

## **9th Annual and General Meeting and conference of the European Passengers' Foundation**

**'Connecting People'**

**Museu Picasso, Barcelona, Spain**

**12 March 2011**

**Speaking points for Ms Kuneva**

**"Connecting people - Easy travel for Europeans."**

I am honoured to address the annual conference of the European Passenger Federation as the Special Adviser to Vice President Kallas on passenger rights issues. My colleague, Veronica Manfredi, has addressed the Malmo conference last year, and I am pleased to announce that, since then, the EU has made a substantial step forward in the field of protection of passengers in Europe.

For me, this EPF meeting is an excellent occasion to present you the work done and the on-going for further improving transport service quality and integration of such policies into wider EU energy to climate policies.

Passenger rights legislation is there to ensure that citizens enjoy a basic set of rights when travelling. Passenger rights only can be effective if passengers are aware of them. Hence the importance of the on-going, EU-wide information campaign. Finally, I will speak about the important links of passenger rights legislation with the aims of the Commission to create a 'door to door seamless approach' to travel, and how this would also have a positive effect on reaching the goals of decarbonisation.

### **The extension of passenger rights legislation to different transport modes**

This very year the EU has reached the goal of extending EU passenger rights legislation to all transport modes. Indeed, having started by covering the air transport sector back in early 2000, the rail passenger rights Regulation came into force in December 2009. Since November 2010 we also have a Regulation to protect passengers travelling by waterborne transport. The latest accomplishment is the Regulation to protect bus and coach travellers that was adopted on 16 February this year. Both Regulations will be applicable in two years time.

These achievements required significant efforts from all sides. As a result passengers on all modes of transport will enjoy a minimum set of rules that are based on common principles, which are yet adapted to the specificities of each mode. In this way, the EU is the first integrated area in the world providing passenger protection in all modes of transport.

### **Passenger rights enable citizens to be better connected**

Passenger rights make travel easier and more comfortable. EU legislation in the field of passenger rights ensures that passengers can benefit from common rules on reimbursement or rerouting, compensation and assistance, if something goes wrong with their travel. This means, for example, that air passengers as well as rail passengers using international or other train services depending on the Member State, should be given the choice between either reimbursement of their tickets and re-

routing in case of long delay or cancellation. Under certain circumstances they can also expect to receive financial compensation from the operator.

While passengers are waiting for rerouting, air carriers or railway companies should provide assistance in terms of refreshments, meals and accommodation if necessary/ People with disabilities and people with reduced mobility can expect specific assistance under certain conditions in railway stations and in airports as well as on-board to reach their destinations. If passengers have suffered a disruption during their journey, EU passenger rights legislation ensures that they can lodge a complaint, first to operators and, after that, to an independent national body (NEB) that is in charge of the application and enforcement of the legislation in the Member States.

However, even with these achievements our work far from being completed. In fact, we only made a significant first step, but we have to acknowledge that much work still lies ahead of us. First, the Commission will have to ensure that existing legislation is effectively and consistently applied in all Member States. For instance, depending on the Member State, National Enforcement Bodies (NEB) seem to work more or less effectively. We have to ensure that they all have the administrative capacity and are integrated in a legal framework that allows them to be fully functional and target oriented.

Second, some work may be needed on the legal side. With a view to constantly improving the situation, the Commission intends to present a horizontal Communication towards the end of 2011 reflecting on synergies between the legal texts as well as on specificities of each mode in view of improving intermodality in transport.

Obviously, the Commission will first consult stakeholders and in particular passenger organisations on the way forward. For example, an important issue of implementing passenger rights legislation is the complaint handling procedures and access to means of redress. The assessment underlying the two forthcoming Communications on the implementation of the Denied Boarding Regulation 261 of 2004 and the PRM Regulation 1107 of 2006 reveals issues related to diverging roles of NEBs and the duration of procedures. The Commission would therefore like to have the passenger organisations' view on their perception of the complaint handling procedure with operators on the one hand, and with the NEB or national, independent complaint handling bodies on the other hand. What solutions do passenger organisations suggest to improve the situation both under the existing legal framework as well as in case of a revision of legislation? The input from stakeholders will be very much appreciated in view of ensuring the most effective legal framework on passenger rights and its implementation in the short and medium term.

A long-term objective of Vice-President Kallas, as expressed in his inaugural hearing at the EP in January 2010, is the development of a common code of EU passenger rights applying to all modes and providing basic protection for travellers across the EU.

### **Information campaign on passenger rights**

Passengers can only reap the benefits of passenger rights legislation if they know their rights. This is the reason why, on 29 June 2010, Vice-President Kallas has launched a Europe-wide information campaign, covering both rail and air passenger rights. The campaign is meant to reach all 27 Member States and to have a maximum dissemination among our citizens. Just yesterday, I have

visited Madrid to discuss EU passenger rights with several key stakeholders. This visit is just one of my many visits to different Member States in the framework of the "road-show" that we're leading to make our campaign better known locally.

The campaign uses an innovative approach: it tries to reach the citizen with humour and modern communication tools, whilst also including those who do not have access to these tools.

- We have developed **posters** showing situations which we might all have experienced once: missing luggage, a train or flight that is delayed or cancelled with the unpleasant consequences that this may sometimes have. All the posters have by now been distributed to airports.
- A **video clip** illustrates the challenges of **people with disabilities and people with reduced mobility** when they travel and how EU legislation intends to help them make their way to the destination, so that they can enjoy, in principle, the same access to transport as anybody else.
- **Small teaser video clips** that can be viewed on EU-Tube and on the Commission website and which already seem to have found a lot of fans.
- **Information leaflets on air and rail passenger rights** to tell citizens in detail and in a clear, accessible language about their rights when travelling.
- **Last but not least, a multi-lingual campaign website**, where citizens can find all necessary information and links, and from where they can download all information and communication material such as the video clips and posters.

I am very proud to be able to play an important role in promoting this information campaign across the EU by being an active ambassador of passenger rights. Yet, to make the information campaign a success, it is very important that all stakeholders are working together. For this reason, I would like to launch an appeal to you and to your organisations in the Member States: please help us, please cooperate with the Commission in order to get the information across to the citizens and to promote the campaign in your respective Member States. An informed citizen is a competent citizen who can make smart choices.

### **Travel connections in Europe should be improved further to make travel easy for Europeans**

Vice President Kallas firmly believes in the urgent need for the creation of a system of seamless multimodal travelling and integrated ticketing, which would result in an overall better travel experience for citizens. This would require single tickets or billing systems and door-to-door information. In order to achieve this aim, it will be necessary to ensure EU-wide multimodal travel platforms that could provide commercial services.

Connecting people across Europe calls for a transport system, which provides sufficient and high quality options for passenger mobility. Making travel easier requires an integrated, efficient and safe transport system. To convert our current transport system into smart and seamless mobility is a challenge. Every passenger has already experienced that too often changing from one transport mode to another results in a loss of comfort or time, or involves higher costs.

Seamless journeys across Europe with a single ticket, door-to-door information and barrier-free transport is a splendid vision but not easy to achieve. What do we need, how do we get there?

- ***Integrated Infrastructure***

Modal integration will call for integrated management of national and modal infrastructure. This development can already be observed along certain freight corridors.

The current policy review of the Trans-European Transport Networks (TEN-T) has brought up the concept of the multimodal core network, which should enable a concentration of trans-national traffic and long-distance flows - both for freight and passengers.

Innovative information and management systems that form part of the network would support logistic functions, intermodal integration and sustainable operation in order to establish competitive door-to-door transport according to the needs of the users.

- ***Door-to-Door Information***

The modal mix has to be better adapted to the overall travel experience. This will only be possible with a continuous and ubiquitous exchange of information. The pervasiveness of information technology to optimise all aspects of personal travel is likely to become one of the most distinctive features of future transport systems.

The challenge is to access, integrate and use the data to deliver meaningful real time and personalised travel information services to the user who is interested in simple door-to-door information. This is especially needed for cross border and multimodal travel.

Under the Directive 2010/40/EU on Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) the Commission will - in close contact with the Member States and other stakeholders - develop the functional, technical and organisational specifications for both real-time traffic information and multi-modal travel information.

The Commission will also support the development of national and regional multimodal journey planners, and links between existing planners, with the ultimate aim of building a Europe-wide service.

- ***Smart Ticketing***

New forms of electronic ticketing on mobile devices (smart cards, mobile phones, etc.) gradually take over from the old paper ticket. Using the full possibilities the new technologies offer is vital to have interoperable systems in place.

***Possible defensives?***

[For public transport, the Interoperable Fare Management project has set up a road map to European interoperability and showed the interoperability of the main national systems. For the rail sector, the ticketing component of the Telematics Applications for Passengers (TAP-TSI) needs to be developed and implemented.]

The Commission will soon make public a study which analyses the current status of smart ticketing and gives recommendations for further steps on a European level.

## **Europe's Quest for Smart Transport**

A current challenge is to make the transport system as intelligent as possible, i.e. making it, to the largest possible extent, capable of coping with new situations (safety, traffic congestion, obstacles, and modal differences) by notably linking, at any time, its knowledge of the network events with available information from all sources of transport data.

How exactly can Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) help?

Our transport system should be user-friendly and support the freedom to make efficient choices.

With the ITS Action Plan and the new ITS Directive (2010/40/EU) we are determined to make an extra step to accelerate the deployment of ITS throughout Europe to help making this difference be felt a reality. Indeed, Europe has a role to play here, not by taking everything into our own hands, but by supporting the right framework conditions: the policy priorities, legal certainty, and agreement on a clear timetable.

The aim of the new Directive 2010/40/EU is to take a substantial step towards harmonised use of ITS while leaving full freedom to deploy systems locally, regionally or nationally as appropriate. The core will be the work on functional, technical and organisational specifications. It is clear that intelligent transport is about technology — but not only technology: it is also very much about services for real people with real needs. This requires good management of all transport-related processes. Caring for one's passengers, clients, employees and their needs and rights helps in identifying innovative solutions and new business opportunities. Service thinking is a must.

### **Better travel connections enable other goals to be reached, such as decarbonisation.**

Transport is an important and still growing source of greenhouse gases such as CO<sub>2</sub>. In order to contribute its part to climate change policies in Europe CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from transport need to be reduced significantly. Curbing mobility is not an option. Future development of the industry, in particular decarbonisation, must rely on a number of strands of which I would like to highlight two:

- Optimising the performance of multimodal travel chains, including by making greater use of inherently more energy-efficient modes, where other technological innovations are insufficient;
- Using transport and infrastructure more efficiently through use of improved traffic management and information systems such as.

The combination of rights for passengers in all transport modes and across them, together with an efficient door-to-door seamless approach to travelling, will encourage drivers to give up their driving-seat and to become passengers. This will contribute towards a reduction in road congestion and in turn it will play a part in reaching decarbonisation goals.

In order to achieve this, it is essential to develop and deploy the key technologies that are needed to develop the EU transport system into a modern, efficient and user-friendly system. Road traffic information and traffic management must not remain confined to a single regional centre, but they should be shared with the adjacent regions. Passengers on a given journey should dispose of all possible real-time information to allow them to select 'en-route' the best possible travel option.

The Commission is looking at ways to foster partnerships for smart mobility and of building consensus on future deployment pathways. Such deployment requires multi-stakeholder co-operation, involving technology providers, energy and infrastructure providers and cities themselves - as well as support from financial bodies.

Perception and information are a primary aspect. Transport users and operators may not have the ability of making truly informed decisions for lack of relevant, correct and well presented data. Wrong perception or uncertainty may also influence decisions, as, for example, in the case of the overestimation of waiting times for public transport. An integrated ticketing system is an essential way to increase awareness of the users on the various options to complete their journeys.

### **Closure**

To conclude, ladies and gentlemen, let me stress how much our legislation on Passenger Rights is a key component of a much wider picture.

Indeed, it sets the minimum service quality requirements to ensure that our citizens, each of us, are progressively encouraged, also through smart technologies, to make better and more informed choices for easier, shorter, hopefully even cheaper, trips, which leave a smaller carbon footprint behind.

Thank you for your attention!