

EPF-Bulletin #21 – September 2016

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INTRODUCTION

Bienvenue(e) au 21^{ème} numéro du bulletin d'activités de la Fédération européenne des Voyageurs et son grand nombre d'associations adhérentes.

Ici vous pouvez lire de nos efforts au niveau européen et de la diffusion de la bonne pratique. Nous avons continué nos efforts concernant des thèmes tels que les voyages transfrontaliers et sans couture et l'avenir des trains de nuit.

Vous pouvez lire aussi de la collaboration de nos associations adhérentes et de notre assistance aux congrès.

J'espère que ces rapports vous donneront peut-être aussi qu'à vos collègues ou des membres de votre association des idées pour encore d'actions, de recherches ou de voyages.

EINLEITUNG

Herzlich willkommen zur 21. Ausgabe des Bulletin über die Tätigkeit des Europäischen Fahrgastverbandes EPF und seiner vielen Mitgliedsverbände.

Sie finden hier mehr über unsere Arbeit auf europäischer Ebene und über die Verbreitung guter Praxis. Wir haben uns auch mit den Themen multimodalem internationalem Reisen und der Zukunft der Nachtzüge weiter beschäftigt.

Ferner finden Sie Informationen über die Zusammenarbeit unserer Mitgliedsverbände sowie unsere Teilnahme an Tagungen.

Hoffentlich geben Ihnen und Ihren Kolleg(inn)en oder den Mitgliedern Ihrer Verbände diese Berichte auch einige Ideen zu weiteren Aktionen, Forschungen oder Reisen.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the 21st edition of the bulletin of activity of the European Passengers' Federation and its many member organisations.

Here you will find more about our work at European level and the spread of good practice. We have also concerned ourselves further with topics of multimodal international travel and the future of night trains.

In addition you will find information about co-operation between our member associations and our participation in conferences.

I hope that these reports will give you, your colleagues and the individual members of your association some ideas for further action, research or travel.



*Trevor Garrod
President, EPF*

EPF HOLD 2017 CONFERENCE IN ROTTERDAM



The 2017 Conference and Annual General Meeting of the European Passengers' Federation will be in Rotterdam on the afternoon of Friday March 17th and all day on Saturday March 18th. It will be the first time in eleven years that we have held the event in the Netherlands. Rotterdam is easy to reach by all modes of public transport.

Please note the date. We are currently working on the programme and you will be able to read more about that in our December bulletin. It is intended to have reports from our member associations on their successes, to hear reports on aspects of EPF's work and speakers at national and European level as well as allowing ample time for networking and discussion.

EPF DISCUSSES PUBLIC TRANSPORT WITH UITP

Each year, EPF representatives meet in Brussels with officers of the Union internationale des Transports Publics, the international body for urban and regional public transport operators for in-depth discussion of matters of common interest. This year Trevor Garrod and Willy Smeulders met four UITP officers on June 8th.

UITP has been taking part in an interesting EU-funded project on electric buses called ZEEUS - Zero Emission Urban Bus System. (www.zeeus.eu). The meeting was given a very interesting presentation on experiments

with battery-operated buses in various European cities, including Stockholm, Warsaw, Pilsen, Cagliari and Barcelona, and how these vehicles could be charged either at termini or in depots. The project was looking at funding, procurement, operation and maintenance and would also measure passenger satisfaction. Initial reaction of passengers was positive, commenting that the electric buses were less noisy, with fewer vibrations.

On passenger rights, UITP said that they would be updating their own charter, in view of new digital technology. EPF welcomed this move and reported on its own concerns, which included recent involvement in consultations in rail, coach sea and air passenger rights. UITP updated us on the Smart Ticketing Alliance and other initiatives in which they were involved.

We shared views on the EU initiative on decarbonisation of transport. We mentioned MaaS (Mobility as a Service), saying that the scheme had potential where the passenger had a choice - for example between taking a train or sharing a car - and could be given objective information about both.

From our previous meeting we raised again the criteria for the award of Public Service Contracts, stressing that "cheapest is not necessarily best". UITP considered that there was nothing wrong with the system as such, but the problems lie with the awarding authorities. The recent Ruter Dialogue Conference in Norway had some very relevant things to say about how such contracts should develop.

REPORT ON TEN-T DAYS

EPF was represented on June 21st at the event on Transport European Networks in Rotterdam, sponsored by the Dutch Government and involving a very wide range of transport professionals and decision-makers. We took part in the Rail Passenger Summit which was part of the programme.

The debate was opened by Dutch Transport Minister Sharon Dijksma who stated, "We're not

giving the passengers what they want for international travel. We need business initiatives to create a new information exchange platform."

Key points made by speakers were:

- It could take the rail industry three years to create a new service = something which a low-cost airline could do in three months.
- The rail industry already had the infrastructure and the Full Service Model of the of European Railways aimed to make it possible to book between any two stations in Europe.

However, customers were moving gradually to



combined journey solutions. An operator that only focussed on its own product was not sufficient for

today's potential passengers. There were twelve different reservation systems needed to cover all of Europe. Interregional cross-border co-operation was just as important as long-distance services. For example, there were plans to run through services between Groningen and Bremen involving the Dutch provincial and German Land authorities.

Teamwork was vital, and everyone in the team must know what was expected of them to make the passenger happy. Governance of the rail sector was discussed and the point made that there were different ways to organise it - but consultation with passengers was essential.

The organisation for young rail professionals TRAIN2EU, with whom EPF has been in contact, has done its own research into customer needs (www.train2eu.org/research) and had three innovative ticketing providers giving presentations. A panel which included EPF's Willy Smeulders judged the entrants and awarded the first of what is planned to be an annual prize to the booking platform "Happy Rail". Its website www.happyrail.com is shortly to go live.

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

- October 1st - EPF Working Group on International Long-distance Travel in Liège, Belgium
- October 11th - 12th Railway Days, Bucharest (Trevor Garrod will be one of the speakers)
- October 17th - 19th Salzburger Verkehrstage Die neue Leichtigkeit der Mobilität - intelligent und kreativ vernetzt innerhalb und außerhalb der großen Städte: www.salzburger-verkehrstage.org
- October 19th - EPF meeting with international train operator Thalys
- October 22nd - EPF General Meeting in Ghent, Belgium
- January 14th 2017 - EPF General Meeting in Paris

RAIL/SEA/RAIL UPDATE

In our Bulletin # 20 (issued in June), we described the efforts of EPF member organisations Rover and Railfuture to ensure that travel between eastern England and the Netherlands via the Harwich - Hoek van Holland ferry remains seamless and therefore attractive. In early August it was announced that Abellio (owned by the Dutch Railways) had been re-awarded the East Anglia rail franchise up to 2025. That should give some cause for optimism.

The new walkway from shore to ship at Harwich was delivered in June, found to be faulty and returned to the manufacturers. It was hoped that it would be fixed by August, but in the early part of that month foot passengers were still having to board a bus for this key part of their journey.

On the Dutch side, we have been assured that the through ticketing issues will be addressed before the line to Hoek van Holland is transferred to Rotterdam city transport operator RET on April 1st. Next summer, however, there will be replacement buses while the line is being converted to metro operation.

CROSS-BORDER RAIL CAMPAIGNS

GERMANY / POLAND

The Ostbahn, or Eastern Railway, links Berlin to Kostrzyn, Gorzów and Piła, on the way to Gdańsk and Kaliningrad. In 2010 a European Grouping for Territorial Co-operation or EGTC (Europäischer Verbund für territoriale Zusammenarbeit or EVTZ) has been actively pursuing the development of this route and its corridor region.

The third International Eastern Railway Conference will be held in the Kreiskulturhaus, Seelow on Thursday October 20th from 10.00 till 15.00 on the theme "Die Ostbahn 2030 - Zukunftsvisionen" - Future Visions of the Eastern Railway in 2030.

German and Polish speakers (with simultaneous translation) will deal with current European views on rail development, the German - Polish treaty on rail development, the relevance of Polish rail development for Berlin and Brandenburg and the new EU Interreg Project "NSB CoRE". The conference is financed by the European Union and registration is free. We hope to enclose a report of it in our next Bulletin.

For more information, visit www.ostbahn.eu or contact Karl-Heinz Bossan at office@client-consult.de

NETHERLANDS /BELGIUM /GERMANY

In our Bulletin #19 we reported on the very successful conference organised in the autumn of 2015 in Wesel by our members in Rover and Pro Bahn. There will be a follow-up conference, which will also involve Belgian associations, in Maastricht on November 5th. Details when available will be on the websites of the organising associations.

GERMANY / CZECH REPUBLIC

We are informed that the authorities in Saxony (on the German side) and the counties of Ústí and Liberec (on the Czech side) are

continuing discussions on how train services along the corridor between Ústí nad Labem, Bad Schandau, Rumburk, Zittau and Liberec can be further improved.

REGIONAL RAIL SERVICES IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC

Our colleagues in Svaz Cestujících ve Veřejné Dopravě (SCVD) are publishing a report on the value of regional train services and the role of local communities in their development.



The report includes an Introduction by EPF President Trevor Garrod, who refers to the British experience, including the work of voluntary

bodies and Community Rail Partnerships; the challenges of unstaffed stations and the importance of tariff integration: For example, he asks, "Why could not a ticket from Rybníště to Liberec also include the tram ticket in Liberec?".

ONGOING EPF WORK

1. THE FINAL MILE - Thank you for colleagues who have contributed to the updating of this report. Aljoscha Labeille is still keen to hear about other developments. Email him at aljoscha.labeille@vcd-bayern.de

2. MULTIMODAL INTERNATIONAL TICKETING - Peter Cornelius, Kerstin Carlberg and Trevor Garrod are working on this report, which will refer to good and bad practice - not only in ticketing but also in the information systems on which good ticketing systems depend. They will be pleased to hear from other colleagues with useful input. The EU SINTRAS project, in which EPF has taken an interest, also has relevance in this respect.

3. CASHLESS TICKETING - This issue was discussed at the EPF General Meeting in the summer and Trevor Garrod has produced a short discussion paper. It is important to consider new technology

and the advantages it can bring to passengers, while at the same time recognising that public transport operators should not "put all eggs in one basket".

NIGHT TRAIN DEVELOPMENTS

In our last bulletin we reported on EPF's approach to all members of the European Parliament's Transport & Tourism Committee, urging support for the idea of an independent study on the demand for night trains, their costs and benefits. We have now followed this up with a further letter to a selection of MEPs who have shown particular interest in our work in the recent past.

Meanwhile, in the more immediate future there have been some positive steps, with decision of ÖBB (the Austrian Federal Railways) to take over certain north/south routes through Germany from December 2016. On August 15th ÖBB announced they would operate the following sleeper services: Munich – Venice; Munich – Rome via Villach and Venice; Munich – Milan via Villach and Venice; Innsbruck – Hamburg via Nuremberg; Innsbruck – Düsseldorf via Nuremberg; Zurich – Hamburg via Frankfurt and Berlin while their existing services from Vienna to Hamburg and Düsseldorf would remain.

A new fares system will give ÖBB a maximum share of the tariff income and be disadvantageous to BahnCard holders and passengers whose journeys include day trains as well. For more information, see www.back-on-track.eu

The timetables for the Austrian sleeper trains are apparently devised so that they complement, and do not compete with, DB's own proposed overnight ICEs (which will not be sleepers).

Meanwhile, the Back on Train of Train Coalition grouping has sent an open letter, signed by ten leading political and industry figures, to the Chief Executive Officers of DB

and ÖBB, urging them to set up a joint undertaking to run the night services, modelled on Alleo, in which DB and SNCF collaborate on the Paris - Frankfurt high speed trains. They have even suggested a name for it: DACH (meaning "roof" but also an acronym of the internationally recognised initials for Germany, Austria and Switzerland)

PROBLEMS ON THE JOURNEY FROM LONDON TO GENEVA

London to Geneva via Paris in a day is a relatively easy journey in these days of high-speed trains,



including the RER (fast metro) to cross Paris. The customer also has a choice of booking methods. However, what happens when things go wrong?

An individual member of an EPF-affiliated organisation experienced such problems in the summer. Buying a through ticket from an on-line agency was easy, and she prepared herself for the cross-Paris leg of the journey by watching a YouTube video. However, having to queue to buy a metro ticket, and a longer than usual wait for an RER train meant that she missed her TGV Lyria train to Geneva by one minute. She had to pay 191 euro to travel on a later train to Geneva, with the RailTeam promise of "hop on the next available train" and EC Regulation 1371/2007 disregarded by the company, who also declined to refund the fare when contacted later.

Our member then contacted the British National Enforcement Body, partly because she found it easier to correspond in English. It was unclear which company was in charge, but Lyria subsequently agreed to contact SNCF about a possible refund. The customer service officer at Paris Gare de Lyon was said to be very unhelpful and unsympathetic.

This case raises four important questions for all of us encountering problems on such a journey -

When the customer books through a third party (such as a portal or an agent), should that third party be the first person to contact when there is a problem? On what basis does the customer decide

to whom to turn with his or her complaint? If the customer turns to a National Enforcement Body, which one? For example, should it be in the departure country or the country in which the problem arose?

In Germany, a case must be processed or at least the process started, within four weeks. How is it in international cases? In addition, there may well be staff training issues - and was it announced on the Eurostar to Paris that passengers could purchase Paris metro tickets in the bar-buffet?

INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL EXPERIENCES

by Trevor Garrod

Part of my holiday this summer was spent in Poland, travelling with the flexibility of a 10-day Interrail global pass.

Travelling by train from Berlin to Szczecin was a better experience than in 2008 - with a more modern diesel multiple unit from Angermünde on a line whose speed limit had been raised since I last used it. Nevertheless there remains a need for through trains and, of course, for electrification of the final section, if rail is to compete better with road between Berlin and Szczecin.

Szczecin's main station building has been improved with a southern extension, though catering facilities are limited. My journey through Pomerania was by a TLK train (an intercity but not the fastest or most expensive) that was perhaps 30% full. It was electric-hauled and ran briskly between stops but seemed to stand for longer than it needed to at most intermediate stops and took 5 hours and 9 minutes for the 374 km to Gdańsk.

This city has a beautifully preserved main station that must have been built around 1900, with a well-equipped and modern interior while frequent trams and buses pass



by outside. It reminded me of the stations at Graz and Peterborough, in that a dual-carriageway road separates it from the city centre. Gdańsk had a pedestrian subway under the road, linking the station to shops and to my hotel.

The TLK from Gdańsk to Poznań was crowded, ran to time but really needed more than 4 coaches. I might have used the recently introduced through service between Berlin and Gdańsk via Poznań, but it only runs once a day and the times were not too convenient for me - but I did travel on it between Poznań and Frankfurt an der Oder and was impressed by its speed and comfort - and the free coffee served from a trolley.

My previous experience of Poland had included the central station at Krakow, which is hidden beneath a modern shopping complex. This year I was to use two more stations which Polish Railways has also redeveloped as shopping centres: Sopot and Poznań. At the former (a resort on the Baltic Coast), someone walking up from the beach to the station might easily miss it, but at least it was not completely dominated by the shopping centre. At the large city of Poznań, the impressive modern station building on the bridge over the tracks is actually quite user-friendly - you walk in and turn right for the trains, left for the shops, while the bus station is also clearly visible on a lower level. Finally, it was good to see the publicity for the Euro-Neisse-Ticket produced by ZVON - the Zweckverband Verkehrsverbund Oberlausitz-Niederschlesien. This multimodal ticket covers neighbouring regions of Poland, Germany and the Czech Republic. There are tips on interesting places to visit in all three countries and multilingual information on www.neisse-go.de.

NOTE ON BREXIT

On June 23rd, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Greater London voted to stay in the European Union; but overall 51.9% of British electors voted to leave. The UK government is therefore expected, before the end of the year, to start negotiations to leave after 43 years in the EU and its predecessor. These talks could take until 2018 and EPF's British member associations will follow closely the negotiations to determine their country's future relations with its European neighbours. Brexit will not stop people travelling between the UK and the rest of Europe. British input into the work of EPF will continue. When our Federation was formed in 2002, its statutes made it clear that bodies from non-EU states were also welcome to be members. It is hoped to include progress reports in future Bulletins as the negotiations continue.

NEXT BULLETIN is due to appear in December 2016. Material should be sent to Trevor Garrod by November 20th.