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Delivering on passenger rights: Railways and national authorities reinforce their cooperation

Railways and National Enforcement Bodies (NEB) will further reinforce their cooperation to achieve a uniform, pragmatic and customer-friendly approach to implement passenger rights across Europe. This is the main conclusion of the second railways-NEB workshop on Rail Passengers' Rights, organised by the Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) and the International Rail Transport Committee (CIT) on 15 October in Brussels. Participants agreed to renew this experience with a third railways-NEB workshop to be organised in 2014.

More than 90 experts from railway undertakings, national enforcement bodies, European institutions, passenger associations and other transport stakeholders outlined their experience with the Rail Passenger Rights Regulation (EC) No 1371/2007 (Rail PRR), four years after the Regulation entered in force.

Discussions focused on hot topics around the issue of passenger rights and the day-by-day implementation of the Regulation. This included practical examples on the handling of passengers' claims by NEBs and railways, the information to be given to passengers, as well as the assistance and the continuation of the journey provided to passengers in the event of travel disruptions.

The participants agreed that the different views on how to apply and interpret some key elements of the Regulation can converge in a compromise vision which would ultimately ensure a uniform application of the Regulation across the European Union. In this regards, the CER and CIT look forward to continue their exchange of views with the European Commission, in view of the publication of the interpretative guidelines on Regulation (EC) No 1371/2007 (Rail PRR), due in 2014.

The discussions clearly underlined the importance of reinforcing the cooperation between all stakeholders in order to successfully implement the Rail Passenger Rights Regulation, in particular on the issue of information to be provided to passengers. With regard to this, participants welcomed the proposal from CIT and CER to organise a third workshop on Rail Passengers' Rights that will take place in Brussels in December 2014.

CER Executive Director Libor Lochman stated: *"Railways are delivering on passenger rights, as it was confirmed in the Commission's implementation report on rail passenger rights. However, all stakeholders should continue their efforts to ensure that passenger rights across Europe are applied in a harmonised way. I am convinced that an enhanced cooperation between railways, NEBs, EU decision-makers and passengers' associations plays a key role in ensuring a customer-friendly implementation of passenger rights across the EU, with the aim of making train journeys even more attractive to passengers over the next years. The railways will continue to offer such a discussion*



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platform in the coming years”.

CIT Secretary General Cesare Brand said: *“Passengers’ rights are implemented primarily with a domestic focus. This is sometimes problematic for both international passengers and carriers. A transparent and customer-friendly approach to international passengers’ rights therefore requires cooperation between the stakeholders involved within the railway undertakings and institutions. The second workshop today is a good basis to go on with the current work. ”*

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The Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies (CER) brings together more than 80 European railway undertakings and infrastructure companies. CER represents the interests of its members towards the European institutions as well as other policy makers and transport actors. CER’s main focus is promoting the strengthening of rail as essential to the creation of a sustainable transport system which is efficient, effective and environmentally sound. For more information, see www.cer.be

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The International Rail Transport Committee (CIT) is an association of 125 freight and passenger railway undertakings (RU) and also maritime and ferry companies as full members and 80 RU through associated members, from EU and non EU member states. The aim of CIT is the transposition of the law of international carriage by rail and in particular the Convention concerning international carriage by rail (COTIF) and its consistent application. Within this framework: the development of close working relationships between members, the representation of the interest of members and the provision of other services. For more information, see <http://www.cit-rail.org>