

Position Paper

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European disability card

Railway companies are continuously keen to improve the travel experience of people with reduced mobility or passengers with disabilities. That is why CER Members are ready to recognize a potential EU wide European Disability Card, provided existing Public Service compensations apply for national citizens and agreed by the competent authorities no matter if they travel on domestic or international routes. CER has also invited in the past Member States to accept the principle of extending their national compensation schemes to the holders of disability cards issued by another Member State under equivalent conditions. In addition, CER invites the European institutions to develop a European disability card acceptable in all member states as soon as possible. The European disability card makes it easier for passengers with disabilities to claim their rights under the European Passenger Rights Regulation 2021/782 and would support the implementation of the CER Ticketing Roadmap. Informing the passengers concerned of their rights is also an important element.

One of the concerns deals with the way in which the card is issued. A European card should not call into question the existence of different national cards. In the same way, it will be necessary to clarify compatibility: for example, some national cards define different levels of disability; the European card will have to be compatible. For this purpose, a uniform and at the same time forgery-proof means of identification (compatible with UIC Standard IRS 90918.9 to enable an exchange via ETCD) is needed throughout Europe, which is made available to passengers with disabilities. Finally, a single-format verification mechanism for checking purchase rights must be guaranteed. For example, through the implementation of an interoperable number to verify that the passenger has an active status.

CER members are delivering transport services for persons with disabilities and are active in the field of assistive technology such as developing accessible apps, ticket-distribution and websites. European railway undertakings and infrastructure managers work internally and cooperate internationally continuously to improve the travel experience of people with reduced mobility or passengers with disabilities. Since 2010 representatives from most of the main railway companies in Europe meet regularly to exchange best practices and to discuss accessibility issues and PRM policies within the UIC PASSAGE group of experts. As a result, a web-based tool (PRM Assistance Booking Tool) was created 10 years ago and has been used successfully since then to facilitate booking of assistance services for PRM for international journeys through Europe when autonomous mobility is not possible

CER members are engaged in an active and continuous dialogue with passengers with disabilities and their national and European federations. For instance, railways generally develop TSI/PRM4-compliant equipment (e.g. ticketing machines, vocalisation of screens announcing departures in stations, orientation tools for visually impaired people, etc.) in close cooperation with organisations representing passengers with disabilities. We believe it is important that railways are involved early in the development of new policy actions related to transport and accessibility.

Rail services are by far more accessible than they were in the past and many passengers with disabilities are able to take the trains without assistance. Billions of euros are being invested to continue removing barriers in stations and on trains over the next decade like purchasing step-free access coaches and adopting platforms, in order to facilitate the travel experience of passengers with disabilities and passengers with reduced mobility – and this, despite the scarce resources available. The legislative framework implemented in recent years introduced major improvements in order to make rail services more accessible than they were in the past.

About CER

The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) brings together railway undertakings, their national associations as well as infrastructure managers and vehicle leasing companies. The membership is made up of long-established bodies, new entrants and both private and public enterprises, representing 73% of the rail network length, 76% of the rail freight business and about 92% of rail passenger operations in EU, EFTA and EU accession countries. CER represents the interests of its members towards EU policy makers and transport stakeholders, advocating rail as the backbone of a competitive and sustainable transport system in Europe. For more information, visit www.cer.be or follow us on Twitter [@CER_railways](https://twitter.com/CER_railways) or [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/cer).

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