

# EPF-Bulletin #11 – July 2012



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## INTRODUCTION

Bienvenue dans le onzième numéro du bulletin d'activités de la Fédération Européenne des Voyageurs. Bienvenue aussi à notre nouvelle association adhérente, For Jernbane, de la Norvège. ([www.jernbane.no](http://www.jernbane.no))

Pendant les mois récents nous nous sommes occupés des droits des passagers par divers moyens de transports publics ; des expériences positives et négatives des voyages internationaux en train et en autocar ; et les problèmes des clients qui veulent amener leur vélo dans le train. Nous continuons aussi notre étude comparative des transports urbains dans plusieurs villes et notre dialogue avec les décideurs au niveau européen.

Au mois de mars, 90 de nos membres se sont rendus à Salzbourg pour participer à notre congrès annuel. Trois thèmes principaux ont été traités : la mobilité urbaine, la libéralisation des chemins de fer et la politique européenne des transports en général. Vous pouvez lire plusieurs rapports d'activités dans ce bulletin, entre autres sur ce congrès.

Welcome to the 11<sup>th</sup> issue of the bulletin of the European Passengers' Federation. Welcome also to our new member

association, For Jernbane, in Norway ([www.jernbane.no](http://www.jernbane.no)).

In recent months we have been concerned with the rights of passengers in a variety of modes of public transport; positive and negative experiences of international journeys by train and coach; and the problems of customers who want to take their bicycle on the train. We are also continuing our comparative study of urban transport and our dialogue with decision-makers at European level.

In March, 90 of our members met in Salzburg for our annual conference to consider three principal topics: urban mobility, rail liberalisation and European transport policy. You can read reports of these and other activities in this bulletin.

Herzlich Willkommen zur elften Ausgabe dieses Bulletins des Europäischen Fahrgastverbandes (EPF). Herzlich Willkommen auch unserem neuen Mitgliedsverband, For Jarnbane, aus Norwegen ([www.jernbane.no](http://www.jernbane.no)).

In den letzten Monaten haben wir uns mit den Rechten der Fahrgäste in allen Arten öffentlicher Verkehrsmitteln beschäftigt; mit positiven und negativen Erfahrungen während internationalen Reisen mit Bahn und Bus; sowie mit Problemen der Fahrradmitnahme im Zug. Unsere vergleichende Studie des Stadtverkehrs wird weiterbearbeitet. Unser Dialog mit den Entscheidungsträgern auf europäischer Ebene ist ständiger Arbeitsbestandteil.

Im März trafen sich 90 unserer Mitglieder in Salzburg für unsere Jahrestagung, um drei Schwerpunktthemen zu besprechen - Stadtmobilität, Liberalisierung im Eisenbahnverkehr und europäische Verkehrspolitik. Berichte über diese und andere Tätigkeiten lesen Sie in diesem Bulletin.

Vergessen Sie auch nicht, unsere Webseite [www.epf.eu](http://www.epf.eu) zu besuchen. Diese ist gerade mit Hilfe unserer ungarischen Kollegen erneuert worden.

Trevor Garrod  
Chairman

## **EPF CONFERENCE 2012 ON THE 10<sup>TH</sup> OF MARCH IN SALZBURG**

The European Passengers' Federation welcomed nearly 100 representatives of European passenger organisations to its tenth Annual General Meeting and Conference in Salzburg for discussion with speakers from the world of transport, the European Parliament and the European Commission.

"It is high time that we came with our conference to our member association PRO BAHN Austria." With these words EPF Chairman Trevor Garrod opened the conference on 9<sup>th</sup> March.



Director Günter Mackinger convinced the audience with impressive information about the services of Salzburg AG and the Salzburg Local Railway. Although the line to Lamprechtshausen and Trimmelkram underwent in the 1970s the usual downwards spiral of falling passenger numbers, service reductions and a consequent further drop in usage, it was later possible to turn the tables.

The cause was not initially investment but the engagement of all the staff and the orientation of all services in the interest of potential customers. An even interval timetable stretching into the late evening, conductors in all trains and a high level of reliability enable to Local Railway to serve today as an essential part of the overall transport system. In Salzburg the environmentally friendly trolley-bus is the ideal and most cost-effective solution for passenger frequency below the level suitable for a tramway.

Mr. Mackinger was critical of the separation of infrastructure and operation. In the meantime, they were also successfully working the Berchtesgaden Railway. With impressive examples, such as 6-minute passing times because of historical safety

technology, he referred to protracted problem solving with DB Netz.

Angelika Gasteiner, Customer Care and Marketing Manager for Salzburg AG, outlined her project with passengers of reduced mobility. "Technology is no substitute for intelligence and understanding was how one participant described their impressions of her lecture. With simple methods, such as always reserving the best situated seats for visual contact with the driver and the shortest way to the door for all passengers needing assistance, it is possible to attain a passenger-friendly climate. If then the bus drivers are also trained regularly with suitable methods, that is a big step towards accessibility.

Walter Joks, Marketing Manager of Wiener Linien (Vienna Lines), spoke about the efforts of this public transport operator to achieve long-term customer loyalty. With a market share of 37% of urban transport and 373,000 annual season ticket holders, a very successful move forward has been made in recent years.

Manfred Mader of WESTbahn AG, representing the company which since December had been operating long-distance trains on the Salzburg - Vienna route, dealt with searching questions from the participants. Passenger rights, possible extensions of the service but also the economic prospects were key points in the discussion.



Under the brand name of Meridian, Veolia is to take over regional trains between Munich, Kufstein and Salzburg from December 2013. Jörg Frank-Marquardt, Sales and Business Development Manager of Veolia Verkehr GmbH was not yet able to answer critical questions with regard to the fare integration of these services as negotiations were still under way.

Pau Noy of the Spanish member association of EPF, PTP, introduced our planned comparison of the public transport service quality of major European cities from the viewpoint of the customer. It annoyed the convinced public transport lobbyist that the German ADAC, of all bodies, had published an urban transport comparison and in so doing had apparently only taken account of passenger needs in a very restricted form.

Keir Fitch, Deputy Chief of Cabinet of the EU Transport Commissioner Siim Kallas, spoke on current questions of European transport policy.

Europe faces the challenges of a predicted rise by 2050 of 50% in passenger kilometres and an increase of 80% in freight kilometres. At the moment, transport as a whole is for 96%

dependent on oil. It is a declared target to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 80% by the year 2050. Vice-President Kallas had declared that "Restricting mobility is not an option." Other methods must be chosen, such as a transfer to rail. The railways must become more attractive for passengers while reliability and quality must also improve for freight.

In the autumn of 2011 the EU had agreed an investment programme in a so-called TEN network, in order to remove bottlenecks in relevant corridors of all modes of transport during the next 8-10 years. The aim is to enhance capacity between the most important cities, ports and industrial areas.

An essential focus of the Commission's work lies in further technical harmonisation. Many national railways and systems are still each working only according to their own regulations.

On the topic of passenger rights, Mr. Fitch said that the European Union had achieved considerable progress in this field during the past two years. By the spring of 2013 there would be customer rights in all forms of public transport. It remained a challenge to organise multimodal journeys more effectively. The transposition of passenger rights in individual member states is very variable and in need of a lot of improvement. Customers must be comprehensively informed of their rights. Information must be easily accessible and understandable. In the event of problems it must be clearly recognisable that the transport companies are concerned with their customers.

The conference participants were in agreement with German MEP Michael Cramer, that every energy turning point must be accompanied by a transport turning point, if the goal was to be reached of keeping global warming to a maximum of 2 degrees. While industry since 1990 had been able to reduce its CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 34%, the CO<sub>2</sub> burden imposed by transport had increased in the same period by 29%. The main causes here are road and air transport with greatly disproportionate increases of absolute burdens on the environment.

It was seen as a matter of concern that environmentally friendly rail transport has a significantly greater tax burden than other modes of transport. Account has to be taken of turnover tax, energy consumption tax, oil taxes and track charges, which only apply in a small measure, if at all, for other modes of transport. Air transport is subsidised every year by around 30 billion euro because of exemption from kerosene and turnover taxes.

Passenger rights are of central importance. In order to avoid disadvantaging rail, the conference participants demanded equal standards for all modes of transport. Thus the rail passenger according to European law has a right to reimbursement of 25% of the fare after one hour's delay and 50% reduction after more than two hours. In air travel the passenger only has a right to compensation after three hours' delay.

Christopher Irwin, Vice Chairman of EPF, formulated claims and a vision for the European Passengers' Federation. He drew attention to current surveys in

which customer perceptions of rail travel and local public transport are on the same level as those for used car salesmen. For potential customers we must succeed in putting before customers an attractive, suitable and reliable service. Irrespective of the means of transport, the customer expects reliability throughout the entire journey chain from the start to the ultimate destination. Only with a massive modal shift to public transport can we succeed in meeting the world-wide challenges. Alongside CO<sub>2</sub> reductions, a decrease in transport-related land use is also one of the essential cornerstones.

At the end of the conference, Trevor Garrod invited all participants to the 2013 EPF Conference on March 15th/16th in Basle. The Swiss EPF member association VCS, supported by PRO BAHN Switzerland, will organise this event at the knee of the Rhine.

All presentations and the conference report can be downloaded from [www.epf.eu](http://www.epf.eu).

The conference report is also available from Trevor Garrod, [trevor.garrod@epf.eu](mailto:trevor.garrod@epf.eu), 15 Clapham Road South, Lowestoft, NR32 1RQ, Great Britain.

## **EPF's 10<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY IN 2012**

EPF will be ten years old in October 2012. To mark the occasion we are producing a presentation of past achievements and future aspirations.

The presentation will be given for the first time on Wednesday October 24<sup>th</sup> at the European Parliament in Brussels, during a breakfast meeting which we are organising with Rail Forum Europe.

Members of the European Parliament will be invited. together with a small number of other guests.

The PowerPoint presentation will then be available for other events, including meetings of our affiliated associations.

## **LONG DISTANCE BUS AND COACH**

### **TRAVEL**

The International Road Transport Union (IRU) held an informative conference in Brussels on February 29<sup>th</sup> 2012. Ten presentations were given by transport professionals and consultants from France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Norway and the UK. The presentations should all be on the IRU website [www.iru.org](http://www.iru.org).

There were no speakers representing passengers, but EPF Chairman Trevor Garrod attended the conference, as did a FNAUT representative and a representative from Pro Bahn.



Several speakers spoke of the advantages of long-distance coaches in lightly populated areas with few or no railways and the point was made more than once that everyone lived near a road whereas not everyone lived near a railway or airport.

The opening of cabotage makes international long-distance coach services more attractive for operators; and possible cuts in train services will also open up new possibilities for coach firms.

Reference was made to the proposed EU Journeyplanner and to airline distribution methods now influencing the way in which long-distance rail tickets are sold. However, some coach operators did not seem keen on having their tickets sold by a third party.

Trevor Garrod asked a question based on the feedback from some members of EPF-affiliated associations. While members chose the international long-distance coach usually because of its cheapness, they had two main complaints:

- Poor facilities to wait for or change coaches (e.g. the "bus station" is a

roadside seat on the edge of the town!)

- Lack of information, particularly if there are delays.

These two criticisms seemed to be widely accepted. It was pointed out that in some countries the coach operators did not own the bus stations. The Chairman of the conference stated, "I think we've got a lot to learn about terminals." It was also pointed out that congestion in city centres caused some coach operators to pick up and drop their passengers on the outskirts or in the suburbs.

Another speaker said that when the Passenger Rights obligation for long-distance bus and coach passengers comes into force in March 2013, on-board information will have to be improved.

Near the end of the conference some mentions were made of intermodality and the coach operator Eurolines has recently spoken about this with the Community of European Railways.

## **BICYCLES ON INTERNATIONAL TRAINS**

In recent weeks EPF has had correspondence with a joint committee of 7 French organisations, including our member association FNAUT, about a ban on bicycles on international trains, for example on journeys from Paris to Amsterdam, Copenhagen, Hamburg and Vienna.



This follows correspondence we had in the autumn with the European Cyclists' Federation (see also [Bulletin 10](#))

Our French colleagues had written to train operators and to EC President Jose Manuel Barroso, urging the European Commission to take the following action:

- Remind cross-border rail operators and member states of their obligation to respect European directives and rules. In particular, request that services where rolling stock is equipped for cycle transport immediately accept bicycles aboard: Thalys-trains, the Paris - Hamburg night service and the Paris - Frankfurt TGV service.
- At least one daily service on each cross-border route should be open to cycle transport, throughout Europe.
- All heavy rolling stock renovation, and new rolling stock purchases, should automatically include the creation of on-board spaces suitable for bicycles.

A reply was received from Mr. Jean-Louis Colson at DG MOVE, agreeing that under article 5 of the Rail Passenger Rights Regulation 1371/2007, "Train operators authorise passengers to take their bicycles on the train, if these are easy to manipulate, if this does not prejudice a specific rail service and if the rolling stock allows it, and in return for a possible payment."

Mr. Colson draws attention to the review of 1371/2007 which will take account of

suggestions made by our French colleagues.

EPF's own working group on International Long-distance Journeys also discussed the issue and made some further points:

- It is reasonable for cyclists to pay a simple and modest charge when the international journey is a long one.
- Carriages with flex-space or space just for bicycles should be clearly marked and where possible the place on the platform where they are due to stop should be clearly signed (e.g. as with the German "Wagenstands-anzeiger"). This can reduce the amount of time needed to load bicycles.
- Timetables should put a bicycle symbol alongside international trains with space for them.

Finally, Josef Schneider and Rian van der Borgt also raised the question at the Customer Liaison Group meeting of the Community of European Railways on April 24<sup>th</sup>. This direct channel to the train operators through their European association may be helpful; and it is hoped for a more detailed debate at the next such meeting in October 2012.

## PUTTING THE EPF VIEWPOINT

Our Vice-Chairman Christopher Irwin gave a presentation on April 12<sup>th</sup> at the European Economic & Social Committee hearing on state aid guidelines for airports and air carriers. He comments that "the debate was characterised by an almost total lack of any reference to co-modality."

On May 30<sup>th</sup> he also took part in a joint meeting of the EESC and the Commission on the revision of Air Passenger Rights legislation.

On June 15<sup>th</sup> he addressed the European Aviation Club and International Institute of Air & Space Law on the subject of Regulation 261. Our Vice-Chairman was also invited to address the European Regional Airlines Association in Brussels on June 21<sup>st</sup> giving EPF's views on the revision of Air Passenger Rights legislation.

Mr. Irwin has also been working on research priorities for passenger rail technology for the European Rail Research Advisory Council. It is important that research projects reflect passenger needs. Interestingly, the manufacturers such as Siemens, Alstom and Bombardier are keen to collaborate with each other on basic research without being prosecuted for anti-competitive practice. There is likely to be a Joint Technology Initiative of the sort that already exists for the aeronautics and aviation sectors.

## EPF SURVEY OF RAILTEAM

### JOURNEYS

Railteam is a consortium of 7 train operators running high-speed services in eight European countries. On the [EPF website](#) we have a questionnaire in four languages for people to complete when they make a journey involving two or more high speed trains - such as London to Frankfurt or Paris to Munich.

In the period June 2011 to April 2012 we had 52 replies. These have now been analysed.

Here are some key findings:

- 37% of passengers booked via the internet; 34% via a travel agent and 28% through a station ticket office. The remainder used a call centre or ticket machine.
- 72% were satisfied with the service they received when purchasing their ticket.
- Not all respondents answered the question about their departure platform; but of those who did, nearly 60% said that information was given and 76% said the platform was easy to find.
- Asked about staff, 76% said they were helpful.
- Trains were delayed or cancelled in 33% of cases. In just over half of these cases, passengers said they were given alternative information or help. But what about the 47% who received no such information or help?

Passengers were also asked about the potential for major improvements in their journeys. Not everyone answered the question, but about 20 different

suggestions were made. The most common ones were:

- London - Frankfurt through services;
- Better connections, especially at Brussels;
- Even-interval high-speed services, preferably hourly ("even interval" is the most commonly used English expression for "horaire cadencé" or "Taktfahrplan" or "klokvaste dienst"; sometimes we also say "clockface timetable");
- Simpler, understandable fares.

We have sent out results to the Railteam Directors. Please continue to record your experiences on our [website questionnaire](#).

## **WORK GROUP - INTERNATIONAL LONG DISTANCE JOURNEYS**

This EPF work group held a productive and interesting all-day meeting in Liège on April 21<sup>st</sup> of 2012, and thanks our member association ACTP (Association des Clients des Transports Publics) for their hospitality. The Group will meet again at the same venue on Saturday November 3<sup>rd</sup>. Before then, it has much work to do.

It was agreed that the group will concern itself with train journeys of more than 3 hours, and usually more than 500 kilometres. This may include a journey done by more than one train, such as between London and Cologne or Luxembourg and Basle - so connections between trains are also important. All members were agreed that rail should

play a greater role in long-distance travel.

Willy Smeulders reported on a meeting he had had with Green MEPs in January. They had done work on possible new and reopened cross-border links to enable more long-distance international journeys to be made and saw the border between France and Spain as having particular potential in this respect.

The Group spent some time examining the requirements of different types of customer and also expressed concern that - apart from Railteam for high-speed trains - little was being done to promote international rail passenger travel as such in Europe. Could there be a role for the Community of European Railways in this respect? The automobile and airline industries already undertake a large amount of pan-European advertising.

Fares and ticketing were discussed, and it was agreed that these should be "transparent and logical". Train operators should be encouraged to offer special combined tickets to events; and long-distance tickets which included a local public transport add-on to the final destination. Such tickets already exist for some journeys in Germany, the UK, Belgium,.... We need to do a Europe-wide survey of all such schemes.

A paper by Ian McDonald on gaps in the Eurocity network was also considered. Since the train is often competing with the plane for journeys over 500 km, it will be useful to compare direct flights with direct train services. Further work

on this issue needs to be done before November 3rd.

Night trains were discussed. Where they exist, how well are they publicised and how easy is it to book them? Are there also gaps in the network which should be filled? Kurt Hultgren did some work on this topic in 2010 and Simon Hope produced a map in 2011. The study now needs to be developed further.

It was agreed that further research is also needed into the circumstances in which the European Commission can influence the development of new international train services.

If you can help in any way with the projects of this Work Group, please contact [Albert Lambert](#) and [Maurice Losch](#). *Vous pouvez leur écrire aussi en français. Sie können ihnen auch in Deutsch schreiben.*

## EPF MEETS RAILTEAM

On January 31<sup>st</sup> EPF members Trevor Garrod, Josef Schneider and Willy Smeulders met Railteam directors Stephan Köster and Sylvette Natiez and their colleagues Claudia Stein and Thomas Posch at the Railteam office in Amsterdam.

[Railteam](#) had relaunched their website in December, with a journeyplanner based on Hafas, and were working on the implementation of redirection rules to the website of their member companies. That is because Railteam themselves do not sell tickets. Already, however, the

website can be used to plan many complex journeys between, for example, Great Britain and Germany or France and Austria. It is now (May 2012) also possible to follow a link to the website of one of the Railteam member companies and book your ticket.

Railteam had commissioned a Customer Satisfaction Survey in May-June 2011 which showed on-board satisfaction at 79% but

less satisfaction with other aspects of international



travel, such as connections. Railteam was aiming for a 9% increase in passenger journeys and a 13% increase in passenger kilometres by 2020.

The EPF representatives gave their own experiences of good and bad practice on high speed trains across Europe, and how things could be improved for the passenger - sometimes at little or no cost. For example, there could be information on the train about public transport at their destination, for passengers unfamiliar with a city. It was encouraging to note that TGV Lyria now sold RATP single tickets (for public transport in Paris) in its bar/buffet. Railteam had also published a useful new leaflet advising passengers how best to travel between termini in the French capital. This leaflet ought to be available on the trains as well as at the stations, however.

We also provided the Railteam directors with some good and bad examples of

customer service experienced by our members when trains were delayed or cancelled. Railteam do not, of course, employ the staff at stations such as London St Pancras or Stuttgart Hbf. However, they can pass feedback to their constituent companies to help improve staff training.

Therefore - if you make a journey by high speed trains from, say, Figueras Vilafant to Brussels; or from Amsterdam to Vienna, please fill in the questionnaire on EPF's website [www.epf.eu](http://www.epf.eu).

## **A SKI TRAVEL EXPERIENCE BETWEEN GREAT-BRITAIN AND THE FRENCH ALPS**

*told by John Friedberger, Chairman of  
the Railfuture Wessex Branch*

You may be interested in a few impressions from our recent return trip from St Pancras to Moutiers.

Compared with the same journey in 2010, the standard has declined. Perhaps this is because Eurostar know they can fill the day train (and probably the night one) with ease and have therefore become a bit complacent.

Although I booked for my wife and I back in September the price was well over £400 return per person in Leisure Select (a considerable hike over 2 years earlier). Even then it was hard to get two seats together - I had to go to see the ticket office at St Pancras to change the ones booked on line. The girl there said that Eurostar would like to run more ski trains but they were constrained by SNCF.

Once on board the staff were friendly but the food was far less good than 2010 - and no free champagne; on our return trip there was no menu; we were just given a sparse lunch, plus one small bottle of wine, and a cup of tea and two biscuits. Over the more than 7 hours lasting journey the staff only came round on those two occasions; there could at least have been an offer of water in the meantime.

There were two delays for signals in France - only one of which drew a comment from the train manager - and his garbled announcement in English was unintelligible.

I am not complaining as Eurostar is still the best and most trouble free method of travel to *Les Trois Vallées* but there has been a deterioration in the experience. Incidentally the exteriors of the trains look a bit tired; and the staff uniforms are a dull grey. So Eurostar is looking a bit drab compared with SWT - and other domestic operators.

We are going on a day trip to Paris next month. Our local station sells CIV tickets but I have still seen no mention of Eurostar on SWT.

## **EUREGIONAL COOPERATION LEADS TO BETTER PUBLIC TRANSPORT: SISTER CITIES WIEN & BRATISLAVA CLOSELY LINKED BY TRAIN, BUS AND BOAT**

For 14 € one can buy a Bratislava-ticket in Vienna, it enables you to make a round trip from all ÖBB-railway stations in Vienna to Bratislava. Hourly even interval trains only need one hour of travel time; and these train services are running every day.

Once arrived in cheerful Bratislava, your train ticket allows you to travel around with the urban transport, all for the same price.

More information about the Euregio Weinviertel is available on their [website](#). And for the interesting offer of the Austrian railway company ÖBB, we refer to their portal.



## **URBAN AND REGIONAL TRANSPORT**

The Union International des Transports Publics ([UITP](#)) represents urban and regional public transport operators, and EPF continues to have fruitful contact with them.

On February 7<sup>th</sup>, Pau Noy represented us at a UITP conference in Brussels on "Towards low-zero carbon urban mobility in Europe."

One speaker said that clear carbon reduction targets were needed for transport, not just for 2050 but for the next ten years. Another emphasised the role of infrastructure investment in creating employment as well as improving public transport.

Speakers made the point that to achieve modal shift, multimodal travel information is needed - and it must be easy to access, neutral and reliable. The example of Oslo was also given, where there was a 6% annual growth in public transport usage as against a 1,2%

growth in car traffic. Realtime information made a difference, as did i-phone apps ([www.trafikanteen.no](http://www.trafikanteen.no)).

This theme was also covered in a meeting on February 21<sup>st</sup> between EPF (represented by Trevor Garrod and Willy Smeulders) and UITP (represented by Brigitte Ollier and Ulrich Weber.) UITP stressed the importance of better quality public transport and also the encouragement of electric public transport - points with which we in EPF would agree.

UITP questioned the need for more EU legislation on Persons of Reduced Mobility, as many local operators and authorities had already done much to improve accessibility. They suggested the need for some flexibility in order to use scarce resources in the interests of the majority of passengers.

We also discussed the EU Plan on Urban Mobility. The EC was proposing to install a platform for the exchange of passenger rights information at EU level. How necessary is this, however? Certainly there is a case for spreading best practice when good passenger charters already exist.

EPF members have also followed with interest the development of the UITP project [European Bus Systems of the Future](#). This is due to be completed at the end of the summer and a conference will then be organised in Brussels, with a display of vehicles, on October 15th.

## EPF URBAN TRANSPORT STUDY

Thank you to members in Spain, France and Great Britain for their input to this important EPF project. We now have complete survey replies for Madrid, Barcelona, Paris and Birmingham.

[Pau Noy](#) presented an interim report to our Salzburg conference and looks forward to receiving more. Our aim is to build up a picture of how good - or bad - public transport is in all European cities of more than 1,000,000 people, from the viewpoint of the passenger.

## PASSENGER RIGHTS - FURTHER

### EPF VIEWS

#### *RAIL*

The European Commission asked consultants to conduct a review of Regulation 1371/2007 on rail passengers' rights. EPF submitted a detailed response, drawn together by Rian van der Borgt from the experiences of our members.

Key points in our response were:

- a) Different train operators have different attitudes on information and services, such as when they issue a new timetable with certain services that are discontinued. Some consult with consumers' organisations about timetable changes; others do not. Operators are generally decreasing the amount of timetable information available on paper. Information about changed timetables because of planned

- engineering works is often a problem.
- b) We are also concerned about the habit of some operators in preparing their trains for departure before the published departure time, and this effectively means already closing the train for passengers.
  - c) Provision of information during travel is very variable, especially when services are disrupted. Some stations provide a lot of information when trains are delayed; others tell waiting passengers almost nothing.
  - d) Our response draws attention to the increasing difficulties in purchasing international tickets and expresses concern that some operators (notably in France, Belgium and the Netherlands) have introduced a separate fee for buying international tickets at the counter. This is discriminatory because many international tickets can only be purchased in this way. Often only relatively simple tickets can be bought on line.
  - e) For passengers from, for example, France to Belgium, websites do not always appear to quote the lowest fare available. Is this compliant with article 8(1) of the Regulation?
  - f) When a service is delayed or cancelled, passengers should be offered continuation or rerouting at the first opportunity. In our experience, either this is not happening or the procedure is slow and cumbersome.
  - g) We have had reports of operators refusing to help passengers in the event of severe weather or other "third party" action or "force majeure".
  - h) Passengers, in our experience, often do not know their rights and few are aware of the existence of a National Enforcement Body to whom they can turn. Indeed, staff of railway undertakings and authorities, especially at regional level, are not always aware of the Passenger Rights Regulation.
  - i) We urge clarification of "force majeure", so that operators do not "make up their own rules". Some are very quick to declare certain types of weather as "extreme" even if it happens every year!
  - j) Regulation 1371/2007 was meant to improve the rights of passengers, but unfortunately some operators have taken the opportunity to take measures that effectively do the opposite, lowering their previous standards in the direction of the minimum prescribed by the Regulation.

### *ALL MODES*

In EPF we have always argued for rights for passengers in all modes of public transport, and it is good to know that, in December this year, these will come into force for boat passengers (from a certain size of vessel) and in March 2013 for bus and coach passengers (for journeys of more than 200 km).

The next stage must be for a common set of rights and so we welcomed The European Commission's Communication COM(2011) 898 issued on December 19<sup>th</sup>.

This is now being considered by the European Parliament - a process which should be complete in late October. On April 12<sup>th</sup> of 2012 EPF Chairman Trevor

Garrod had a very useful discussion with Mr. Georges Bach, MEP, rapporteur for this topic in the Transport & Tourism Committee and his assistant Mr. Marc Reiter. As a result, our Chairman wrote to Mr. Bach setting out EPF's key concerns:

- a) EU citizens and visitors to EU countries rightly have a choice of modes for many journeys, especially international ones. To enable them to make an informed choice, they should have common and equal access to accurate and understandable information when planning and booking their journey; be given suitable assistance if things go wrong; and be made aware of their rights.
- b) Competition between airlines, railway operators, shipping and bus and coach companies must be on a "level playing field", with comparable rules on information, booking, accessibility, convenient facilities, compensation, complaint handling and other concerns of passengers.
- c) The longer the journey, the more likely it is to be multi-modal and multi-operator. One journey chain should mean one contract of carriage and where there is a delay compensation should be calculated over the whole journey.
- d) There must be a comparable system of National Enforcement Bodies for each mode and these NEBs must be proactive, not just reactive.
- e) We appreciate that the specific characteristics of each mode may require some variation in how passenger rights are applied. However, we find it unacceptable, for instance, that in one mode a 3-hour delay is needed to trigger a compensation claim, whereas only a 1-hour delay is necessary in another mode.
- f) Harmonisation is also needed on issues such as accessibility and assistance for Persons of Reduced Mobility; publishing information on quality standards and performance and information during the journey.
- g) It should also be made clear that the passenger has a right to the fulfilment of his or her transport contract in the case of disruption. This could include continuing one's journey with another operator or by a different mode of transport. We agree with the Communication when it says that operators must have competent staff on hand, and tools, to advise passengers.
- h) Compensation in the form of vouchers may suit some passengers, but it must be made clear to them that they also have the right to payment in cash.
- i) We welcome the Commission's promise "to examine together with third countries how to extend the application of EU passenger protection to journeys outside the EU."

## HOW WE TRAVELLED TO SALZBURG

Three [Railfuture](#) members described how each of them travelled to the EPF Conference in Salzburg and why they chose that way.

### *TOLD BY SIMON HOPE*

My journey from Norwich to Salzburg was determined entirely by ticket cost. By rail (off peak) via Paris and onward overnight couchette, the cheapest of three possible route options was £289.19 (a written quotation from a well-known Rail Agent, 6 weeks before departure). Then I went to the local bus station where a Eurolines leaflet showed all travel information necessary for the journey from London to Munich - except insurance. (£59 booked at least ten days before departure plus £15 add-on from Norwich). All was booked in 5 minutes.

We left Victoria Coach Station at 14.00 hrs (14.00 on the coach clock, Continental time) and after a refreshment stop near Ashford, entered the Folkestone Channel Tunnel Terminal. Passports were inspected on the coach, but there were limited security and baggage checks and we remained on board.

The Shuttle train (30 minutes to Calais) provided by far the smoothest ride of the 900-mile journey.

By evening we had stopped at Lille and Brussels (where most passengers alighted and others boarded) - a cheap alternative to Eurostar?

Unexpectedly, on the Belgian/German border, passports were collected and taken to an office, then returned. No other checks were made. At a motorway

service station north of Frankfurt, a police-car drew up in front of the coach and passports were again examined. Soon, a passenger was escorted off the coach - not to return.

We stopped at Frankfurt Bus Station (schedule 05.00), then Mannheim, Karlsruhe, Stuttgart and Ulm. By now there were significant rush-hour autobahn delays and we arrived in Munich an hour late at 13.00.

At the main railway station (ten minutes' walk from the less-than-user-friendly environment of the coach terminal), a helpful English-speaking DB assistant in the ticket office sold me a Bavaria Day Pass, this was the cheapest available ticket to Salzburg (£20 in each direction).

Four days later I was well prepared for a second sleepless night, but as before the journey was interesting as a transport experience.

There was a police check during the night but no long delays. The pattern of intermediate stops (5-30 minutes) continued until Brussels where a late-running connection caused a wait of 2 hours. We departed at 07.00.

At the Calais terminal procedures were somewhat different to the outward experience at Folkestone. All passengers had to disembark with all luggage and file through for three separate passport controls and full security screening in the UK Border Agency area. After the Channel Tunnel crossing there were no further stops and we arrived in London at 13.00 - on time!

Notable throughout the journeys, there was practically no communication between the four excellent Czech drivers and their passengers (languages could be a problem here) except announcing

times at stops, mostly in English. There was no apology for the late arrival in Munich nor explanation for delays en route. However, between Lille and Calais a pre-recorded voice in English informed us of seat-belt regulations and other travel comfort advice.

Conclusion:

- Unlike the existing complex system, most passengers need a much simpler rail booking and ticketing procedure - easy to access and use - providing cheap turn-up-and-go national and international tickets without the need to book weeks in advance. This should become the standard to encourage more people to use rail as first choice transport mode.
- Eurolines coaches are best suited for shorter, daytime national and international routes. Perhaps passengers would prefer through-ticketing from co-ordinated multi-mode transport with high-speed rail and night trains linking with coaches for destinations off the rail network or not easily served by train.

*TOLD BY DAVID SMITH*

For personal reasons we could not leave the UK till Friday morning 9th March so we had no option but to fly! We left Stansted on Easyjet to Munich at 07.55 - our return fare for two including one suitcase was £163 - arriving on schedule at 10.45 with time to collect our bag and have a coffee. We took the 12.04 S-bahn (suburban train) to the Ostbahnhof (East Station) in the city and connected with the 12.50 DB regional service to Salzburg - a double decker 2nd class packed out, standing room only to Salzburg. It was not a comfortable trip.

The return ticket was £48 which we bought on line and printed at home. We made it to the conference start at 13.50, just in time.

We returned the same way on the 16.09 ÖBB single decker to Munich East and then to the airport: an hour in the Club Lounge and then a chaotic flight due to leave at 21.05 with Easyjet (at first one passenger too many on board and the pilot refused to take off), getting back to Stansted at midnight plus with a queue a mile long at passport control - just what you need at that time of night! But we had had a good time and the conference was excellent.

*TOLD BY TREVOR GARROD*

Lowestoft to Munich in a day by train is possible and I have in the past done it. Salzburg in a day is just about feasible, but on this occasion I opted to spend the night in Brussels and was able to discuss some matters with one of our Belgian colleagues on the high speed train from there to Frankfurt. I then took a comfortable conventional train via Stuttgart and Munich to Salzburg.

To keep costs down I had booked an InterRail ticket. This facility was introduced in 1972, initially for students and young people, but over the years has been extended to the rest of us. Information about it is available on [www.eurailgroup.com](http://www.eurailgroup.com). I cannot purchase this useful ticket from my local station but was able to do so from the agency [Trainseurope](http://Trainseurope) at 4 Station Approach, March, Cambs, PE15 8SJ (Tel: 0871-700-7722).

InterRail tickets are not valid for travel by Eurostar, but you can obtain a special rate. They can however be used on nearly all trains in most Continental

countries and Ireland and are valid for five or ten days' travel in one or more countries. You can also purchase reservations if you wish or need to do so.

My second reason for using InterRail was flexibility. From Salzburg I continued to Berlin to take part in a conference there, returning direct to Brussels and London; and a week later was in north Germany again for the Annual Conference of Pro Bahn, one of Railfuture's German sister organisations. I only had to pay on the Harwich - Hoek van Holland ferry. The travel in the Netherlands and Germany was covered by my InterRail ticket and I had a good choice of trains and routes. InterRail is not well-publicised in the UK but is certainly worth investigating if you are planning more than a simple out-and-back train journey in the rest of Europe.

## COHESION FUNDS FOR POLAND AND HUNGARY

In our last bulletin we referred to the proposals of the Polish government to divert EU cohesion funds from rail to road; and the letters sent to EU officials and MEPs by EPF's Chairman. It was said that the funds had been underspent and so the spare money would be diverted to road schemes.



We were pleased to learn in March that the Polish Transport Minister had prepared plans to spend the leftover money on four rail projects. These include repairs,

modernising level crossings, replacing junctions and purchase of new rolling stock. Our Chairman wrote again to the European Commission and leading MEPs in support of this new proposal.

In April it was announced that the EC had indeed given approval for unspent cohesion funds to be used for much-needed repairs to the Polish rail network.

Meanwhile in Hungary it was reported in November 2011 that the National Development Agency proposed to re-allocate 60 billion HUF from urban and suburban transport to its Environment & Energy Operational Programme.

EPF wrote to DG REGIO at the time and received a reply in December 2011 giving useful background information and stating that the application had not yet been made but was expected.

We wrote again in May 2012 stressing that, if this shift went ahead, some of the projects in Budapest (commuter rail rolling stock, tram rolling stock, some tram line projects) would either be cancelled or deferred. We urged that the funds be used for the purposes originally intended, at least as far as urgently needed rolling stock was concerned.

In May the EC wrote a letter to the Hungarian authorities in which they indicated not being in favour of this money re-allocation, the Commission gave no further indications for alternative priorities. The Hungarian government has now decided to re-allocate a part of the money to railway development projects.

## NETWORKING AMONG EPF

### MEMBER ASSOCIATIONS

Members of Railfuture (Great Britain) and the Associó per a la Promoció del Transport Públic (PTP) in Catalonia met and learned more about each other between May 21<sup>st</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> when 20 members of the British association visited Barcelona. Two of the British visitors also gave a presentation to the College of Engineers in Barcelona on rail privatisation, the advantages and disadvantages.

The British party travelled from London to Barcelona by train and are grateful to the members of PTP, and especially to Pau Noy, for their help and kindness during the visit.

EPF Chairman (and Railfuture Board member) Trevor Garrod took part in the Annual Conference of Pro Bahn at Bad Salzdetfurth, Germany, on March 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. On the morning of the second day he also conducted a seminar on passenger rights at European level, which also covered other issues concerning international rail travel and the work of EPF raised by Pro Bahn members.

On September 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> of 2012 a party of members of Deutscher Bahnkundenverband is due to visit Strasbourg, where they will learn about and experience public transport in the city and also meet members of FNAUT in Alsace. For further information about this visit please contact [Jochen Reitstätter](#).

Railfuture is always keen to welcome other member associations to Great Britain. If you are thinking of organising a trip, contact [Trevor Garrod](#).

## "SMART MOVE"

This is the title of a project just launched by the International Road Transport Union (IRU) with EU backing, as "a long-term reflection on buses, coaches and taxis". EPF's Chairman has been asked to take part in its meetings, the first of which was on July 12<sup>th</sup> of 2012.

This could be a way of influencing discussion on the passenger experience of buses, coaches and taxis, as part of the journey chain and within urban transport.

The input of members of our Bus Working Group and Urban Transport Working Group will also be very helpful in this respect.

## EPF SPEAKING

EPF is regularly invited to put the passenger viewpoint, either by giving conference presentations or by participating in smaller gatherings.

In addition to the conferences and events reported earlier in this bulletin, here is a summary of other such occasions:

Willy Smeulders spoke at a meeting of Green MEPs on cross-border services on January 21<sup>st</sup>; and took part in a Rail Forum Europe event on ERTMS on January 25<sup>th</sup>.

Trevor Garrod gave a presentation at the Marketforce conference on "The Future of European Rail" in Berlin on March 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>.

Willy Smeulders represented EPF at the Passenger Ship Safety Stakeholder Conference in Brussels on April 16<sup>th</sup>.

Rian van der Borgt represented EPF at the CER/CIT workshop on Rail Passenger Rights on May 10<sup>th</sup>.

Trevor Garrod gave a presentation on European transport policy at the Railfuture Summer Conference in Stirling, Scotland, on June 16<sup>th</sup>.

Three days later, Willy Smeulders represented EPF at the Rail Forum Europe event on Innovative Solutions in European Rail Freight.

Trevor Garrod is due to give a presentation at the 2<sup>nd</sup> European Conference on Urban Transport in Prague on November 6<sup>th</sup>/7<sup>th</sup>.

Willy Smeulders will be in Amsterdam November 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> for a presentation at the Smart Stations & Terminals Conference.

## **SALZBURGER VERKEHRSTAGE**

### **OCTOBER 2012**

Die 10. Salzburger Verkehrstage finden vom 8. bis 10. Oktober statt. Thema für dieses Jahr ist Stadtverkehr. Weitere Auskunft finden Sie auf [www.salzburger-verkehrstage.org](http://www.salzburger-verkehrstage.org) oder [www.regionale-schienen.at](http://www.regionale-schienen.at).

Während dieser drei Tagen treffen sich Referent(inn)en und Delegierte aus mehreren Ländern, inner- und ausserhalb des deutschen Sprachgebiets, um wichtige Verkehrsthemen zu besprechen und Verkehrsmittel zu erleben.

## EPF 2013 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Switzerland, France and Germany come together by the knee of the Rhine at Basle - which is where EPF members are also invited to come together for the 2013 Annual Conference on Saturday March 16th. Please note the date. Details will be published at the end of this year.

At this stage we are discussing the programme with our Swiss colleagues. In view of the popularity of the Friday afternoon session at our 2011 and 2012 conferences, we shall probably start the Basle event then.



On the Sunday it is proposed to visit Mulhouse, home of the French National Railway Museum, where members can also ride on the tram-train taking them through the city streets and then out up the valley to the picturesque and historic town of Thann.

Trevor Garrod comments: it was a conference in Mulhouse in October 1998, organised by Pro Bahn and AUT Alsace, that I first met Josef Schneider, Albert Lambert and Edwin Dutler together with other future colleagues and we discussed how we might work together at

European level. Four years later, EPF was formed.

At that conference we also had a presentation by the Mayor of Mulhouse on the proposed tram-train system - which has now come to fruition!

### COLOPHON

*Contributors to this bulletin include:*

*Marc Broeckaert, Lajos Dorner, John Friedberger, Trevor Garrod, Simon Hope, Christopher Irwin, Stijn Lewyllie, Josef Schneider, David Smith, Rudy De Ceuninck ...*