

EPF SUMMIT ATTRACTS 100 PARTICIPANTS

On December 9th, EPF held its first summit conference aimed especially at political and professional decision-makers and opinion-formers. A large number attended, together with 12 members of EPF-affiliated associations.



Mr. **Fotis Karamitsos**, the European Commission's Deputy Director of Mobility & Transport, gave the first keynote speech, stressing the need for stakeholders to work better together and welcoming the development of multi-modal information systems. He also announced that there would be moves in 2016 to establish a common system of passenger rights. In the meantime, he welcomed the progress with accessibility for persons of reduced mobility, saying that this offered "great opportunities for the future" and that "people can be made more welcome in public transport."

Mr. **Philip Martin**, Head of Marketing at Amadeus Rail & Ground Travel, described their work to improve the whole travel experience. He described the challenges faced when he and two colleagues sought to travel by train from Antibes to Vienna earlier this year. It was important "to integrate the rail sector into the travel ecosystem." Their work involved inspiring the customer to make a journey, helping the customer search for options, booking the journey, booking other facilities needed such as hotels and post-trip actions. Mr. Martin also

referred to Amadeus' EU project work and their co-operation with Thalys whose trains also had a role as feeders into major airport hubs

Mr. **Christopher Irwin**, Vice-Chairman of EPF, spoke on inter-modal passenger rights, stating "In your own car you feel in charge" - and that it was important for public transport users also to attain such a feeling. Operators needed to be seen as acting with integrity, keeping passengers informed if things went wrong and advising them on what alternatives they might have. Issues that must be addressed included the inconsistencies in current protection of passengers, a level playing field between modes and passengers, effective enforcement of passenger rights (if necessary by an EU-wide enforcement body) and a requirement for operators in all modes - not just rail - to publish data on their performance so that "customers can make informed choices." See full speech [here](#).



Introducing an open discussion on seamless travel, Mr. **Willy Smeulders** (EPF) urged a "change of mindset" by many operators and authorities, moving from the concept of single trips to an end-to-end journey that would often be multi-modal. There should be a single ticket and one body responsible when things went wrong. Transport nodes should, be regarded as "an opportunity, not a disadvantage" He saw a long-term vision as a portal for planning and booking an entire journey and urged that steps be taken in that direction.

Ms. **Marie Denninghaus** of the European Disability Forum pointed out that lack of mobility affected many other aspects of people's lives and that, while progress

had been made in catering for persons of reduced mobility, there remained examples of discrimination. When new payment methods, such as contactless cards and pinpads, were developed, account must be taken of the needs of persons of reduced mobility. She also stressed the importance of staff training.

In discussion from the floor, support was voiced for EPF's European Passenger Declaration and it was also pointed out that different modes could learn from each other but must not necessarily copy each other in every respect. It was also suggested that connecting different IT systems together was preferably to starting a completely new information and booking system.

Passenger Expectations was the theme after lunch, with Ms. **Ruth Lopian** from the European Commission giving results of their research into European awareness on passenger rights across all modes. 78% of European had used public transport during the past year, and for the majority this meant local or urban transport. Only 31% were aware of their rights and obligations, although the Commission had launched three information campaigns and two surveys to help spread awareness. There was an obligation of national governments and the transport industry to make passengers more aware of their rights. The most common cause of complaint (by 69% of customers) was disruption caused by long delays.

Mr. **Anthony Smith** (Passenger Focus, UK) explained how the National Passenger Survey (for rail) and now similar surveys for bus and tram customers, enabled the Government and indeed all stakeholders to obtain the views of 120,000 passengers every year. The aim was "to produce rich data in order to get companies to improve." Passengers' biggest single concern was punctuality and reliability of services while the greatest cause of dissatisfaction (in 50% of cases) was how companies dealt with delays.



A final panel discussion on "European Transport Policy - What does it mean for citizens?" featured Mr. **Karamitsos**, Mr. **Michael Cramer MEP** (Chairman of the Transport & Tourism Committee) and Mr. **Christoph Klenner** of ETTSA. The Moderator for this and earlier sessions was leading British transport writer Mr. **Christian Wolmar**. Here the debate involving panelists and audience ranged over such topics as the Telematics Application for Passengers, the cost of dealing with passenger rights, and the amounts of EU funding for research into various transport issues and developments. Transport financing and subsidies - hidden or otherwise, also concerned many colleagues, together with the impact of financing on fares.

In his summing up of the day, EPF Chairman **Trevor Garrod** thanked EPF's industry partners Amadeus, Deutsche Bahn, Airports Regional Conference, FairPlane and TravelPort for making the event possible; and all colleagues who had worked hard to organize it. He highlighted five points from the day's presentations and discussion:

- Information and booking must be made user-friendly
- Passenger rights must be simple, consistent and properly enforced
- Everyone ultimately benefitted from measures to help persons of reduced mobility
- Fares issues must be addressed - which meant giving value for money but also ensuring that transport financing was fair
- Staff training was important, not only for when things went wrong but also to deal with hoped for increases in public transport users.

EPF would take these matters forward in its continued dialogue with decision-makers.

Many Thanks to the following partners:

amadeus

DB BAHN

FairPlane

ARC  
AIRPORT REGIONS CONFERENCE

Travelport 
Redefining travel commerce