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Rail passenger protection needs upgrade, say transport MEPs

Members of the European Parliament's transport committee today voted to better protect rail passengers in future.

MEPs want to make it compulsory to sell a so called 'through ticket' when, in a single transaction, a consumer books a journey which has more than one leg. This is good news because railway companies often sell separate tickets for each segment of a journey, allowing them to bypass obligations relating to compensation, rerouting and assistance [1].

The transport committee also removed a worrying clause from the Commission's proposal which would exempt rail operators from paying compensation to consumers when there is severe weather or there are natural disasters. MEPs also voted to increase compensation levels payable to rail passengers when their train is seriously delayed or cancelled.

Monique Goyens, Director General of the European Consumer Organisation (BEUC), said: "Rail passengers often face difficulties when they travel. Delays can have serious consequences on people's lives or holiday plans, so it's important compensation is paid out when it's due. Making through tickets mandatory is one way of making sure that people become better protected than they are currently. Increasing the compensation levels rail passengers can receive when their train is seriously delayed or cancelled is another good development.

"It is very good news that railway operators will not be able to invoke severe weather disturbances to avoid paying compensation. This would have been a real weakening of consumer protection for rail travel."

ENDS

Notes to editors

[1] The current rules concerning compensation, re-routing and assistance are available [here](#).

UPDATE 25.10.2018

We have realised that this clause was in fact NOT removed by the Transport Committee of the EU Parliament during its vote. This is due to a compromise amendment being voted on in a separate vote. This means the Transport Committee voted to allow rail operators the possibility of invoking extraordinary circumstances to avoid paying compensation to rail passengers.