

PRESS RELEASE

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Worrying behaviour by the European Council regarding the revised EU Rail Passenger Rights Regulation COM(2017)0548

The Association of Passenger Rail New Entrants in Europe, ALLRAIL, notes with great surprise how the European Council's new compromise text on the revised EU rail passenger rights legislation dated 25th April 2019 (doc. 8673/19) **threatens to overturn** many of the new amendments voted for by European Parliament back in November 2018.

For example: there is a major risk that new amendments that would have provided better protection for passengers travelling with combined tickets will be abandoned.

Why would this be a major backwards step for the rail sector? -

Europe's national railway incumbents have had years to provide cross-border through tickets on a voluntary basis, but they still remain scarce. On the contrary: the result is often more costly options or, increasingly, **none at all**. The evidence is clear: only last week, Eurostar & DB ended their voluntary through ticketing, which will lead to *even more* fragmentation¹.

Meanwhile, many independent digital platforms **have embraced digitalisation, combining separate tickets on different rail operators in the most optimal manner**, regardless whether incumbent or new entrant. By means of API technical interfaces with different reservation systems, they combine the best rail options (e.g. advanced tickets) and sell the cheapest & fastest options between any two stations in Europe => **The Passenger Should Come First**.

It must be stressed: such 'combined tickets' **are NOT put together at the digital platforms' discretion!** Instead they are **impartial** & adhere to viable connection times that are approved by rail incumbents themselves and feature in official rail journey planners²(!!)

However, such 'combined tickets' do not yet enjoy passenger rights coverage from beginning until the end of the entire journey. That means: If the first operator is delayed and a viable connection is missed, then passengers "risk having to buy new onward tickets at expensive, fully flexible prices"³. So, most obviously, the missed connection protection is missing.

Last November, the EU parliament voted to give 'combined tickets' the same passenger rights as the (more limited) through tickets, which includes missed connection protection. Logically: if they cover journeys featured in official journey planners, then there should be coverage.

ALLRAIL Secretary General Nick Brooks says: "climate activists such as Greta Thunberg push for modal shift to rail. Innovative digital platforms have delivered this, making EU passenger rail more accessible. **The EU Council should follow the vote of the EU Parliament back in November 2018 and extend rail passenger rights coverage to combined tickets as well**".

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¹ <https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/eurostar-train-rail-brussels-germany-austria-switzerland-through-ticket-a8902431.html>

² Such as the planner MERITS: <https://uic.org/merits-database>. Alternatively the timetable of bahn.de is powered by the planner HAFAS

³ <https://www.independent.co.uk/travel/news-and-advice/european-rail-operators-kinder-delayed-travellers-trains-expert-warning-mark-smith-seat-61-a8240216.html>