

Railway transport: international rail passengers' rights and obligations. 3rd package

2004/0049(COD) - 03/03/2004 - Legislative proposal

PURPOSE: continuation of the reform of the rail sector by strengthening International Rail Passengers' Rights and Obligations (Third Railway Package). **PROPOSED ACT:** European Parliament and Council Regulation. **CONTENT:** As announced in the White Paper 'European transport policy for 2010: time to decide', the Commission is presenting a proposal with a view to strengthening international rail passengers' rights and obligations. This is one of several measures being proposed to complement the First Rail Package (2001) and the Second Rail Package, which is to be formally adopted in the near future (directive on rail safety, the Rail Agency and the opening of the freight market). Along with this current proposal on the opening of the market, the Commission is also proposing to open up to competition the international transport of passengers within the EU (COD/2004/0047), to establish a certification system for locomotive drivers (COD/2004/0048) and to step up the quality of freight services (COD/2004/0050). As has already been introduced in the aviation sector, with the protection of passengers rights in the event of denied boarding and delays, the Commission is proposing to establish a framework to protect the rights of passengers using international rail services. The proposal will lay down provisions on the minimum requirements for information to be provided to passengers before, during and after their journey; contract conditions; the liability of railway undertakings in cases of accidents, delays or cancellations of services; the conditions under which persons with reduced mobility shall be assisted and, finally, the conditions under which railway undertakings shall co-operate to achieve the aims of the Regulation. Furthermore, this proposal aims at defining the obligations passengers have to comply with, such as the obligation to purchase a ticket and to avoid any behaviour likely to inconvenience train staff or other passengers. This regulation constitutes the basis for the introduction of more favourable measures which will be encouraged through voluntary agreements between the industry and passenger organisations.