

EPF-Bulletin 7 – August 2010

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INTRODUCTION

Bienvenue dans ce septième numéro du bulletin d'activités de la Fédération Européenne des Voyageurs.

L'hiver et le printemps ont vu des perturbations dans les transports à cause de la neige, des cendres volcaniques et d'autres causes. Voici de bonnes raisons qui plaident pour la collaboration entre les exploitants des transports publics, les gouvernements et la Commission européenne, pour que les voyageurs puissent entreprendre les trajets qu'ils ont besoin d'accomplir.

La situation souligne aussi l'importance des droits des passagers de tous les moyens de transport en commun, de l'information pour les déplacements locaux, régionaux et internationaux, de

l'investissement pour améliorer l'infrastructure et – si on ose le dire - de l'imagination de la part des exploitants ?

Dans ce bulletin, vous pouvez lire des opinions individuelles et collectives, et des rapports sur les efforts livrés concernant ces thèmes, de la part de notre Fédération et de la trentaine d'associations adhérentes, dans les pays et les régions d'Europe.

Mais ce bulletin est trop court pour vous donner tout les détails de ces opinions et de ces actions. Par conséquent, nous vous recommandons de visiter aussi notre site Internet www.epf.eu, où vous trouverez aussi des liens vers les sites de nos associations adhérentes.

Trevor Garrod
Président

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the seventh issue of the European Passengers' Federation bulletin of activity.

The winter and spring have seen transport disruption thanks to snow, volcanic ash and other causes. Here are strong reasons for co-operation between public transport operators, governments and the European Commission, so that travellers can undertake their necessary journeys.

The situation also emphasises the importance of passengers' rights; information about local, regional and international journeys; investment to improve the infrastructure and - dare one say it - some imagination on the part of the operators?

In this bulletin you can read individual and collective

opinions and about efforts on these topics by our Federation and some thirty affiliated associations in the countries and regions of Europe.

But this bulletin is too short to give you all the details of these views and actions and therefore we also recommend you to visit our website www.epf.eu where you will find links to the sites of our affiliated associations.

*Trevor Garrod
Chairman*

EINLEITUNG

Herzlich Willkommen zur siebten Ausgabe dieses Bulletins des Europäischen Fahrgastverband (EPF).

Im Winter mussten wir aufgrund von Schnee, Vulkanasche und diversen

anderen Ursachen zahlreiche massive Störungen des Verkehrssystems erleben. Für die Zukunft bedarf es einer wesentlich stärkeren Zusammenarbeit zwischen den Betreibern des öffentlichen Verkehrs, den Regierungen und der Europäischen Kommission, damit die Fahrgäste notwendige Reisen auch unter schwierigen Bedingungen unternehmen können.

Diese Erfahrung zeigt, wie wichtig Fahrgastrechte in allen Verkehrsmitteln, verlässliche Auskünfte im Nah-, Regional- und internationalen Verkehr, und Investitionen zur Verbesserung der Infrastruktur sind. Man wagt es kaum anzusprechen, gute Ideen und Tatkraft von Seiten der Betreiber sind hier gefordert.

In diesem Bulletin lesen Sie von individuellen Initiativen und gemeinsamen Aktivitäten unserer etwa 30 Mitgliedsverbände und dem Europäischen Fahrgastverband als Dachorganisation.

Aber dieses Rundschreiben ist zu kurz, um Ihnen alle Einzelheiten dieser Themen und Aktionen mitzuteilen. Deswegen empfehlen wir Ihnen unsere Webseite www.epf.eu zu besuchen, wo Sie auch direkte Links zu den Webseiten unserer Mitgliedverbände finden werden.

*Trevor Garrod
Vorsitzender*

WELCOME TO DERKE!

EPF's recent General Meeting accepted an application for membership from the Debreceni Regionális Közlekedési Egyesület (DERKE). Based in Hungary's second city of Debrecen, DERKE is a voluntary body working for better public transport in the city and its region in the east of the country.

Its members are also keen to see improved public transport links across the border with Romania. Both countries have signed the Schengen Agreement, Romania will join the Schengen Area in 2011, so their citizens will be allowed to move freely between them. However, there has been little effort so far from train and bus operators to improve cross-border services.



You can learn more about DERKE from their website: www.derke.hu.

TAXIS

Taxis can be an important part of a multi-modal door-to-door journey. As public transport users we therefore have an interest in measures to ensure that taxi services are reliable and reasonably priced. They also need to be clearly signposted to passengers arriving in a town or city where perhaps they have not been before.

Within towns and cities the member organisations of EPF promote public transport and other "green" modes (such as cycling) - but, for some journeys, a taxi may be the most suitable mode.

Our colleague Dorothy Gallagher of the Consumers' Association of Ireland writes of recent dispute between Dublin taxi drivers and the Taxi Regulator. The taxi drivers urged the Minister of Transport to intervene.

"They want a three year moratorium on the issuing of new taxi licenses and stricter tests for applicants for taxi licenses which would be equal to or more stringent than the tests for the ordinary Irish driving license.

From the Consumers' point of view it is astonishing that the tests to become a taxi driver are not already more stringent than the ordinary test for a driving license because it is presumed that a taxi driver will have a special expertise whereas the holder of an ordinary driving license may have little driving experience.

It has been brought to my attention that taxi drivers stationed at Parnell Street have freely admitted to passengers that "they do not know how to get to the Southside"



Dublin taxi

"Consumers have also reported that taxi drivers at Dublin Airport do not recognize suburban addresses and need explicit directions from the passenger to go to suburban locations. I had one such experience myself when taking a taxi at St-Stephen's Green. The driver had to be directed street by street to the suburbs.

So what has happened to the tests of local geographical knowledge of Dublin.

How are these drivers being passed? Does the test exist anymore or are taxi drivers simply automatically passed?

When the Irish taxi companies look into this problem for passengers perhaps the public will be more sympathetic to their demands'

London taxi drivers have to pass a stringent test to show that they know their way around the city - but even then, things can go wrong - as they did with three visitors to our EPF London Conference in 2008!

We shall be interested to hear about how taxis are regulated, and how drivers qualify, in other European countries. Please e-mail our secretariat at secretariat@epf.eu.

FERRIES – HOW EASY IS IT TO USE THEM?

In our last Bulletin we gave examples of maritime ferries which were restricting foot passengers or which became more difficult to use for those passengers arriving or leaving the port by public transport.

Interestingly, during the flight ban following the Icelandic volcano eruption, some cross-Channel operators between England and France lifted their ban on footpassengers on night ferries. Does that not prove something...?

The International Committee of one of our British member associations, Railfuture, is researching a report on ferries connections between Great Britain, Ireland and Continental Europe, which it plans to publish in October 2010.

Initial research shows that, the longer the ferry crossing, the more likely it will accept foot passengers and cyclists. Only Harwich - Hoek van Holland, Holyhead -

Dun Laoghaire and Newhaven - Dieppe still have good rail/sea/rail facilities; though some other crossings, such as North Shields (Newcastle) - IJmuiden (Amsterdam) and Hull - Rotterdam/Zeebrugge do have bus connections to or from the main rail station.

Experience showed that operators were not always helpful to non-motorists. One passenger was not told of the re-timing of the ferry, and connecting bus, and nearly missed it. One cyclist was made to wait until all motor vehicles had driven on to the Birkenhead - Dublin ferry, before being allowed to board. This had been his second choice, after being told by P and O, operator of the Liverpool - Dublin ferry, that "health and safety reasons" prevented non-motorists from using their services!

One passenger wanting to use the Ramsgate - Ostend ferry (during Eurostar's midwinter problems), was told that they did not take foot passengers "as such", but would turn a benevolently blind eye to anyone who could persuade an already-booked motorist or lorry driver to include him among his or her permitted 4 or 5 passengers!

What a contrast to the excellent footpassenger-friendly ferry between Helsingborg and Helsingør which some of us experienced during our visit to Sweden in March for the EPF Conference in Malmo. We also learned of a ferry using the Swedish port of Trelleborg where foot passengers were driven on and off the hold of the ship in a bus.



Scandlines ferry Aurora in Helsingborg harbour (source: Wikipedia)

STENA Line continues to offer an attractive rail/sea/rail package between any station in East Anglia (the region of England which includes Cambridge, Norwich and Ipswich) and any station in the Netherlands.

Peter Walker, who is writing the Railfuture report, would be pleased to hear from anyone using, or trying to use, a ferry between Great Britain and Ireland, or between Great Britain or Ireland and the Continent, this year. He would like to hear both good and bad experiences. For example, was it easy to find out about and book the journey? Was it easy to reach and leave the port without a car? How helpful was the ferry operator?

Jürg Tschopp would also be keen to hear your experiences, so that they can also be publicised by the Verkehrsclub der Schweiz.

Please contact them at
pj.walker@zen.co.uk and
juerg.tschopp@epf.eu.

EUROPEAN PASSENGERS' FEDERATION IN SWEDEN

Public transport users from 13 European countries gathered in Malmo, Sweden, on March 20th for the annual Conference of the European Passengers' Federation.

Keynote speakers were Mrs Åsa Torstensson, the Swedish Infrastructure Minister and Mrs Veronica Manfredi, a member of the cabinet of Mr Siim Kallas, the new European Transport Commissioner.

Mrs Torstensson emphasised the essential role of public transport in tackling environmental issues and creating jobs, but said that operators must address passengers' needs and offer good, affordable services.

Mrs Manfredi reported on the efforts of the European Commission to implement passengers' rights in the air and rail sectors; and complete the same process for bus, coach and ship passengers. The Commission also handled thousands of queries from passengers via EuropeDirect and she looked forward to a "Common Charter of Passengers' Rights."

Other speakers covered a range of train and bus topics including information, ticketing, customer care and integration and there was much audience participation in questions and discussion.

The speakers' presentations and the conference report (in English) can be found on the website www.epf.eu; the conference report is also available in hard copy from Trevor Garrod, 15 Clapham Rd South, Lowestoft, NR32 1RQ, UK.



Trevor Garrod, chairman of EPF, and Kurt Hulgren, host of the Malmö conference (picture: Rudy Deceuninck)

EPF events, like many of those of Railfuture, try to combine local public transport experiences with the presentations and debates of the conference hall. On this occasion, Kurt Hultgren, secretary of the Swedish member organisation ResenarsForum, as well as organising the conference, also arranged two interesting excursions the following day.

Some visited the exhibition of the rail tunnel which has been built under the city of Malmo, giving improved access to business, residential and leisure areas, and travelled over the magnificent combined road/rail bridge across the Öresund to Denmark. The bridge and its associated infrastructure was opened in 2000 and has made travel by rail in the regions on either side of the Öresund (or Sound) much easier.

Others took a rail trip northwards to the towns of Lund, Landskrona and Helsingborg. The rail infrastructure along this corridor has been greatly improved during the past two decades.

We used innovative bus services in Lund and a trolley bus link in Landskrona, all accessible, like the trains, with one regional smartcard. At Helsingborg we visited the impressive interchange between train, bus and ferry. Our excursion concluded with a delicious buffet meal on the ferry "Hamlet" as it

went to and from across the strait between Helsingborg and Danish Helsingør (English Elsinore). The ferry was not covered by the smartcard, but the fare was very reasonable.

We also had fine (but chilly) weather on this first day of spring, to appreciate how rail and other modes of public transport are bringing together and indeed helping to regenerate communities in this fascinating cross-border region of Europe. It is also easier to reach it now by train from Great Britain - but if you need to fly, choose Copenhagen's Kastrup Airport from which you can catch a frequent train to any of the places mentioned in this article.

EPF CONFERENCE, MALMÖ, 20TH MARCH 2010

Address by Mrs Åsa Torstensson, Minister of Infrastructure of Sweden.



Swedish Infrastructure Minister Torstensson at the EPF conference in Malmö, Sweden (picture: Bernt Månsson)

"Sweden's Climate and Transport Politics - the role of Public Transport as an important Factor."

The Minister began by stating that public transport was already an important element in society and could be an essential part of the strategy for tackling environmental issues and creating jobs. However, it must offer good and affordable services.

When she took office in 2006 she had raised the question: What do passengers need and what do they want? How do we get more people on to public transport?

In 2008, a Long-term Action Plan had been received from the transport industry and to succeed this needed a well-adapted legal framework.

The opening up of the rail network in 2009 should make rail a more modern industry.- for example with competitive tendering from non-viable services. There were no longer any barriers to potential operators.

Already the effect could be seen with two different companies operating between Malmö and Stockholm offering different prices. On October 10th a final step would be taken to make the rail market fully open.

Mrs Torstensson said that the focus must now shift from production to catering for the consumer. Current legislation was 30 years old and a new law was being drafted to allow open access to local and regional services. Strategic regional planning was needed to cater for long-term needs, including urban planning and infrastructure. For all operators, participation in a central information system would be mandatory.

The new law would enter into force on January 1st 2011.

Turning to staffing issues, the Minister said that it was difficult to recruit new train and bus drivers and so there was a proposal to lower the age requirement to 18 under appropriate conditions.

For a long time there had been discussions about a cross-modal perspective but this did not exist in reality.

Under the Swedish EU Presidency, high priority had been given to the regulations and rights of bus, coach and boat passengers. Agreement had now been reached in the European Council.

In Sweden, a national investigation had been commissioned to look at filling gaps in users' rights. A proposal was being made to the Government for an Advisory Passenger Forum. Research had indicated that cars were the mode of transport which produced most satisfaction for their users. Satisfaction with public transport modes needed to be increased.

(Next year's EPF conference will be in Barcelona, Catalunya, Spain, on Saturday March 12th 2011. Please note the date.)

EURORAIL 2010

EuroRail is an annual conference of railway professionals and this year the European Passengers' Federation was invited to participate and speak on the theme "Are your passengers happy passengers?"



The event took place at the end of February in Berlin and Trevor Garrod attended together with Willy Smeulders of the Flemish association TreinTramBus and Dietmar Dalbogk of the German association Pro Bahn.

This was also an opportunity to network and have informal dialogue with operators, infrastructure managers and firms which supply the railways with everything from rolling stock to signalling to catering equipment.

Open access and franchising were among the topics discussed. Some speakers were dubious about the effectiveness of this. Supporters pointed out that it could reduce subsidy requirements and lead to innovation; but that new operators should have access to existing depots and stock to avoid duplication. Liberalisation was "not an end in itself", however. It needed to prove that it could provide better quality at an affordable price.

Several speakers called for a "level playing field", not only between rail and its competitors, but also between train operators. The need to address taxation, charging and internalisation of external costs was widely accepted.

A speaker from the Spanish Railways explained how they had developed a 1500km high-speed network to counter competition from road and internal airlines and stressed that a high-speed train operator must be "a true partner that accompanies the customer throughout his/her journey." that included giving the customer all relevant information, including the time and cost of his/her journey to/from the station and/or airport. Passengers were given a refund if the train was late or the air-conditioning was not working.

A speaker from the high-speed operator, Eurostar, said that 130 million people fly each year between the UK and the Continent and 10 million now go by train. Of those flying, 11 million were travelling to or from places that could be reached by train within 6 hours. "To grow the market you have to get more people to connect", was his conclusion. This was

why Eurostar had joined RailTeam which brings together several high-speed operators.

It was admitted that train operators were not able to share data in the way that airlines did, and a study, Network 2020, was now underway to explore greater integration.

Our EPF presentation focussed on easy rail travel, measuring passenger satisfaction, passenger rights and fares. We described the British National Passenger Survey (which has few equivalents in the rest of Europe at present) but also made the point that it was not enough to seek the views of passengers on the train. Operators also needed the views of non-passengers on why they were not using the train when they could do so!

More information on EPF's presentation can be found on the website www.epf.eu.

THE EYJAFJALLA-VOLCANO AS AN OBJECTIVE PARTNER FOR THE ADVOCATES OF EUROPE-WIDE PUBLIC TRANSPORT?

The eruptions of the Icelandic volcano made it necessary to close a part of the European sky, and this for almost a week (from 14 April until about 20 April). The volcano did not choose a good moment to spit out its clouds full of ash and dust: just then a lot of people had to return home after Easter holidays abroad.



Overlooking the Eyjafjallajökull glacier and the ongoing volcano eruption from Hvolsvöllur on April 18th, 2010 (source: Wikipedia)

Nowadays many people travel by plane over long distances on the European continent. For intercontinental journeys the plane is clearly the best mode without discussion, but at continental level - and especially at the level of the Union - public transport by rail and road are too often forgotten as safe and comfortable alternatives and often more environmentally friendly.

Now again, mass media focussed on the impossibilities of travel because of no planes allowed in the sky. Blocked travellers offered the press some exciting sensation. Only incidentally, could one read or hear that train services were fully booked, that some extra trains were put into service and that coach operators did good business.

All this fuss, concerning a lot of passengers, made EPF to feel the necessity to react.

That the public authorities in Europe decided to close the sky in the problematic parts of the territory can only be applauded. Safety of passengers is not an object for compromises, it simply deserves full priority. Commercial interests - even if the big financial costs the air companies have undergone due to this natural calamity are important - have to remain subordinate to safety policy.

EPF deplores that the alternatives for travelling by plane remained neglected in the mass media.

It was not only a matter of the press. The companies providing long distance public transport by rail and coach missed this opportunity to promote their services. Perhaps because they are aware there are fundamental problems that keep them from offering a full alternative?

This makes EPF also to ask some questions about the organisational structures of long distance train services.

The long distance train network in Europe has silently been reduced to high speed trains jumping (over relatively short distances) from one big city to another and to national cross country trains. Trans-European trains – using a combination of high speed rail and conventional rail – running over meaningful long hauls are lacking in the train time tables!

Is there no demand anymore for trans-European train services during the day or over night? Do travellers prefer (low cost) planes? Hard to say, without an existing long distance train alternative. When there is no alternative, one can not choose.

And why don't people use connecting trains to cover their long distance journey? A lot of obstacles appear: procurement of a series of different train tickets, expensive travel costs because the price "simply" equals the sum of all the prices of the different tickets of the different operators; no operator that feels responsible for the transfers however these are essential to maintain the travelling chain; discomfort of transfers, especially with a lot of luggage; etc.

Why are there so few cross Europe trains? The traditional co-operation

between (national) train operators is now less in evidence. Rail liberalisation has not helped. Nor has the "hidden subsidy" to the airline industry which pays no tax on its fuel. Individual operators, that nowadays are entitled to take the initiative for such a trans European train service, are apparently not interested. Without public service subventions and with high fees for using the rail infrastructure, these services clearly are not commercially viable.

A volcano eruption gives EPF a good occasion to repeat its demand to rethink European rail policy!

The market of the privately run long distance coach lines may react quickly to respond to special needs, but this same market is not an efficient tool to steer all alone the development and the functioning of a cross Europe train system.

European citizens need - for different reasons - a good system of cross Europe trains, covering the whole territory and running over underpinned long distance hauls. These trains must be considered as a public service for the 500 million European citizens, organised by their public authorities. And why not organised and funded under the responsibility of their European Commission itself?

CHAIRMAN'S NOTE

The present situation with tens of thousands of stranded passengers around Europe is unacceptable and all transport operators, led by the European Commission and Council of Ministers,, should work together to resolve it as quickly as possible.

Volcano eruptions are relatively rare, but other serious disruption (such as that resulting from last winter's snow or

major accidents) also underline the need for contingency plans.

Train, ferry and coach operators need to be offering a better alternative. There have been some welcome examples of this - such as the lifting of the ban on foot passengers on some cross-Channel ferries, and Arriva Train Wales and Virgin laying on extra trains for the increased numbers of passengers on the ferries between Holyhead and Ireland.

A better alternative however also means an integrated trans-Europe rail booking system. It could also mean a central strategic database of vehicles, vessels and rolling stock and where they are. National Transport Ministers should consider this course of action.

Airlines should rely on their insurance rather than expecting the taxpayer to help them out.

Transport Ministers should recognise the constructive nature of European Union passenger rights regulations and ensure that these are applied effectively in their countries.

In the longer term, the EC should take the lead in developing simple and effective cross-modal passenger rights and international contingency planning.

MAKING INTERNATIONAL RAIL EASIER

The European Railway Agency seeks to harmonise the national rail networks so that it is easier for international freight and passengers to travel across borders.

In the case of passengers, this means easier information and booking facilities.

Part of this process is the Telematics Applications for Passengers, Technical Specifications for Interoperability - or TAP TSI for short.

Earlier this year, draft recommendations were issued by the ERA, and many of the rail users' organisations around Europe have studied and responded to them.

Railfuture's response was sent to the ERA on March 30th.

While welcoming the TAP TSI as "an important step towards easier international rail travel", Railfuture's response set out several concerns and suggestions for improvements.

Firstly, the TSI should cover domestic as well as international rail services. This is particularly important in Great Britain, where there are many domestic train operators and effectively only three "international stations." (St Pancras, Ebbsfleet, Ashford and hopefully in due course Stratford.) Therefore, for most British passengers, their international journey starts at a domestic station.

Secondly, in line with European Consumer Strategy, intending passengers should be given as much information as possible so that they can choose the most suitable fare for their journey. That also includes making them aware of the London International ticket which should be available from their local station. We are not convinced that the TSI as presently drafted would guarantee this facility.

The Railfuture response goes on to urge creation of a single, impartial electronic portal for timetable and fares information. The existence of such a portal should be mentioned on all transport operators companies (TOC) websites and where appropriate in other publicity.

Experience has shown that it is not enough just to rely on the individual goodwill and initiative of operators to provide such information. Some degree of enforcement is necessary, but it

should be as simple and workable as possible.

Footnote: recent weeks have seen instances of severe disruption to air travel. All the more reason for easy information and booking facilities for the rail or indeed rail/sea/rail alternative.

CROSS-BORDER JOURNEYS

Trevor Garrod writes...

On May 2nd I made a cross-border journey by train between Maastricht and Liège. It was the first time I had done that particular trip by rail.



Liège-Guillemins station by Calatrava (picture: Stefan Styren)

It was quite easy. I had just 6 minutes to change and simply had to walk along the platform from the big yellow Dutch Inter-City train from Amsterdam to the bright red Belgian local train. Although my ticket only took me to Maastricht, I was easily able to buy a cheap weekend return to Liège from the Belgian conductor.

The return journey later that day was equally easy.

Only one thing might have made it easier - an announcement on the train about the platform of the connecting service.

That is an example of an easy cross-border journey. Not all are as simple or convenient as that, however. In our forthcoming EPF report on "Journeys without Borders" we shall look at some of the problems to be surmounted and at some good practice that could be followed elsewhere.

We aim to issue our report at the beginning of September. It will be announced on our website www.epf.eu. If you are able to help in compiling it, please contact me at trevor.garrod@epf.eu. I am writing the report in English but it ought to appear in full in French, German and possible other languages as well. Would anyone have time to do translations?

NIGHT TRAINS CROSS-BORDER JOURNEYS

Every year DSB, Danish State Railways, publish in February the leaflet "International Timetable", with all international trains from and to Denmark. Since the Yom Kippur War and oil crisis there have been very much debates about journeys with private cars, coaches and airplanes with railways as alternative, but in the real world the number of international trains has decreased, especially night trains with sleepers. Fierce competition has forced the low budget companies to offer tickets for prices, that only covers the costs, and the victims to that price policy are security, environment and climate, comfort and the wages and working conditions of staff, plus of course railways.

On the bright side are the huge tunnel - and bridge projects, development of fast passenger trains and the international cooperation between railway companies in Europe. The classic night train Hamburg - Paris Gare du Nord is history, but that's because of the new railways as the Neubaustrecke in Germany and LGV Est from Paris Gare de l'Est.

Therefore the night train today runs from Hannover and via Saarbrücken to Paris Gare du Est.

If we see Copenhagen as a hub, there are in fact two northbound lines, one east line, and five southbound lines plus one southbound from Århus.

A: Copenhagen - Stockholm: There are four direct SJ X 2000, they all call at the airport CHP to boarding passengers, and a sleeper departing in Malmö at 21.43 and arriving in Stockholm at 5.56, train 21.43 from Copenhagen gives connection. Some of the southbound X 2000 from Stockholm are very fast, train 505 depart from Stockholm at 17.40 and arrive in Malmö at 21.55 and Copenhagen 23.37. The sleeper with depart in Stockholm at 23.06 and with arrival in Malmö at 6.27, connection with 6.42 which arrive Copenhagen 7.17.

B: Copenhagen - Göteborg. With 24 trains daily in each direction from 5.23 to 20.25 (from Copenhagen) there are plenty of connections, but because the tunnels under the ridge Hallandsåsen are not yet complete, the trains can't be fast like Malmö - Stockholm. Although a X 2000 departing Copenhagen 6.59 arriving Göteborg 10.30 with seven calls is not a slow train!

C: Copenhagen – Kristianssand / Karlskrona / Kalmar. Because all trains run via Malmö and Hässleholm (a huge junction) there are many connections, and 26 trains in each direction crossing the Danish - Swedish border, but most trains terminate at Hässleholm, Alvesta or Karlskrona.

Denmark - Sweden - Denmark. Yes, there are through Intercity trains Copenhagen - Ystad, where ferries link the island Bornholm to Denmark. It can be discussed, if that are domestic or international trains? From March to November five trains daily in each direction, else three trains.

To lovers of the Kurt Wallander serials I can inform that after the opening of the Sound Link 2000 DSB use IC3-DMUs, but after electrification of the line to Ystad the class ET with equipment to 15kV16,7 Hz in Sweden and 25kV50Hz current in Denmark are at service, the Sound bridge has 25kV50Hz. Four car trains with rubber noses like IC3 - DMU, but they have body of stainless steel in shining finish, blue tinted windows and orange door frames. They are designed to the traffic across the Sound and delivered from ASEA, Västerås, 2000 - 2002.

Travelttime Copenhagen - Ystad 1 hour and 18 minutes, the train only calls at Svedala and Skurup, they bypassing Malmö. The crossing Ystad - Rønne (Bornholm) takes 1 hour and 15 minutes.

D: Copenhagen - Femarn - Lübeck - Hamburg - Berlin. Deutsche Bundesbahn runs this service via the Rødby - Puttgarden ferry and use ICE diesel trains, there is no electrification Ringsted - Rødby and Puttgarden - Lübeck. Of six daily in each direction only on proceed to Berlin and vice versa, but on the other hand there are many fast trains Hamburg - Berlin today.

E: The German ICE diesels also have trips to and from Århus, ICE 381 departs Århus 7.54, arriving Hamburg 12.32 and Berlin 14.38. Opposite direction ICE 380 departs Berlin 11.16, arrival Hamburg 13.18 and Århus 18. 04. These trains have no calls at all between Hamburg and Berlin. ICE 386 depart Hamburg 9.30 and arrive Århus 14.02, ICE 387 depart Århus 14.24 arrive Hamburg 18.53. The other connections are all with changes at Fredericia and Padborg, therefore not international trains.

F: International night trains to Germany, the Netherlands, Austria and Switzerland.

The ordinary night train departs Copenhagen 17.41, use the route via the belts to Kolding and cross the Danish-German border at Padborg, by that most people in Denmark are able to catch the train with other trains. By coupling to other night trains, there are four main destinations: Amsterdam via Köln (Cologne), München, Innsbruck and Basel. Arrivals respectively 10.29, 9.00, 11.36 and 10.37. In the opposite direction departure Amsterdam 19.01, München 19.00, Innsbruck 16.23 and Basel 18.04. December - March these trains are complemented with "the Skier" departing Copenhagen 18.42 and proceeding to St Anton am Arlberg in Austria.

Train no EN 483/CNL 473 departure Copenhagen 17.41, calls Hamburg 11 minutes past midnight and have no calls before arrival 6.54 at Frankfurt am Main, and 10.37 at Basel. With a X 2000 from Stockholm 12.21 a traveller can be in Copenhagen 17.30 and catch the sleeper. Because of excellent connections between Basel and Mulhouse, the journey can proceed to Lyon with Corail and Nice with TGV, arrival 22.37. But I will prefer to spend some time in Mulhouse because of Cité du Train, Musée du Chemin de Fer Mulhouse.

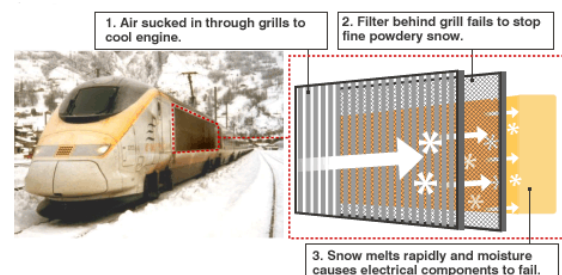
Erland Egefors

EUROSTAR

Thousands of passengers were inconvenienced by the 3-day suspension of Eurostar services in the cold weather just before Christmas 2009, and the company set up a review under Claude Gressier and Christopher Garnett to investigate the problems.

EPF submitted comments, following discussion among our member associations.

In our comments we said that the trains should have been better equipped to cope with the snow, as indeed are those Eurostars used on services from London to the French Alps.



Eurostar: what went wrong (source: Eurostar)

Evacuation of the first stranded train was quite well handled by Eurotunnel, but evacuation of the other four stranded in the Chunnel was much less satisfactory. The evacuation procedures of Swiss and Austrian Railways in their longer Alpine tunnels could usefully be studied.

The EPF submission notes that Eurostar's level of customer care has been widely criticised and must be fully investigated. We called for the real reasons to be put in the public domain rather than passengers having to rely on some of the more sensational media reports.

We also urged that passengers should be properly compensated and given proper assistance under European Union and international conditions of sale rules.

The likelihood of similar problems in the future could be offset by improving staff training and guidelines.

The Gresier and Garnett report was published in February 2010 and recommended engineering improvements to the trains, better evacuation procedures and better communication.

The report also recommended that Eurostar provides information on alternative means of transport for passengers; clear information on

compensation available, and better handling of delayed and evacuated passengers at terminals. The company should also reach an agreement with other train companies on the acceptance of Eurostar tickets, as well as wider help for passengers who need extra assistance in the event of a train breaking down.

Soon after the report appeared, a serious accident between two Belgian commuter trains at Buizingen, south of Brussels on the track between Brussels and Halle, caused Eurostar services to be suspended again, this time between Lille and Brussels.



Buizingen accident (source: GVA.be)

On February 16th, EPF Chairman Trevor Garrod was interviewed on BBC Radio Five Live. He said that we regretted the loss of life in the accident and expected the Belgian Railways to investigate the causes; but meanwhile it was not good enough to Eurostar to simply suspend services. They should consider diverting services or at least informing passengers of alternative routes.

In the event, it took two weeks for services to return to normal. Some leaflets were produced by Eurostar giving alternative routes but it was not easy to obtain reliable information from Eurostar staff. The websites of Eurostar, Belgian, French, Dutch and German railways all gave different and sometimes contradicting information about Eurostar services and replacement

options. Maybe the restructuring of the company, already under way, will improve matters here. We certainly look forward to news that the recommendations of the Gressier/Garnett review are being implemented.

DIALOGUE WITH UITP

EPF meets twice a year with officers of the Union International des Transports Publics - the international professional body for public transport operators, based in Brussels.



At the February meeting, EPF colleagues from Belgium, France, Spain, the UK and Hungary took part in two hours of detailed discussion.

1. We discussed the European Union's Action Plan on Sustainable Urban Mobility. UITP wanted to see progress on the internalisation of external costs, and we agreed with them. We also agreed that it was important to identify all the benefits of public transport, including social inclusion, when pressing for more investment. It was pointed out that the "greenness" of public transport, in comparison with private transport, was likely to decrease as more electric cars were introduced. However, should "green-ness really be based on a comparison of passenger-kilometres rather than the efficiency of particular vehicles?
2. Means of payment - UITP saw ITSO (contactless pass) systems as an important way forward. The EC could encourage greater harmonisation here. The British PlusBus and German City Ticket systems were also important in enabling people who had arrived by train to continue seamlessly to their final destination by local

public transport. UITP pointed out, though, that local authorities saw their first loyalty as being to their own residents and so looked for local solutions to local problems. EPF understood this but pointed out that a town or city should encourage visitors, whether for tourism, business or both, as this was of benefit to their economy. It was therefore also in the authority's interest to make its public transport system easy to use.

3. The end-to-end journey: we drew attention to projects in Spain, Germany and Sweden to make it easier to plan an end-to-end journey - which would usually be multi-modal if using public transport. A system such as Google Maps was often based on ideal assumptions and was unrealistic - taking no account of congestion or weather conditions, to say nothing of environmental impact. The PoMo system being developed in Catalonia, however, enabled the person planning a journey to compare the private and public transport alternatives in terms of time, cost and environmental impact. On the last point: electric cars would reduce emissions, but would still take up space! It was agreed that, for city transport, it was more helpful to give information about service frequency rather than exact times. UITP was working on good practice guidance to help operators. It was agreed that UITP and EPF should continue dialogue on these matters.
4. We also discussed a number of other topics reported elsewhere in this bulletin.

MEETING WITH THALYS

EPF members in France, Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany hold an annual meeting with Thalys managers to discuss issues in depth. The most recent such discussion took place on April 7th.



We were told about the challenges of running Thalys services after the Buizingen accident. The company had tried to run them via Kortrijk and then via Charleroi, but there were operational and capacity problems on both routes and in the end the trains were run via the normal route with 25 minutes added to their schedules.

We expressed concern about poor communications and urged that alternative train services should have been mentioned to passengers, even if these were slower. We also pointed out that not all staff seemed to be aware of CIV rules concerning tickets.

The upgrade programme for the 26 Thalys train sets should be complete by the end of 2010. Currently 14 of them have been renovated.

There are now 8 daily trains on the Paris - Amsterdam route; from September there will be 9 and from December 10. Consideration is being given to earlier trains on the Paris - Cologne route in each direction Thalys has also agreed to look at a through service on Saturdays between Cologne and Marseille.

Concern was expressed that the second exit from the Eurostar to Thalys platforms at Brussels often seemed to be blocked. Thalys will look into this. It is especially important when there is a tight connection between the two services.

We also raised the lack of cheap fares, but were informed that 75% of tickets

are sold at a price lower than the full fare. Thalys is aware that there is a perception that their trains are expensive, but assured us this is not always the case and they are discussing the matter further.

An experiment is being tried whereby a former luggage compartment has been adapted to carry four bicycles. The results of this experiment will be known during the summer.

Thalys delays are never shown on the DB website. Further season ticket holders between Aachen and Cologne never get any compensation for delay. Thalys will take up these matters with DB. Progress does seem to have been made on the application of CIV rules when Thalys trains are cancelled.

EPF also referred to problems caused by broken connections at Aachen (from Mönchengladbach) and in Cologne.

Finally, we were informed that over the next 2-3 years Thalys will concentrate on its core business and improving the quality; but in the longer term there may be new projects.

Pierre Havelange

INITIATIVE FERNREISEN

Unser Kollege Albert bringt von Zeit zu Zeit ein elektronisches Rundschreiben dieses Namens aus, worin er Information drückt, die den internationalen Bahnkunden nützlich ist, die man aber anderswo oft nicht sehr leicht finden kann.

Um ein Exemplar zu erhalten, melden Sie sich bitte bei albert.lambert@epf.eu.

Er freut sich auch auf Auskünfte, Reisetips usw für künftige Ausgaben.

Pour ce bulletin d'informations utiles pour le voyageur international en train, contactez Albert Lambert svp.

For this information bulletin for the international rail traveller, please contact Albert Lambert.

EPF SPEAKING

On February 26th, EPF submitted comments on the European Commission's consultation on air passengers' rights, reviewing how the regulations were operating. You can read the submission on our website www.epf.eu.

On April 15th, EPF Vice-Chairman Christopher Irwin gave a presentation at the European Metropolitan Transport Authorities' annual conference in Budapest.

On May 27th, Mr Irwin spoke at the European Traffic Law Conference in Trier, Germany.

EPF Chairman Trevor Garrod has accepted an invitation to speak at a conference on The Future of High Speed Rail in Amsterdam on October 21st.

On February 16th, EPF Chairman Trevor Garrod was interviewed on BBC Radio Five Live. He said that we regretted the loss of life in the accident and expected the Belgian Railways to investigate the causes; but meanwhile it was not good enough to Eurostar to simply suspend services. They should consider diverting services or at least informing passengers of alternative routes.

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easy to obtain reliable information from Eurostar staff. Maybe the restructuring of the company, already under way, will improve matters here. We certainly look forward to news that the recommendations of the Gressier/Garnett review are being implemented.

SALZBURGER VERKEHRSTAGE

Leser, die Deutsch verstehen, sind bei den diesjährigen Salzburger Verkehrstagen herzlich willkommen. Thema: "Grenzüberschreitend unterwegs mit Bahn und Bus - verpasst der Öffentliche Verkehr den Anschluss?".



Diese sehr interessante Tagung findet vom 11. bis 13. Oktober in Salzburg statt. Jürg Tschopp, Trevor Garrod, Albert Lambert und Josef Schneider sind unter den EPF-Leuten, die daran teilnehmen werden.

Weiteres erfahren Sie später in diesem Sommer auf www.salzburger-verkehrstage.org.

PLANNED CONFERENCE IN GORZOW

A conference is planned at Gorzow, Poland, on October 7th, as part of the ongoing work of the Interessengemeinschaft Ostbahn Berlin - Gorzow.

The languages will be Polish and German and the event will be of interest to everyone keen to see this important international railway developed further and benefitting the regions of eastern German and western Poland through which it runs.

For more information, go to www.igob.eu.

EPF CONFERENCE 2011

Our 2011 Conference and Annual General Meeting will be on Saturday March 12th in Barcelona. The capital city of Catalonia has much of interest - transport, architecture, scenery and culture.

Please note the date. Full details of the event will be in our December bulletin.

Colophon

Contributors to this bulletin include:

Marc Broeckaert, Erland Egefors, Dorothy Gallagher, Trevor Garrod, Pierre Havelange and others