



JOINT PRESS RELEASE

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Rail Passengers' Rights: current proposals "unacceptable" say EDF and AGE Platform Europe

The Transport Committee will discuss compromise amendments on the rail passengers' rights regulation tomorrow. However, the vote initially planned on 21 June, has been postponed. The European Disability Forum (EDF) and AGE Platform Europe are concerned that the current draft compromise amendments will not deliver equal access to rail transport for passengers with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility.

There are an estimated 80 million passengers with disabilities and 190 million older people in the EU. One of the objectives of the Regulation is to give passengers with disabilities and passengers with reduced mobility the same access to rail travel as other citizens, in line with the EU's obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) [1].

To have equal access to rail transport, passengers with disabilities and passengers with reduced mobility need the right to 'turn up and go', i.e. the right to travel spontaneously, like everybody else. This is why we want the existing requirement to book assistance in advance abolished at all stations. Unfortunately, current compromises would only deliver this at 3% of rail stations. [2] [3]

EDF President Yannis Vardakastanis said ***"We expect the European Parliament to ensure passengers with disabilities have equal access to rail transport across the EU; not just provide equal access at a minority of large stations. These proposals are not acceptable; we want MEPs to go back to the drawing board."***

To deliver fully accessible stations and train will take decades. This is why assistance is required to ensure passengers with disabilities or reduced mobility get equal access to rail transport. Good quality assistance can only be achieved when all staff are given thorough disability-related training. We are disappointed that this is not reflected in current proposals. ***"We cannot accept amendments that water down the European Commission's proposal. Organisations of persons with disabilities have relevant expertise and must be involved in the training process."*** Vardakastanis said.

Anne Sophie Parent, AGE Secretary General said: ***“1 in 3 European citizens is an older person. Forcing people to give up to 12 hours’ notice to get assistance to board a train cannot be justified. It means also that in case of delays, re-routing through another station may not possible as for other passengers. It is unacceptable to maintain such barriers to the freedom of movement of passengers with reduced mobility. Freedom of movement and non-discrimination are fundamental principles of the EU and apply to all”.***

The UNCRPD was adopted 10 years ago and has been ratified by the European Union. It is time for MEPs to uphold the rights of all passengers and ensure provisions in the rail passengers rights regulation are fit-for-purpose.

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Note to the editor

[1] See [Article 9 of the UNCRPD](#) “(...) States Parties shall take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public, both in urban and in rural areas.”

[2] For more information, see [EDF President Yannis Vardakastanis opinion piece](#) and [our position paper on the recast of the rail regulation](#)

[3] Current draft compromise amendment on article 24 (conditions under which assistance is provided) would impose prenotification requirements to passengers with disabilities travelling from stations with up to 10,000 passengers a day. **The overwhelming majority of rail stations in the EU (97%) have less than 10,000 passengers a day.** According to data from the European Commission’s [5th Rail Market Monitoring Report](#) there are 28,269 rail stations in the EU but only 874 have more than 10,000 passengers a day (3%). Most rail stations (78.4%) have less than 1,000 passengers a day.

About the European Disability Forum:



The European Disability Forum is an independent NGO that defends the interests of 80 million Europeans with disabilities. This unique platform brings together representative organisation of persons with disabilities from across Europe. www.edf-feph.org

About AGE Platform Europe:



AGE is a European network of organisations of and for people aged 50+ aiming to voice and promote the interests of the 190 million citizens aged 50+ in the European Union and to raise awareness of the issues that concern them most. www.age-platform.eu

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