

# EPF-Bulletin #10 – December 2011



## CONTENT

Introduction.....	2
Plane and train .....	4
Eurostar – Railfuture’s second survey.....	5
Short report of the Salzburger Verkehrstage 2011.....	7
New train Potsdam – Gorzów - Pila .....	8
Polish shift of funds from rail to road – an update .....	9
Through trains to Slovenia, Croatia and Serbia.....	9
Night trains between France and Italy .....	10
Bicycles on high speed trains .....	11
Urban Transport comparison .....	11
Vice-President Kallas’ Rail Strategy Platform.....	11
Public Transport in the Commission Work Programme for 2012.....	12
A bus adventure between Brussels and Berlin by a DBV-member.....	14
Two sides of Manchester – a report by Trevor Garrod.....	15
EPF Working Group – Long Distance Rail.....	17
EPF Meeting People .....	18
Work in progress .....	18
For your diary .....	19
EPF Conference 2012 in Salzburg – EPF celebrates its 10th anniversary .....	20



## INTRODUCTION

Bienvenue dans le dixième numéro du bulletin d'activités de la Fédération européenne des Voyageurs (EPF).

Pour beaucoup de voyages, c'est souvent l'intermodalité qui les rend plus faciles. S'il est nécessaire de prendre l'avion, le trajet vers l'aéroport par le train ou le bus appartient à la chaîne de voyage. Quand on arrive dans une ville par le train rapide, on ne veut pas perdre trop de temps à chercher le train de banlieue, le tram, le métro ou le bus pour atteindre sa destination finale.

Il faut aussi que les moyens de transport publics soient fiables et que les clients soient bien informés.

Voici des thèmes que nous soulignons autant que possible pendant nos dialogues avec les politiciens, les exploitants et les décideurs. Vous pouvez en lire dans ce numéro.

L'interopérabilité à travers les frontières rend les voyages plus faciles. Nous vous racontons des nouvelles encourageantes concernant les trains entre l'Allemagne et la Pologne sur le Chemin de fer de l'Est.

Vous pouvez lire aussi les expériences d'un voyage international en autocar entre Bruxelles et Berlin, les résultats d'un questionnaire aux clients d'Eurostar et un rapport du neuvième congrès des transports de Salzbourg en octobre, qui a pris en considération beaucoup de problèmes des transports et de l'environnement.

Dans trois mois, le congrès et l'assemblée générale de notre fédération auront lieu aussi à Salzbourg, et vous pouvez trouver bientôt toutes les informations sur notre site web [www.epf.eu](http://www.epf.eu).

Trevor Garrod  
Président

## EINLEITUNG

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

Für viele Reisen ist es oft die Intermodalität, die sie leichter machen. Wenn man fliegen muss, gehört eine Fahrt mit dem Zug oder Bus zum Flughafen zum Teil der Reisekette. Wenn man in einer Stadt mit dem Schnellzug ankommt, will man nicht zu viel Zeit verlieren, indem man S-Bahn, Straßenbahn, U-Bahn oder Bus sucht, um sein Endziel zu erreichen.

Die öffentlichen Verkehrsmittel müssen auch zuverlässig sein und die Kunden müssen gut informiert werden.

Dies sind die Themen, die wir so oft wie möglich betonen, wenn wir Dialoge mit

Politikern, Betreibern und anderen Entscheidungsträgern führen. Darüber können Sie in dieser Ausgabe lesen.

Interoperabilität über Grenzen macht Reisen leichter. Wir bringen Ihnen ermutigende Nachrichten über die Züge auf der Ostbahn zwischen Deutschland und Polen.

Sie können auch die Erfahrungen einer internationalen Busreise zwischen Brüssel und Berlin lesen; die Ergebnisse eines Fragebogens für Kunden im Eurostar sowie einen Bericht von den neunten Salzburger Verkehrstagen im Oktober, wo man viele Probleme des Verkehrs und der Umwelt besprach.

In drei Monaten finden auch die Tagung und die Jahreshauptversammlung unseres Verbandes in Salzburg statt und Sie können in Kürze alle Informationen hierüber auf unserer Webseite [www.epf.eu](http://www.epf.eu) finden.

Trevor Garrod  
Vorsitzender

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the tenth issue of the Bulletin of the European Passengers' Federation (EPF).

For many journeys, it is often intermodality that makes them easier. If you have to fly, the journey to the airport by train or bus belongs to the journey chain. When you arrive in a city by fast train, you do not want to lose too much time looking for the suburban

train, tram, underground or bus to reach your final destination.

Means of public transport should also be reliable and the customers should be kept well informed.

These are topics which we emphasise as often as possible in our dialogues with politicians, operators and all decision-makers. You can read about it in this issue.

Interoperability across borders makes journeys easier. We bring you some encouraging news concerning trains on the Eastern Railway between Germany and Poland.

You can also read the experiences of an international coach journey between Brussels and Berlin; the results of a questionnaire for Eurostar customers, and a report of the ninth Salzburg Transport Conference in October, which considered many problems of transport and the environment.

In three months the Conference and Annual General Meeting of our Federation will also take place in Salzburg and you can find all the details shortly on our website [www.epf.eu](http://www.epf.eu)

Trevor Garrod  
Chairman

## PLANE AND TRAIN

In February 2010 Railfuture, one of the British member associations of EPF, issued a report "Airport Links" on train or other public transport links to and from UK airports. Nearly all my remaining copies of the report were eagerly taken at a European Commission seminar in Brussels on September 21<sup>st</sup>.

The seminar on Intermodality at Airports was organised as part of the Commission's Intermodes Project and those present represented mainly the Commission, national governments and the airline industry. [L'Institut d'Aménagement et d'Urbanisme d'Ile de France](#) had produced a study of public transport access to the Paris airports of Orly and Charles de Gaulle. The Regional Council was particularly concerned about access to and from places other than the city centre, and new radial metro routes were being planned.

Most airport authorities were looking at ways of increasing public transport usage to and from the airport to 50%.

Currently it stands at 40% to London Heathrow compared to 43% at Charles de Gaulle, 37% at Gatwick but a more modest 20% at Düsseldorf.

My own presentation, as Chairman of the European Passengers' Federation, stressed that travel by public transport should be as easy as possible.

Information before, during and after the journey must be easy to understand and use; while staff must be well-trained and motivated and well-informed.

I supported the ideal of end-to-end through ticketing; saying that train operators and airlines must be shown

that it is in their interests to develop through ticketing between air and high-speed rail.

However, not all airline passengers want to access or leave the airport by high speed train. Many want to use regional or urban trains and sometimes buses. Airlines could negotiate an add-on similar to the British Plus Bus ticket, or the German "City Ticket" and many others which are similar, giving onward urban transport travel for passengers arriving by train.



It is also important for trains serving airports to have sufficient space for passengers' luggage. Through luggage registration between plane and train might be attractive on some routes.

In the ensuing discussion, it was pointed out that, in rail/air ticketing, there must be an agreed mechanism for sharing the revenue. A representative from a low-cost carrier pointed out that "airlines have successfully taken complexity out of the business" and offering intermodal ticketing would push up their costs.

However, it was pointed out by other participants that passengers should be properly informed of what was available. For example, The French railways have introduced a special "TGV Air" ticket and

at German stations it is possible to buy a special ticket to the airport if you show your flight ticket - but neither of these facilities is very well known.

Finally, the meeting discussed some "quick fixes" to make transfer between plane and surface public transport more seamless. Some members of EPF-affiliated organisations, including Railfuture, provided some examples which were forwarded to the European Commission in November. These included making automatic rail ticket machines at certain airports more user-friendly and simply ensuring that there are enough of them!

Trevor Garrod can provide a more detailed report of the meeting. Please send your request to Trevor Garrod, 15 Clapham Rd South, Lowestoft, NR32 1RQ or by [e-mail](#).

## **EUROSTAR – RAILFUTURE'S SECOND SURVEY**

Railfuture is one of the British member associations of EPF and, as the Railway Development Society campaigned in the 1970s and 1980s for a Channel Tunnel. Since the Tunnel opened in 1994, Railfuture has promoted Eurostar services through it, but also monitored them and tried to make constructive comments.

Railfuture has just issued its second Snapshot Survey of Eurostar journeys, the first being issued in May 2008. One notable change since 2008 is the greater number of origins in Great Britain and destinations on the Continent used by our members and other people who completed the questionnaire. It showed that, increasingly, Eurostar's services to Lille, Paris and Brussels are being used as a link in a longer journey chain. Thus the 179 respondents to our questionnaire travelled from 127 different stations, from as far away as Barnstaple and Muir of Ord. 71% of them were travelling beyond the Eurostar stations - for example to 27 different stations in France and 22 different stations in Germany.

This trend may show passengers being more adventurous and the growth of high speed lines on the Continent is almost certainly a factor. For example, the faster journey now possible between Liège and Aachen, following the opening of a stretch of high speed line, means that more towns and cities in Germany and Austria are within easy reach of London. The same can be said for France and Switzerland, following new high

speed line openings. The Railfuture report goes on to say, "The opening of such lines also brings London within easier reach for Continental visitors to Great Britain. Is the British tourist and railway industry taking advantage of that?"

Very few of our respondents had any problems booking their Eurostar ticket or on the train itself; and for 86% of them, train was also the main mode used to reach London, where 90% of them boarded at St Pancras station.

The questionnaire asked about possible improvements to Eurostar services which respondents would like to see. Here the views were not markedly different from many of those in our 2008 survey. There were calls for a simpler fare structure, cheaper fares and through ticketing between more British and Continental stations. A significant number called for more trains to stop at Ashford International and there was criticism of the on-board catering.

We also undertook a mystery shopper exercise this time, checking websites and publicity by Train Operating Companies and making telephone enquiries to call centres. With the exception of East Coast, we found many TOCs were ignoring or saying very little about Eurostar in their printed publicity. Our members checked 20 TOC websites and found 7 of them had good links to the Eurostar website. That left 13 with no obvious links to Eurostar, although some had airport and ferry links. Yet most Eurostar passengers also used the trains of these very same TOCs for the first stage of their international journey!

Our mystery shopper volunteers sought information from their local TOCs on through bookings from their local station to Paris or Interlaken. None of the TOCs contacted was able to do through bookings, but it was encouraging to see that their call centre staff gave phone numbers or websites for Eurostar or, in one case, [www.internationalrail.com](http://www.internationalrail.com). We also came across one major station where the enquiry office staff themselves had produced a list of contacts for people asking about Eurostar or European travel; and one line where the local rail users' association promoted Eurostar on its own station notice-boards.

The Railfuture report concludes, "Railfuture has always considered the train services through the Channel Tunnel as a great technical achievement and they open up so many journey opportunities. There does however remain much to be done, often by the Train Operating Companies, to promote international rail travel through better information and easier booking. We hope this report will contribute to that process."

The report can be obtained from [Trevor Garrod](#), 15 Clapham Rd South, Lowestoft, NR32 1RQ.

*MEANWHILE, IN 2013...*

Deutsche Bahn plans to run ICE trains from London to Brussels, where they will split, one half going to Amsterdam and the other to Cologne and Frankfurt. They hope to run three trips each way per day. Railfuture has been in contact with DB's London office and we hope to meet them in 2012 to learn more about their plans.

## SHORT REPORT OF THE SALZBURGER VERKEHRSTAGE 2011

This year's Salzburger Verkehrstage took place in early October in Sankt Wolfgang, by a lake in the Salzkammergut area, and included a bus ride, an evening on a ship and a trip by cogwheel railway to the summit of the Schafberg mountain.



Much serious consideration also took place, in the modern Congress Centre of Sankt Wolfgang, on the theme "Pleasure and Burdens of Mobility" - which sounds much neater in the original German "*Lust und Last der Mobilität.*"

The first evening of the conference discussed local public transport issues and was attended by a considerable number of people from the Sankt Wolfgang area.

The first full day had presentations on how mobility is changing and how it must change. Some of the statistics given by speakers reflected the position at least some other European countries - for example, that half of all car journeys in Austria are under 5 km and that one child in four is taken to school by car.

The "burdens" of pollution and congestion were demonstrated. Town planning had a role in encouraging people to use public transport - if the car park is further away from your house or destination than the bus or tram stop, you may be more likely to use public transport for the journey.

Dr Eva Lichtenberger MEP questioned the viability of "European transport megaprojects planned in the 1980s and 1990s" and called for measures to ensure that different modes of transport competed on a level playing field. She also referred to "a Europe of monarchies - railway monarchies", in which national rail undertakings each said that they and they alone were right and did not co-operate in the interests of the passenger.

Dr Johannes Ludewig of the Community of European Railways countered, "We need the big projects in order to make rail more competitive." He also referred to the work of the European Railway Agency in promoting interoperability between national rail systems.

Representatives of ÖBB (the Austrian Federal Railways) and a new open access operator Westbahn, took part in the conference. Westbahn is due to start running trains between Vienna and Salzburg in competition with ÖBB in December 2011. The ÖBB speaker said that they welcome competition, though "our real competitor is the car".

Other speakers said that competition was merely a means to an end (that end being greater customer satisfaction) and that it would not solve all problems. It

was important for the European railway industry to standardise and bring down costs.

Speakers from the transport industry explained the latest developments in electric vehicles. However, one speaker compared the investment in battery-charging facilities for electric cars with the delays in investment in certain German rail electrification schemes; and another warned against claims that green technology would automatically create long-term manufacturing jobs in Europe. Such investment in the USA had been followed in some cases by firms switching their production to China.

The final day of the conference included optimistic presentations on public transport improvements in Vienna and Gdansk.

Under the slogan, "*Die Stadt gehört Dir*" ("The city belongs to you") Wiener Linien, the Vienna public transport authority, had used imaginative and humorous marketing with positive results. It had also expanded the city's Underground network. Public transport usage had increased from 29% in 1993 to 36% in 2010, while car usage had decreased - partly also as a result of encouragement of car sharing.

Gdansk and Gdynia had replaced diesel buses by electric buses and trolleybuses, with help from the European Regional Development Fund, and this had improved the image, efficiency and patronage of urban public transport.

A city planner from Vienna showed examples of buildings which had been

designed on the assumption that occupants would arrive and leave by car, using underground car parks. When cities were unattractive for families, more and more people moved out of them and commuted by car, creating "the drive-in city." Architects and planners could, however, design buildings and neighbourhoods which were pleasant to live and to work in.

For details of the presentations (in German) from the 9<sup>th</sup> Salzburger Verkehrstage, log on to [www.salzburger-verkehrstage.org](http://www.salzburger-verkehrstage.org). Next year's conference will be back in the city of Salzburg on October 8th - 10th.

## NEW TRAIN POTSDAM – GORZÓW - PILA



On 21<sup>st</sup> of October 2011, a diesel multiple unit train of the VT 646/946 series made a historic journey from Potsdam via Berlin, Kostrzyn and Gorzów Wielkopolski to Pila.

98 guests joined the train, which was met by local civic leaders at several places on route. It was chartered by the „IGOB Interessengemeinschaft



Eisenbahn Berlin-Gorzów EWIV“ (IGOB-EWIV) to mark its fifth anniversary.

In August DB Regio Nordost had received permission for the train to run on Polish tracks and it is hoped that in 2012 similar Polish units will have permission to operate on German tracks.

Currently trains run every hour between Berlin Lichtenberg and Kostrzyn; where passengers change for a less frequent service onward to Gorzów and beyond. There are now strong hopes that in 2012, as RE300, the new units will also run four times a day between Berlin and Gorzów and ideally on to Pila.

As Karl-Heinz Bossan, director of IGOB put it, *"Die Politik will das, die Kunden wollen das - Fahrzeuge sind vorhanden, die Trasse gibt das her, für die Finanzierung sollte eine Losung zu finden sein."*

"The politicians want it, the customers want it - the vehicles are there, the track is there, it should be possible to find a solution to the financing."

To find out more, visit [www.ostbahn.eu](http://www.ostbahn.eu) or [www.kolej-wschodnia.eu](http://www.kolej-wschodnia.eu).

## **POLISH SHIFT OF FUNDS FROM RAIL TO ROAD – AN UPDATE**

In our last Bulletin we reported on how the Polish Government was considering moving some of the EU cohesion funds, intended to improve rail infrastructure, into road projects.

Our Polish members Zielone Mazowsze and other Polish NGOs made representations to the European Commission and EPF supported them, also alerting certain MEPs.

In the summer the Polish Government did indeed apply for some of the EU money to be diverted from rail to road.

We were pleased to learn in October that the EC did not agree to this application; but instead appointed an expert to look at additional rail infrastructure projects in Poland, on which the cohesion funds could be spent.

No doubt our Polish colleagues will have good ideas for the expert!

Meanwhile, we are especially grateful to Michael Cramer MEP and Brian Simpson MEP for their support and actions on this matter.

## **THROUGH TRAINS TO SLOVENIA, CROATIA AND SERBIA**

Slovenia is already a member of the European Union; Croatia is a candidate member; Serbia would like to become a member. We in EPF were therefore concerned to read in July that international trains from Germany via Austria to Ljubljana, Zagreb and Belgrade were to be cut in December.

After consulting colleagues in the region, EPF's Chairman wrote to the Austrian and Bavarian Transport Ministers and to ÖBB, the Austrian Federal Railways. Some interesting correspondence resulted with all three.

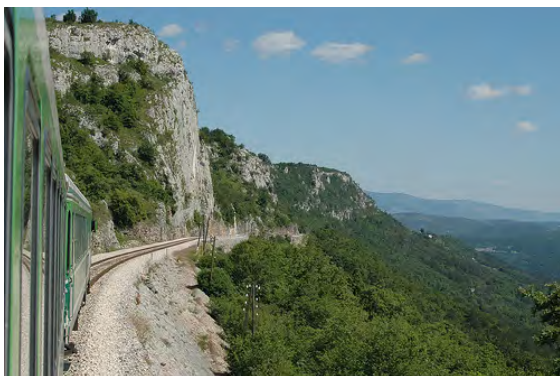
We were informed that the bridge across the River Drau at Villach is having to be reconstructed and this means that some through trains will not operate. Instead, passengers will have to change at Villach.

Night trains will not be affected.

Only one pair of trains will be withdrawn completely: the EC110-210 and EC 211-111 between Munich, Villach, Ljubljana, Zagreb and Belgrade. We are told by ÖBB that this is because of deteriorating infrastructure in Serbia and unsuitable Serbian rolling stock meant that the train was slower and it was difficult to offer an attractive alternative to the cheap flights.

We have replied urging that the connections in Villach should be as customer-friendly as possible, during the building work and that, once these are complete, improved train services on this route between Germany, Austria, Slovenia and Croatia should be offered.

We shall also continue to take every opportunity to press for adequate investment in rail infrastructure in present and future EU member states.



Border crossing Slovenia-Croatia

## NIGHT TRAINS BETWEEN FRANCE AND ITALY

Artesia runs night trains between Paris and Venice and Paris and Rome. We were concerned to learn in August that they stopped selling tickets for three weeks till mid-September and that this period was then extended into October. The reason given was lack of rolling stock.

EPF's Chairman wrote to Artesia asking whether any alternative was being offered for passengers travelling between France and Italy and what measures were being taken to resolve the rolling stock problem.

No reply was received, but we learned via a travel agent in Great Britain that during October Artesia again started to take bookings.

Now we learn that a new operator, Thello, is due to start a Paris - Venice night train service, but there are concerns about how easy it will be to book tickets. Thello is a joint open access venture between Veolia and Trenitalia and SNCF may not be selling their tickets.

Our colleagues in FNAUT are monitoring the situation and we may need to take it up at EU level. The experiences of members using, or trying to use, the new Thello night service will be very welcome. Please contact [Jean-Marie Tisseuil](#) in the first instance.

## BICYCLES ON HIGH SPEED TRAINS

Following a report from some of our French colleagues who were not allowed to take their bicycles on a high speed train from Saarbrücken to Paris, we have contacted the [European Cyclists' Federation](#).

ECF and certain of their national member associations have monitored this issue and taken it up with the European Commission. They produced a review of the situation in 2006 and plan to set a further meeting with DGMOVE in Brussels in the coming months.

Thank you for members of EPF-affiliated associations who, in early November, provided ECF with further information about good and bad practice. We hope to work further with them as appropriate.

## URBAN TRANSPORT

### COMPARISON

Members of EPF-affiliated associations from England to Greece, from Poland to Spain, are now busy completing our questionnaire on how good - or bad - public transport is in large cities such as Birmingham, Athens, Warsaw and Barcelona.

A few more volunteers would be welcome and should contact [Pau Noy](#).

We plan to issue a report in the spring of 2012 and hope that it will contribute to the spread of good practice and give information and ideas to public transport campaigners in many European cities.

## VICE-PRESIDENT KALLAS' RAIL

### STRATEGY PLATFORM

EU Transport Commissioner Sim Kallas has formed a Rail Strategy Platform which met for the first time on October 10<sup>th</sup> and is due to meet again in the New Year.

All 22 participants were invited personally by Mr Kallas. Most of them are from the railway industry, but also included are a trade union representative and a passenger representative - EPF's Vice-Chairman Christopher Irwin.

Mr Kallas explained the aims of the Platform as being:

- to assist the Commission in developing the Single European Rail Area;
- to assist in developing a vision for the future of rail, as a key part of a highly competitive transport system in Europe, capable of absorbing greatly increased traffic flows while ensuring sustainability and delivering climate change emissions reduction targets, in line with the Europe 2020 strategy and Transport White Paper.
- to assist in questions related to intermodal competition and the current rail legislation, including issues of financing and provision of rail services under a public service obligation.
- to formulate proposals for sector-specific policy recommendations that the Commission may address to policy makers at EU and national level.

From the many contributions of those present, there seemed to be consensus on the need for market opening, for greater standardisation and more effective homologation procedures. There also appeared to be willingness to increase the powers and extend the functions of the European Railway Agency.

There was a mood favouring further measures to give priority to freight on specified corridors. There was also a significant undercurrent of concern about the need for the industry to tackle its costs more effectively.

Christopher Irwin stressed the importance of service reliability, noting that during the last twelve months he had made more than 50 international rail journeys and the majority had been marred by poor performance of a sort that would not be tolerated by many business passengers.

There had been problems with the inability of ICE units to cope reliably with multiple standards as they switched between German and Belgian and German and French infrastructure; the apparent lack of co-ordination between operators and infrastructure managers, particularly when there was engineering work, and a failure to keep passengers informed at such times.

Mr Irwin also drew attention to the lack of adequate information and the frequent difficulties experienced in trying to make bookings that involved more than one operator, thanks to lack of compatible IT interfaces.

He stated that rail would not realise its potential for a greater market share of medium/longer distance travel in Europe if it did not aim for higher, more competitive standards. Its position was further hampered by fares that reflected the high cost structure of the industry and which were widely perceived to compare poorly with those of the low-cost airlines.



## **PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN THE COMMISSION WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2012**

The European Commission publicised its 2012 work programme on the 15th of November 2011. You can read it extensively [here](#).

EPF didn't find many directly public transport related actions. It's obvious that the EC's overriding priority is to foster a sustainable and job-rich economic recovery.

Under the heading of completing the internal energy market by 2014, new proposals are mentioned on railway liberalisation that will also help

modernise and decarbonise European transport through increased competition. This increased competition is also considered to create new, more innovative and customer-oriented services to passengers.

EPF will follow the developments closely. Liberalisation can bring advantages to passengers, but much depends on the way it will be implemented.

Also on the EU scale level EU-citizens need a responsible transport authority that organises high quality public transport that links the Member States and the Regions and Metropolises. This high quality trans-EU lacks nowadays in an important extent! EPF thinks EU-citizens are entitled to ask for this public service as this would be a good way of spending (a small part of) our tax money. If therefore changes should be made to existing EU legislation, then this has to be done.

In the annex with an up listing of individual initiatives, figures an initiative "127 – rail package", containing two legislative actions, one about the rail market access and one about the European Railway Agency. Their objectives are described as follows:

"Further market opening in the rail sector (for domestic passenger market) implies adaptation of the existing acquis on rail market access (1st railway package and its subsequent amendments) and appropriate changes to the Regulation on public service contracts in the rail sector (EC 1370/2007), including mandatory award of public service contracts under

competitive tendering. This initiative will also ensure non-discriminatory access to rail infrastructure, including rail-related services, in particular through structural separation between infrastructure management and service provision (unbundling). It will be accompanied by a Communication on Review rail market organisation and assess non-discriminatory access to rail infrastructure.

This initiative will enhance the role of ERA in the field of rail safety, in particular its supervision of national safety measures taken by national safety authorities and their progressive harmonisation. It will also aim at achieving a single vehicle type authorisation and a single railway undertaking safety certification. Safety and interoperability directives (2004/49 and 2008/57) might be adjusted as necessary. (4th quarter 2012).".

The structural separation of the rail infrastructure management and the provision of train services is not only facilitating the access on rail for different operators, offering public or commercial services, without the obligation to reserve a rail to one operator. It creates also possibilities for different public authorities to operate their own category of train services. The European public transport users are waiting for a Europe-wide acting operator that plans and offers fast and comfortable trans-EU train services. These long distance trains would offer a sustainable alternative to travelling throughout the EU by plane. Modern adapted rolling stock and well-reasoned time tables would produce an important modal shift towards public

transport in general and to the train in particular for trans-European travelling.

Last but not least, passengers should have easy access to independent information and ticketing, as is available in the UK. Such a one-stop-shop is a *conditio sine qua non* for further liberalisation: if information and tickets are only available for one operator at a time, rail will lose out.

## **A BUS ADVENTURE BETWEEN BRUSSELS AND BERLIN BY A DBV-MEMBER**

This report concerns a bus journey from Berlin to Brussels and return that has been lived by some DBV-members. How will it look when the European passenger rights for bus passengers come into force in 2013?

The bus adventure was very easy to book. In the internet there was a fare (113 Euro). I went to the Central Bus Station and bought a ticket at the ticket window. Quite simple...

In the dark and the rain there was not much to see of Braunschweig, Hannover or Antwerp. I learned a little about how travel right across Europe with Eurolines works - or should work.

Return journey: I arrived back in Berlin with a "slight" delay of 100 minutes. A bus arrived at the correct time with a smart display "London - Berlin". The bus driver first had to collect his bus numbers. When you check in you receive a ticket with a number, which the driver

has to collect as you get on. And that then was also my bus. Fairly full, so that I could not find a double seat for myself.

After we had boarded, nothing happened. For a whole hour - nothing. People became restless. No information, nothing. The bus driver was nowhere to be seen. Strike? Did he no longer want to, perhaps because a bloke has moaned at him at the start? After an hour, a car raced up and two young women got out with their luggage - and hardly had they got in the bus but it left. We learned at last that the bus from Paris had broken down. I can imagine that the women were the only ones who wanted to continue to Berlin. The bus route from Paris was a different one to that from London. So the police brought the women quickly to the Brussels' North Station ... Good for them, bad for the rest of us. No one came out of the office to inform the waiting passengers in French or English. The bus driver may well only have known Spanish or was he too shy?

In Duisburg the bus stopped in the middle of nowhere (Central Bus Station) and the driver disappeared without a word. Bye! About 30 minutes went by, until he reappeared briefly - with his colleague. Change of driver. The new driver first asked all passengers if they wanted Hanover or Berlin. During the breakfast stop at Marienborn everyone had to leave the bus. On the other hand that was not such a bad idea, because those not breakfasting in the service area could stretch their legs and breathe in some morning air. Very solicitous!

So it took me 12 hours from the Central Bus Station in Brussels to the Central Bus Station in Berlin.

To sum up in railway jargon: after an hour "waiting for connecting passengers" and short traffic jams north of Brussels at least 30 minutes "delay in operational schedule."

It can happen that a bus breaks down. One can understand that bus drivers must comply with working hours. It is good that they do. That things do not work out immediately with change of driver when there are delays is also something that passengers can imagine. And understand. But please: information!

Even if the staff can only say, "I don't have any exact information, only that the connecting bus is broken and we're now waiting for a car with two passengers" or "Good night. My colleague will take you on from here." Anything is better than nothing.

On the invoice for my ticket it says that one must put up with delays of up to 4 hours. I have never bothered about passenger rights. Yet on the railways it is now regulated differently - 60 minutes. Are bus customers not passengers? Strange world!

## **TWO SIDES OF MANCHESTER – A REPORT BY TREVOR GARROD**

On the first weekend of November I was in Manchester for the Railfuture autumn conference. It is a city that I only occasionally visit and I decided to put myself in the position of a visitor, perhaps from elsewhere in Europe. Manchester has fast Inter City trains from London Euston, a few minutes' walk from St Pancras where the Eurostars arrive. It also has an international airport from which you can get regional trains into the city centre and indeed to many other places in the North of England.

I used the internet to book a reasonably priced hotel for two nights. I arrived at the nearest station at 17.50 on a dark wet Friday night. There was a local map at the station, but it was of limited usefulness. It did not show the road in which the hotel was situated, but I pulled my suitcase alongside one busy main road, then a ring road, to the modern hotel which was obviously designed for the motorist. Indeed, its website said nothing about public transport access. It took me 20 minutes to walk there. The following morning, however, the helpful receptionist printed me a map showing how to get to the conference venue on foot.

Saturday and especially Sunday were bright crisp autumn days. On Sunday morning I walked for some 15 minutes to the nearest stop on Manchester Metrolink, a tram system opened in 1992 using two suburban railways and on street running in the city centre. I had only ever used it once before.

The tram stops are unstaffed but with ticket machines. The instructions are in English, but by pressing a flag in the bottom left corner you can also obtain them in three other languages.. I was soon able to book what was apparently a day ticket for the entire network for £4.20 (less than 5 €). This seemed remarkably cheap.



When the 2-car tram came. I boarded and found two members of staff checking all tickets. Not wanting to incur a £100 fine, I asked the official if I really could use this ticket all day. He confirmed that I could and indeed that I could even have bought a weekend ticket, valid from Friday evening, for just £5.00 (about 5,50 €).

The tram network has expanded since 1992, with four lines and two short stubs, all converging on an east-west route through the city centre. It serves the two main line railway stations. Further expansion is planned, with one conventional diesel-operated rail line presently being converted for tram (or light rapid transit) operation. I was impressed by the number of cheerful helpful staff on the vehicles. Each stop has a platform, shelter and information including a helpful

neighbourhood map. Few have real time information at present - but the trams are frequent. Even on a Sunday, they were running at 12-minute frequencies. There are dot-matrix signs in the vehicles. I rode on six different trams, and all but one had clear announcements about stops and where to change.

I rode the tram northwards to Bury, on a double-track railway that had been electrified in 1916 but needed modernising by the 1980s. We ran mostly through the suburbs, but near the end the tram was passing fields with sheep and there were views of the Pennine hills not far away. From the terminal platform at Bury you go straight up an escalator into a modern combined tram and bus interchange, with a travel shop, cafe and newsagents, well signed, and the shopping centre of the town immediately beyond. There is also a car park and some cycle lockers. To complete this transport melange, the town centre map shows you the terminus of a heritage steam railway a few minutes' walk away. There was standing room only on the tram back into the city centre. It did wobble somewhat when travelling at speed.

I then took another tram, after waiting just three minutes, westwards into Salford - Manchester's sister city on the opposite bank of the small River Irwell. We used some old rail infrastructure and then passed through an area of former dockland and industry on a brand new alignment past modern flats and offices. I alighted at MediaCity UK, serving futuristic buildings housing film and television studios and cultural



attractions. Here the tramlink was designed into the regenerated area.

For £4.20 it was an impressive and fascinating tour of this major city, and had I not had to make a 5-hour train journey back home across England, I could have had even more for my money!

Postscript: After showing this article to two members of Railfuture in the North West, I am informed that I could have phoned Traveline 0871 200 22 33 for information on how to get by bus to the nearest stop to the hotel; or logged on to [www.transportdirect.info](http://www.transportdirect.info) or [www.tfgm.com](http://www.tfgm.com). The latter website is for Greater Manchester. These things are useful to know for the future.

## **EPF WORKING GROUP – LONG DISTANCE RAIL**

During 2012 this EPF Working Group plans to produce a report on long-distance international train services. The Group will look at problems, including end-to-end journeys and the future of night trains, and make recommendations.

Members of the Group are Albert Lambert, Maurice Losch, Willy Smeulders, Jürg Tschopp, Pierre Havelange, Xavier Lukanl, Josef Schneider, János Vincze, Kurt Hultgren, Matthias Kurzeck, Trevor Jones and Ian McDonald with Trevor Garrod ex officio.

The Group will hold a short preparatory meeting in Salzburg on the morning of Friday March 9th, before the EPF

Conference. It will then hold a longer meeting - a brainstorming - in the ACTP office in Liège (opposite Liège-Guillemins station) on Saturday April 21st.

Documentation will be circulated before the meeting and the input of other colleagues will be welcome. There is also room for one or two additional members in the Group. Please contact [Albert Lambert](#).

Le travail de ce groupe est en français et allemand.

Die Arbeitssprachen dieser Gruppe sind Deutsch und Französisch.

The work of this group is normally conducted in French and German, but you can also send e-mails in English.

## EPF MEETING PEOPLE

- October 15<sup>th</sup>: Rian van der Borgt attended the Customer Liaison Meeting of the Community of European Railways
- October 21<sup>st</sup>: Albert Lambert, Maurice Losch, Pierre Havelange, Kurt Hultgren and Trevor Garrod had a very useful meeting with the Luxembourg Transport Minister, Mr Claude Wiseler.
- November 8<sup>th</sup>: Christopher Irwin took part in a conference on The Role of Independent Travel Distribution in Brussels, organised by the European Technological Travel Services Association
- November 10<sup>th</sup>: Willy Smeulders took part in the Rail stations and terminals world conference in Amsterdam.
- November 14<sup>th</sup>: Willy Smeulders took part in an EC workshop on the implementation of Regulation 1370/2007.
- November 15<sup>th</sup>: Josef Schneider took part in a meeting of Rail Platform Europe in Strasbourg, meeting MEPs.
- November 22<sup>nd</sup>: Willy Smeulders took part in a conference organised by Regions of Connected Knowledge in Lille
- November 19<sup>th</sup>: Willy Smeulders took part in a workshop at the TEN-T days in Antwerp
- December 5<sup>th</sup>: Christopher Irwin and Willy Smeulders took part in the EESC-EC Conference on the White paper on Transport.
- December 6<sup>th</sup>: Rian van der Borgt took part in the Hitrail conference on ICT in European railways.

- December 6<sup>th</sup>: Christopher Irwin took part in a conference on EU passenger law at Leuven university.

## WORK IN PROGRESS ...

- EU Journeyplanner - EPF's discussions with the European Commission and with providers of electronic journey planners have been continuing.
- EU White Paper on Transport - we have continued dialogue with MEPs on the possible amendments to the White paper on Transport. The Parliament is due to vote on these in November and the Council of Ministers in January.
- Members of Railfuture have provided the BAG-SPNV (German regional railway authorities) with examples of community involvement and service promotion of secondary lines in Great Britain.
- As part of the Inter Regio Rail project, a handbook on the organisation of regional passenger services throughout the EU plus Switzerland and Norway has appeared - see [www.interregiorail.eu](http://www.interregiorail.eu)

## FOR YOUR DIARY

- Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> of January 2012 - EPF Council meeting, Milan.
- Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> of March 2012 - EPF Conference and Annual General Meeting, Salzburg; preceded on the Friday by seminar and long distance rail preparatory meeting.
- Saturday 21<sup>st</sup> of April 2012 - Long distance rail working party - Liège
- Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> of June 2012 - EPF Council meeting, Stuttgart (provisional)
- 8<sup>th</sup> till 10<sup>th</sup> of October 2012 - Salzburger Verkehrstage
- Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> of October 2012 - EPF Council meeting, Ghent (provisional)
- It is has been agreed to hold the January 2013 Council meeting in London and the 2013 Conference and Annual General Meeting in March in Basel.

## EPF CONFERENCE 2012 IN SALZBURG – EPF CELEBRATES ITS 10TH ANNIVERSARY

The 10th Conference and Annual General Meeting of the European Passengers' Federation will be held in Salzburg, Austria, on Saturday 10<sup>th</sup> of March 2012. The events will take place in the Best Western Parkhotel, a short walk from Salzburg's main station.

The conference will be preceded on Friday afternoon, March 9<sup>th</sup>, by a seminar on public transport in and around Salzburg - which includes train, bus and trolleybus.

The welcome dinner will take place on Friday evening.

On Saturday morning the conference will hear speakers on challenges to urban transport and the experiences of rail liberalisation. In the afternoon, speakers will deal with long-distance rail travel at European level and the work of EPF, including our current urban transport comparative survey.

We shall also learn about the work of Pro Bahn Österreich, the Austrian rail users' association which is hosting our 2012 conference. Salzburg and its region contain much of historic, cultural and transport interest, and for delegates staying until Sunday there will be a choice of excursions.

The EPF conference is an excellent opportunity for public transport users throughout Europe to network, learn from each others' experiences and have

dialogue with important figures in the public transport sphere.

The registration fee for members of EPF-affiliated associations has been maintained at 65 €, which includes documents, drinks and lunch on Saturday.

There are extra charges for the Friday evening meal and Sunday excursions. There will be an extra 10 € charge for persons registering after February 17<sup>th</sup>. The fee for non-members is 100 €.

Full details will be available from December on [the EPF website](#).



### COLOPHON

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