

Press release

eu travel tech commends strong first steps of rail action plan

Brussels, 14 December 2021 – eu travel tech, the industry association for travel technology services supports the aspirations of the newly released EU rail action plan. It is highly encouraging to see a strong ambition of the Commission to tackle regulatory approaches on the availability of real-time rail data and the conclusion of fair commercial agreements between railways and independent distributors. The Commission must ensure its commitments move quickly towards implementation in the interests of passengers and the environment.

Evidently, the current state of affairs in rail distribution (with large incumbent railways purposefully hindering independent distribution) is hampering modal shift. Regulatory intervention must create the right market conditions to allow for an effective indirect distribution of passenger rail, as it currently exists in air travel. Such an intervention will enable indirect distributors (booking platforms, travel agents, metasearch, GDSs) to fulfill their role as facilitators of competition and convenient passenger booking/comparison providers. Concretely we call for an obligation for rail operators to share relevant real-time data and enter into distribution agreement based on fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory conditions.

We applaud the Commission's commitment to fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory (FRAND) distribution terms as a key element for the development of the rail market. While the sector has already committed to this principle in March 2021, it is crucial to now have adequate regulatory follow-through. In addition, we strongly support the Commission's ambition on real-time data sharing in rail, an important element to facilitate both independent rail distribution and multimodal journeys. Evidently, a strong promotion of air-rail multimodal journeys will be key for travelers across Europe. While there are a myriad of additional issues to be addressed in passenger rail, it is eu travel tech's belief that increased consumer demand and competition through independent distribution are a prerequisite to make the EU's rail ambitions a reality.

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eu travel tech

Emmanuel Mounier, Secretary-General of eu travel tech said: *“we are glad to observe the Commission’s support for a facilitation of multimodal digital mobility platforms, to make rail the cornerstone of the European Rail Transport Network. Such services will be key to achieving a truly multimodal and sustainable transport system in Europe.*

The time has come for both the industry and European legislators to step up and provide what passengers want: transparent, convenient and competitive booking services for rail travel. Today’s action plan is a step in the right direction, we now call on the Commission to move ahead in its implementation at maximum pace“

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About eu travel tech

eu travel tech represents the interests of travel technology companies. eu travel tech uses its position at the centre of the travel and tourism sector to promote a consumer-driven, innovative and competitive industry that is transparent and sustainable. Our membership spans Global Distribution Systems (GDSs), Online Travel Agencies (OTA), Travel Management Companies in business travel (TMCs) and metasearch sites. For more information on eu travel tech and our policy priorities, please visit www.eutraeltech.eu

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