



**Draft consultation paper of the
Directorate General for Energy and Transport
on International Rail Passenger Rights and Obligations**

Alexandru Dodu
Project coordinator

Our association finds rail passenger transport a very important and essential transportation mean for millions of consumers. Because of this we believe it is important to have a very detailed regulatory system that would regulate all aspects involved.

We find the draft paper very clearly structured into the three chapters: information services during the preparatory stage of the journey, passenger rights during the journey and complaint handling after the journey.

- information services during the preparatory stage of the journey

Our association's wish is that consumers should be fully informed before buying the ticket on the timetable, prices and the programmed changes in the timetable in an adequate information system. Also, at the point of sales, there should be a clear information on facilities available.

Passengers' rights and obligations should be present in any railway station and point of sale.

Railway undertakings should also be obliged to present at the point of sale the last analysis of complaints.

- passenger rights during the journey

The paper should emphasise the need for security and safety in trains against thefts, violence, and accidents.

There should be an adequate temperature in the cars, cleanliness, hygienic conditions in lavatories, access for persons with reduced mobility, sleeping cars tickets availability for international trains, even if travelling only during the day, extra luggage and bikes services in designated areas for long journey trains (possible for an extra tariff).

Long journey trains should not leave overcrowded and with passengers having no seat reservation.

In case of an unexpected disruption of services (delay), the passenger should be fully informed with no delay and by all possible means of the cause of the disruption, what to do (as to leave the car or not, in case of an emergency), and a true approximation of the delay (at the first possible moment). If the delay will mean more than one hour, passengers should be informed on other means available to continue the journey. If there is no possibility to continue the journey the same day, passengers should receive accommodation.

Passengers understand that delays can not always be avoided, but expect a professional information services.

Some compensation should be involved when the delay is due to reasons that relate to the railway undertaking.

- complaint handling after the journey

The railway undertaking should have its own complaint point in each railway station and should respond to complaints in maximum one week.

In case the passenger is unsatisfied with the result of the dispute, he should be able to complain further to a relevant national authority or to a European “call” centre. Four weeks is a reasonable time for this relevant authority to answer.

Points that sell tickets in behalf of the railway undertaking should be able to deal with complaints that refer to information services available before the journey. Complaints that refer to the journey services themselves should be forwarded to the railway undertaking.

Representative consumer bodies should take a role in receiving complaints. Consumers associations should play a role of a mediator, friendly settling disputes.

If the passenger desires to file a lawsuit against the company, he should be able to do so in either of the countries stated in question 41.

Consultations

Associations representing disabled people should be also involved in consultations.

Issues as cleanliness and health, safety, information systems etc should not be regulated by the railway undertaking, but by regulatory institutions with the consulting of a consultative committee composed of stakeholders (also possible through standardisation).

Passenger obligations

Passengers should not destroy the train or throw litter. Passengers should have the obligation to keep the lavatories clean after usage.