

Railways and passengers: one goal, and same concerns

Passengers are important to the European railways as rail is important to passengers. However, the level of service and assistance provided to passengers is linked to a number of factors beyond the control of the railways. Those factors include the level of infrastructure financing by national and European authorities and the level of compensation for public service obligations (PSO) by competent authorities. The charts below show variations in these economic factors in EU Member States. As a result, railways cannot offer the same level of service, the same level of assistance and satisfy passengers' rights to the same degree in all Member States.

Public service compensation in EU15 and Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) states

PSOs are undercompensated in practically all Member States. The problem is even more acute in CEE countries.

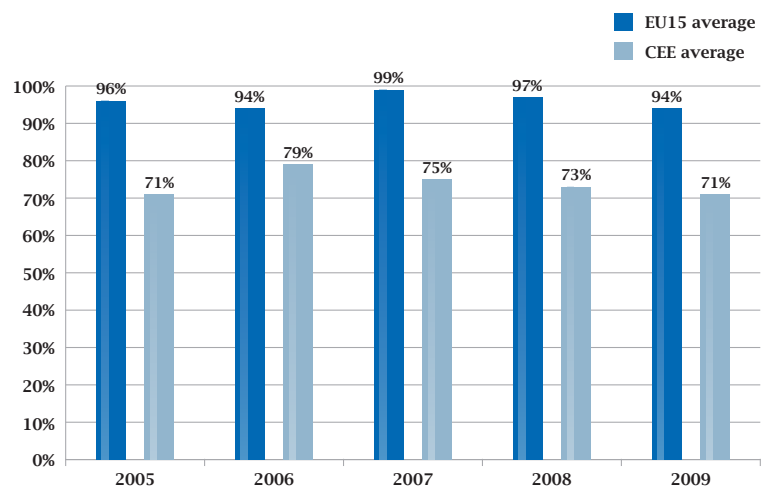
Track access charges in 2008

Where infrastructure investment is reducing whilst the level of track access charges is increasing, railway undertakings find delivering even the minimum quality of service to their customers something of a challenge.

The role of the competent authorities be they national, regional or local, is crucial. Proper infrastructure financing and charging as well as fair competition between the modes is essential to preserve an acceptable level of service and assistance to rail passengers.

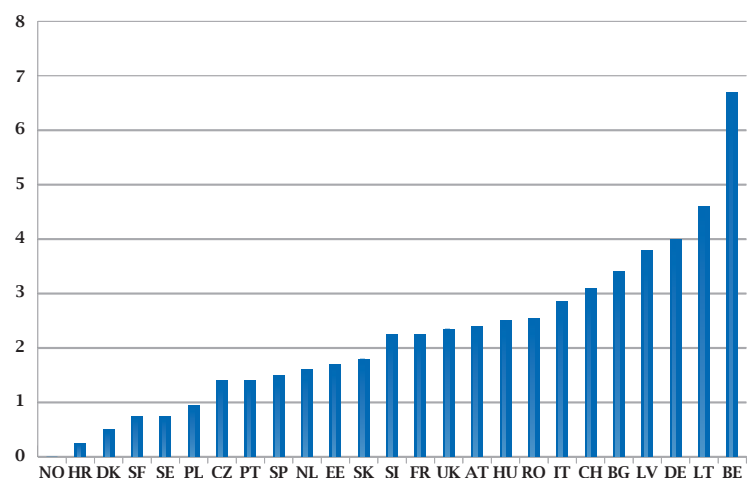
Passengers' organisations, i.e. the European Passenger Federation (EPF) and the European Disability Forum (EDF), share railways' concerns that sustainable framework conditions should be ensured to guarantee a good level of service to passengers. The current European law does contain a number of provisions enabling to remove obstacles which prevent an open and competitive European railway market from functioning smoothly.

Figure 1 Percentage of state compensation of total cost minus ticket sales



Source: CER members

Figure 2 Infrastructure charges for typical intercity passenger trains (€/train-km)

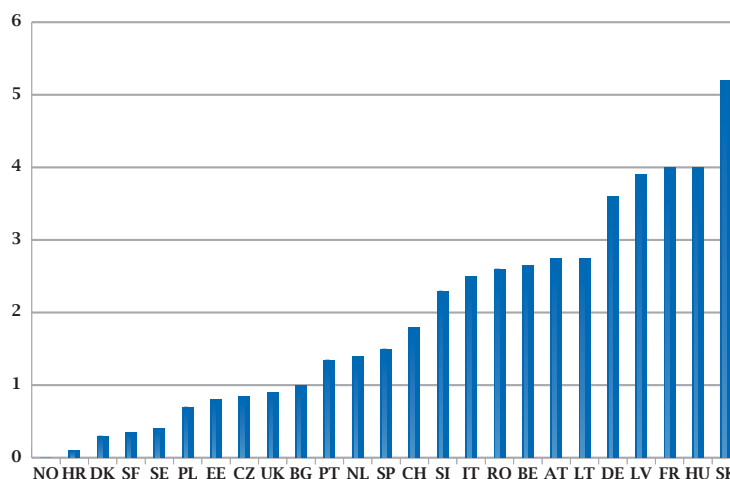


Source: OECD/ITF 2008

The European Commission and Member States should therefore take steps at European and national level to ensure that these provisions are implemented and enforced properly. Specifically this means:

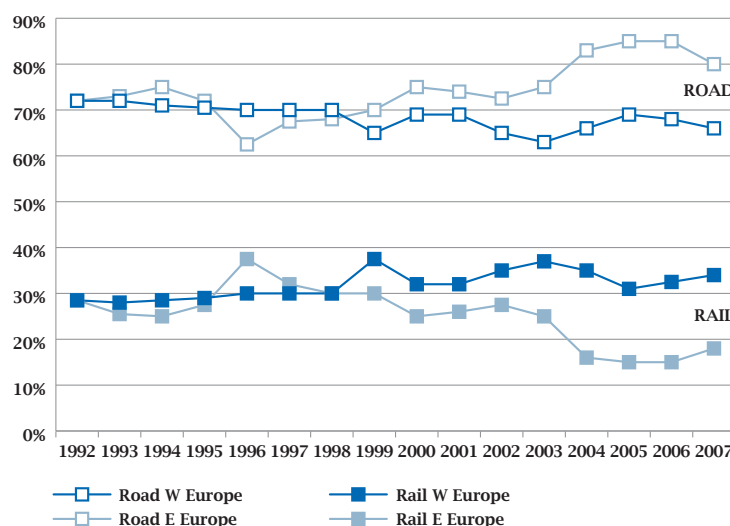
- ensuring sufficient infrastructure financing – in particular through the implementation of multi-annual contracts – and sufficient financing of PSO transport;
- enforcing the provisions of Directive 2001/14 concerning the allocation of railway infrastructure capacity and the principles of track access charging;
- considering the above, no additional derogations to Regulation (EC) No 1371/2007 should be granted;
- facilitating the development of intermodal journey planners that would enable prospective passengers to obtain the information on schedules, services and tariffs necessary to enable them to make informed choices on potentially competitive journey options, thereby facilitating the development of a more competitive consumer market;
- working together to ensure that the decisions of national enforcement bodies on matters covered by Regulation (EC) No 1371/2007 are consistent with one another throughout the EU and that the findings of those national enforcement bodies are recorded in the public domain as evidence of the effectiveness and transparency of their deliberations;
- providing a level playing field with other transport modes, in particular in the field of taxes and the internalisation of external costs.

Figure 3 Infrastructure charges for typical local and suburban trains (€/train-km)



Source: OECD/ITF 2008

Figure 4 Modal split of total investments in rail/road infrastructure



Source: ITF/ECMT 2009

For further information, please contact:

EPF
Trevor Garrod, Chairman
chairman@epf.eu

EDF
Carlotta Besozzi, Director
Carlotta.Besozzi@edf-feph.org

CER
Libor Lochman, Executive Director
Libor.Lochman@cer.be