

European Passengers' Federation

7th Annual General Meeting and Conference

SBB Training Centre, Berne, 14th March 2009

Integrated Transport for Passengers

#0. Glossary and Abbreviations

AG = Company (as PLC in England)

BLS = Bern - Lötschberg - Simplon railway

CEO = Chief Executive Officer

CHF = Swiss Francs

CIS = Customer Information System

DB = German railways

EC = Euro-City train

GA = General Abonnement - All-Switzerland ticket

LAN = Local Area Network (electronic communications)

PBS = PostBus Switzerland Ltd

PF = Passenger Focus (UK statutory passengers' watchdog)

PRM = People of Reduced Mobility

ProBahn = Swiss Rail Users and also German and Austrian Rail Users associations

SBB = Swiss Federal Railways

TEN = Trans-Europe Network(s)

TGV = French high-speed train

UIC = International union of railway companies

UITP = International association of public transport

#1. Opening

#1.1. Trevor Garrod, Chairman of EPF, welcomed everyone present to this the 7th international annual meeting of EPF.

#1.2. Franziska Teuscher, National Councillor and President of VCS, also welcomed everyone to Berne.

- a. She said VCS has 115,000 members divided into regional sections to determine transport policy for Switzerland, promote public transport, encourage goods traffic to transfer to rail, improve road safety, and take care of environmental concerns. VCS together with ProBahn form the Swiss delegation to EPF. She is also a Green Party representative.
- b. Since 1995 the European motorway network had increased from 47,500km to 62,000km but the rail network had reduced from 218,000km to 195,000km. She wanted to promote transport that is not a burden to the environment. Travelling by train also allows you to do other things *en route* and allows you to go right into city centres.

- c. On 21 March there would be a VCS initiative to get sufficient money for public transport in Switzerland to permit investment in the rail network over three years without any fare increases. This would be by taxes on fuel, but it would need to get over 100,000 signatures over 18 months. Swiss fuel tax is currently designated for new motorways, but she wants to get that changed so that 50% of it goes into rail.
- d. Extra capacity is needed both on urban routes and for Alpine freight. Swiss people are champions of rail use globally, being only second behind Japan. The intensity of traffic will grow over the next few years. She expects 20% to 30% increase in passengers and 45% to 95% increase in goods. There was a decision in 1992 to transfer freight from road to rail, but that goal has been missed or postponed.
- e. To make the railway attractive compared with road and air needs a pleasant travelling environment. You also need to be able to take bikes with you, but you should also be able to enjoy walking to the train.

#2. Morning Session 1

#2.1. Andreas Meyer, CEO SBB AG

"State of Affairs and Challenges for the Swiss Federal Railways"

- a. He was pleased that there were people working for the passengers. Whilst technical requirements are important, everything is for the customers willing to pay a fair fare to travel. In Switzerland the railway is deeply rooted in the population and in politics. The country invests a lot in its railways. In contrast to other countries, it is accepted that the state and cantons pay for railways, and even the stock exchange can't change that.
- b. SBB is subdivided into infrastructure, stations, real estate, passenger trains, and freight trains. All areas had improved last year. Demand continues to increase. SBB is the 4th biggest employer in Switzerland.
- c. Last year in conjunction with the European football championships, there were 4,700 special trains and 2m additional people, with a modal split of 80% in favour of public transport.
- d. The *General Abonnement* (GA or Abo) ticket allows you to take the train everywhere without reservation, numbers rising by 33%. There are also 2.2m half-price cards (i.e. where you buy the card then get 50% discount of fares for a year) up 16% from 2004 to 2008. It can be used on 250 different public transport companies. For example you can mix and match Postbus, Rhaetian Railways, SBB and BLS for one single ticket.
- e. Network usage is 90 train-km per km of track per day. The network is very dense. Well over 90% is electrified, with 70% coming from water power. SBB is used 40% more than neighbouring countries, and is attempting to improve infrastructure.
- f. SBB is now working on a customer punctuality measure to count people delayed rather than trains, but it is not known how fast implementation will be, whether months or years.
- g. SBB has mystery shoppers as well as customer satisfaction surveys. Customers will be invited here later in the year. The pricing system is also discussed. Seats, safety, punctuality are all wanted, and information in the case of any problems. More seats are needed, so there is a major tender for new double-deck long-distance trains.
- h. The nation supports investment: *"Bahn 2000"* from 1987 to 1992 and then *"NEAT"* for Alpine base tunnels from 1992 to 1998, and now high speed connections from 2005 to 2010. A final decision was expected the next week by parliament, with the consensus of all political parties.

- i. To make Swiss traffic attractive, there is also a simple *Taktfahrplan* timetable of hourly or half-hourly train services with enough time for regional connections. He accepts that this is more difficult for foreigners, but it is simple for the Swiss.
- j. With growing demand, an increase of 50% is expected by 2030, but it might be much more, or might be achieved much earlier. Already there is now over 100% increase in some places, such as along Lake Geneva and Zürich suburban services.
- k. A major challenge is to look to the future with increased peak periods demand. There is discussion about long-term funding, whether by public authorities or customers. It was decided this year not to increase prices due to the economic situation. SBB is even looking at some reduction in some periods of the day, at less busy times. The press said this was to punish commuters, which isn't true. The challenge is to have a highly attractive system.
- l. There is potential also in cross-border traffic. Two years ago the TGV came to Basel from Paris, raising traffic by 60%. There are now quicker journey times to Paris and Milan.

#2.2. Martin Butikofer, SBB Passenger Services

"International Transport in the heart of Europe - Chances and Risks for the SBB"

- a. SBB has centralised staff from dozens of different office buildings, who have now been here in Berne for 12 months as a think tank for all passenger operations, i.e. long-distance, medium, and inter-regional, with altogether 700 people in open-plan offices.
- b. There is customer feedback not only about problems but also positive feedback. It is important to ensure good cooperation with bus transport. There are 860,000 daily customers, with 35,000 reactions by email or letter, by day, which are taken very seriously. The CEO signs personally the responses to customer complaints. SBB can only improve step by step thanks to the complaints.
- c. Border crossings are important. To accommodate more of Italian commuters in Ticino, special rolling stock was obtained. Around Geneva is a region where 1m people cross borders, and there is much cross-border commuting around Basle. Switzerland is now in the European Schengen agreement [for borders without passports and customs]. But Switzerland has 15kV electrification, whereas France has 25kV and 50kV, and Germany has a different cable system. For example the relatively short journey from Mulhouse in France to Olten in Switzerland uses four different systems.
- d. There are also changes regarding inter-regional travel. There was less mobility challenge in the old days. SBB is now a modern dynamic friendly company. For example, if a passenger can't at first find his ticket, the inspector is told to say he will come back in 3 minutes.
- e. It is also important for high quality to be perceived. InterCity needs clear standards, for example a Business Zone with plugs in first class, including quiet zones. Everyone is offered the chance to enjoy a good small meal in all types of train including double-deck ones.
- f. Family zones are offered for the youngest passengers, also with space for prams. There are bigger stickers on carriages, for example in quiet zones. If you don't know there will be refreshments on the train, you will buy a sandwich on the station, so you need to know you can jump on every half-hour assured there will be food and drink on board.
- g. The rolling stock defines the perception of the train, which is difficult for the infrastructure people. When trains are on average 15 years old, they are refurbished or renovated for another 20 years. This can re-use 80% of spare parts, which is ecologically important.
- h. As first class fares are at least 60% higher than second for the same journey, it is important to add value, such as ensure a seat and improve seat quality.

- i. New information systems can inform people on the train of connecting buses. One new innovation is “Navigo”, whose software can be downloaded to your mobile phone, and which will inform you of all possible delays. You can also click the button anywhere for info on how to get home as quickly as possible. “Navigo” uses the same cell phone as can be used to listen to music. Another innovation is to use cell phones for ticketing.
- j. SBB sees itself as more than a train company: most people don’t live in a train station, so bicycle parking is offered, known as “combined mobility solutions”, and also car-park spaces. There are 27,000 SBB staff working every day to ensure a good experience for customers.

#2.3. Alain Barbey, CEO Cisalpino AG

Transalpine Passenger Transport between Switzerland and Italy

- a. He admitted there had been problems in the past few weeks, but corrective measures had now been taken. The project for the future is to improve satisfaction for customers.
- b. Cisalpino was founded in 1993 with 50% shares owned by SBB and 50% by Trenitalia. There are six directors but only 40 staff as much work is outsourced. It has a “triple Q” certificate from the Swiss Tourist Authority. There are 12m passengers per annum and there is 165m euros cross-revenue. It is a stock corporation under Swiss law. There is good sales and marketing, with good trains, and technical reporting to both the Swiss and Italian authorities.
- c. Cisalpino is the only other European train company [besides SBB] completely integrated into the Swiss frequency plan. Maintenance, catering, cleaning are all done by a mother company, but Cisalpino is responsible for finance. Its main task is cross-border services between Italy and Switzerland, city-centre to city-centre, safely and quickly. It also offers innovative services.
- d. There has been much negative press coverage 2008-9 about delayed services. Some trains were unable to operate. In Italy the high-speed and increased service to Milan needed extra infrastructure, with Cisalpino having to keep trains in Milan longer than it wished. Some services therefore had to be temporarily curtailed at the border and passengers transferred to domestic services.
- e. Cisalpino had to adapt to deal with the technical issues, working with its supplier Alstom. Trains were tested both sides of the border. It was desired to keep the trains in operation for another 10 to 15 years, so systems were re-assessed leading to a revised maintenance contract.
- f. Cisalpino uses “ETR 470” and “ETR 610” [tilting] trains and conventional EC trains. SBB helped out with conventional trains as an interim measure.
- g. Products and Services: the ETR 610 especially is an “entertaining” train with a video library and on-board info such as wireless LAN, and touch-screen for a cell-phone, even also in second class. You can travel in comfort, and because of the long distances you can have fresh dishes cooked on board, whether in conventional or tilting trains. There is a minibar in 2nd class, whilst there is an at-seat meal in 1st class.
- h. Cisalpino is an entire series of services, almost all being SBB services, with “Club Cisalpino” like a frequent-flyer program. The operational centre is Milan. The three main access points [in Switzerland] are the Simplon route and the Gotthard route and the City of Basel which serves both the routes. From Milan there are three axes into Italy, viz. south, south-east, and east.
- i. There is a new generation of tilting technology, inter-operable in three countries, on different electric systems, with good immunisation and safety, and second-generation CIS, also going into Germany. Speed is up to 250km/h, with high comfort for passengers, and low noise. There are 430 seats (108 in 1st class, 304 in 2nd class, and 18 restaurant). Length is 187.4m; width is 2.84m.

#3. Morning Session 2

#3.1. Markus Thut, Association of Public Transport (VöV) and Director of ch-direct

“General Subscription GA, an example for Europe?”

- a. The GA (“General Abonnement”) Travelcard is valid almost everywhere, including on postbus, ship, and tram, and there is even a reduction on cable-car fares. It has existed since 1891 then 3,200km, at the time of the first private railways in Switzerland. But its usage is now much increased, and it should be an example for all Europe.
- b. In today’s money the price in 1936 was 6,913 CHF whereas it is now 3,100 CHF. There were 40,000 cards in the 1980s but there are now 379,000 cards. Cable-cars are generally included with a 50% tariff reduction. Local urban public transport has in recent times also been included.
- c. There is also cross-border usage of the GA around Geneva, Basel, Liechtenstein and some to Italy, with also a 25% rebate in Germany and Austria and on the TGV. The card’s success is due to its simplicity with a simple timetable of high frequency trains in Switzerland until late at night.
- d. There is also a version for half-price-travel. There were 700,000 of them when priced 360CHF, but now there are 2.175m at a 100CHF price, reduced in response to climate change.
- e. Cooperation with politicians achieved a lot. There is a tariff structure, even for dogs. A second person in a house gets a rebate, and the two don’t have to be married. There are special rates for seniors and juniors and handicapped people. Family cards can be used by an individual, for example children commuting [to school]. You can also have a monthly subscription.
- f. There are three main pillars for it to function. Firstly there is the “Direkter Verkehr” (DV) “Tarifverbund Schweiz” organisation for direct traffic. Secondly there is SBB Marketing and Production as the main carrier. Thirdly there are all the transport undertakings that get some money from it. It works by consensus, and every operator has a vote.
- g. DV is responsible for operational activities, responsible for what is decided by a “Kommission Personenverkehr” (KoP) of 9 people comprising SBB, Postauto, and seven other experts including shipping companies, local road operators, rail and tourism. There is sharing of costs and income. Marketing and distribution is organised by SBB, who also do the clearing of financial flows.
- h. SBB has to make proposals for any changes, but then there has to be negotiation with the other parties before any changes can be carried out. Money has to be accounted for.
- i. There is a mechanism to share income via a representative study amongst owners of cards who say what they do over 7 days, also according to different seasons of the year. Results of the study are evaluated and compared with the normal tariff, which is done annually, albeit working on a rolling 4-year cycle as it would be too much work to do everything in 1 year.
- j. Transport companies rely on a VöV key. SBB is the biggest company, which is easy; smaller companies are more difficult; but all benefit and accept the distribution of money, remaining mindful of data protection. There is also use of Facebook to find what customers do and don’t like, to see what they say.
- k. The system could be used for the rest of Europe subject to three conditions: (1) it needs a product that is acceptable and simple, well harmonised. (2) it needs an organisation including all the companies involved, with a common will to offer, but no one is obliged to join, although the card would be of no benefit if a big company was missing. (3) There needs to be good information to customers, with the ability to just get on. Now it is up to everyone else in Europe! Trevor Garrod, as EPF Chairman, said we would now take the ideas back to our own countries, of which 13 were represented today.

#3.2. Albert Lambert, EPF International Long-Distance Trains working group

- a. He complained about waiting 40min to change trains in Basel because of a barrier with policemen, so he couldn't make a 1-minute connection. His working group had also looked at short-distance journeys before and after the main long-distance train journey. Sometimes if there is no bus info board, then it can be difficult to find the bus stop. It was suggested there be an EU regulation for bus stops and coloured press-buttons.
- b. Arrangements for and information on transportation of luggage are different in different countries. You do need luggage insurance from the train station to cover loss of luggage, perhaps to buy new clothing. Train builders have asked how big are suitcases, but it is hard to find an average size.
- c. Ticket sales vary by country. You can sometimes print [cheaper] tickets at home over the internet, but this implies a tax on buying at the station. In Bavaria there is a discount at the ticket machine, so the booth is just for difficulties. Every transport company has different rules and regulations. There is lots of red tape. It would be nice to have common ticketing systems between different countries. It will make passengers happier at no cost to the railway companies.

NOTE: formal minutes of the EPF International Long-Distance Trains working group at Düsseldorf on 7.3.09 will be available separately.

#3.3. Question and Answer Session

- a. There is a system for informing teachers who can then tell their pupils. The highlight is the "schooltrain" which can be brought near schools to tell students how to use trains and timetables. The half-fare card is promoted strongly so that it may still be used when people are old enough to drive.
- b. Some buses have signs giving amounts of seating and standing places available, but more info is to be sought [about when a new vehicle is required].
- c. A market analysis was done at the Nexus Institute in Berlin, but work is still in progress. We know what form the customer panels should have but are still working out the details. Nexus has now produced a book "Public Transport and its Users" ISBN 978-0-7546-7447-4

#4. Afternoon Session 1

#4.1. Christopher Irwin, Vice-Chair of EPF

Issues needing to be addressed in the coming few years

- a. He is European adviser to Passenger Focus who had produced a report comparing ticket prices (copies available). He is also on TravelWatch in the UK and represents rail passengers on the European Rail Agency.
- b. EPF was established 7 years ago encouraged by the European Commission at that time, following the European Transport Policy for 2010, a white paper putting users at the heart of policy. The Commission recognised the need for passenger rights with removal of borders, passengers being the weaker party, so needing an effective voice. We now have 28 members in 16 states in Europe.
- c. This is consumer empowerment. Provisions for domestic travel are needed as well as international, because both use the same services. This is part of the Third Railway Package. Work is in hand to extend rights to buses and other modes.

- d. Conditions should be easy to understand and use, and consistent, especially for bus and coach passengers who are the most vulnerable. We welcome the Commission's proposal to apply to all types of services. Under subsidiarity principles, local operators can do better but mustn't do worse than European rules. But buses and maritime concerns are trying to resist.
- e. European Rail Agency is considering ensuring the passenger voice is heard in telematics like ticket systems. Europe-wide access to info is the key to enable consumers to exercise their power driving different things, for example mobile.transportdirect.info on a mobile phone.
- f. A motorist can drive everywhere with just a credit card, but no card works throughout Europe's public transport. We want a European smartcard and timetable database equivalent to "satnav" for cars.
- g. We tried but failed to make the price of travel represent the "true" [environmental] cost of transport. European leaders fudged the issues under automotive pressures. Christopher is sceptical of making cars and planes more environmentally friendly as a long-term solution. As travel costs decrease, people travel more, so the percentage of income spent on travel remains constant, as also the journey time, but we just go further faster. So we need behavioural change. We have changed the attitude to smoking in public places, so why not change transport attitudes?
- h. The Commission wants a railfreight priority network at the expense of passenger services, which threatens passenger growth. We say yes to freight but must avoid interference with passenger services; investment must precede any change of rules. Transport needs much investment. We need to develop scenarios for a 20 to 40 year horizon good attractive affordable public transport, to which EPF will continue to contribute.

#4.2. Tunde Olantunji of Passenger Focus in the UK

Train Fares

- a. PF does lots of research to show that issues raised are based on evidence, such as a survey given to 25,000 passengers. Anecdotal info suggested fares were deemed too high, so to obtain the facts there was a study looking at fares in Britain compared with other countries. It is government policy to shift the cost burden to the passenger, hence the general rule for fare rises is RPI + 1%, with RPI + 3% in Tunde's area, where RPI is the rate of inflation, making a total of 8% [based on the RPI mid-2008], which isn't good in the current economic climate.
- b. The consultancy Steer Davies Gleave was employed to look at eight other countries. It found that in Great Britain fares were much higher, taking account of distance and purchasing power, especially for commuting for a short distance. For long-distance travel, the British advance purchase system is cheaper than elsewhere in Europe, but Great Britain is worst for buying on the day of travel. There is also more use of discount cards abroad. But there are lots of nuances. Comments on the research will be welcomed. *[Copies of the report were made available.]*

#4.3. Question and Answer Session

- a. One delegate suggested passenger rights were an unrealistic demand which if delivered would cause operators to have to raise prices so hitting the vulnerable and anyway tram, metro, and light rail are still left out. It was said there is room for improvement, but we do need compensation for loss or death or injury. The biggest problem is with people with disabilities, accounting for 1% to 2% of operating costs, so Chris Irwin thinks we do need to set targets for disabled access, for example all vehicles to be compliant by a certain date, so that requirements can be built in to new fleet purchases. There will always be good operators and always others who need bringing into line.

- b. Regarding passenger rights between air, rail, bus, and coach, the strategy is to work through national organisations to get the best application in each country. We doubt operators' pleas about costs. Running a good service is good for both the passenger and the operating company

#4.4. René Böhlen and Gregor Ochsenbein, PostBus Switzerland

Introduction

- a. PostBus has 100 years of history. It is a decentralised company, split into 9 regions. Total passengers are 116m, of which 5m are generated. PostBus is a name covering different operators subject to common standards. Growth is through expansion of activities abroad, examples in Bourg-en-Bresse, Narbonne and Liechtenstein being quoted. From 2008 there are 8 regions of France and also some operations in Germany and Italy. France remains an important growth area.

“Customer Information and Combined Mobility with PostBus Switzerland Ltd”

- b. The challenge of “Combined Mobility” means assess and develop trends in society, and then anticipate and integrate them. PBS may in future be inter-modal, e.g. on road and rail according to needs, and structured in a modular way, e.g. children/families, bikes, panorama, standing places.
- c. The traditional focus is on the train station: Park + Rail, Bike + Rail, Car-share, and Communication. However, it is now possible to switch from one to another, e.g. if parking places are limited. This is the integrated approach as compared with the traditional approach.
- d. The general definition of Combined Mobility is getting from A to B by several modes, but little is known about the reasons for choosing different modes. PBS wants new solutions. Usually public transport is star-shaped, but demand is growing on non-traditional lines, so a research programme was started with UniTech in Lausanne.
- e. Existing research was validated by an in-depth survey to decide the factors involved in mode selection, then new offers were developed. Customer information about Combined Mobility must be easy, quick, and user-friendly, across the entire mobility chain. Passengers need some sort of “travelling companion” who can be trusted, to tell such things as where you can leave luggage or eat *en route*, and it should be accessible both at home and on the move.

#4.5. Question and Answer Session

- a. The Swiss Post Group used its own money, so no government funds are being used, apart from Lausanne being a publicly funded university.
- b. PBS tried to analyse parts of Germany close to the Swiss border, and is working with advisers there, but there are no concrete plans.
- c. City transport is preferred to regional transport.
- d. PBS are not often asked to provide cross-borders services but are willing to do so.

#5. Afternoon Session 2

#5.1. Hanspeter Oprecht, Federal Office of Transport (FOT)

“Public Transport for all: The legal framework conditions for accessible public transport in Switzerland”

- a. There are federal laws and ordinances on public transport meeting its obligations. The law says disabled people shall not suffer any adverse consequences. All obstacles are to be removed. Access is required to all public buildings, offices, cinemas, shops, restaurants, etc, and also to education, jobs, etc, and also to public transport.
- b. Everyone should be able to use public transport spontaneously, possibly with staff to provide assistance. But what does “disabled” mean legally? - e.g. hearing/seeing impairment to fully deaf/blind, and also a walking impairment whether or not confined to a wheelchair. There are the mentally impaired who are very difficult to deal with because you can’t measure the degree of impairment. It doesn’t matter whether the impairment is due to birth, accident, disease or age.
- c. All companies with a government permit must adhere to the law. Also all new buildings and vehicles since January 2004 need to be constructed without obstacles, and all existing ones must be adapted by 2023. For example ramps or tracks may have to be raised.
- d. Passenger information and ticket systems need not be modified for the disabled until 2013. But disabled people already have the right to sue, for example if the train station in your village doesn’t meet your requirements.
- e. New vehicles and buildings must be financed by normality, but there are special funds at federal and canton levels of 600m CHF for minor modifications, but complete rebuilds. These might allow partial raising of track or adding a ramp or modifying just one door in a train. The cost is shared between federal and canton authorities. Extra costs associated with new construction are only 5% to 6%, but costs are much higher for modifying existing things.
- f. There are detailed stipulations in the ordinances for railways, trams, cable cars, and ships. By 2013, door openers are required that give a confirming signal for those with either hearing or seeing impairments. It is difficult to look for a door-opening from outside, so you risk being dragged along with the train, so there must be signals for hearing and sight disabled people.
- g. There is also a maximum angle for a ramp to avoid a wheelchair falling off if the ramp is too steep. You also need ground level entry to track and train for wheelchairs or people with walking aids, which we will see more and more in future, as they are a lot safer than crutches and usually have brakes and they also give the possibility of sitting down and they have a basket for shopping.
- h. It is also necessary to tackle visual safety lines on railway tracks to show which zone is safe. This is to enable the blind to “see” by feeling with a stick.
- i. There was already a rule about toilets. Many rules are based on existing ordinances, soon to be replaced. Society is growing older. Requirements today different from those of past times and may differ again in 25 years time. We often have to deal with several impairments together.
- j. See website www.bav.admin.ch/mobile and email mobile@bav.admin.ch

#5.2. Question and Answer Session

- a. Asked what happens if public services are getting funding but still don't make facilities accessible (in Ireland), it was said there is the right of suing because of the two instruments. There have been intense discussions looking at contradictory interests. Improvements for disabled access are also of benefit to the general public, e.g. those with luggage or small children.
- b. A similar law in France was mentioned, but the reality is often far away, for example a station with a 50cm gap to the train, which is not acceptable for the disabled. The track was on a curve and had to be made higher. International trains have problems with differences in different countries.
- c. You should try and coordinate different things to deal with the different interests and needs of people in wheelchairs against those with hearing impairments.

#5.3. European Commission Conference on "The Future of Transport", Brussels, March 9th-10th. Marc Broeckaert and Trevor Garrod had participated and reported on it.

- a. Marc said that the White Book of Transport 2001 will end in 2010, so we need a new one, hence EPF was invited, with about 400 others including lots of NGOs, to a stakeholders' conference.
- b. Mr. Antonio Tajani has been Transport Commissioner since July 2007, said transport guarantees freedom and we must have the courage to plan it.
- c. TEN (Trans-Europe Networks) have made progress, but with some delays and with some resistance. The European Commission cannot plan alone behind closed doors, hence this conference was held. Most invitees were industry-based or academics, but users (such as EPF) and PRM groups were also there.
- d. One-third of the European population are PRM (People of Reduced Mobility). The problem is that we are 97% dependent on oil, so we need a different European energy policy less dependent on oil. Several other speakers at that conference saw the need to look beyond European borders, to Africa and to the east, to build better links.
- e. Mr. Tajani also referred to shipping routes, and saying we must be open to other modes like airships, monorails, and pipelines. Lastly interoperability is the key to easy cross-border travel.
- f. Karel van Miert, a former transport commissioner, said transport used to be a junior portfolio but has now moved up. The Treaty of Rome had common transport as an aim, but only considered since the 1980s.
- g. Marc mentioned the workshops that had taken place at the stakeholders' conference, covering four items: urban, freight, passengers, and sustainability. He had attended passengers, where the CEO of Air France said air travel was vulnerable because it loses lots of money, yet it is the most appropriate for travel throughout Europe. He didn't believe in high-speed trains because they needed too much in the way of platforms of change. We in EPF must be mindful of such views.
- h. TENs were said to be very important. We need to develop railways, such as a freight route from Berlin to Palermo. So we thought we could also have passenger trains on such lines, but the Commission was only thinking of freight trains for so long a route. Again EPF must be mindful of such thoughts. Rail at local, urban, and regional levels is credible for the Commission, who are also interested in high-speed from one big metropolis to another, such as London to Paris, and who are also interested in mass transport in cities, but not traditional long-distance passenger trains.

- i. Public service is an important notion, but the Commission is not concerned at the European level, leaving that for national states. But EPF thinks we pay taxes at the European level and so do expect services. So EPF needs a strong policy sustained by its members. We need a notion of public service at the European level, and we must remain a credible partner with the Commission.
- j. There was also a question of how we meet the required 2020 reduction in greenhouse gases. DG Tren had a veiled comment about age, because more money is going on healthcare, so there is less on transport, so we must spend what we've got [for transport] until 2013.
- k. There would also be a lot of money for a trans-Europe high-speed line used only for 16h a day: what about running freight to fill the gaps? Trevor Garrod said we could avoid controversial airport expansion with 24h rail.

#5.4. Conclusion

- a. Edwin Dutler explained the arrangements for the next day's trip to Brig, using the new and old Lötschberg tunnels, one in each direction.
- b. Thanks were given to all the organisers, especially SBB for hosting today's event. It had been Fritz Stakie's (SBB Transport/Traffic) idea to have the meeting here at SBB offices rather than in an hotel, and to have simultaneous translation, the first time this had been done at an EPF Annual Conference. Other thanks were given to the technical assistants who prepared the speeches (saved on memory sticks) and charts, to the catering staff, and to the translators, as well as everyone else who helped in the background.
- c. The SBB Annual Report was made available in various languages.
- d. Trevor Garrod made some concluding remarks. It was a long way since two lunches in a restaurant in Lille nine years ago, which first created an informal association, with statutes 2 years later in 2002. He gave special thanks to Edwin and Juerg who have good contacts in Switzerland and ensured everything ran smoothly today, and he also thanked our paid Flemish administrative support. Trevor also thanked Josef, Rian and Christopher, as well as the other officers, who had all worked well together as a team.
- e. But there was so much more to do. With European Parliament elections this year, there are bound to be new faces with whom to establish dialogue on passengers' needs and opinions. He thanked Marc and Jasper for making the new work programme that had been circulated.
- f. There would be a conference report aimed at a wider audience, but this could also be sent by post to those who ask for it by email. It will be in English, due to lack of translation resources, and will also be posted on the website, which will also contain links. One idea is for EPF to point people to each other to share ideas.
- g. Looking ahead, the next EPF AGM/Conference will be on 20 March 2010 in Malmo, Sweden, and it is hoped that in 2011 it will be in Barcelona.

THE END of the Conference

NOTE: this was followed by the AGM, which is reported separately.

APPENDIX: Travelling to Berne

Members who attended the EPF Conference were asked to complete a questionnaire about their journey. Replies were received from members in Switzerland, France, Germany, Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain and the UK.

All travelled to Berne by rail, but 8% went by air and 4% used coach and ferry for the main part of their journey. The reason for the former was lack of a daily overnight train between Barcelona and Zurich and for the latter the high cost of a Eurostar ticket. One member was unable to leave work early enough to catch a train and so had to fly.

30% were making this journey for the first time and 45% did it once a year or less.

When members were asked to give two reasons for choosing rail, the percentage responses were:

Speed	14%
Convenience	32%
Concern for environment	18%
Comfort	10%
Safety	6%
Price	6%

Some other reasons were given, such as "I like travelling by train" or "I can do office work while travelling." 12% only did the final part of their journey by rail because of the problems mentioned above.

60% of members used the internet to find out about train times and fares, although only 16% booked tickets that way. Some commented that booking on line was too complicated, because of changes of train and operator and there were some difficulties in navigating homepages or printing tickets.

16% found out via a travel agency; 12% used Thomas Cooks' European Timetable, 16% enquired at a station and 8% used a call centre. (The total comes to more than 100% as a few members used two means of enquiry.) 60% of members bought their ticket at a station; 16% used a travel agency, 8% used a call centre and only 16% booked on line. The percentage who booked at a station includes a few who flew to Switzerland and then used domestic trains.

Just over half of the members found it "easy" to book tickets, but there remained many who had problems. For example, one had to make two separate visits to the station and it took over 3 hours to find out and book. Another said it took a long time to find the cheapest option. There were further complaints about "unclear pricing". Booking a sleeper on an international night train was also described as difficult. Some members called for more stations to have international ticketing facilities.

70% of members went to the station by foot; or walked to a bus or tram stop first. 15% used a local or regional train to get to the departure station for the international train; 25% started their journey by bus or tram and 12% by underground. 4% started by car and 4% by bicycle.

On arrival in Berne, 40% reached their final destination by bus; 10% by tram and the remainder on foot.

No one experienced any serious delays in their train journey. 15% reported minor delays which were then recovered before they reached Berne.

Finally, members were asked what could have made their journey easier. Some 30% said they were fully satisfied with the journey; while the suggestions for improvements (to an open-ended question) included easier facilities on trains and at stations for luggage; more capacity on the tram in Berne; less complex ticketing and ideally one ticket for the entire journey; a much cheaper overall fare and advance knowledge of the total fare; more flexible routing of international tickets; better train catering; availability of timetables on the train; and seats that could be turned round; and clearer platform signs.

The comments of members in this survey will help EPF in its work for better public transport over the coming year.

Trevor Garrod