CER

UNION INTERNATIONALE DES CHEMINS DE FER
INTERNATIONALER EISENBAHNVERBAND
INTERNATIONAL UNION OF RAILWAYS

Freight Quality Charter-2003

(Adopted on 4 July 2003 in Rome)

This Rail Freight Charter sets out a voluntary commitment by the European Railway Undertakings on the service quality offered to their Freight Customers. This initiative is intended to meet the requirements of the market and support business development.

By subscribing to this Charter, European Railway Undertakings demonstrate commitment to the customer to provide and further develop attractive rail services, respecting contractual quality provisions. The charter covers areas relevant to the stages of freight transport.

The Railways undertake to work out all the necessary international measuring methods to ensure that the commitment contained in this Charter is implemented and respected. To this end they commit to introduce the appropriate arrangements in agreement with customer need.

THE COMMITMENT

It is Freight Customers' obvious right to freely negotiate Quality of Service commitments with Railway Undertakings and to enter into agreement with Railway Undertakings on such commitments.

Contracts between Freight Customers and Railway Undertakings shall include customer service quality provisions in one or more of the following service areas, depending on Customers and Railways respective quality requirements towards each other.

1. Responsibility

Responsibility towards the customer for the entire transport chain will be clearly specified in line with the CIM conditions (which will be considered as the minimal requirement).

2. Safety

Railway undertakings have safety as their highest priority: they aim to move freight in secure conditions, free of damage, and with respect for the environment. Compensation terms and conditions for damage to goods in transit will be defined in the contract. They will respect at least the terms set out in the CIM conditions.

3. Planning

The service planned for the customer – service frequency, departure, arrival times and transport order deadlines – will be clearly defined (within agreed performance margins in line with market conditions) for major traffic flows with quality requirements. Improved international planning processes will be pursued.

4. Punctuality and reliability

Railway Undertakings commit to improve their processes in order to guarantee service reliability and punctuality. Contracts with negotiated quality standards and according to client requirements shall provide for appropriate compensation in the event of unacceptable reliability and punctuality performance.

The compensation structure, levels and thresholds will be individually negotiated in line with business standards and taking into account the respective responsibility of the partners. Processes to develop methods and ensure application will be in place.

5. Information

Railway Undertakings shall provide transport status information, in particular any delays or service changes, to customers as soon as possible. Railway Undertakings will commit to arrangements for defining with the customer the particular reasonable information needs for the traffic flow concerned. Cross border information systems are in process of being worked out.

6. Rolling Stock

When contracted and Railway Undertakings are also rolling stock provider they will provide sufficient, clean freight rolling stock in a timely manner (and according to defined standards). When required by the client contracts may include provisions for any shortfall.

7. Billing

Transparent billing arrangements will be contracted (according to commercial circumstances) between railway undertakings and freight customers.

8. After-sale service

Processes will be in place to ensure the timely resolution of any matters raised by the customer under the terms of the contract.

CUSTOMER SUPPORT

The Railway Undertakings' commitments depend upon customer support on

- *timely customer presentation of wagons and cargo at the handover point,*
- *proper and timely receipt of customer documentation.*

Railway Undertakings will require appropriate contractual provisions in this respect.

Railway Undertakings may also require contractual commitments from customers on

- *the earliest possible notice to railway undertakings of any delays or changes,*
- *the hand-over of cargo in the form and packaging agreed between the parties.*

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