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Rail passengers on track for new rights across the European Union

Rail passengers will from now on enjoy new rights that will protect them and their belongings when they travel by train anywhere within the European Union. EU Regulation (EC) No 1371/2007 on rail passengers' rights¹, which enters into force today, enshrines travellers' basic rights and imposes a number of obligations on rail companies concerning their responsibility towards their customers. Every year, almost 8 billion passengers use the train for their journeys.

Antonio Tajani, Vice-President of the European Commission in charge of transport, commented: "With millions crisscrossing Europe each day, it is for me evident that Europe has to take care that people are able to travel in safety and comfort. These new rights protecting people travelling by rail promote reliable and high-quality rail passenger services. After establishing these rights for passengers travelling by air and rail, our next step will now be to protect those going by water or by bus and coach."

The new rights that are in force from today² will:

- Guarantee disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility non-discriminatory access to trains and assistance
- Strengthen rail passengers' right to compensation when their luggage gets lost or damaged (up to about €1285 per piece of luggage)
- Strengthen rail passengers' right in case of death or injury through an advance payment to meet immediate economic needs. This advance payment amounts to at least €21000 per passenger in the event of death.
- Reinforce rail passengers' right to compensation in case their journey gets delayed or cancelled; the minimum compensation amounts to 25% of the ticket price for delays between one and up to two hours and to 50% of the ticket price for delays of two hours and more.
- Give rail passengers the right to be informed comprehensively before and during their journey, for example about delays
- Make it easier for rail passengers to buy tickets
- Impose the obligation on rail companies and station managers to ensure passengers' personal security in railway stations and on trains

¹ Regulation (EC) No 1371/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2007 on rail passengers' rights and obligations, *OJ L 315, 3.12.2007, p. 14–41*

² A summary of the rail passenger rights under Regulation 1371/2007 is published on the Commission's website (http://ec.europa.eu/transport/passengers/rail/rail_en.htm)

- Oblige rail companies to set up a complaint handling mechanism for the rights and obligations covered by the new regulation
- Oblige Member States to ensure that passengers can lodge a complaint to an independent body, if passengers consider that their rights have not been correctly implemented.
- Extend the existing rights of passengers under the Convention for the International Carriage by Rail (COTIF) which only covers international transport, in principle, to all domestic train services.

To give time to railway undertakings to adapt to the new rules on passenger rights Member States can request not having to implement some of these rights for a period of up to 15 years for services limited to the national territory. As local services (i.e. urban, suburban or regional services) are different in character from long-distance services Member States can request permanent derogations for such services but not for cross-border services within the EU.

Air passengers already enjoy an extensive set of rights as guaranteed by European legislation. The European Commission has also proposed new legislation protecting the rights of people travelling by water or by bus or coach. These laws could be adopted as early as next year.

For more information

http://ec.europa.eu/transport/passengers/rail/rail_en.htm