

Making the railway system
work better for society.

To the attention of:
Mr. Peter Cornelius
Vorsitzender des Landesverbandes
Berlin-Brandenburg des
Fahrgastverbandes PRO BAHN

Sent via email, 12th March 2020

Subject: Your request from 01.12.2019 via the ERA website. Position paper on New Green Deal

Dear Mr. Cornelius,

You asked the Agency to provide comments on the position paper from 'Back-on-track' on the New Green Deal. First of all I sincerely apologise for our late answer. I would like to thank you for the numerous topics you address in your position paper and your efforts to improve European cross border rail services for passengers.

The position paper contains numerous measures to improve European cross border train services, especially for night trains. Today ERA is not in a position to comment on all your points, which cover political, commercial and technical issues to improve European passenger traffic. In particular the political and commercial questions are not in the scope of the Agency's mandate. That's why I prefer to focus here on topics to which ERA significantly contributes: 'Simplifying fares and ticketing in the Single European Railway Area' and 'New rolling stock'.

Simplifying fares and ticketing in the Single European Railway Area:

According to Article 23 of the Agency regulation (EU) 2016/796 the Agency is the telematics system authority for the Technical Specifications for Interoperability (TSI) "Telematics applications for passengers" (TAP TSI). In this technical specifications, the details for the distribution of railway tickets are laid down. The TSI is supporting the implementation of the European Rail Passenger Rights Regulation (EU) 1371/2007 covering the passenger information concerning the available services of a railway undertaking before and during the journey as well as the booking interfaces and ticketing standards. The application of this TSI is mandatory in the European Union.

The Agency has recently published a recommendation for the European Commission with a revised version of the TSI "telematics application for passengers". New addressed topics are the exchange of tariff data for domestic railway services, allowing the information provision of all existing European Railway tariffs to the passengers and harmonised e-tickets. Based on the working principles of the Agency, representatives of the European passenger organisations were involved in the preparation of this revision and provided valuable input for the revised regulation. The recommendation "Recommendation ERA-REC-122 of the European Union Agency for Railways on the technical specification for Interoperability relating to the subsystem 'telematics applications for passenger services' of the Union rail system" is available https://www.era.europa.eu/library/era-recommendations_en#tab-recommendations-2020.

For instance the European rail timetable data, used in various applications and websites are provided according to these standards, accommodated in the TAP TSI. The interfaces to book a ticket and to print them, including e-tickets based on barcodes, are standardised as well. The booking system is implemented by the railway undertakings as the system HERMES, connecting most of the European railway undertakings.

This allows from technical point of view to sell most of the rail tickets within EU and even in countries connected to the HERMES system.

In your position paper you mentioned the lack of common standards regarding data formats and booking systems and as well the lack of interoperable 'digital tickets'. This statement cannot be confirmed by the Agency: Those standards for data, booking interfaces and digital tickets are well defined in the TSI for the telematics applications for passengers and already in productive use in the EU.

- *Data format specifications for timetable data, international tariffs and the specifications of ticket formats are covered by this TSI. This allows the set-up of European Journey planners as operated by many railway undertakings. Furthermore, the regulation (EU) 2017/1926 obliges all member states to provide in the next years data for the public transport on their national access points. Data for timetables for all scheduled transport modes, not only for railway services, have to be made available since 01/12/2019.*
- *For the interoperability of the 'digital tickets' in EU the TAP TSI provides as well the standards, covering these tickets. It is already possible to sell, print and control digital tickets for all railway undertakings in the EU. Those interoperable tickets are widely available for cross-border trains, e.g. Belgium, Germany, Czech Republic, Poland, Austria, Switzerland and as well for some domestic tickets in these member states. Some undertakings may use for their own trains specific ticket specifications (e.g. specific barcodes), where they are solely responsible for ticketing and ticket check.*

However the railway undertakings have the freedom to decide on their commercial strategy, which products are made available via which distribution channel and for which products of other railway undertakings are provided for sale. For instance some cheap tariffs may not be made available for sale to other railway undertakings. This may restrict the access to the full range of products for the passenger, purchasing their tickets via sales channels, not operated by the railway undertaking offering them. Even though we are aware of this fact, this topic is not in the scope of the Agency's mandate.

For topics addressing commercial and legal problems of the accessibility of European railway services for the passengers we recommend addressing these questions directly to the European Commission or the European Parliament to be taken into account in the revision of the rail passenger rights regulation (EU) 1371/2007.

New rolling stock:

Since 16 June 2019 the Agency is responsible for issuing authorisations for the placing on the market of railway vehicles and vehicle types, used on the trans-European railway network (Regulation (EU) 2016/796; initially for eight Member States, as of 16 June 2020 for all Member States). For passenger trainsets, used for cross-border operations, the Agency is in charge of checking if the technical specifications of these vehicles are conform with the technical specifications of interoperability as well as the national rules applicable in the area of use foreseen for the vehicle. If an applicant, e.g. the manufacturer of a passenger coach, requests to have an interoperable vehicle for the European 1435 mm network, the Agency has the task to check the application and to authorise the vehicle if the application is correct. But it has to be considered that the applicant chooses the area of use (the member states he defines in his application). This means that even if the Agency authorises a vehicle for the European market, the vehicle may still be restricted in the operational area chosen by the applicant, not covering the RIC.

For further questions concerning the new rolling stock, not in the scope of the Agency's mandate, we would advise you to contact the European Commission.

Yours sincerely,


Josef DOPPELBAUER
Executive Director