

EPF-Bulletin 8 – December 2010

- **Introduction**
- **Looking forward to Barcelona, 12th of March 2011**
- **Journeys without borders**
- **Making international travel easier**
- **DBV-Saxony starts joint project with Lower Silesia**
- **Action for better train services between Portbou and Cerbère**
- **Multi-modal rights**
- **Two compensation stories**
- **Technology and Independent Distribution in the European Travel Industry by ETTSA**
- **Taxis in European cities**
- **The future of high speed rail**
- **Rail Future examines ferry links**
- **Salzburger Verkehrstage**
- **Meeting people**
- **Putting our case**
- **New proposal of directive establishing a Single Rail Area**
- **CER customer liaison meeting**
- **Regions of Connected Knowledge**
- **Contact at Vienna University**
- **Colophon**

INTRODUCTION



Trevor Garrod, EPF's chairman

Bienvenue dans le huitième numéro du bulletin d'activités de la Fédération Européenne des Voyageurs.

Voyages sans frontières - des liaisons faciles et attractives par le train, l'autocar et le bateau - entre les pays de l'Europe est un des buts de notre fédération depuis sa

fondation en 2002. La publication de notre rapport de ce titre et d'une nouvelle liste des liaisons transfrontalières sur notre site web en octobre a été une démarche importante et nous espérons qu'elle contribuera aux débats et aux développements.

Notre questionnaire pour les usagers des trains à grande vitesse des exploitants membres de RailTeam vient de paraître aussi sur notre site www.epf.eu

Nos membres ont pris part aux congrès en Autriche, aux Pays Bas, en Belgique et en Allemagne pour exprimer le point de vue des clients.

Nous avons commencé de nouveaux dialogues avec les associations de gens handicapés et avec les syndicats pendant que nos

dialogues continuent avec la commission européenne, des associations d'exploitants des transports publics et des organismes professionnels comme l'Agence européenne des Chemins de fer.

J'espère que ce bulletin vous donnera au moins un goût de nos activités et de nos intérêts variés et multimodaux. Visitez aussi notre site Internet www.epf.eu pour plus de lecture et les liens vers les sites de notre trentaine d'associations adhérentes.

Trevor Garrod, Président

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the eighth issue of the bulletin of the European Passengers' Federation.

Journeys without Borders - easy and attractive links by train, bus and ferry - between the countries of Europe has been one of the aims of our federation ever since its foundation in 2002. The publication of our report of this title and a new list of cross-border services on our website in October has been an important step and we hope it will contribute to discussion and developments.

Our questionnaire for users of high speed trains operated by the members of RailTeam has also just appeared on our site www.epf.eu

Our members have taken part in conferences in Austria, the Netherlands, Belgium and Germany to express the customers' point of view.

We have started new dialogues with associations for handicapped people and with trades unions while our dialogues continue with the European Commission, associations of public transport operators and bodies of professionals such as the European Railway Agency.

I hope that this bulletin will give you a taste of our varied and multimodal

activities and interests, Visit our internet site www.epf.eu to read more and for links to the sites of our thirty-plus affiliated associations.

Trevor Garrod, Chairman

EINLEITUNG

Herzlich Willkommen zur achten Ausgabe dieses Bulletins des Europäischen Fahrgastverbandes (EPF)

Reisen ohne Grenzen - leichte und attraktive Angebote mit dem Zug, Bus und Schiff - zwischen den Staaten Europas ist eines der Ziele unseres Verbandes seit seiner Gründung 2002. Die Veröffentlichung unseres Berichts dieses Titels und einer neuen Liste grenzüberschreitender Angebote auf unserer Webseite im Oktober ist ein wichtiger Schritt gewesen und wir hoffen, das dieser zu weiteren Debatten und Entwicklungen beitragen wird.

Unser Fragebogen für Reisende in Hochgeschwindigkeitszügen der Betreiber, die zu RailTeam gehören, ist gerade auf unserer Webseite www.epf.eu erschienen.

Unsere Mitglieder haben an Tagungen in Österreich, den Niederlanden, Belgien und Deutschland teilgenommen, um die Meinung der Kunden zu äußern.

Wir haben neue Dialoge mit Verbänden für Behinderte sowie mit Gewerkschaften angefangen, während unsere Dialoge mit der Europäischen Kommission, mit Verbänden der Betreiber des öffentlichen Verkehrs und Organen von Fachleuten wie die Europäische Eisenbahnagentur weitergehen.

Ich hoffe, dass dieses Bulletin Ihnen ein Geschmack unserer vielfältigen multimodalen Tätigkeit geben wird. Besuchen Sie unsere Webseite www.epf.eu um mehr zu lesen und um direkte Links zu den Webseiten unserer mehr als dreißig Mitgliedsverbände zu finden.

Trevor Garrod, Vorsitzender

NEWS OUT OF THE EPF BOARD GROUP

Our colleague Jean-Paul Jacquot has retired from the EPF Board, having represented the Fédération Nationale des Associations d'Usagers des Transports (FNAUT) since 2002. FNAUT is one of the founder members of EPF and Jean-Paul's knowledge and experience has been very valuable to us over the past eight years.



Jean-Paul Jacquot

He has contributed to many of our submissions on passenger rights and given advice on economic and environmental matters, in particular, and represented us at a lot of meetings. Merci pour tout! We hope it is "Au revoir" rather than "Adieu", however, and that we can still call upon his expertise in the future.

EPF CONFERENCE AND GENERAL MEETING OF 2011 IN BARCELONA

On Saturday March 12th we shall hold our Conference and Annual General Meeting in Barcelona. This will be the first time we have met south of the Pyrenees and our colleagues in PTP have organised an attractive and interesting programme. The conference will take place in the Picasso Museum situated in the Barrio Gotico (Gothic neighbourhood).

On Friday morning, March 11th there will be a trip around Barcelona using public transport; and after lunch a workshop on how cross-border services between south west France and Catalonia could be improved. From December two daily French TGV trains will run across the border to Figueras but there are also conventional trains between Portbou and Cerbère and a night train.



On Saturday our Conference will have as its theme "Connecting People". There will be presentations and discussions of urban and regional public transport and a session on the work of our Catalonian member PTP to improve Spanish public transport. We then deal with the themes to cover RENFE (the Spanish national rail operator) and the role of the European Commission. Conference languages will be Catalan, Spanish and English, with simultaneous interpretation.

The speakers will include Mr Cecilio Gomez, Director of High Speed and Long-

distance Trains for RENFE and Mrs Meglena Kuneva, adviser to Siim Kallas' cabinet and herself a former Commissioner.

The work of EPF and on-line information needs will also be featured.

EPF's Annual General Meeting will be held at 17.00 and details and reports will be sent to all of our member associations in late February.

On Sunday March 13th there will be an excursion by regional train to the spectacular monastery of Montserrat in the mountains north of Barcelona and the possibility of a trip around the city as an alternative for those members unable to be there on Friday morning.

We look forward to seeing many members and friends in Barcelona in March. Full details of the event, plus booking form, will be on our website shortly and will be e-mailed to everyone on our mailing list.

Hasta el 11 o 12 de marzo en Barcelona!

REIZEN ZONDER GRENZEN - VIATGES SENSE FRONTERES - POTOVANJA BREZ MEI

EPF does not - yet - have the resources to produce its new report "Journeys without Borders - some Successes and Problems" in more than two languages - but in October we produced an English version "Journeys without Borders" and also a German version: "Reisen ohne Grenzen".

Thank you to all members who helped with the research into the 12-page report, and to Matthias Kurzeck of Verkehrsclub Deutschland for translating it. Thank you also to Jean Dreyer for help with a French summary.

The report has been sent to other international organisations, to the

European Commission and leading MEPs, to many national Transport Ministers and rail operators.

Our report examines some success stories in the long-distance rail market - such as Eurostar, Thalys and ICE International; but also some side effects of these successes and some problems.

It also looks at regional cross-border train and bus services and the role of ferries in countries from Switzerland to Poland, from Finland to Romania.

Lastly, our report examines current problems, challenges and some possible solutions. We hope that it will help spread good practice and encourage debate.

The report is designed to be read in conjunction with the updated list of cross-border services on our website and is available in hard copy from Trevor Garrod, 15 Clapham Road South, Lowestoft, NR32 1RQ. trevorgarrod2000@yahoo.co.uk. Both reports are also available on the EPF-website.

MAKING INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL EASIER

The TAP-TSI (Technical Standard for Interoperability: Passenger Applications Telematics) has been endorsed by member states and is likely to enter European law in 2011.

EPF has followed closely the progress of this project of the European Railway Agency and welcomes the fact that it will cover international and in future probably also domestic train services. It should thus become easier to find out about and book end-to-end rail journeys between European countries.

Several member associations of EPF made representations to the ERA earlier this year and we are pleased that the

Agency has taken account of these views.

Our Vice-Chairman Christopher Irwin has also written to the Chairman of the European Parliament's Transport Committee, Brian Simpson MEP, expressing our satisfaction and looking forward to "eventual development of intermodal telematics."

The recast of the First Railway Package is now under consideration by member state Governments and will be on the agenda of the Transport Council on December 15th. This legislation underpins the liberalisation of European railways.

Much hinges on what may be termed "Railway Related Services." These include stabling and maintenance of rolling stock; but EPF has also made the point that impartial retailing and through ticketing are important for passengers and this should be made clear in the legislation.

DBV-SAXONY STARTS JOINT PROJECT WITH LOWER SILESIA



State of Saxony, Germany
(source: Wikipedia)

About one and a half years ago the state of Saxony started to co-finance a rail connection between the two cities of

Dresden and Wrocław. Since then there have been three trains a day in each direction to link the two capitals of the state of Saxony and the Województwo Lower Silesia. In one year the number of passengers increased by 400 percent and reached over 40000 by the end of the first period in March 2010.

Since the state commitment for this train service is only for the duration of two and a half years the DBV in Saxony started a scheme with representatives of Wrocław and Lower Silesia as well as other private associations and cities along the railway line. The aim is to initiate single projects to use the capacity of the trains even more so the Deutsche Bahn can run the trains after the period of co-financing by the state on a sufficient economic basis.

The goal for the next year is to complete the joint project team and to work out concrete ideas in single working sessions. Important is to fill the trains with more passengers. To bring all ideas together we plan in the second half of the forthcoming year a common conference of all partners where the issue will be discussed and summarized in a book of ideas and proposals for 2012.

More information about the project you get here: marketing@bahnkunden.de.

ACTION FOR BETTER TRAIN SERVICES BETWEEN PORTBOU AND CERBÈRE

Saturday, the 18th September 2010 a protest event in Portbou took place to boost the conventional train in both sides of the Spanish-French border.

The councils of Portbou and Cerbère and associations in favour of public transport of both sides of the Pyrenees (PTP and FNAUT) claimed as conventional train "an instrument to promote cross-border initiatives" under the euro district. This

was claimed in the statement ended by calling for a commitment to a Catalan transborder train.



Portbou-Cerbère meeting (source: El Punt)

On this occasion, PTP has issued cross-border train schedules with a new and attractive graphic design. The document may be downloaded from http://www.transportpublic.org/images/pdf/20100918-horaris_butxaca.pdf

As shown by analyzing these schedules, coordination of RENFE and SNCF trains is frankly bad. In addition, there are only three daily crossing-border trains without change of train, two Talgo trains to Montpellier with an obsolete quality and one sleeper train to Paris.

Local authorities on both sides of the border fear the planned opening of high-speed direct link between Perpignan and Figueras on 12th of December means that Spanish and French governments disengage from the conventional rail.

The event was organized by the municipalities of Portbou and Cerbère, the General Council of Pyrénées-Orientales and FNAUT and PTP.

MULTI-MODAL RIGHTS

Progress with maritime users' rights and bus/coach users' rights was discussed at the EPF Council meeting in Paris on October 23rd.

We welcomed the fact the maritime users' rights have now been settled and are due to come into force in 2012.

Under the current Belgian Presidency, a conciliation team has been set up to solve outstanding issues concerning bus and coach passengers. EPF has written to the MEPs involved in the conciliation repeating the arguments in favour of "a proportionate approach to passengers' rights for users of both long-distance and local services."

We considered that on many bus journeys compensation for delays was arguably less important than assistance when things went wrong, catering for the needs of persons of reduced mobility and clarification of liability.

Our long-term aim remains to see passenger rights legislation applicable to all modes, easy to understand and easy to enforce.

TWO COMPENSATION STORIES – A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE BY TREVOR GARROD

On October 22nd I caught Thalys train 9326 from Amsterdam to Paris. The train arrived 38 minutes late because we were delayed waiting for a new driver at Brussels.

As we approached Paris we were told that compensation forms would be available at the end of the platform - and a member of staff was indeed there, distributing them.

I duly completed and sent away my form to Thalys and on November 5th received

a letter of apology and a voucher for 16 euro.

On February 25th I had travelled by train from Berlin to Lowestoft. The Eurostar from Brussels to London ran so late that I missed my last train home and had the choice of either finding a hotel room in Norwich at 23.00 and taking a taxi for the last 30 miles. (about 50 km). As I had to be at work the following morning, I chose the taxi, at £54, and applied to Eurostar for compensation. Some weeks later they replied advising me to claim on my travel insurance.

The insurance company refused to pay and I wrote to Eurostar again. After a further reminder I eventually received a reply on October 21st saying that my claim had been reviewed and advice taken "from senior colleagues" but the final decision was not to pay me. Eurostar cited their conditions of carriage and essentially said that, because they had advised passengers who had booked tickets not to travel following the Buizingen accident on February 15th, they could not refund costs incurred.

Of course, the Belgian train accident was not Eurostar's fault but could contingency planning and customer care have been better? We know that they have been taking steps which will hopefully lead to better customer care if and when services are disrupted again.

Trevor Garrod

TECHNOLOGY AND INDEPENDENT DISTRIBUTION IN THE EUROPEAN TRAVEL INDUSTRY BY ETTSA

On the evening of 28th of September there was a pre-presentation of the report of ETTSA (European Technology & Travel Services Association): "Technology and Independent Distribution in the European Travel

Industry" which Willy Smeulders attended on behalf of EPF.

At this pre-presentation the introduction was done by Simpson MEP, Chairman of the European Parliament Transport & Tourism Committee and Max Strotmann of the cabinet of Mr Siim Kallas, responsible for Intelligent transport systems.

The European Technology & Travel Services Association (ETTSA) brings together the key players in independent travel distribution – both the global distribution systems (Amadeus, Sabre, and Travelport) and major online travel agents (Expedia, ebookers, Opodo, lastminute.com, Booking.com, and eDreams). These key players give tens of thousands of travel agents and travel management companies access to a vast range of travel products – flights, rail journeys, hotel rooms, rental cars, cruises, and travel packages – all with one key objective: to provide transparency and choice to consumers across Europe.



So they claim they could provide the same service to rail and bus travel as they already do to air travel, since they have developed the tools and only need the inputs from the rail and bus companies, to be able to provide to customers travel from A to B in whole Europe with use of all multimodal travel platforms.

TAXIS IN EUROPEAN CITIES

In our last Bulletin Dorothy Gallagher reported on problems with taxis in Dublin and we have since received comments from British and German colleagues on the same issue.

An efficient and user-friendly taxi service is sometimes a necessary part of public transport, both within a city and as part of a longer journey.

Dorothy has updated us following a discussion which she had with the Irish Taxi Commissioner, Kathleen Doyle.



Dublin taxi

As there were so many complaints about new taxi drivers not knowing their way around Dublin and its suburbs, a more stringent test was created. The first group which took it found it very difficult and there were many failures. These people will have to wait until the next exam to try again to qualify.

That still leaves an existing group of drivers who had passed the old exam. The Commissioner suggested that, in case of problems, passengers should ask for a printed receipt giving the taxi licence number, so that the driver could be called in to take the new exam. The receipt gives the start and finish time and the fare charged.

All taxis have now been obliged to display prominent signs telling passengers how to make a complaint; their rights and the rights of the driver, and how fares for different times of day and holidays are calculated.

URBAN TRANSPORT

Taxis are part of the overall urban transport system and during 2011

we plan to conduct an EPF survey of public transport provision in major European cities. This will be co-ordinated by our recently formed Urban Transport Study Group and we shall request the help of our member associations in providing information about good and bad points. For example, how easy it is to travel around the city and how attractive and flexible are the fares.

We hope to provide a progress report in our next Bulletin.

THE FUTURE OF HIGH SPEED RAIL

A conference on this theme was organised in Amsterdam by Marketforce and the Adam Smith Institute on October 20th and 21st and attended by transport and industry professionals from many European countries and from North America.

The Future of High-Speed Rail

The passenger perspective was provided by Trevor Garrod - as Chairman of the European Passengers' Federation and by Christopher Irwin, representing Passenger Focus.

The challenges of building high speed lines in Great Britain, Poland, France, Russia, Spain and Portugal were explained. German, Dutch and Italian speakers dealt with competition - with other modes and on the tracks. The conference opened on the day after the first German ICE had arrived on a test run in London.

Distribution was also a major theme of the conference, with IT consultants eager to show how the rail industry could learn from the airline industry on ticketing and sales.

In its short presentation EPF referred to previous difficulties in obtaining information about and booking international tickets - as demonstrated by the Railfuture Mystery Shopper exercise in 2008. On-line ticketing has increased rapidly in the European travel market over the past few years and the formation in 2009 of the European Technology and Travel Services Association in 2009 reflects this trend.

However, there is always likely to be a role for human contact. Staff training is vital - both in using the internet and selling the product - and operators' computer systems need to be able to talk to each other.

EPF also stressed the importance of the end-to-end journey. High-speed rail is usually only part of a long-distance journey and travel to and from the high-speed station must also be considered. Otherwise time gained on the high-speed journey is lost finding out about local public transport and buying tickets. There are good examples of best practice here, however - such as the British Plus Bus, German City Ticket and Belgian zonal ticketing which can be added to your Eurostar ticket for a small extra charge.

Christopher Irwin gave a presentation on "Delivering a true alternative to the car" in which he highlighted passengers' concerns as shown by the British National Passenger Survey. This showed that passengers' priorities included value for money, punctuality and reliability and sufficient services at times wanted. Faster journey times alone were only part of the solution, though the additional capacity created by high speed lines was welcome.

It was also important to have shorter end-to-end journey times, dependability, demonstrable convenience and attention to service and comfort.

He also posed some questions for operators to consider, such as:

- Is there more we can do for our passengers?
- Is the train operator necessarily the best retailer?
- Is the passenger inconvenienced by the structure of the industry?

RAILFUTURE EXAMINES FERRY LINKS

There are no fewer than 52 ferry services from Great Britain to the Continent, Ireland, the Isle of Man, Channel Islands, Scilly Isles or Scottish islands.



P&O Dover-Calais Ferry (source: Wikipedia)

Railfuture's International Committee has just issued a report on them, based to a considerable extent on their own members' experiences when using - or trying to use - them.

The conclusions of the report are:

- Passengers without cars, and passengers with bicycles, are not always treated well by ferry companies.
- In some few cases, those without cars ("foot passengers") may not use ferry services at all.
- In many more cases, even when ferry operators welcome foot passengers and cyclists as well as motorists, it has become difficult to reach their vessels straight from adjacent rail stations, as was at one time the norm.
- Ferry companies can, if faced with the unexpected (such as volcanic

eruptions closing airports) soon put on extra services for those otherwise unable to travel at all, and this even includes relaxing any bans on foot passengers. Railfuture has welcomed moves of this kind.

- On some routes that had faced damaging competition from budget airlines, a swing away from air use, thanks to increasing hassle and delay at airports, has resulted in more traffic. This in turn had led to increased use of feeder rail services, where these exist, and some train operators have been unable to cope properly because of rolling-stock problems.

We therefore urge that all ferries should be open to foot passengers and rail operators should have enough rolling stock and staff to cope with demand.

The report contains a wealth of information about rail links - where these exist - or bus links to the nearest station. Not all of these are well advertised by the ferry companies. On the other hand, we give "full marks" to Stena Line for its rail/sea/rail promotions on the Harwich - Hoek van Holland route and some good offers on its Holyhead - Dun Laoghaire/Dublin routes.

The report is available from Trevor Garrod, 15 Clapham Road South, Lowestoft, NR32 1RQ. It has been sent to ferry operators and relevant train operating companies and to politicians.

See also the website of Railfuture:
<http://www.railfuture.org.uk>.

SALZBURGER VERKEHRSTAGE – LOOKING BACK TO THE EVENT ON 11 TO 13 OCTOBER

When we think of Salzburg we may think of Mozart and perhaps "The Sound of Music."

This Austrian city also has much of transport interest, however, and each year since 2003 Salzburg or its surrounding area has hosted the Salzburger Verkehrstage (or "Transport Days.")

Organised by Peter Haibach (of EPF's member organisation Pro Bahn Österreich), the event brings together public transport users and providers, politicians and industry, from the German-speaking countries and further afield. The conference theme this year was "Rail and Bus without Borders" and the EPF chairman was one of the speakers.



In his speech Trevor Garrod outlined the work of the European Passengers' Federation in putting the users' point of view to the European Commission and MEPs and in dialogue with the railway industry. There have been many positive trends such as the development of international high-speed trains; but also negative aspects which need to be addressed to enable rail to provide an attractive alternative to the private car and the plane.

We learned about the efforts of public transport authorities in Basle (Switzerland) to improve services and information in the border region where Switzerland, France and Germany meet. Tens of thousands of people come into Basle regularly for work, business or leisure from the two neighbouring countries and the city is making great

efforts to encourage them to come in by train, tram or bus.

Another border area, Maas-Rhine, has in the past 12 years made great progress in promoting public transport in the border area of Belgium, the Netherlands and Germany and making the system more user-friendly. This also has relevance for travellers from Great Britain. If one travels from London by Eurostar and Thalys trains to Aachen, the Thalys ticket now also entitles passengers to free use of local and regional public transport.

A speaker from Deutsche Bahn (whose first ICE train, on a test run, came to London on October 19th) explained how their international passenger traffic had increased by 10% each year since 2005, particularly through faster journey times. The train was considered competitive with air for 4-hour journeys and its advantages sometimes made it marketable for up to 6 hours for would-be air passengers.

There were problems when trying to reinstate cross-border routes. We were given a presentation about a former line across the Austrian - Czech border which could carry international passengers, have a tourist role and take heavy timber traffic off local roads. The Czechs had upgraded their section but some Austrian politicians wanted to convert theirs into a cycle path. One speaker urged the European Commission to bring together both sides to solve such differences.

To counterbalance the problems, however, we received impassioned presentations from two railway managers: Gunther Mackinger of Salzburg and Jurgen Bosse of Usedom in Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. They both demonstrated how local knowledge, customer care and a "can do" approach could overcome difficulties and lead to

improved services and greater passenger numbers, within and across borders.

Open access also featured widely in many of the contributions and in points raised by delegates. Some warned of the dangers of monopolies and of the benefits of competition, with one would-be open-access operator between Vienna and Salzburg provoking lively discussion.

The matter was perhaps wisely summed up by a Swiss transport consultant at the end when he said, "What harms public transport is the misuse of monopoly and the misuse of competition."

Another very relevant point, which ran like a thread through much of the discussion, was the need for on-train staff who were knowledgeable and looked after passengers.

Our packed programme also included a cross-border train to the town of Bad Reichenhall where a five-course meal and local beer were on the agenda, to the sounds of a Bavarian band - but no Mozart!

Next year's Salzburger Verkehrstage will be on October 3rd-5th with the provisional title, "Lust und Last der Mobilität" ("Pleasures and Burdens of Mobility.")

MEETING PEOPLE

In September, EPF officers Trevor Garrod and Rian van der Borgt had a useful meeting in Brussels with Maria Nyman, Policy Officer of the European Disability Forum.



We discussed areas of common interest, and notably the progress of maritime and bus/coach passengers' rights at European level.

EDF (European Disability Forum) had studied maritime legislation elsewhere, such as in the USA, and welcomed the European Maritime Safety Directive which would include signage, alarm systems, step-free entrances and other considerations for persons of reduced mobility. Both EPF and EDF remain concerned about accessibility problems for all passengers - not just PRMs, on certain ferries however. The disability certification in air passengers' rights had also set an important precedent.

We agreed to keep in regular contact by e-mail, exchange bulletins and meet on an occasional basis, such as when there were important users' rights or accessibility issues to be discussed.



In October, EPF Council member Willy Smeulders attended a meeting of the European Transport Workers' Federation (ETF) and gave a presentation on our aims and activities. Representatives were present from Germany, France, Luxembourg, Italy, Spain, Norway and Hungary.

Many of the trades unions' aims are similar to ours: sustainable transport policies; quality, punctuality and security of transport; maintaining infrastructure at a good level; subsidies for services where necessary. We can also share their concerns about aggression from passengers. They also call for Europe-wide rules for ticket pricing and timetables.

We may differ from them on issues such as striking and their opposition to liberalisation Willy put the point to them that, if industrial action was necessary after all alternatives had failed, they should consider possibilities that would

not inconvenience the passengers - such as free travel.

An Italian trade unionist gave a good example of the union communicating with passengers, producing a brochure explaining seven points which they were standing for.

On liberalisation another trade union representation said that, where it could not be avoided, there should be rules for Public Service Obligations with minimum requirements for operators.

We shall keep in regular contact with ETF.

PUTTING OUR CASE

Members of EPF and its affiliated organisations continue to put the passenger viewpoint at meetings and conferences to which we are invited.

On November 15th Pierre Havelange and Stefan Stynen attended a seminar in Liege on "Rail unites Europe"

On November 19th, five members met officers of the Union International des Transports Publics in Brussels.

On December 9th, Christopher Irwin was due to address the conference in Trier on European Union Passenger Rights organised by the Academy of European Law. The theme was "Strengthening the role of transport users."

On February 23rd and 24th, Trevor Garrod and Dietmar Dalbogk are due to give passenger input at Eurorail 2011 in Berlin.

On March 16th Trevor Garrod has also been invited to speak at a Marketforce conference in Brussels on "The Future of European Rail."

Meanwhile ...

The conference planned by the "Interessengemeinschaft Ostbahn Berlin - Gorzów" in the Polish city of Gorzów is now due to take place in March.

Our members DERKE plan a conference in Debrecen, eastern Hungary, in April to discuss their report on cross-border links between Hungary and Romania.

NEW PROPOSAL OF DIRECTIVE ESTABLISHING A SINGLE RAIL AREA

On 17th of September the European Commission adopted a proposal for a new rail directive. The main objectives are: to make one coherent text of the three directives in force with their successive amendments and to tackle three key problems that undermine the effective functioning of the railway market.

These three problem areas are:

- To increase competition on the rail market through a more transparent and an easier market access.
- Strengthening the power of national rail regulators to obtain a better regulatory supervision.
- Strengthening the framework for public and private investment.

See for more information on this important topic:

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/rail/market/market_en.htm

EPF is following up this main policy item. Our organisation hopes that the responsibility of public authorities to organise a high quality public transport at all relevant scale levels, will be encouraged. Free market principles, infrastructure financing, operation subventions etc. must serve the public transport as a public service accessible –

in all its meanings – to all European citizens.

CER CUSTOMER LIAISON MEETING

Josef Schneider and Rian van der Borgt represented EPF at the six-monthly Customer Liaison Group meeting of the Community of European Railways in Brussels on October 15th.

One item discussed in detail was ticketing, when our representatives pointed out that some popular relations were not available on line. For example, the Deutsche Bahn website - which is good in many ways - does not enable passengers to book combinations involving Thalys or Eurostar. It was pointed out that some types of ticket, however, are only available on line, and yet persons of reduced mobility are often unable to book in this way.



The recent introduction by Belgian Railways of a charge for most international tickets purchased by phone or over the counter was criticised by participants in the meeting. An international ticket, it was said, could be booked on the SNCB/NMBS website, but this did not always show the lowest fare or apply requested reductions.

Eurostar gave a presentation to the meeting, explaining the concrete actions being taken to minimise the risk of disturbances this winter. The measures include protection against snow and condensation in electrical equipment; reworked evacuation procedures; more staff training; more equipment on board to emergencies; better information management at stations and on trains; and more adequate contingency planning, including coach/ferry/train connections.

Progress with passenger rights was also discussed in detail. Rian had sent in advance five cases where co-operation between operators did not work well. It was reported that most of these had been discussed in a workshop organised by the CIT. The general rule was that the operator who sold the ticket should communicate with the customer, even if their train was not the late or cancelled one. Rebooking with another carrier could and should be organised without any further delay, we argued, since in our view the Passenger Rights Regulation provided for this.

The meeting also looked ahead to the forthcoming European White Paper on the Future of Transport. EPF largely agreed with the conclusions of a study published last month showing that liberalisation had worked in Germany (regional services) and Great Britain, where passenger numbers had increased. The CER representative suggested that this increase could have been caused by other factors, such as better financing. CER has produced data on financing in different European countries, but not apparently on passenger satisfaction.

The Customer Liaison Group is due to meet again in April 2011.

REGIONS OF CONNECTED KNOWLEDGE

EPF values its contact with the RoCK group, based in Eindhoven and working for better regional rail connections between western Germany, the Netherlands, Belgium, northern France and South East England.

Willy Smeulders attended their Brussels conference on October 7th and explained the actions of EPF, including our regular dialogue with the European Commission and our new cross-border report. He also described relevant activity by EPF members ROVER and TreinTramBus.

CONTACT AT VIENNA UNIVERSITY

EPF has been contacted by Herr Manuel Binder at the University of Vienna. He is working on a project about sustainable transport, including long-distance rail - examining such questions as what will persuade would-be passengers to use the train and how many changes of train en route are acceptable. EPF has already sent him its new report *Reisen ohne Grenzen* (Journeys without Borders) and the discussion paper on night trains produced earlier in the year by Kurt Hultgren. Other members are welcome to contact him at manuel_binder@gmx.net.

Colophon

Contributors to this bulletin include:

*Marc Broeckart, Dorothy Gallagher,
Trevor Garrod, Christopher Irwin, Pau
Noy, Jochen Reitstätter, Willy Smeulders.*