



Security in public passenger transport – European Passengers’ Federation (EPF) asking for appropriate and scalable solutions

London and Spain in 2005, Thalys, Brussels metro and regional trains events in Germany in 2016: public passenger transport has become a target for terrorists. It is understandable that, in the wake of a terrorist incident involving public transport, some people look to make their journeys by other modes and demands are made for ‘more effective security measures’.

However, evidence gathered after the 2005 London bombing seems to suggest that, even in the immediate wake of an attack, most passengers expect to travel safely and securely and **do not welcome additional security measures** that are intrusive or which add to the inconvenience of their journey.

1/ Avoiding security measures that may have the effect of actually increasing the overall security risk:

- EPF considers that the goal of terrorists may be furthered by **precipitate security responses**, as, for example scanners at the entrance or on platforms in railway stations or at access points of public transport hubs involving long queues and creating important gatherings which are due to become easy targets.
- **Transferring to less safe modes may not be the solution**, as a car occupant in Europe is more than 15 times more likely to be killed per billion passenger kilometres travelled than a public transport passenger. Research published in *Psychological Science* on behalf of the American Psychological Society suggests that the number of Americans who lost their lives on the road to avoid the dread risk of flying in the quarter following 9/11 was higher than the total number of passengers killed on the four fatal flights involved. Subsequent research published in the *International Journal of General Medicine* concluded that the increase in driving after 9/11 may have resulted in increased fatalities and an increased frequency in less serious injury.

2/ Calling for a proportionate response to terrorism threat:

- What is called for is a proportionate response reflecting the nature of the identified risk and avoiding an inadvertent increase the risk of death or injury to passengers. Risks vary over time and the authorities must be equipped and organized to provide a response that is **scalable to the risk assessed**.

- Many passengers attach particular value to the '**turn up and go**' nature of the public transport system. The cost and utility of public transport network would be seriously undermined if it were decided to try to enforce 'a closed system'. A land transport network with secured perimeters, as at airports is not a practical option: the additional land-take requirements alone would be massive. And there is the ever-present risk that terrorists would shift their attention to softer, less well-secured targets.
- Public transport users are generally extremely safe. **Vigilant passengers have a crucial role** to play as the 'eyes and ears' of a secure system. They can reinforce the protective capacity of digital technology – CCTV, atypical behaviour recognition software - and full and timely cooperation between the responsible agencies to secure the **mobility that is the corner-stone of a free and flourishing society**.