Garrod, Président

Herzlich Willkommen zur vierten Ausgabe unseres Bulletins. Darin können Sie Berichte zur Tätigkeit von EPF seit Juli 2008 lesen. Diese Zeit ist voll von Debatten und Treffen, Studien und Erfahrungen gewesen, über solche

Themen wie zum Beispiel Zug-Flug-Integration, Sicherheit, internationale Reisen, Fahrkartenverkauf und Fahrgastrechte. In diesem Bulletin geben wir Ihnen einen Geschmack unserer Tätigkeit. Mehr darüber können Sie auf unserer Webseite www.epf.eu lesen. Wir erhalten immer mehr Einladungen um Vorträge bei Treffen und Tagungen zu halten - etwas, was wir hoffentlich werden weiterentwickeln können. Auch gibt es Forschungsprojekte, die wir gern unternehmen würden, oder woran wir teilnehmen möchten. Wir hoffen, viele Mitglieder der an EPF angeschlossenen Verbände am 14. März 2009 zu sehen, wann unsere nächste Jahreshauptversammlung und Tagung in Bern, Schweiz stattfindet. Thema:

Verkehrsintegration für
Fahrgäste.

Trevor Garrod, Vorsitzender

Welcome to the fourth
issue of our Bulletin, in
which you can read about
the activities of EPF since
July 2008.

This period has been full of
discussions and meetings,
studies and experiences on
such topics as for example
rail/air integration, safety,

international journeys,
ticket sales and passengers'
rights.

In this Bulletin we give you
a taste of our activity. You
can read more on our
website www.epf.eu
We receive an increasing
number of invitations to
give presentations at
meetings and conferences -
something which we hope
to be able to develop
further. There are also
research projects which we
should like to undertake or

in which we should like to
participate.

We hope to see many
members of the
associations affiliated to
EPF on the 14th March
2009 when we hold our
next Annual General
Meeting and Conference in
Berne, Switzerland. The
theme: Transport
Integration for Passengers.

Trevor Garrod, Chairman

EPF MEETS PEOPLE ...

On September 3rd, four EPF
representatives had a fruitful meeting at
the Berlaymont in Brussels. They met Mr
Mattia Pellegrini, a member of the
cabinet of the new Transport
Commissioner, Mr Antonio Tajani, and
three of his colleagues, to discuss the
implementation of rail passengers'
rights; prospects for other public
transport users' rights; air/rail integrated
ticketing and the proposed Freight
Orientated Rail Network.

On October 10th, three EPF
representatives met officers of the Union
International des Chemins de fer (UIC)
in Paris for a discussion which included
international ticketing, RailTeam and
night trains.

On November 14th EPF met managers at
Thalys to discuss issues relating to their
services and we also hope to have a
similar meeting with another
international train operator, Lyria.

On November 28th we were also due to
hold a further meeting with UITP.

RAIL SAFETY AND SECURITY

There has been great concern at two
train fires in Bulgaria, with 9 deaths on
first, and some other train incidents
without injuries this year and the way in
which these accidents were handled. We
note that the European Rail Agency has
discussed the problem. Our Bulgarian
member association Railway Transport
Friends Association has produced a
presentation on this topic and we hope
to develop it into a position paper for DG
TREN and EC.



Bulgarian train fires (source: <http://stamb.net>)
(thanks to Railway Transport Friends
Association)

HOW AND WHERE CAN WE BUY TICKETS?

Some train operators have been reducing ticket office facilities, especially for international journeys, and one even proposed charging extra for tickets bought this way! Fortunately that idea has been withdrawn following protests.

Advances in technology have of course meant that traditional ticket offices and travel agents are no longer the only methods of booking a rail ticket.

However, research by Passenger Focus in southern England recently showed that 86% of customers trusted the ticket office, 60% the internet, 49% the telephone and only 39% the ticket machine when buying a ticket. Is there a lesson there...?

EPF is going to do some research work to find out how easy it is to buy certain international tickets in different countries; as a possible pilot to a wider project on this issue.

EPF SPEAKERS

Our Secretary Josef Schneider gave a presentation at a forum of the International Institute for Information Design in Vienna in September and the Railway Interiors Expo 2008 in November. He also spoke at the Verkehrsclub Deutschland its Annual General Meeting and is due to make a further presentation at the UITP Congress on June 7th-11th in Vienna.

Our Treasurer, Rian van der Borgt, will be one of the speakers at the CIT conference on International Railway Transport Law in Berne on February 4th/5th 2009.

On March 24-26th 2009 the Rail Terminal Design and Operations Design Conference will find place in London. This conference will deal with stations design and Kurt Hultgren, member of the EPF board, will give a presentation of the passengers' point of view on stations. Kurt has previous experience as Stations Development Manager of SJ Swedish Railways.

EPF welcomes other invitations to provide speakers at meetings and conferences. We shall always do our best to find the most suitable representative.

RAIL – AIR TICKETING

In August the European Commission initiated a consultation over integrated ticketing for rail and air.

It sounds much neater in German: "Zug und Flug", as one travel agency markets it. Indeed, considerable progress has been made with this concept in Germany and Switzerland, but less so in some other European countries.

EPF submitted a detailed response to the EU, which you can read on our website www.epf.eu, or our Chairman, Trevor Garrod, 15 Clapham Rd South, Lowestoft, NR32 1RQ, UK, can send you a copy.

Key points in our submission are:

1. There should be integrated ticketing when an airport is served by high-speed trains (such as Roissy Charles de Gaulle or Frankfurt) or a good-quality airport feeder service (such as London Heathrow or Brussels).
2. Airports could be classified according to their accessibility by public transport; similar to the way in which the European

Commission classifies bathing beaches according to cleanliness.

3. Airlines and rail operators should ideally introduce rail/air ticketing on a voluntary basis; but an element of regulation and/or incentivisation may be necessary.
4. The booking system would probably best be an extension of the tried and tested IATA system; but whatever system is chosen, the important thing for passengers is that it is easy and effective.
5. Luggage registration to and from a major rail station should be optional, and not compulsory.
6. Measures must be in place so that if a connecting plane or train is missed, place will be found on the next available and suitable one. Air and train users' rights must therefore be harmonised.
7. Air/rail ticketing should not be limited to high-speed train services. Sometimes a train by a classic route may be the most suitable; and sometimes a zonal ticket (such as the Brandenburgkarte) could be the most suitable add-on to the flight ticket.
8. Information about public transport from the destination airport should be made available to passengers as a matter of course. A passenger waiting for his or her flight to Vienna at, say Madrid Airport should be able to obtain details about the public transport in the city, including if possible a day network ticket or smartcard. In the long term, a harmonised smartcard for all major European cities is worth investigating.

A conference on rail/air ticketing was held at Gatwick Airport, London, on October 29th, when Trevor Jones represented EPF.

INITIATIVE FERNREISEN – VOYAGES A LONGUE DISTANCE – LONG DISTANCE JOURNEYS

The next meetings of this study group are arranged for Saturday January 10th 2009 in Basle and for Saturday March 7th 2009 in Düsseldorf.

Issues to be discussed include the future of night trains; integrated ticketing and RailTeam; other ways to make long-distance international rail travel easier and more attractive; cross-border journeys; future action for EPF and its member associations.



High Speed Trains (picture by Josef Schneider)

If you are interested in taking part please contact Albert Lambert at albert.lambert@epf.eu and he will send you details in due course.

The main working languages of this study group are French and German. E-mail contributions in English will also be welcome.

RAIL PASSENGERS' RIGHTS

In 12 months from now, the European rail passengers' rights for which EPF has worked since its foundation should come into effect.

National governments are currently implementing the European regulation.

Many EPF member associations have been in contact with their Transport Ministries about this.

For those countries where we do not have associations, EPF's Chairman has written directly to the Transport Ministers.

1. Key points in his letter are:
 1. We do not wish to see unnecessary financial burdens placed on the rail industry; but we do want to see the highest level of consumer protection for rail passengers, comparable to those now in force in the airline industry.
 2. It is important to safeguard passengers' rights on all types of journey, and so we are concerned about the provision enabling Member States to exempt "urban, regional and suburban passenger services."
 3. If the current national system of compensation for delays, cancellations and missed connections is better than that proposed by the European Commission, we would expect the transposition to safeguard this system.



**Regional Train in Southern Germany
(picture by Josef Schneider)**

We look forward to the publication of rights for bus and coach and maritime passengers and shall comment on these when they appear.

MEETING WITH EUROSTAR

On October 10th 2008, representatives of EPF met with Eurostar managers in Paris as part of a regular pattern of meetings.

Much of the discussion this time centred on the incident in the Channel Tunnel on September 11th/12th and how Eurostar handled the emergency.

This was a large operation involving tens of thousands of passengers booked to travel between France, Belgium and the UK and we were told in detail of the measures taken to inform passengers, make alternative arrangements and pay compensation. We suggested ways in which arrangements could be further improved in the event of a similar problem in the Tunnel in future.

We were advised that the repair work in the Tunnel will continue beyond December 14th (when the new timetable was due to start). Eurostar is currently operating a slightly reduced number of trains between London, Paris and

Brussels with up to 30 minutes added to their journey time.

We also discussed connections at Lille Europe; how Eurostar passengers are surveyed; future extensions of services to Amsterdam and Cologne; and how controls at stations could be streamlined.

COMPLAINT HANDLING

Our member association Verkehrsclub Deutschland has a contract with the German Government to provide mediation for airline and rail passengers. EPF's Chairman recently had a very interesting meeting with two of their staff responsible and can provide a set of slides in English summarising their work. Contact him at 15 Clapham Rd South, Lowestoft, NR32 1RQ, UK or trevor.garrod@epf.eu.

Since 2005 Verkehrsclub Deutschland has handled 9,300 enquiries on rail and air problems. 20% of the airline issues cannot be solved as not all airlines using German airports are participating in the scheme. However, 45% of the conciliation proposals to the airlines were accepted and 85% of those to Deutsche Bahn. Nearly a quarter of rail complaints were about delays and the most common airline complaints (30%) concerned cancellations.

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT ELECTIONS 2009

These elections will take place in June 2009. Dialogue with Members of the European Parliament is an important part of EPF's work; and as part of that process we are also contacting political parties to advise them of issues which we should like to see addressed in their election manifestos.

In the UK, our member association Railfuture has met some current MEPs and has prepared a memorandum to the political parties.

Some of the issues which we should like to see addressed are relevant to all EU countries - such as easier cross-border travel by train; whether aircraft fuel should be taxed; problems in booking international rail tickets and compensation for delays.

Other issues raised by Railfuture are specific to the UK and countries to which it has direct rail and/or ferry links: such as freight services through the Channel Tunnel, Eurostar journeys north of London and accessibility to ferries for foot passengers.

This is the right time to sound out the parties on these issues and discuss with them their policy proposals at European level.

WHAT IS THE NAHVERKEHRSWEGWEISER ?

GPS based navigation systems are widely used for motorised individual transport. They show you how to reach chosen destinations everywhere and at any time.

There is no such "sat nav" system for public transport users. However, our colleague Jörg Bruchertseifer has devised the Nahverkehrswegweiser website, which is accessible from the EPF website via a link and which gives you information about public transport links to and from main rail stations in many European towns and cities.

The website also contains an introduction in English, French and Russian. Why not give it a try? Log on to: www.nahverkehr.info

It is hoped that the website can be developed further. Hopefully we can give more news in future bulletins.

DEVELOPING A EUREGIONAL PUBLIC TRANSPORT NETWORK IN THE EUREGIO MAAS RHINE

On 30th of June 2008 in Maastricht, 29 Dutch, Belgian and German authorities signed a letter of intent to further establish a Euregional public transport network. With this letter of intent the concerned public authorities and transport companies want to underline the importance of trans border public transport in this region of Europe with Aachen, Maastricht, Hasselt, Liège and Eupen as main centres.

At the website of the Euregio Maas Rhine the existing cross border public transport initiatives are presented. The Euregiobahn regional train link between Heerlen – Aachen – Stolberg is actually one of the main tangible initiatives of the Euregional transport co-operation.

A new intent is the realisation of a cross-border light rail between Maastricht and Hasselt. This light rail project "Flanders – Maastricht" offers a view on a sustainable direct rail link between the dense networks of the Belgian and the Dutch Limburg provinces. The actual travel time between Hasselt and Maastricht will simply be halved in the future. And this will also strengthen the relationship between the two universities at both sides of the border; they already work closely together under the name of "transnationale Universiteit Limburg" (tUL).



Euregio map

EPF welcomes this exemplary cross-border collaboration. This Euregional structure is a promising solution for the often neglected cross-border public transport links. It is obvious that such an initiative of high quality public service can only be taken by public authorities that consequently have to bear important financial responsibilities. The liberal approach in public rail transport, which is so cherished by the actual European Commission, has probably not much to offer in this context !

With bus and train through the Euregio :
http://www.euregio-mr.org/emr_site/site_nl/service/euregiobahn.php

More about the Interreg initiative :
http://www.interregemr.info/site_en/interreg_eu/interreg_eu.php

Vision document about the Euregion Maas Rhine : <http://www.euregio-mr.org>

mr.org/emr_site/pdf/Visiedocument_EN.pdf

EPF will try to follow up all the euregional public transport projects. We can learn a lot from the existing ones and they have to be promoted Europe wide. Therefore we would be grateful to collect readers' reactions at marc.broeckaert@epf.eu.

MAY TRAIN PASSENGERS WITH A HANDICAP COUNT ON SUPPORT WHEN TRAVELLING THROUGH EUROPE ? A QUESTION ASKED BY AN EXPERIENCED BLIND TRAIN TRAVELLER

European politicians are working at a European Union where transport of persons and freight is free. In this "free" market approach the EU-policy is striving for a privatised or liberalised public transport.

However, there is little political concern about the free travelling possibilities for people with a handicap, while they also are European citizens.

Is it normal that a handicapped traveller has to contact himself all the rail companies that he is going to use on his trip? Practically he then has to know a lot of different languages and he should not be afraid of a huge telephone bill.

Indeed one can not expect that all candidates for travelling nor all employees of rail companies are able to communicate in fluent English. And inter member state phone costs may increase quickly, especially when one has to wait online for some time.

Consequently it must be possible to organise the necessary support in the different interchange stations by way of the "own" station of departure.

Some days before starting his journey, the handicapped person should be able to contact an appropriate service in his

station to settle all necessary support in all concerned stations, and this in his own language and with a familiar service desk. It's obvious that the passenger must be sure that all engagements will be fulfilled during his journey.

And if the proposed task would be too much for railway services, why shouldn't travel agencies be able to do all this organisational work ? They have skilled people to contact relevant staff, not only in Europe, but all over the world.

In these times from extensive communication possibilities, people with a handicap should be released from all this practical concern linked with their travelling.

And at last, please beware for overruling. Procedures should remain easy to overlook. And the services offering support activities may never forget the central position of their client who doesn't want to be overwhelmed by well-meant but imposing care.

Reactions on this position will be very welcome to further develop an EPF-position on this important topic. They may be sent to firmin.criel@skynet.be, the chairman of the accessibility working party of the Vlaamse Reizigersbond vzw.

SALZBURGER VERKEHRSTAGE

Green tourism was the theme of the sixth Salzburger Verkehrstage, held in Austria from October 15th - 17th 2008. The 130 participants from 8 countries included several from EPF member organisations.

The venue, in the province of Salzburg, was the small town of Zell am See, beautifully situated by a lake surrounded by spectacular mountains and itself a good example of green tourism. The railway station is well-sited for the

pedestrianised town centre and many hotels, together with a well-equipped modern conference centre where the event was held.

It was not all talk. We were also given a ride from Salzburg to Zell in the Austrian Federal Railways' new Railjet train, which will soon be running to Munich and Budapest and then to other central European destinations.

The Pinzgauer Lokalbahn, a meter gauge railway damaged by floods in 2005, has also reopened to Mittersill and is now owned by the province of Salzburg. We enjoyed a ride on it, coupled with an evening at the Tauern National Park visitor centre in this small town.

See also:

<http://www.pinzgauer-lokalbahn.at.tf>.

Here are a dozen key points made during the presentations and discussions at this very informative and stimulating conference:

1. Rail travel should be part of the holiday or leisure experience, including for those tourists who have arrived in the area by plane or car.
2. Public transport operators must be customer-focussed and that includes having well-trained staff.
3. Over 80% of leisure visitors to Austria now come by plane or car; but they can be encouraged to use public transport around their resort and region - for example with a network card which also gives free entry, or concessions, at many attractions.
4. 22 resorts from Les Gels in France to Bled in Slovenia now market themselves as "Alpine Pearls". All are accessible to non-motorists; and all visitors arriving by train (or motorists who hand in their car keys for the duration of their stay) are entitled to a special pass for free or reduced rate facilities.
5. Rail has a larger share of the market for short-break holidays - as much as 60% in cities advertised by the German company Ameropa.
6. Over 50% of customers find out about holiday resorts and areas via the internet, even though they may then go to a travel agent to book. Websites therefore need to include information, or links to information, about trains to and from the destination and local public transport.
7. Another major German operator, TUI, now offers combined train and flight tickets from the customer's home station to the airport.
8. In Switzerland there is now a national network of footpaths and cycleways, served by 18,000 bus or tram stops or railway stations.
9. Representatives of the rail industry showed how train interiors could be adapted to carry, for example, more luggage and bicycles in summer; more commuters (and/or skiers) in winter.
10. New initiatives, such as rover tickets with special offers at other tourist attractions, take three years to reach their full potential.
11. In the Italian Alps, one line (from Meran to Mals) has reopened with cross-border bus links to Austria and Switzerland while another (from Trento to Male) has been

modernised, with local and regional authorities playing a key role.

12. It is important for public transport operators, whether public or private, to work closely with local hoteliers and other businesses which benefit from tourism. Events such as celebrating a line's birthday (every year!) and themed trains can be run in collaboration with local businesses.

See also:

http://www.regionale-schie-nen.at/3_Verkehrstage.asp?bereich=3.

Next year's Salzburger Verkehrstage will be on October 7th - 9th, in the city of Salzburg. Congratulations to Peter Haibach and Christa Schlager for their organisation of this year's event. We look forward to an equally stimulating conference next year.

NEXT EPF CONFERENCE AND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING IN 2009

On Saturday March 14th 2009 we shall meet in Berne, Switzerland, for our Annual General Meeting and Conference. The theme will be "Transport Integration for Passengers" and we are especially grateful to our colleagues from Verkehrsclub der Schweiz and Pro Bahn Schweiz for preparing a very interesting programme. The event will take place in the conference centre of the SBB (Swiss Federal Railways), whose Chief Executive, Mr Andreas Meyer, will be one of the speakers.

We shall also be pleased to welcome Mr Antonio Tajani, the European Commissioner for Transport and Tourism, as keynote speaker. Other guest speakers will include the SBB Director of Passenger Services, the President of

Verkehrsclub der Schweiz, the Director of Postbus and a representative of the Ministry of Transport.

The Conference will run from 10.00 to 17.00 and the Annual General Meeting from 17.30 to 18.30. The venue is just a 5-minute trolley bus ride from the main station and we shall also provide details of suitable hotels.

All members of EPF-affiliated organisations have a right to attend. **A booking form, including the charge and how to pay, will appear on our website immediately after Christmas and is also available from our Chairman, Trevor Garrod, 15 Clapham Rd South, Lowestoft, NR32 1RQ UK.**

On the Sunday following the Conference, there will be an opportunity to enjoy an excursion by train from Berne to Brig via the new Lötschberg base tunnel, running via the classic route higher up in the mountains and the original tunnel.

We look forward to seeing many colleagues from all over Europe at this gathering.

Colophon

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Copy finished on 5 December 2008.