



# NEWS RELEASE

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## **Europeans unite to create European Passengers' Watchdog**

A new consumer watchdog has been set up to champion the interests of European rail passengers and other public transport users. Representatives of thirteen different national organisations met in Belgium at the end of last year to agree the formation of the European Passengers' Federation (EPF).

One of the first tasks of the Federation is to respond to the European Commission's consultation paper on *International Rail Passengers' Rights and Obligations* and meetings have already taken place with senior officials from the Commission's Energy and Transport Directorate. The EPF expects to play a key role in protecting the interests of passengers using international services and in championing policies in the European Union that promote sustainable transport.

The Federation's Administrative Council, which is chaired by Trevor Garrod of Railfuture, intends to attract membership from among not-for-profit organisations in every member-state of the European Union. The EPF currently comprises organisations from nine European countries – Austria, Belgium, Britain, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands and Switzerland.

The Federation has set up work groups covering topics such as long-distance international travel and the enhancement of local cross-border services and the EPF will function as a platform where volunteers and staff members of the different users'

organisations can share their knowledge and experiences. The first Annual General Meeting for member organisations will be held later this month in Namur, Belgium on 22 March, 2003.

Trevor Garrod, the Federation's Chairman, said: "We have worked hard to get this unique federation on track. It gives passengers a voice in European policy making. We will use this to champion passengers' interests as the European Union develops plans for improved consumer protection of public transport users."

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### **Notes to Editors**

1. The European Passengers' Federation (Fédération Européenne des Voyageurs or Europaischer Fahrgastverband or Europese Reizigersfederatie) is an international not-for-profit organisation which is being registered under Belgian law in Gent, Belgium.
2. Membership is open to all Europe-based associations (not-for-profit or based on citizen's initiatives) serving the interests of public transport users and to those that aspire to quality public transport systems that reflect sustainable development policies.
3. English language media inquiries should be directed to: Caroline Jones, communications manager of the Rail Passengers Council, at Whittles House, 14, Pentonville Road, London N1 9HF, England.  
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