



**What can Europe do for passengers?  
4th annual general meeting and conference of the  
EUROPEAN PASSENGERS' FEDERATION  
18 MARCH 2006**

**Kumulus Centrum voor de kunsten, Maastricht, Netherlands**

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# Conference report

75 members attended the event and there were five apologies for absence.

## General meeting

**1. Opening:** The Chairman, Trevor Garrod, welcomed members from 16 associations and organisations in 11 countries.

The Annual Report was accepted and is now posted on the EPF website <http://www.epf-eu.be/>. The financial report and budget were discussed and adopted. The work plan for the coming year was agreed and the Administrative Council for the coming 12 months was appointed. Full minutes of the General Meeting are sent to each affiliated association.

## Conference

**2. Mr Michael van der Vlis**, Chairman of ROVER (the Dutch public transport users' association) welcomed delegates to Maastricht which he described as "a very international city" in an area where cross-border travel was very important. He also spoke of the need to strengthen customers' rights in the Netherlands where the law was relatively weak in this respect.

**3. M. Jean-Paul Jacquot** (FNAUT, France) introduced the session by referring to the January document on Passengers' rights adopted by the Council of Ministers. The associations which make up EPF needed to address their concerns to the Transport Ministries of each country. EPF was working at European level with bodies representing rail operators, persons of reduced mobility, cyclists and others. We were also following up European Commission consultations on other transport modes.

The member associations of the EPF had up to 35 years' experience in 14 countries and believed that they should be consulted by the Commission at an early stage. Our concerns currently included cross-border transport, night trains and international trains such as Thalys and Eurostar.

Progress was being made with a European Standard Information System, but it presently depended on the good will of individual operators.

**4. Mr Saïd El Khadraoui MEP**, speaking on the work of the European Parliament, said that the different political groups shared similar goals in the transport field.

The Parliament was not able to make laws on its own initiative but could put pressure on the European Commission to make proposals to address issues and then discuss these.

He traced the development of passenger rights at European level, starting with directives on air passengers' rights in 1997. The Parliament had played an important role in changing the regulations on unsafe planes and companies, and a black list was about to be published by the Commission.

There had been opposition from sections of the airline industry to passengers' rights, but the European Court of Justice had confirmed the validity of the regulation.

The Commission then sought to extend similar rights to rail passengers in its 2004 Third Railway Package. A second reading of this was due in the Parliament this summer.

Rights would include train ticketing and information, liability, compensation and measures for persons of reduced mobility. The European Parliament wanted to expand the scope of these rights to cover all passengers, not just those making international journeys.

Mr El Khadraoui said that passengers were not always interested in refunds if things went wrong, but this was a way of putting pressure on companies to be more efficient.

For commuter journeys the Parliament did not want to impose a solution but did want to encourage one. If a commuter train was regularly delayed, operators, authorities and passenger representatives should sit round the table and discuss what compensation mechanism should be applied.

For the bus and coach industry, the Parliament hoped that similar principles would apply and there was due to be a stakeholders' meeting on 29 March. For sea passengers, the ERIKA III Package in November 2005 had made 7 proposals on such issues as safety, security, liability and compensation, bringing EU law in line with the Athens Convention.

**5. Answering questions**, our speaker suggested that "horizontal institutions", such as a central office for complaints, would be useful to ensure that there was a fair competition between transport modes.

There should be minimum rules applicable to journeys between EU and non-EU countries; and, whatever the EU minima were, there was still scope for regional and national authorities to do more.

In response to a question about whether quality of travel and passenger rights should be left to the operation of the market place, Mr El Khadraoui said that he did not believe that the market alone should determine such matters. The SNCB had increased usage by 25% but this was partly as a result of public money being invested in better trains and services. "We hope to find a good and balanced solution", he said, "between the market and the offer of public service."

Asked about services of general interest, and whether there should be a minimal standard applicable throughout the EU, based on affordability and accessibility, our speaker invited passengers to suggest to MEPs what the minimal universal service standard requirements should be.

In reply to another question, he said that the EU had a list of 30 priorities for improved services but that the budget agreed at the end of 2005 was not generous enough to allow investment in all of them.

Mr El Khadraoui concluded by recommending EPF members to enter into discussion with MEPs on the Transport & Tourism Committee and especially with those who were rapporteurs and shadow rapporteurs.

The conference heard short presentations from other guests:

**6. Herr Sven Andersen** (Germany) gave an update on his dialogue with stakeholders on the TGV Est connection into Germany. He was about to meet the Mannheim and Karlsruhe Chambers of Commerce. He had also had discussions with Thalys and Deutsche Bahn managers about improvements in the services between France, Belgium and Germany.

**7. Mr Colin Hall** (Community of European Railways) reported on the development of a passengers' charter by the European railway industry. 23 rail companies in 19 countries now had national charters and 19 companies in 14 countries now had compensation packages.

Mr Hall defined "quality" as "If we say we're going to do something, and we do it. If we set ourselves a 90% target because we consider it realistic, we'll aim to meet that target."

He was proud to work with EPF and with bodies representing persons with reduced mobility, blind travellers, etc., and paid special tribute to Jean-Paul Jacquot and Josef Schneider for the integrity with which they conducted EPF's interests. "We may not always agree, but there's respect on both sides."

EPF had helped CER to develop an international website for passengers (<http://www.railpassenger.info/>) and both organisations shared a common commitment to rail as a mode of transport. Rail operators understood the concept of consumer rights and the needs of persons of reduced mobility, but laws and regulations must also be practical.

He gave a guarantee that rail companies would not adjust their schedules to accommodate regulations on compensation; but also pointed out that the recent cooperation between Eurostar and Thalys was "happening because the market is asking for it, not because of regulations."

Commenting on calls for comprehensive ticketing, he asked "Would Ryan air be required to sell everyone else's tickets?"

**8. Herr Martin Schiefelbusch** of the NEXUS Institute, Berlin, spoke about participatory transport planning. He said that the political climate was now pro-public-transport, but that "knowledge and prioritisation of users' needs" was vital for operators and transport planners. Otherwise dissatisfied customers would use the "exit option" and travel by car.

He defined quality management as "the implementation of services as advertised". Attention must also be paid to contingency plans if things went wrong, and to the handling of practical problems, complaints and irregularities.. It was important to have service guarantees and comparable methods of complaint-handling in all European countries. EPF members had been helping NEXUS by completing a questionnaire about customer rights and participation in various countries and he hoped that collaboration between the two bodies would continue.

**9. Mrs Ingrid Lieten**, General Manager of De Lijn, explained what her authority was doing to develop public transport in Flanders. About 52% of buses in Flanders were operated by De Lijn and the remainder were contracted out to private operators.

Public transport was seen as “an essential service of general interest” and EU legislation now recognised it as such, albeit with a commercial dimension. This was a big step forward.

Users were not generally concerned with the organisation but with the end product. With this in mind, minimum service obligations had been introduced in sectors such as telecommunications but not yet in public transport.

Flanders had developed a scheme of “a universal minimum offer of public transport”. A system of basic mobility would be implemented in 90% of the region by the end of 2006. Citizens had rights to demand certain levels of transport and even to charge De Lijn for taxis. She hoped this would inspire other countries to follow suit.

Mrs Lieten described measures being taken to speed up buses and trams. The included more dedicated bus and tram lanes but also a network of pre-sale points, such as in supermarkets and post offices where tickets would be 25% cheaper than on the vehicle. “It takes 50 seconds to sell a ticket on board” said Mrs Lieten. 2,500 pre-sale outlets had already been established and the number was likely to rise.

Communication with customers was being improved with real-time information on arrival and departure announcements and a route planner had been initiated in collaboration with rail colleagues. A Commuting Plan was to be introduced to encourage more professional people to take the bus or tram.

Benchmarking research was being undertaken jointly with operators in other countries, including the Netherlands and Ireland, to identify what made passengers happy or unhappy. A voluntary passenger rights charter was also being considered.

Mrs Lieten concluded with a call for “more debate on passenger rights but also on minimum universal service obligations”.

**10. Rufus Barnes** (London TravelWatch and EPF Administrative Council) launched the afternoon session of the conference by outlining the history of EPF and what it had achieved.

The Federation had begun as an informal grouping of public transport users’ organisations from several countries and, encouraged by the European Commission, had formalised itself as an international non-profit association under Belgian law.

It had grown to include 22 organisations in 14 European countries and was able to have dialogue with other pan-European bodies and with international companies such as Eurostar and Thalys.

However the bulk of its work was carried out by volunteers, and to provide a more effective counterbalance to the voice of the rail industry EPF needed more substantial ongoing funding.

He referred to the recent comments of the Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection, Mr Markos Kyprianou, that the EU “wants consumers to be more visible, more vocal and more demanding” and that “consumer rights are an integral part of the internal market, but there is no point in having those rights if the citizens of Europe do not know what those rights are.”

**11. M. Jean-Arnold Vinois**, Head of Rail & Interoperability at the European Commission Directorate DG TREN, stressed that passenger rights were in the forefront of EU concerns and that his colleague, Herr Peter Faross, now had overall responsibility for passenger rights in all modes of transport.

The original reaction of the Community of European Railways to European passenger rights was “an absolute No” but much progress had been made since then. He told delegates, “Your best defender in this case is the Commission”, adding that the British system of passenger rights and representation was an example of best practice.

He advised EPF to bid for project funding in the call for tender later in 2006; but also to put to MEPs their case for regular funding. National governments also had a role to play if the voice of the passenger was to be properly resourced and heard.

M. Vinois then turned to the problems of the European railways identifying in many cases declining modal share, costs, focus on processes rather than passengers, organisation on national lines, lack of integration and inefficient management.

Because of the many demands on taxpayers’ money (such as in health and education), the challenge facing the rail industry was to become more affordable.

For example the Thalys trains had had to be designed to cope with 7 different signalling systems and this had put up the cost of a seat by 60%. French and German railway industries were concerned with self-protection; but, said our speaker, “Europe has been at peace for 60 years, so why do we change locomotives and signalling systems at the border?”

He had urged the CER to produce a vision for European railways in 2025. Meanwhile, the Commission’s 2001 White Paper was very pro-rail (and had been criticised by the road lobby for this reason) and the present Transport Commissioner, M. Jacques Barrot would “keep railways high on the agenda.” However, the railway industry had not changed fast enough.

There was a challenge not only to the national railways but also to the railway manufacturing industry. For example, harmonisation of signalling and safety systems and greater standardisation of rolling stock would reduce costs. It was cheaper to produce a long series of locomotives which could operate in many countries than a small batch just for one country only.

Turning to passenger rights, M. Vinois criticised lack of information, problems with accessibility and fares; frequent delays and cancellations; dirty trains and insufficient seating.

The UIC (Union Internationale des Chemins de fer) had been working on its MERITS and PRIFIS systems for timetabling and fares to make long-distance travel easier. At present, said our speaker, “A travel agent would rather sell you an international air ticket than an international train ticket for a journey across 3 or 4 countries because it is simpler for him.”

There was also some cause for optimism in that the decline in traffic had now stabilised. Furthermore, the United Kingdom and, more recently, Germany had restructured their railways to make them more competitive. Other countries should follow suit.

M. Vinois stressed that the European Commission could make proposals, but it was up to the national transport ministers (in the Council of Ministers) and the European Parliament to take the decisions on implementation.

Necessary actions included restructuring debts, greater inter-operability and standardisation, elimination of bottlenecks, and better passenger rights and service quality for international passengers.

Since 1991 Directives had been made to separate infrastructure from operation; to encourage standardisation; to open the market for freight and then cabotage; to make transparency obligatory; and to regulate the market.

European Infrastructure Managers had created a company to identify ways of relieving congestion, one of which could be to have some lines purely for freight. A Market Regulator was needed to ensure a level playing field and oversee passenger rights.

An open market for international passenger services was being discussed. A legal framework was needed for the award of public service contracts. The European Rail Agency was undertaking important work in the field of interoperability, with draft specifications for persons of reduced mobility and high quality systems for information and ticketing.

It was also important that existing rules were properly enforced and that best practice was shared. For example, Britain had an integrated system of ticketing between Train Operating Companies administered by the Association of Train Operating Companies. Why could not European railway operators do the same - with a system administered, perhaps, by the UIC?

Proposed passenger rights legislation had been “watered down” by the Council of Ministers but what was now being proposed was still a step forward and “better than nothing”.

Finally M. Vinois referred to the rail services now operating over the Øresund bridge between Denmark and Sweden. The development of a joint Copenhagen - Malmö service was a good example of cross-border cooperation.

**12. Herr Hans-Joachim Sistenich**, Chief Executive of the Aachener Verkehrsverbund (AVV - the Public Transport Authority for Aachen) then told delegates about improved cross-border travel in the area where the conference was taking place.

The AVV acted as coordinator centre for transport operators in the Maas-Rhine Euroregion which stretched from Hasselt in the Belgian province of Limburg, through Dutch Limburg into Germany and also included the Liège area and the northern Ardennes.

Ten years ago services were very localised, with different ticketing, timetable and fares systems and different organisational structures and, of course, three different languages. Yet it had become very simple to drive by car between the three countries.

In 1997, a working party was set up for local public transport within the region, then a Steering Group and a series of bilateral working parties. By 2000 results were visible, for example in a bus service between Eupen (Belgium) and Monschau (Germany) for leisure traffic and then the following year the reopening of the rail link from Heerlen to Stolberg for passenger trains. Modern easy-access German diesel trains were introduced with Dutch

drivers. The rail ticket between Heerlen and Aachen was also valid on urban buses in Heerlen.

In 1998, an Euregioticket was introduced - a day rover for a family of 2 adults and 2 children. At the same time, marketing of services was stepped up with high quality leaflets and internet publicity.

The withdrawal of Ostend - Cologne through trains with the advent of Paris - Brussels - Cologne Thalys services had caused dissatisfaction among local and regional passengers; but the Euregio stepped in with the introduction of a Liège - Aachen AIXpress (a play on words, as Aachen is "Aix-la-Chapelle" in French). A further innovation was a fast bus service between Sittard in the Netherlands and Geilenkirchen in Germany.

2006 has seen the introduction of a Thalys Kombi-ticket with which long-distance travellers arriving by international train in Aachen can then use their ticket on local public transport to reach their final destination.

Herr Sistenich told delegates that 5 years ago there was not even a single network map for the region of the three countries. One had now been introduced. Bodies such as Chambers of Commerce and local passengers' groups were also involved in studying new initiatives.

Our speaker then looked ahead to likely future developments to make public transport in the region "grenzenlos" (borderless). Plans included measures to ensure transparency in ticketing systems; a common electronic ticketing facility and a multilingual call centre. The Spartacus Plan involved bus/rail integrated ticketing in Belgian Limburg, up to 14 new rail halts, and a possible light rail service from Hasselt, via the city's university, to Lanaken and Maastricht by 2012.

There were still harmonisation issues to be addressed: for example, the maximum age for a child's fare differed from country to country. A European definition was needed.

Special fare deals for bulk customers (such as where trains and buses served large colleges, schools and centres of employment) could be considered.

Finally Herr Sistenich outlined long-term plans to link the region by direct trains to Cologne-Bonn Airport and to the German high-speed trains. This would comprise fast regional trains from Liège and Eindhoven via Aachen to the airport.

**13. The Chairman, Trevor Garrod**, thanked all speakers and participants as well as all colleagues who had worked behind the scenes to ensure the success of EPF's largest conference to date.

EPF had also adopted a work plan for 2006/7 and he encouraged members of all of the Federation's 22 affiliated bodies to help put this plan into practice.

The following day, 19 March, many delegates took part in an excursion by public transport through the Euregio from Maastricht via Heerlen and Aachen to Heimbach and then back into Belgium.



## Sommaire français

### Que peut faire l'Europe pour les voyageurs ?

**La Fédération Européenne des voyageurs (EPF)** a tenu le samedi 18 mars 2006 à Maastricht, Pays-Bas, son Assemblée Générale et sa conférence la plus importante de son histoire : plus de 70 participants venant de 11 pays s'y réunirent. Nous fûmes accueillis par **Michael van der Vlis**, président de l'association ROVER des utilisateurs des transports publics néerlandais. **Jean-Paul Jacquot** (FNAUT, France) traça le rôle de la Fédération européenne dans les réponses apportées aux consultations menées au niveau européen, soulignant que la plupart des organisations membres de la fédération avaient plus de 35 ans d'expérience d'action en faveur des usagers des trains et des bus.

**M. Saïd El Khadraoui** (Belgique – Membre du Parlement Européen), donna des informations sur le rôle du Parlement Européen, soulignant le large accord sur les buts régnant parmi ses collègues du Comité des Transports et du Tourisme. Il expliqua les relations entre le Parlement, la Commission Européenne et le Conseil des Ministres dans la discussion et le processus de décision en matière de politique des transports ; il montra comment le règlement sur les droits des voyageurs aériens de 1997 et des années suivantes fut suivi par des propositions similaires pour les voyageurs ferroviaires. Le « Troisième Paquet Ferroviaire », qui comprend un projet de règlement sur les droits des voyageurs ferroviaires, devrait être vu en seconde lecture au Parlement en juin prochain. Des travaux sont aussi en cours concernant des droits similaires pour les voyageurs par bus, car et ferry. Au cours de la discussion qui suivit, M. El Khadraoui dit en résumé : « Nous voulons trouver une solution acceptable et équilibrée entre marché et service public. »

De courtes présentations ont été faites par **Colin Hall** (Communauté Européenne du Rail), **Martin Schiefelbusch** (NEXUS, Berlin) et **Ingrid Lieten** (De Lijn, l'autorité flamande des transports publics). **M. Hall** définit la qualité dans les transports ferrés européens en disant « nous sommes en train de faire quelque chose et nous le faisons » et expliqua de quelle façon les chemins de fer surveillaient leurs réalisations. **M. Schiefelbusch** dit que le climat était maintenant favorable au transport public mais qu'il était vital pour les opérateurs de connaître les besoins des voyageurs et de leur donner la priorité. **Mme Lieten** décrivit les mesures prises en Flandre pour rendre plus attrayant le transport public, allant de la vente de billets (à prix réduits) dans les supermarchés à la mise au point d'indicateurs d'itinéraires combinant bus et train.

**M. Jean-Arnold Vinois**, chef de « Rail et Interopérabilité » à la Commission Européenne, pressa le secteur ferroviaire d'accroître sa part de marché en étant efficace et abordable, en mettant l'accent sur les voyageurs plus que sur les processus et en ayant une perspective internationale plutôt que nationale. Par exemple, l'harmonisation des systèmes de signalisation et de sécurité, ainsi qu'une plus grande standardisation du matériel roulant réduiraient les coûts. L'Agence Ferroviaire Européenne entreprend un travail important dans le domaine de l'interopérabilité.

**Rufus Barnes** (London TravelWatch et Conseil d'Administration de EPF) décrivit les réalisations d'EPF depuis sa fondation en 2002 ; et souligna que, pour atteindre son plein potentiel, la Fédération avait besoin de plus de soutien financier.

**Hans-Joachim Sistenich**, de « l'Autorité des Transports Publics » d'Aix-la-Chapelle, rendit compte des progrès enregistrés dans les transports publics de l'Euregio Meuse-Rhin depuis 1997. Un système de billets globaux et de billets familiaux pour un tour dans la journée ont été introduits ainsi que des services trans-frontières de bus. Un nouveau service ferroviaire entre Heerlen et Aix-la-Chapelle a été mis en place sur des trains allemands conduits par du personnel néerlandais. Pour l'avenir, les plans portent sur un centre d'appel multilingues et une billetterie électronique, ainsi que des trains directs de Eindhoven et Liège à Cologne/aéroport de Bonn.

Le rapport complet de la conférence est disponible sur le site EPF <http://www.epf-eu.be/>

# Deutsche Zusammenfassung

## Was kann Europa für Fahrgäste tun?

**Der Europäische Fahrgastverband (EPF)** führte am Samstag den 18. März 2006 seine bisher größten Generalversammlung und Jahrestagung mit mehr als 70 Teilnehmern aus 11 Ländern in Maastricht (Niederlande) durch. **Michael van der Vlis**, Vorsitzender des niederländischen Fahrgastverbandes ROVER begrüßte alle Teilnehmer. **Jean-Paul Jacquot** (FNAUT/Frankreich) betonte die Rolle von EPF durch die Teilnahme an europäischen Konsultationen nicht ohne darauf hinzuweisen, dass viele Mitgliedsorganisationen auf langjährige Erfahrungen bei der Arbeit zugunsten von Bahn- und Busfahrgästen haben.

**Saïd El Khadraoui**, Mitglied des Europaparlaments, berichtete in seinem Referat über die Aktivitäten des Parlaments. Er betonte dabei die weitgehende Übereinstimmung aller Abgeordneten des Ausschusses für Verkehr und Tourismus. Er ging dabei ausführlich auf die Entscheidungsprozesse zwischen Parlament, Kommission und Ministerrat ein. Ausgehend von Regelungen für Fluggastrechte aus dem Jahre 1997 wurden dabei ähnliche Vorschläge für Fahrgäste der Schiene entwickelt. Das 3. Eisenbahnpaket, welches auch Regelungen zu Fahrgastrechten enthält, kommt vsl. im Juni 2006 zur zweiten Lesung ins Parlament. Weitere Regelungen für Fahrgäste von Bussen und Fähren sind in Vorbereitung. Während der anschließenden Diskussion forderte El Khadraoui „einen ausgewogenen Interessenausgleich zwischen den Marktanforderungen und öffentlichen Interessen“.

Kurze Referate wurden von **Colin Hall** (CER, Gemeinschaft europäischer Bahnen Brüssel), **Martin Schiefelbusch** (Nexus, Berlin) und **Ingrid Lieten** (De Lijn, flämischer ÖPNV-Betreiber) gehalten. **Colin Hall** definierte den Qualitätsanspruch der europäischen Eisenbahnen als „wenn wir sagen, wir machen etwas, dann tun wir es auch“ und führte aus, wie die Eisenbahnen ihrer Leistungsqualität überwachen. **Herr Schiefelbusch** schätzt die politische Stimmung noch als „pro öffentlicher Verkehr“ ein, aber für die Zukunft sei die Kenntnis und Priorisierung von Fahrgastinteressen überlebensnotwendig für Transportunternehmen und Planer. **Frau Lieten** stellte die in Flandern vorgesehenen Maßnahmen zur Verbesserung des öffentlichen Verkehrs vor. Künftig werden Tickets zu einem vergünstigten Preis in Supermärkten verkauft, ein kombinierter Bahn- und Bus-Fahrplaner ist in Vorbereitung.

**Jean-Arnold Vinois**, Leiter der Abteilung Rail and Interoperability der europäischen Kommission, forderte die Eisenbahnen auf, ihren Marktanteil durch Effizienzsteigerung und Fokussierung auf die Interessen der Fahrgäste zu steigern. Alle Produktionsprozesse müssten international ausgerichtet werden anstatt sich national abzugrenzen. So könnten zum Beispiel durch die Vereinheitlichung von Signalsystemen und Rollmaterial erhebliche Kosten eingespart werden.

**Rufus Barnes** (London TravelWatch und Mitglied des EPF-Vorstandes) unterstrich die Fortschritte, die EPF seit seiner Gründung 2002 gemacht hat. Um die Interessen der Fahrgäste nachhaltig zu vertreten, ist aber eine dauerhaft gesicherte Finanzierung auch durch die Europäische Union notwendig.

**Hans-Joachim Sistenich** vom Aachener Verkehrsverbund gab einen Überblick über die Verbesserungen im grenzüberschreitenden Personenverkehr der Euregio Maas-Rhein seit 1997. Tarifliche Maßnahmen und mehrere grenzüberschreitende Buslinien waren erste Maßnahmen. Ein neues Schienenangebot zwischen Heerlen und Aachen wurde eingeführt, deutsche Triebwagen werden unter anderem durch niederländische Lokführer gefahren. In Vorbereitung ist ein mehrsprachiges Callcenter und elektronische Tickets. Für die weitere Zukunft wird an durchgehenden Zugverbindungen von Eindhoven und Liege nach Köln-Flughafen gearbeitet.

Der vollständige Bericht der Konferenz ist in Kürze auf der EPF-Website abrufbar unter <http://www.epf-eu.be/>

# Nederlandse samenvatting

## Wat kan Europa doen voor reizigers?

**De Europese Reizigersfederatie (EPF)** heeft op zaterdag 18 maart in Maastricht haar tot nu toe grootste algemene vergadering en conferentie gehouden, met meer dan 70 deelnemers uit 11 landen. We werden verwelkomd door **Michael van der Vlis**, voorzitter van de Nederlandse reizigersvereniging ROVER. **Jean-Paul Jacquot** (FNAUT, Frankrijk) lichtte de rol van EPF toe bij de reacties op Europese consultaties, waarbij hij benadrukte dat veel van de lidorganisaties meer dan 35 jaar ervaring hebben met het werk voor reizigers in het openbaar vervoer.

Europarlementariër **Saïd El Khadraoui** (België) hield een interessante presentatie over de rol van het Europese Parlement, daarbij de brede overeenstemming over de doelen benadrukkend tussen zijn collega's in de Commissie Vervoer en Toerisme. Hij verklaarde het onderling verband tussen het Parlement, de Europese Commissie en de Raad van verkeersministers in de discussies en de beslissingen over het vervoersbeleid. Ook beschreef hij hoe de verordeningen over vliegtuigreizigers vanaf 1997 werden gevolgd door soortgelijke voorstellen voor treinreizigers. Het Derde Spoorwegpakket, waarin de rechten van de treinreizigers zijn opgenomen, komt in juni voor een tweede lezing in het Parlement. Er wordt ook gewerkt aan soortgelijke voorstellen voor de rechten van touringcar-, bus- en bootreizigers. Tijdens de discussie vatte El Khadraoui samen: "We willen een goede en evenwichtige oplossing vinden tussen de markt en een openbare dienst."

Er waren ook korte presentaties van **Colin Hall** (CER, Gemeenschap van Europese Spoorwegen), **Martin Schiefelbusch** (NEXUS, Berlijn) en **Ingrid Lieten** (Vlaamse Vervoermaatschappij De Lijn). **Colin Hall** definieerde kwaliteit bij de Europese spoorwegen als "zeggen dat we iets gaan doen en het dan doen" en zette uiteen hoe de spoorwegen hun prestaties in de gaten houden. **Martin Schiefelbusch** zei dat het politieke klimaat nu pro-OV was maar dat "de kennis en de behoeften van de reizigers prioriteit geven" van vitaal belang is voor vervoerders en vervoersplanologen. **Ingrid Lieten** zette de maatregelen in Vlaanderen uiteen om het openbaar vervoer aantrekkelijker te maken. Dat varieert van de verkoop van (goedkopere) tickets in supermarkten tot de ontwikkeling van een routeplanner voor al het openbaar vervoer.

**Jean-Arnold Vinois**, hoofd Spoor & Interoperabiliteit bij de Europese Commissie, drong er bij de spoorsector op aan het marktaandeel te vergroten door efficiënt en betaalbaar te zijn, door de reizigers centraal te stellen in plaats van de processen en door ook verder dan de nationale grenzen te kijken. Harmonisering van sein- en veiligheidssystemen en een grotere standaardisering van rollend materieel zouden bijvoorbeeld de kosten verlagen. Het Europese Spoorwegagentschap doet belangrijk werk op het gebied van de interoperabiliteit.

**Rufus Barnes** (London TravelWatch en Raad van Bestuur EPF) vatte de verwezenlijkingen van EPF samen sinds de oprichting in 2002 en benadrukte dat er meer structurele financiering nodig is om tot volle ontwikkeling te kunnen komen.

**Hans-Joachim Sistenich** van de Akense vervoersautoriteit AVV beschreef de verbeteringen van het openbaar vervoer in de Euregio Maas-Rijn sinds 1997. Er zijn doorgaande kaartjes en een Euregio-dagkaart geïntroduceerd en nieuwe grensoverschrijdende buslijnen geopend. De nieuwe Duitse treinen tussen Heerlen en Aken worden bestuurd door Nederlandse machinisten. Voor de toekomst denkt men o.a. aan een meertalige informatielijn en elektronische tickets. Verder staan doorgaande treinen van Eindhoven en Luik via Aken naar vliegveld Keulen/Bonn in de plannen.

Een compleet verslag van de conferentie is te vinden op de EPF-website <http://www.epf-eu.be/>

Trevor Garrod

## Ελληνική περίληψη

### ΤΙ ΜΠΟΡΕΙ Η ΕΥΡΩΠΗ ΝΑ ΚΑΝΕΙ ΓΙΑ ΤΟΥΣ ΕΠΙΒΑΤΕΣ;

Η **Ευρωπαϊκή Ομοσπονδία Επιβατών (EPF)** είχε τη μεγαλύτερη Ετήσια Γενική Συνέλευση και Συνέδριο μέχρι σήμερα όταν περισσότεροι από 70 συμμετέχοντες από 11 χώρες συγκεντρώθηκαν στο Maastricht της Ολλανδίας το Σάββατο 18 Μαρτίου. Η εναρκτήρια ομιλία ήταν από τον **Michael van der Vlis**, πρόεδρο της ένωσης των Ολλανδών χρηστών μέσων μαζικής μεταφοράς ROVER. Ο **Jean-Paul Jacquot** (FNAUT, Γαλλία) περιέγραψε το ρόλο της EPF στην βοήθεια που έδωσε σε πανευρωπαϊκές μελέτες, τονίζοντας πως πολλές από τις οργανώσεις μέλη της Ομοσπονδίας έχουν πάνω από 35 χρόνια εμπειρία εργασίας για τους χρήστες τραίνων και λεωφορείων.

Ο Ευρωβουλευτής κ.**Saïd El Khadraoui** (Βέλγιο) έκανε μια κατατοπιστική ομιλία για το ρόλο του Ευρωκοινοβουλίου, τονίζοντας την ευρεία συμφωνία στους στόχους ανάμεσα στους συναδέλφους του στην Επιτροπή Μεταφορών και Τουρισμού. Εξήγησε το συσχετισμό ανάμεσα στο Ευρωκοινοβούλιο, την Ευρωπαϊκή Επιτροπή και το Συμβούλιο των Υπουργών Μεταφορών στη συζήτηση και τις αποφάσεις σε θέματα πολιτικής μεταφορών, ενώ περιέγραψε πως οι κανονισμοί για τα δικαιώματα των επιβατών στις αερογραμμές από το 1997 και μετά ακολουθούνται από παρόμοιες προτάσεις για τους επιβάτες των τραίνων. Το Τρίτο Σιδηροδρομικό Πακέτο, που θα περιλαμβάνει τα δικαιώματα των επιβατών, πρόκειται να περάσει το δεύτερο γύρο συζήτησης στο Ευρωκοινοβούλιο τον Ιούνιο. Παρόμοια εργασία γίνεται επάνω στη προετοιμασία παρόμοιων κανονισμών δικαιωμάτων για επιβάτες λεωφορείων, πούλμαν και πλοίων. Κατά τη συζήτηση, ο κ. El Khadraoui συνόψισε "θέλουμε να βρούμε μια καλή και ισορροπημένη λύση ανάμεσα στην αγορά και την εξυπηρέτηση του κοινού".

Σύντομες παρουσιάσεις έγιναν από τους **Colin Hall** (Community of European Railways), **Martin Schiefelbusch** (NEXUS, Βερολίνο) και **Ingrid Lieten** (De Lijn, η Φλαμανδική αρμόδια υπηρεσία για δημόσιες συγκοινωνίες). Ο κ.**Hall** προσδιόρισε τη ποιότητα στους Ευρωπαϊκούς σιδηροδρόμους ως "λέγοντας ότι πάμε να κάνουμε κάτι και να το κάνουμε" κι εξήγησε πως οι σιδηρόδρομοι παρακολουθούν την απόδοσή τους. Ο κ.**Schiefelbusch** είπε ότι το πολιτικό κλίμα ήταν τώρα υπέρ των δημόσιων συγκοινωνιών, αλλά ότι "η γνώση και η κατάταξη σε σειρά προτεραιότητας των αναγκών των χρηστών" ήταν ζωτική για τους διαχειριστές και τους σχεδιαστές στις συγκοινωνίες. Η κ.**Lieten** περιέγραψε τα μέτρα που λήφθηκαν στη Φλάνδρα για να κάνουν τις δημόσιες συγκοινωνίες πιο ελκυστικές, ξεκινώντας από τη πώληση εισιτηρίων (σε μειωμένες τιμές) σε σουπερμάρκετ μέχρι τη δημιουργία ενός συστήματος σχεδίασης ρομολογίων που περιλάμβανε λεωφορεία και τρέινα.

Ο κ. **Jean-Arnold Vinois**, επικεφαλής στους τομείς Rail & Interoperability της Ευρωπαϊκής Επιτροπής, παρακίνησε το σιδηροδρομικό τομέα να αυξήσει το μερίδιο της αγοράς με το να είναι αποτελεσματικός και προσιτός, να εστιάζουν στους επιβάτες παρά στις διαδικασίες, και να έχουν διεθνείς παρά εθνικές προοπτικές. Για παράδειγμα, εναρμονίζοντας τα συστήματα σηματοδότησης κι ασφαλείας σε συνδυασμό με περισσότερη τυποποίηση του τροχαίου υλικού θα μείωνε το κόστος. Η Ευρωπαϊκή Σιδηροδρομική Αντιπροσωπεία (European Rail Agency) έχει αναλάβει σημαντική δουλειά στον τομέα της διαλειτουργικότητας (interoperability).

Ο **Rufus Barnes** (London TravelWatch + Διαχειριστικό Συμβούλιο της EPF) περιέγραψε τα επιτεύγματα της EPF από τη δημιουργία της το 2002, και τόνισε ότι, για να φτάσει τη πλήρη δυνατότητά της, χρειάζεται περισσότερη και σταθερή χρηματοδότηση.

Ο κ.**Hans-Joachim Sistenich** από την Αρχή Δημόσιων Συγκοινωνιών του Άαχεν κατέθεσε μια καταγραφή της διαδικασίας της βελτίωσης των δημόσιων συγκοινωνιών στη περιοχή των ποταμών Μάας και Ρήνος από το 1997. Κοινά εισιτήρια κι ένα οικογενειακό ημερήσιο εισιτήριο δημιουργήθηκαν, καθώς και διασυννοριακές διαδρομές λεωφορείων. Μια νέα σιδηροδρομική υπηρεσία ανάμεσα σε Heerlen κι Άαχεν έχει ξεκινήσει, με Γερμανικά τρέινα που οδηγούνται από Ολλανδούς μηχανοδηγούς. Μελλοντικά σχέδια περιλαμβάνουν ένα πολύγλωσσο τηλεφωνικό κέντρο εξυπηρέτησης χρηστών και εισιτήρια που θα εκδίδονται ηλεκτρονικά, μαζί με διαμπερή τρέινα από το Αϊντχόβεν και τη Λιέγη προς το αεροδρόμιο Κολωνίας και Βόννης..

Τα πλήρη πρακτικά του συνεδρίου είναι διαθέσιμα στον ιστότοπο της EPF, <http://www.epf-eu.be/>