

## Third INTER-Regio-Rail email newsletter

*Date: 16 December 2011*

(Mailing list: Passenger Rail Authorities in Europe)

Dear Sir/Madam,

The year 2011 is drawing to a close much faster than we expected due to a busy recent few weeks. It has been a successful year for Europe's passenger rail authorities in terms of their European political work, and we would like to take this newsletter as an occasion to look back on our joint work.

Since we will probably not meet, telephone or email between now and then, my team and I would like to wish you a **Happy Christmas** and a **good start to 2012** in advance. We have a lot of ideas for our future cooperation and we hope to see you again next year!

Yours faithfully,  
Susanne Henckel

General Manager, German Association of Passenger Rail Authorities

### *Work programme of the European Commission*

On 15 November the Commission published its work programme for 2012, "Delivering European renewal". It lists two legislative initiatives to be delivered in the course of 2012 that are of particular relevance to us, since they may lay the bases for the future framework conditions governing the organisation and financing of regional rail transport:

- Further market opening in the rail sector implies adaptation of the existing acquis on **rail market access** (first railway package and its subsequent amendments) and appropriate changes to the Regulation on public service contracts in the rail sector (EC 1370/2007), including the mandatory award of public service contracts under competitive tendering. This initiative will also ensure non-discriminatory access to rail infrastructure, including rail-related services, in particular through **structural separation between infrastructure management and service provision** (unbundling). It will be accompanied by a Communication on the Review of rail market organisation and assess non-discriminatory access to rail infrastructure.
- A second initiative will **enhance the role of the European Railway Agency** (ERA) in the field of rail safety, in particular its supervision of national safety measures taken by national safety authorities and their progressive harmonisation. It will also aim at achieving a single vehicle type authorisation and a single railway undertaking safety certification. The Safety and Interoperability Directives (2004/49 and 2008/57) may be adjusted as necessary.

### *EU fourth railway package*

The Commission is conducting a **stakeholder consultation** in advance of the fourth railway package which will include the aforementioned issues. An external expert is tasked with collecting stakeholders' points of view.

We suggest that we - the European passenger rail authorities - take this opportunity to give our points of view during the upcoming consultations. In order to facilitate the process, we have volunteered to provide our contact partners at the Commission with a list of all passenger rail authorities' postal and email addresses.

We encourage you to reply to the related survey and thereby actively influence the future framework conditions of your work. In order to help you we will provide example answers that you may use to elaborate your own answer.

### *Evaluation of EU Regulation 1370/2007*

The European Commission is currently evaluating the implementation of EU Regulation 1370/2007 and is developing guidelines on its implementation. On 14 November, we attended a workshop organized by the Directorate-General for Mobility and Transport and discussed the further process with the head of the legal matters department, Eddy Liegeois. The Commission is currently working on a guidance document that should help passenger rail authorities to apply Regulation 1370. Furthermore, as part of the fourth railway package the Commission will develop a proposal on the revision of this regulation, due to be published in late 2012 or early 2013.

We are welcome to report our experience to the Commission.

### *Survey on the future role of the European Railway Agency*

As part of a study on the revision of the institutional framework governing the EU railway system, the Commission launched a survey on the future role of the European Railway Agency (ERA) on 26 October. The aim of the study is to improve the European railway system, and the German Association of Passenger Rail Authorities has been asked to reply to the survey. We will keep you informed about the outcome of the study and try to coordinate a joint position between all European passenger rail authorities for the next step of this study. This will consist of a stakeholders' workshop which should take place before May 2012.

The questions deal with stakeholders' experience with their National Safety Authorities, their Notified Bodies and the national Regulatory Bodies. The survey furthermore asks stakeholders about their opinion on a number of policy options that could help improve the functioning of the EU railway sector.

Our general position is:

- \* We are aware of the limits of our German National Safety Authority and Regulatory Body (although these institutions are said to be very efficient) and therefore see some opportunities if some of their competences were to be transferred to the European Railway Agency.
- \* At the same time there is a risk that a single European regulatory body and a European safety authority are so distant from national railway markets that they are unable to make passenger rail authorities' work easier.
- \* The European passenger rail authorities' point of view needs to be included in this process in order to find the best solution for our future work.

### *Summary of European passenger rail authorities' political activities in 2011*

The lobbying undertaken by the INTER-Regio-Rail partners has made great progress over the last year. What are our achievements?

- Some of the INTER-Regio-Rail pilot projects have produced interesting intermediate results, on which we will continue to inform you in this newsletter and on the project website [www.interregiorail.eu](http://www.interregiorail.eu).
- The INTER-Regio-Rail project has awarded a contract to Eurotran, a consulting company specialised in European lobbying on railway issues, to assist us communicating our joint positions in Brussels.
- We keep in touch with you via this newsletter. Many of you we have even met personally - either during our study trip in May or during meetings in your offices.
- We have started to identify our key joint positions (your reactions to these are still very welcome if you have not sent us your feedback so far).
- We have identified the most important issues for passenger rail authorities that the European Commission and European Parliament are going to deal with in the coming months.
- We have sent our first two European passenger rail authority position papers to the members of the European Parliament Transport Committee - one on the Recast of the first European railway package, and the other on the Commission's White Paper on Transport.

That is quite some success in our eyes! We are happy for anyone of you to jump aboard and join our positions, as together our voice will be heard more easily in Brussels. For any questions or suggestions please do not hesitate to join us!

### *Best practice for improved regional rail transport: the WintersportExpress*

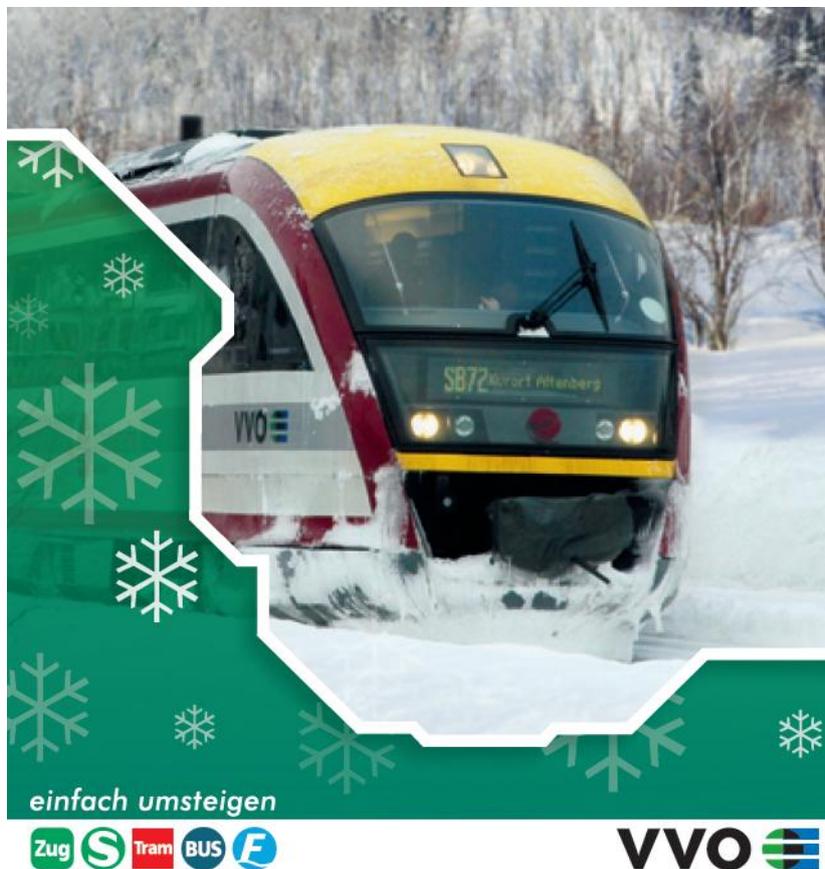
Here is a nice, seasonal, example of how to make (regional) rail transport more attractive: snow trains in the Upper Elbe region of Saxony (DE):

The Ore Mountains (Erzgebirge) in the border region between Germany and the Czech Republic are a traditional winter sports destination for many Saxons. To increase the usage of trains at weekends and minimise conflict between winter sports enthusiasts and regular passengers, the VVO has defined the most important winter sport destinations and is offering special "snow trains".

A 40-page brochure (<http://tiny.cc/1xn3m>, only in German) describes travellers' options for combining public transport and winter sports, listing all the connections by bus and train. A map of cross country and downhill ski slopes is also included. In addition, the brochure suggests interesting tours, special events and destinations.

To provide winter sports enthusiasts with better connections and to handle the sometimes very large numbers of passengers travelling between Sachsen's capital Dresden and Altenberg, the major winter sports destination, the Upper Elbe Transport Association (Verkehrsverbund Oberelbe, VVO) has developed a special train running on Saturdays and Sundays. While the usual connections between Dresden and Altenberg require passengers to change trains, the WintersportExpress offers a direct connection that takes around 1 hour for the entire trip. Because the Ore Mountains are only a secondary mountain range with heights mostly below 1000 metres, snow conditions vary. Therefore, special trains are only laid on when special events draw large crowds (for example the European bobsleigh and skeleton championships) and if conditions for winter sports are good. Whether or not the special trains will run is announced two days in advance in the local newspapers and over the internet. The VVO who is ordering the trains considers them a great success. Especially the flexibility of the service – the lacking of which is usually a drawback of rail transport – is crucial as passenger numbers in outdoor sports vary greatly.

Please contact us if you are interested in obtaining more information on the project!





Happy Christmas and a good start to 2012 (Winter decoration at DG MOVE)!

Do you have further questions about our work, or do you no longer wish to receive this newsletter?  
Please contact [INTER-Regio-Rail@bag-spnv.de](mailto:INTER-Regio-Rail@bag-spnv.de)