



## **ALLRAIL member MTR reports Swedish rail incumbent SJ to the Swedish Competition Authority.**

Brussels, 13<sup>th</sup> April 2018.

**ALLRAIL believes that access to ALL rail travel information should become a passenger right.** ALL rail timetables & pricing options should be available at ALL ticket vendors.

Incumbents know that, if they do not show & sell all rail options on their in-house sales channels (with the inherited brand equity), passengers will not easily find out about new competitors on the tracks.

Therefore, it is good to learn that MTR Express has lodged a complaint against Swedish rail incumbent SJ about the anti-competitive behaviour of its in-house online sales platform [www.sj.se](http://www.sj.se).

That sales platform was developed when the Swedish incumbent was still a monopoly. Over many decades, most Swedish rail passengers have grown up only knowing this brand – it is where they go to instinctively in order to search and book rail tickets.

**SJ now takes unfair advantage of this inherited brand equity.** It has already excluded MTR from showing and selling its services on [www.sj.se](http://www.sj.se) for several years. Then, a few months ago, a new start-up operator in Sweden (called Saga Rail) was barred exposure as well.

This means: unlike in some other countries (e.g. Finland & the UK), Swedish rail travellers cannot compare all prices and book all tickets on one site.

New Above Rail competitors can gain exposure and win more travellers from other modes of transport only if there are well-known & impartial online sales platforms.

It is very peculiar - the Swedish government wants to achieve modal shift to Rail and there is strong evidence that competition brings growth to all operators, including incumbents. So why does the same government allow its subsidiary SJ to retain control of a major obstacle that prevents this from happening?

Nick Brooks, Secretary General of ALLRAIL, says: **“In Sweden, the incumbent operator gets preferential exposure in the downstream online sales market, because it is dominant there as well”.**

ALLRAIL’s operators call for a level playing field in online sales. Unless this happens, new competition can easily fold. Only last year in Germany, a start-up rail operator (Locomore) ended services after just six months, identifying its lack of access to the incumbent’s in-house sales channels as the one area where it “ran against closed doors”.<sup>1</sup>

Brooks states further: **“the current EU rail passenger rights recast can provide a solution. It should introduce a robust framework that ensures passengers can search and book ALL rail options at ALL ticket vendors”.**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.allianz-pro-schiene.de/themen/aktuell/interview-derek-ladewig-locomore/>