

PRESS RELEASE

More trains and better quality for regional rail transport European passenger rail authorities lay the ground for closer cooperation

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During yesterday's INTER-Regio-Rail conference 90 representatives of regional passenger rail authorities from 10 Member States of the European Union discussed ways to improve the railway services in their home countries, and the four European associations of passenger rail and transport authorities signed a Memorandum of Understanding for their future cooperation.

The conference resulted in three findings:

Firstly, passenger rail authorities are facing big challenges in all countries of Europe. The timetables and the rolling stock have to be adapted to the ever changing needs of the population, to conflicting demands of different groups of passengers and the demographic change. In times of the economic crises the lack of public money is an additional issue that the authorities have to cope with.

Secondly, the results from eight INTER-Regio-Rail pilot projects are positive, and they are transferable to other regions of Europe. This was the unanimous reaction of the audience. New bicycle trains in the Regione Emilia Romagna Region, new services for elderly passengers of rail transport in the Stuttgart region, modernised railway infrastructure in the Liberec region, modernised stations in the Kujawsko-Pomorskie region and other pilot implementations can be copied by authorities in other countries in order to attract more passengers.

Thirdly, the four associations of the regional passenger rail authorities in France, Italy, the Czech Republic and Germany are going to investigate concrete terms of their future cooperation in order to enlarge their exchange of their experiences and to react to the changing framework of European legislation. Further authorities are invited to join the process. See the Memorandum of Understanding in the annex.

Alfredo Peri, President of federMobilità, the Italian Association of Administrations Responsible for Mobility Management: "European Cooperation is essential for our success. We have to improve our network both on the political level and in our daily work, to ensure high-quality regional rail transport in a framework of regulated competition."

Roland Ries, President of GART, the French Association of Transport Authorities: "The European Passenger Rail Authorities have to develop joint positions on the European level to be heard in the political debates of the future."

Aleš Stejskal, President of CAOVD, the Czech Association of Public Transport Authorities: "Cooperation between passenger rail authorities within the framework of INTER-Regio-Rail shows how much is at stake at the European level, and what gains can be made."

Dr. Thomas Geyer, President of BAG-SPNV, the German Association of Passenger Rail Authorities: "We need to maintain our presence at the European level in order to input into the legislative process, and we

need to keep working with our partners in order to support the Europe-wide flow of ideas and experience to improve the railway system."

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Outdated rolling stock, little motivated conductors, slow trains, run-down stations and timetables that did not meet the needs of the population. This was the common picture of railway services on regional lines in most of the countries of Europe 20 years ago. In consequence the number of passengers was decreasing and loss-making lines had to be closed - even in densely populated areas.

196 Passenger rail authorities have emerged since then in the different countries of Europe. Some of them are working on Member State level, others on regional level. Their task is to organise rail services of so-called common economic interest and to finance these by public funds. All over Europe, these amount to annually 21 bn Euros. Most of the authorities not only pass the funds to the incumbent undertakings, but set up detailed service descriptions and award public service contracts to the operator that meets the requirements in the best way.

The results are convincing: More involvement of regional and local politics, more trains, more punctuality and better services and an increase of the number of passengers in most regions of Europe.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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