

Charter on Rail Passenger Services

(Adopted on 22 October 2002)

1. Purpose of the Charter

This charter is a voluntary commitment by European railway undertakings to raise the quality standards of services provided to their customers.

It covers all rail services. Services operated in agreement with public authorities may be subject to specific conditions.

2. Information on passenger services and travel tickets

Customers will be provided with adequate information at all relevant points of sale and through the appropriate information channels regarding:

- the most convenient timetables,
- seat availability (where applicable),
- lowest fare in relation to customer requirements,
- the terms and conditions applicable.

For international services, if available at points of sale, this information will be provided for journeys between the main European railway stations as well as for the international fares that are available.

3. Ticket issuing

Tickets will be available through various distribution channels (international and long distance counters, internet, telephone or accredited travel agents).

4. Communication languages

The languages used for communication with customers on board trains and/or at stations shall be the language(s) in use on the route where the customer is travelling. For international services railway undertakings will endeavour to communicate with customers in at least one other commonly used language.

5. Intermodal information

Customers will be provided with information on access to and from stations and on connections with other modes.

6. Information about services such as luggage arrangements, bicycles, etc.

Passengers may travel with up to three pieces of luggage provided that this luggage will not endanger other passengers and that it will fit in the dedicated luggage space. Larger pieces of luggage (skis, surfboards, bicycles, etc) are subject to special conditions.

Information about dedicated services for carriage of bicycles and/or for registered luggage to passengers' destinations, in particular international destinations, is available at the point of sale or through the appropriate information channels.

7. Complaints and claims

Complaints and claims will be handled as early as possible and normally within four weeks. The reply will indicate the reasons for acceptance or rejection of the complaint.

Each railway undertaking will create and indicate the contact point to which complaints and claims can be addressed in writing and/or by other means. Complaints or claims may be submitted in the languages used by the different railway undertakings involved in a customer's journey and/or in at least one other commonly used language.

In the event that a claim is rejected, customers have a right of appeal to consumer organisations or to an official conciliation body or mediator.

8. Refunds

Refundable tickets will be reimbursed in a fast and simple procedure at the points of sale of the railway undertaking which issued the ticket and/or at any other designated locations.

Requests for refund of tickets purchased from travel agents must be submitted to the travel agent concerned.

Customers will be provided with clear information about refund conditions and procedures at the points of sale.

9. Punctuality

The public will be informed in stations, on posters or by other means about the goals and particular performance concerning the level of punctuality for the different passenger services.

In the event of delays, cancellations or diversions, railway undertakings will endeavour to provide customers on board trains and in stations with information about the reason for the above, the duration of delays and the consequences regarding the customer's rail journey.

10. Delays

In the event of a delay, customers concerned will be provided with:

- refreshments if possible in the event that a disruption in a service exceeds three hours;
 - overnight accommodation when it is impossible to continue a journey on the same day and where alternative means of transport cannot be provided at reasonable cost.
- In the event that the responsibility lies solely with the railway companies:
- Appropriate compensation for train delays exceeding a certain time limit as indicated in the conditions governing a ticket.

Compensation which may take the form of financial compensation or pre-paid vouchers for future journeys.

- In the event of a disruption in services, passengers will be offered reimbursement or accommodation in another train (upgraded tickets included) or alternative travel arrangements at a reasonable cost, depending on circumstances and free of charge.

11. Passengers with reduced mobility

Common practice regarding assistance to rail passengers with reduced mobility will be applied, as reflected in standards agreed by the European railways (a summary of the contents of these standards is appended). This will cover information on assistance in stations, assistance and facilities to board/disembark from trains and on-board information.

Information on services available for persons with reduced mobility on the main international routes is available at points of sale and on the appropriate information channels.

12. Passenger wayfinding in stations

User-friendly wayfinding systems to facilitate passengers' access to trains and station facilities will be based on best practice in Europe as reflected in standards agreed by the European railways (a summary of the contents of these standards is appended).

Convenient transfer facilities between railways and other modes will be provided

13. Conditions of contract

Passengers may request all contractual conditions at the point of sale and on the appropriate information channels like e.g. internet.

14. Railway safety

The railway operations will meet high safety standards maintaining rail's role as the safest transport mode. This includes the continuous high attention for safety of infrastructure and rolling stock, for operational procedures and for safety qualifications of the railway staff. The safety record will be communicated on an at least annual basis.

15. Security

The level of security in trains and in stations will continue to be developed in cooperation with the relevant authorities. Campaigns to raise public awareness will be launched in order to promote active cooperation by customers on ensuring security levels.

16. Cleanliness

It will be ensured that all areas under our responsibility are kept clean and secure in cooperation with other railway and intermodal stakeholders to ensure comparable levels of cleanliness in station infrastructures and transfer facilities.

17. Customer obligations

- Passengers must conduct themselves in such a manner as to avoid causing disturbance to other passengers and/or jeopardising the safety of railway operations.
- Passengers must follow the instructions of the train personnel and respect the rules applied in designated areas in trains and at stations, e.g. non-smoking areas, silent areas, etc.
- Passengers must be in possession of a valid rail ticket and where applicable a valid reservation as well as the requisite travel documents.
- Passengers must comply with regulations concerning luggage.

18. Permanent consultation of customers

Railway undertakings or their representative bodies will take part in consultation forums, notably with organisations representing customers.

Railway undertakings will take part in discussions on the implementation of this Charter, monitoring of service levels, changes in service levels including line closures and the quality of rail services in general and will seek advice on their design and organisation.

19. Monitoring

All railway undertakings will monitor customer satisfaction and the level of punctuality on a regular basis. In addition, railway undertakings will collect customer complaints on national and international passenger transport by rail, classifying them in the appropriate categories and publish an overview.

Railway undertakings will take continuous action to improve their services in order to meet customer needs.

