

European railways keep up the work on improved rail passenger rights

The EU Regulation on Rail Passenger Rights significantly impacts decisive factors driving passengers' choice of transport mode. Newly voted provisions in the Regulation will constitute a challenge to the sector when looking at the entire EU rail network. However, the Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) would like to express support to the agreement, as the text introduces a higher level of customer protection while enabling rail to remain operational and, ultimately, to achieve the goals of the European Green Deal in reducing transport emissions.

The revision of the Rail Passenger Rights Regulation sets up an improved framework that governs the relationship between rail passengers, the railway undertakings, infrastructure managers and ticket vendors, with higher standards compared to other transport modes. Key provisions include:

- Measures regarding the flow of real-time traffic and travel information among the various actors involved in a rail journey, to the benefit of the passengers.
- A clarification of the liability in case of through-tickets or tickets bundled at the retailers' own initiative.
- Stronger provisions on re-routing passengers in case of travel disruptions and options for re-routing with alternative public transport.
- The reduction of the pre-notification period for passengers with reduced mobility requesting assistance.
- Increased requirements for bicycle spaces on trains.
- The development of an EU-wide claim form.
- The re-introduction of the "force majeure" clause, in line with other transport modes but limited to, for example, extreme weather conditions, major natural disasters or major public health risks like COVID-19.

Since its entry into force in 2009, the sector has taken the implementation of the Regulation very seriously by investing significant resources to effectively meet the requirements. In view of the entry into force of the revised text, CER members are ready to keep up the good work by putting in place the measures to implement the new legal framework in the best possible way.

CER Executive Director Alberto Mazzola said: *"The protection of rail customers is first and foremost the sector's own long-standing commitment. In a context of increasing intermodal competition, rail customers are better protected than in other modes of transport. I would like to thank the co-legislators and the European Commission for their hard work over the past four years. It's now time for the sector to implement the new EU requirements, in close cooperation with the competent authorities and the passengers' associations, with the objective of having all the trains and services meeting the highest possible standards, so as to further improve the attractiveness and competitiveness of the sector."*

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FUTURE RAIL

 EUROPEAN YEAR OF RAIL 2021

Contact person

Laura Henry
CER Communications Manager
E: laura.henry@cer.be
M: +32 491 16 21 73

About CER

The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) brings together around 70 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 policymakers 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 [@CER_railways](https://twitter.com/CER_railways) on Twitter.