

# Rail ticketing

2026/0115(COD) - 13/05/2026 - Legislative proposal

**PURPOSE:** to simplify EU-wide travel booking by promoting rail single ticketing for multi-operator journeys.

**PROPOSED ACT:** Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council.

**ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT:** the European Parliament decides in accordance with the ordinary legislative procedure and on an equal footing with the Council.

**BACKGROUND:** in 2024, kilometres travelled by passengers on EU railways grew by 5.8%, driven by strong consumer demand and the launch of new services, including by new operators. However, although significant progress has been made on other fundamental elements of the single European railway area (such as common infrastructure development, improved interoperability and better capacity management), rail ticketing remains a significant structural weakness.

Incumbent railway undertakings act as gatekeepers: they own the dominant online ticketing platforms, selectively share data with third-party providers, and exclude competing operators from their channels. This limits price transparency, restricts passenger choice, and undermines the business case for new rail entrants.

An efficient online ticketing system is essential for the functioning of the railway passenger market.

This proposal addresses the above-mentioned issues in the ticketing market. First, it obliges operators and organisers of rail services to share their rail products with online ticketing service providers, when requested. Second, this proposal obliges railway operators with a market share of 50% or above of national railway services to open their online ticketing service to any requesting operator or organiser of railway services.

**CONTENT:** the proposed regulation lays down the obligations of railway service providers and of certain online railway ticketing service providers regarding the provision of railway service's information and the conclusion of commercial agreements for the display, re-linking, resale or distribution of rail products. It applies to railway service providers and online ticketing service providers for railway services partly or fully operated in the Union. It excludes metro and tram services, heritage/tourist railways, standalone urban/suburban networks, and online search engines.

## *Sharing obligation*

The proposal states that a railway service provider will conclude a **commercial agreement** with a requesting online ticketing service provider for the purpose of providing content for the display, re-linking, resale or distribution of its rail products within two months of receiving the request of the online ticketing service provider. Unless otherwise agreed between the parties, the agreement will be concluded within eight months from receiving the request.

## *Hosting obligation*

An online ticketing service provider will be deemed an 'indispensable railway online ticketing service provider' if it is vertically integrated with a railway undertaking that is designated as having a significant market presence in any given Member State.

Independently of any request, and not later than 12 months of the entering into force of this Regulation, an indispensable railway online ticketing service will display all available railway services.

### ***Fair and non-discriminatory conditions***

Railway service providers must allow combination of rail products across operators and sale as a single ticket. To ensure that online ticketing service providers and railway undertakings are not confronted with unreasonable obligations, parties to those agreements should be required to accept fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory conditions.

### ***Significant market presence***

Specific regulatory requirements should be introduced to avoid possible market distortions caused by shareholding or controlling links between online ticketing service providers and railway undertakings with significant market presence in the railway service market. A railway undertaking will be designated as having significant railway market presence in a given Member State where it provides 50 per cent or more of the rail passenger services in that Member State, expressed in passenger kilometres.

The Commission will publish and keep up to date a list of railway undertakings having significant railway market presence on a dedicated website.

### ***Booking horizon***

The proposal stipulates that railway service providers will make tickets for a railway service available for sale at least **five months** before the operation of that railway service.

### ***Enforcement***

National rail regulatory bodies act as national enforcement bodies, with power to handle complaints, act on own initiative, impose penalties, and cooperate through the existing SERAC network. For failure to conclude an agreement within 8 months, the enforcement body must issue a decision within 6 months.