

## EPF-Bulletin #19 – March 2016

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## INTRODUCTION

Bienvenu(e) au premier numéro de notre bulletin d'activités pour 2016. Après avoir publié un bulletin deux fois par an depuis 2006, nous avons décidé de publier maintenant un bulletin plus court mais plus fréquent - c'est-à-dire quatre fois par an - afin que les informations soient plus fraîches et plus utiles.

Dans ce numéro vous trouverez les articles concernant les droits des passagers maritimes et ceux dans les bus et les cars, notre dialogue avec les décideurs au niveau européen, les trains de nuit et les défis des offres transfrontalières. Vous pouvez aussi lire un rapport des nouvelles lignes de tramway à Nottingham, Angleterre - et une nouvelle encourageante concernant les trams de Barcelone.

Nous espérons aussi que ce bulletin vous aidera en vos efforts à améliorer et promouvoir les transports publics en votre pays ou région.

N'oubliez pas aussi notre congrès annuel qui aura lieu le 8 et 9 avril à Berlin et notre congrès pour les décideurs et les professionnels à Bruxelles le 26 mai.

## INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the first issue of our bulletin of activities for 2016. After publishing a bulletin twice a year since 2006, we have decided now to publish a shorter but more frequent bulletin - that is, four times a year - so that the information is fresher and more useful.

In this issue you will find articles concerning the rights of maritime and bus and coach passengers, our dialogue with decision-makers at European level, night trains and the challenges facing cross-border services. You

can also read a report of the new tram lines in Nottingham, England, and some encouraging news concerning the trams of Barcelona.

We also hope that this bulletin will help you in your work to improve and promote public transport in your country or region.

Also - do not forget our annual conference which will take place on April 8th and 9th in Berlin and our conference for decision-makers and professionals in Brussels on May 26th.

## EINLEITUNG

Herzlich Willkommen zur ersten Ausgabe unseres Tätigkeitsbulletins für 2016. Seit 2006 haben wir ein Bulletin zweimal pro Jahr herausgegeben. Jetzt haben wir beschlossen, ein kürzeres herauszubringen aber häufiger - und zwar viermal im Jahr - damit die Auskunft darin frischer und hilfreicher ist.

In dieser Ausgabe finden Sie Artikel zum Thema Fahrgastrechte für Schiffs- und Busreisende, unser Dialog mit Entscheidungsträgern auf europäischer Ebene, Nachtzüge und die Herausforderungen welche grenzüberschreitenden Zügen gegenüberstehen. Sie können auch einen Bericht über die neuen Straßenbahnlinien in Nottingham, England oder positive Nachrichten betreffs der Straßenbahnen in Barcelona. Wir hoffen, dass dieses Bulletin Ihnen in Ihren Bestrebungen helfen wird, den öffentlichen Verkehr bei Ihnen zu verbessern und zu fördern.

Vergessen Sie auch nicht, dass unsere Jahrestagung am 8. und 9. April in Berlin und unsere Tagung für Entscheidungsträger und Fachleute am 16. Mai in Brüssel stattfinden wird.

## COME TO OUR CONFERENCE IN BERLIN!

Bookings are coming in steadily for the 2016 EPF conference on April 8th/9th in the Stadtmission, Lehrter Strasse, BERLIN. This is an excellent opportunity for public transport users from all over Europe to meet and discuss issues, learn from each other and make new contacts and friendships.



On the Friday afternoon we shall hear reports from member associations in several countries, followed by a welcome dinner at the Zollpackhof restaurant on the banks of the Spree.

On Saturday we welcome guest speakers on passenger rights (including for long-distance coaches), ticketing and cross-border rail services. These include two Members of the European Parliament, Dr Dieter-Lebrecht Koch and Mr Michael Cramer as well as Mrs Ruth Lopian from the European Commission and Mr Jan Vávra from Czech Railways. We have allowed considerable time for discussion.

The afternoon concludes with a report and discussion on EPF's work at European level and then our Annual General Meeting.

Sunday's programme gives the option of a city tour by public transport or a rail excursion into Poland. Berlin has a well-developed public transport system and we are delighted that the transport authority BVG will provide each participant with a complimentary network ticket.

To book for the conference, log on to [www.epf.eu](http://www.epf.eu).

## REPORTS AROUND EUROPE - NOW ON THE EPF WEBSITE

Three times a year, for the EPF General Meeting, we receive many interesting reports from member associations about the positive and negative public transport developments in their countries. Some of these topics also lead to fruitful discussion and action.

The reports for the last quarter of 2015 and first quarter of 2016 are now posted on our website [www.epf.eu](http://www.epf.eu). These include a report from our Polish members Friendly Flying on air passenger rights.

We believe that this will help all campaigning organisations, including those who find it difficult to send representatives to all the meetings.

Therefore, if you want to find out about experiences with smartcards, coach service liberalisation or rail capacity elsewhere in Europe, for example, these reports should help you - and there is a "search" facility on our website..

## CROSS-BORDER PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES

DUTCH/GERMAN BORDER - Arriën Kruyt writes:

On 14<sup>th</sup> November we had a symposium jointly organised by Pro Bahn and Rover on cross-border connections in Wesel, a town halfway between Arnhem and Oberhausen. It was a tremendous success. We had expected 70-90 participants but 140 turned up. The majority were members of Pro Bahn or Rover, but we also had directors of all the relevant public transport companies and politicians from both sides of the border as participants and speakers.

Lessons learned -

1. A cross-border connection is sustainable if there are enough commuters either for work or study. Businessmen and tourists are a nice extra.

2. To reduce costs the bus or train crossing the border should fit in the national timetable pattern and carry passengers inside the country as well.
3. Despite the freedom of movement inside the EU, there are many legal and technical obstacles for cross-border trains. ERTMS does not help.
4. To ensure cross-border connections, strong co-operation between all the relevant politicians, companies and transport authorities is necessary.
5. Differences in fare systems and electronic ticketing are a serious obstacle.
6. Consumer organisations can contribute with their expertise and lobby possibilities.

What is going to happen between the Netherlands and Germany?

The frequency of Arriva trains between Groningen and Leer is planned to go hourly, seven days a week. The trains have wifi. (Since then the bridge over the Ems has been damaged by a ship and may have to be rebuilt). The Province of Groningen is studying the case for a fast train between Groningen and Bremen.

The existing Inter City train between Amsterdam and Berlin every two hours has had a nice increase in passengers. The train



fits in the normal timetable structure of NS and DB. A stopping train from Bielefeld via Rheine to Hengelo will run in the new franchise on the German side of the border.

The service between Enschede and Gronau is doing quite well. Abellio will introduce a stopping service from the Ruhr area via Emmerich to Zevenaar and Arnhem. Elten station will be reopened.

More train services via Venlo are possible after the doubling of the single track between Venlo and Viersen. Arriva, NS and Eurobahn

will improve connections in Venlo. Heerlen - Aachen will be electrified and that will make possible a direct a direct Eindhoven - Cologne service. New bus services are going to be introduced.

Patrick van den Broek, the very active Commissioner of the Province of Limburg has invited everyone to a similar meeting in November 2016 in Maastricht. This should also involve Belgian colleagues.

#### MEANWHILE ON THE FRANCO-LUXEMBOURG BORDER...

The ERTMS signalling system has been introduced throughout Luxembourg. It has not yet been introduced throughout the neighbouring Lorraine region of France. Therefore there are fears that from 2010 passengers will have to change trains at the border.

However, we have also been contacted by the Quattropole consortium, which promotes cross-border co-operation, including better rail links, between the cities of Luxembourg, Trier, Saarbrücken and Metz and is seeking innovative solutions. This could include extension of German long-distance trains across the borders or better integration of long- and short-distance services.

#### CONTROLS ON THE DANISH/SWEDISH BORDER - EPF RESPONDS

The opening of the Oresund bridge and tunnel in 2000 reduced the journey time between Copenhagen and Malmo to 35 minutes, with a train every 10 minutes. However, the Swedish government has now imposed identity controls on all train and bus passengers, which have resulted in a rail journey time of nearly 90 minute and trains only at 20-minute intervals.

At the end of January EPF, after discussion with our members in Resenårsforum, sent a 3-page letter to the Swedish government.

Our letter points out that the controls are discriminatory as they do not apply to car passengers or indeed to people flying to Sweden.

They have led to overcrowding on the trains which do run and a drop in rail usage in a region that had become increasingly vibrant and integrated..

While the Schengen Regulations allow a country to introduce temporary borders in cases of "serious threat", our letter points out that "this serious threat cannot be treated differently on different means of transport." We therefore urge the Swedish government to reconsider.

#### THE GERMAN/POLISH BORDER



Last year a citizens' initiative Kolej-depl (Bahn Deutschland Polen) was set up to press for improvements in cross-border services. EPF representatives

have met Anja Schmotz and two of her colleagues who formed the group.

For more information, log on to [www.facebook.com/kolejDEPL](http://www.facebook.com/kolejDEPL). They will also provide two speakers at the Friday afternoon session of our Berlin Conference.

## DISCUSSIONS IN BRUSSELS

1. On January 13<sup>th</sup> Arriën Kruyt and Willy Smeulders had a useful discussion with Dutch MEP Wim van de Camp. They spoke about the likely conclusion of the 4<sup>th</sup> Railway Package and also the issue of track access charging. Our representatives drew the attention of the MEP to the difficulties facing cross-border services because of different national systems of track access charging.

Mr. van de Camp said that he understood he position and that rail was at a disadvantage when competing with road and air transport. He suggested that the research bureau of the

European parliament might be able to investigate the matter.

2. On January 28<sup>th</sup>, three representatives of EPF (Trevor Garrod, Arriën Kruyt and Michel Quidort) had a meeting with Mr. Jocelyn Fajardo, a member of the cabinet of Transport Commissioner Violeta Bulc, and Mr Jean-Louis Colson, Head of Passenger Rights at the European Commission.

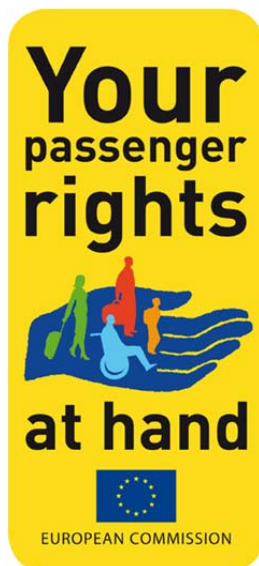
We were assured that, following last year's review, the overall objectives of the Transport White Paper were unchanged. Mr Fajardo also updated us on the progress of the 4th Railway Package and the aim of reaching agreement by Easter.

Passenger issues raised by EPF included difficulties in international ticketing, the implementation of air and rail passenger rights and how to define "exceptional circumstances." We were advised that the European Commission favoured a "bottom up" approach of making different ticketing systems compatible with each other - in which case we urged that the Commission should monitor the situation closely and act if necessary. It should also persuade the banking community, transport operators and ticket vendors to act together.

The other major issue discussed was that of cross-border problems, including current temporary controls, such as at the Oresund. Mr. Fajardo referred to studies showing that there were damaging economic activity and said that all public transport operators should have contingency plans to deal with such problems with appropriate training and equipment for their staff.

## REVIEWING PASSENGER RIGHTS

### WATERBORNE TRANSPORT



It is now just over three years since EU Passenger Rights Regulation for passengers on ferries and cruise ships came into force. The European Commission therefore invited comments about them in November and December as part of a review.

In our response we welcomed the regulation (1177/2010) as "a step in the right direction" and stated that, in the feedback which we received from members, there was general satisfaction with the ferries themselves.

The causes of complaint were more about poor integration between ferries and other modes at certain ports, and lack of information about how to get to or from ports. There were also complaints about the way in which cars were given priority over foot passengers.

The existence of EU rights for ship passengers could be better known - though it was encouraging to see that some companies mentioned these on their tickets and/or websites.

Some issues, such as multimodal ticketing, are not strictly speaking part of passenger rights - but we drew attention to some good and bad examples. There was also an opportunity to raise this at a round table discussion on December 14<sup>th</sup>, when Trevor Garrod represented EPF and shipping operators from the UK, France and Germany also took part. A

representative of the European Disability Forum was also present and urged that rail and ferry operators should notify each other when a passenger with special needs was travelling.

### BUS AND COACH TRANSPORT

The three-year review of these passenger rights took place in February and, again, EPF submitted comments..

In the EPF comments we welcomed the Regulation 181/2011 as "a significant step forward in the right direction" but stressed the need for common passenger rights in all modes. Where there had been an increase in bus and coach usage, we suggested it had been because of attractive prices, sometimes convenience and sometimes good customer service rather than the existence of passenger rights.

Indeed, there needs to be more publicity for passenger rights by operators and at terminals. More attention also needs to be given to informing passengers of delays and we cite (anonymously) some examples provided by individual members of our affiliated associations.

Under EU regulations, passengers on international services of over 250km qualify for assistance or reimbursement in the event of cancellation or severe delay. From feedback from some of our member associations, we suspect that this only applies to a very small proportion of customers and we therefore urge the European Commission to gather proper statistics on journey lengths, and whether or not the journeys are international.

We also refer to a welcome action by the Swedish government in applying the EU assistance and compensation rules to all journeys over 150 km.

The experience of some countries is that the claiming procedure also needs to be simpler but take account of the fact that some journeys are multimodal.

Our colleagues in Pro Bahn have also made their own submission based on the situation in Germany, where there has been a great increase in

long-distance coach travel since liberalisation in 2013 - but the number of complaints has also increased.

#### TAXIS ARE ALSO PUBLIC TRANSPORT

EPF was approached in January by researchers conducting a study for the European Commission on taxis, hire cars and ride-sharing.

Our President responded, referring to our participation in the Smart Move project in 2012-13 and stating, "We recognise the value of taxis in the journey chain, and therefore the importance of them being available at main rail and bus stations, airports and seaports. It is important for travellers to know this in advance and/or to have an app or phone number. Public transport operators should advertise this fact.

"We also recognise the role of taxis (and indeed demand-responsive transport) in being available to passengers when public transport is not running (late night or early morning, for example) or to places which are difficult to reach by public transport. It is important for drivers to be properly trained and licensed."

## GOOD PRACTICE IN URBAN TRANSPORT

One of the aims of EPF is to spread good practice or at least to study new ideas in one place and see if they can be a model for elsewhere.

#### IN LONDON



We were therefore very pleased to welcome to our General Meeting on January 9<sup>th</sup> in

London Mr. Vernon Everitt of Transport for London.

He explained that TfL saw its role not just as a service provider but also as helping to make life in London better and to improve the city. Passengers wanted efficiency, value for money (including the approachability of staff) progress and innovation. 50% of TfL's revenue came from fares, while it also gained income from its property portfolio, the congestion charge and government grants.

Mr. Everitt explained that contactless payments had been introduced in September 2014 and a quarter of all payments were now made this way. Indeed, several of us attending the meeting simply used our bank cards to pay our fares around the city. This also made it easier to administer refunds, which could be paid straight into a customer's bank account. Although ticket offices had closed, staff were now "out in front by the ticket machines, talking with customers"

Some colleagues commented on a lack of fares information when they arrived in London and it was important to have staff available at important gateway stations. Mr. Everitt said that TfL valued customer feedback. "We do not treat complaints as a threat but as a constructive contribution to improving your services." Useful websites are [www.tfl.gov.uk/fares](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/fares) and [www.tfl.gov.uk/waystopay](http://www.tfl.gov.uk/waystopay)

#### MORE NOTTINGHAM TRAMS

Trevor Garrod writes –

The city of Nottingham, England, is famous for the mediaeval outlaw Robin Hood, Raleigh bicycles, Boots the Chemist, the writers Lord Byron and D H Lawrence. It is also twinned with the German city of Karlsruhe.

Nottingham has also become famous as one of six British cities that have re-introduced the tram. It started in 2004 with a line and a branch from the rail station northwards through the city centre. In August 2015 a new tram bridge (called the Karlsruhe Friendship Bridge) was opened over the station platforms and out into the southern and

western suburbs, bringing the total network to 32km (20 miles).

I recently had cause to spend the night in Nottingham (at the Ibis in the Lace Market, next to a tram stop) and used the next morning to try out the new extensions.

There is some street running, but wherever possible the extensions are on reserved track, including over a former toll bridge across the River Trent and part of the track bed of the former Great Central Railway (closed in the late 1960s). This line passes through the large residential area of Clifton to a terminus with toilets, a coffee kiosk, cycle storage, bus stop and large park-and-ride area.

The trams on the other line were busier, serving as they do a major hospital, the university and the town of Beeston (with a bus/tram interchange) before reaching a park-and-ride site, also served by country buses, at Toton Lane.

A day ticket cost me only £4 (about 5 euro) and was also valid on city buses. A variety of other tickets - including some in connection with special sporting and cultural events, are also available and can be purchased at ticket machines at every stop.

When the system first opened 12 years ago there were conductors on the trams. On five rides which I had, no one checked my ticket, but there would have been quite a large fine if I had not had one!

For more information, log on to [www.thetram.net](http://www.thetram.net)

...AND SOON ALSO IN BARCELONA

Barcelona already has two attractive modern tram systems, in the western and eastern suburbs. What the city has also needed in a tram line along the great avenida Diagonal, running from northwest to southeast, which could link the two systems. Our colleagues in

Asociacio per a la Promocio del Transport Publico have for some time pressed for such a scheme.



It is therefore very good news that the Mayor of Barcelona, Mrs. Colau, has announced that the city will build and finance the tram link along the Diagonal. Discussions will continue about linking it with the existing routes. Public works will start in early 2017 and it is planned to have the trams running two years later.

A new bus network is also planned for the city, with access to the vehicles only from the front door. Thank you for EPF member associations in 10 other countries for sending PTP useful details about the operation of bus doors in their cities.

## NIGHT TRAINS

EPF supported its German member associations in lobbying Deutsche Bahn against the proposed withdrawal, later this year, of night services.

These trains are of international importance, even if they start and finish within Germany, because for a significant number of passengers they form part of an international chain. We are also in contact with the Train Coalition grouping of campaigners for night trains in several European countries.

It has never been EPF's position that, just because there was once a night train on a particular route, there should always be one.

However, we do consider that in principle such trains still have an important role and we have urged action at EU level to study the wider costs and benefits of overnight services.



This is one of the issues that will be on the agenda of the April 23<sup>rd</sup> meeting of our INTERNATIONAL LONG-DISTANCE WORK GROUP in Liège. It will meet at the office of the Association des Clients des Transports Publics opposite Liège Guillemins station.

OUR NEXT BULLETIN, 2016/2 is due to appear in late June.

That meeting will discuss the various projects and developments being undertaken or monitored by members of the Group. One of these is a list of hotels near stations, which members of EPF affiliated organisations have used and can recommend. If you have any to add to the list, please email them to [albert.lambert@education.lu](mailto:albert.lambert@education.lu).

## EUROPE FOR CITIZENS

A small group of EPF members has discussed this EU programme and done preliminary work. on an application for funding which we plan to make next winter. We shall need the active participation of at least five member association, and one has already expressed an interest.

The aim will be to involve more people who are not so far participating in our work and to focus on how the 2011 Transport White Paper can affect travel habits.

## FUTURE GENERAL MEETINGS

On June 18<sup>th</sup> there will be a General Meeting of EPF in Copenhagen, hosted by our colleagues in Passagerpulsen. We have allocated time in the morning for discussion on an expected Communication from the European Commission on decarbonisation. This will be very relevant to transport.

On October 22<sup>nd</sup> our autumn General Meeting will take place in Ghent.

On January 14<sup>th</sup> 2017 we shall hold our winter General Meeting at a place still to be decided. Any offers or suggestions?