

Combining bikes and trains to improve intermodality - Regulation on Rail passengers' rights and obligations (recast)

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Introduction

Bicycles and trains are two of the great inventions of the 19th century. Both transport modes revolutionised personal travel and opened up the world to millions of European citizens. 200 years later, in a time of climate emergency and the European Green Deal, their role is perhaps more important than ever before. To maximise the benefits of both modes, railways should facilitate intermodal journeys by allowing passengers to bring bicycles on board of trains: the sum of the two modes combined is greater than their parts alone.

Bicycle carriage on trains is regulated through Art 6. of the Regulation on rail passengers' rights and obligations (Recast). In September 2017, the European Commission published their [proposal](#). In November 2018, the European Parliament adopted its [position](#) on the revision while just over a year later the Council of the European Union adopted its own [position](#). The first half of 2020 will now see the dialogues between the three institutions to agree the final wording of the new regulation.

Set out in this document is the position of the European Cyclists' Federation (ECF) on the current status of the revision. Our position is clear: **while all three European institutions have confirmed that passengers shall be 'entitled' to bring bicycles onboard the train (in Art. 6 on 'bicycles'), only the European Parliament provides a means to implement such an entitlement**, by calling for a "*designated space for the carriage of assembled bicycles with a minimum of eight spaces*" in all new and refurbished passenger trains.

We fully support the European Commission's ambition to make Europe the first net-zero carbon emission continent by 2050, as highlighted in the European Green Deal. With the recast of the Rail Passengers' Rights and Obligations Regulation (COM(2017 548) there is an excellent opportunity to make a significant step into the right direction by improving rail and bicycle solutions as an effective alternative to carbon-intensive car and plane trips.

We believe this is really an opportunity where Europe can make a positive difference.



Article 6

Article 6 in the revised regulation is related to bicycle carriage and we were particularly pleased with the wording proposed by the Parliament in November 2018. We urge the Council to support this approach:

“Passengers shall be entitled to take bicycles on board the train, including on high speed, long distance, cross-border and local services. All new or refurbished passenger trains shall at the latest by ... [two years after the date of entry into force of this Regulation] include a well indicated designated space for the carriage of assembled bicycles with a minimum of eight spaces. Railway undertakings, ticket vendors, tour operators and, where appropriate, station managers shall inform passengers at the latest when purchasing the ticket of the conditions for bicycle carriage on all services in accordance with Regulation (EU) No 454/2011. ”

We think that the Parliament’s position to make bicycle carriage mandatory only on new and refurbished trains (i.e. it is not necessary to retrofit all existing trains!) is a very sensible and pragmatic approach and would support those railway undertakings already introducing space for 8 bicycles on new rolling stock (e.g. Deutsche Bahn in Germany and PKP in Poland).

Article 2 – paragraph 4

Article 2 concerns the overall scope of the regulation and the types of rail services for which it will be applied. The Parliament proposed that Article 6 relating to bicycle carriage be added to the list of articles that apply to all rail passenger services. The ECF is supportive of this change.

“Articles 5, 6, 11, 12, 17 and Chapter V shall apply to all rail passenger services referred to in paragraph 1, including services exempted in accordance with point (a) of paragraph 2.”

Recital 13

This was a new recital originally proposed by the Commission and provides some context for the benefits of providing space for bicycle carriage and also explicitly encourages railway undertakings to facilitate the combination of cycling and train journeys (which the existing version of the regulation does not). The Parliament proposed some further amendments to the recital to reflect their proposed wording for Article 6. Again, the ECF supports the Parliament’s proposed wording.

“The increasing popularity of cycling across the Union has implications for overall mobility and tourism. An increase in the use of both railways and cycling in the modal split reduces the environmental impact of transport. Therefore, railway undertakings should facilitate the combination of cycling and train journeys as much as possible, in particular they should provide bicycle sufficient stands for the carriage of assembled bicycles on board trains in areas intended for that purpose on board all types of passenger trains, including high speed, long distance, cross-border and local services. Passengers should be informed of the space available for bicycles. These requirements should apply to all railway undertakings from ... [two years after the date of entry into force of this Regulation].”

Annex II – part I – indent 5

The ECF is also supportive of the Parliament’s proposed change to this Annex.

“Access arrangements for bicycles”



Importance of combining cycling and public transport

As global passenger mobility is expected to rise by 50% until 2030ⁱ it is becoming increasingly important to integrate different modes of transport to create a mobility network that can effectively serve the needs of the modern European citizen. Combined bike and train journeys are the ideal solution for environmentally sustainable mobility and can provide a genuine alternative to the private motor vehicle in seamless door-to-door journeys whether for recreation or everyday mobility.

One of the objectives of Regulation (EC) No 1371/2007 is to encourage a modal shift towards passenger transport. Railways' share of the modal split within the EU has seen little growth since 1995 (6.4% in 1995 compared to 6.8% in 2017) according to the EU Transport in Figures Statistical Pocketbookⁱⁱ. If the railways' share of the modal split is to increase then it is clear that it needs to do more to attract new customers.

Carbon savings

Transport accounts for 25 % of the EU's greenhouse gas emissions and its share continues to grow - emissions have been increasing for the past 5 consecutive years. Shift policies aiming at increasing the level of cycling have proven to work and to be very cost-effective in reducing CO₂ emissions. A German studyⁱⁱⁱ estimated that 27.4 % of the emissions of the transport sector could be saved through an integrated and multimodal approach – i.e. strong promotion of walking, cycling, public transport, etc. – that would result in substantially lower car ownerships and hence less km driven by car.

The 2011 White Paper on Transport stressed the importance of multimodality, particularly with regard to longer distances. It seems surprising there is currently no requirement that all renovated and new stock in service on Europe's rail network must provide space reserved specifically for passengers' cycles. This space, often widely available on regional trains, should be available on international and long-distance trains, including High Speed Trains, to help increase the mode share of both cycling and the railways.

Rolling stock capacity

New rolling stock ordered by Germany's Deutsche Bahn ICE-4 and Poland's PKP already include a designated space for 8 bicycles. In the Polish IC trains, the number of passenger seats has only decreased by 6 (from 360 to 354), so the loss of capacity due to the bicycle compartment is very low. In general, the utilisation rates in trains in the EU are not so high that it is possible to claim that there is a lack of capacity to accommodate bicycle compartments. For example, on France's TGV (national highspeed) trains, the occupancy rate was 67% in 2016^{iv} (see ANNEX with overview of occupancy rates).

Supporting the European tourism industry

According to a study commissioned by the European Parliament in 2012^v, cycle tourists prefer to bring their own bike with them on holiday and are more likely than the average tourist to use public transport. It seems illogical that the rail network in Europe is currently discouraging them from doing so. Especially because the same study identifies that cycle tourism contributes €44 billion to the EU economy and is becoming an increasingly important part of the European tourism sector. In effect, the lack of bicycle carriage on some rail services is constraining the potential of the European tourism sector. Long and medium distance travel, especially on trains, between different touristic zones is a vitally important factor for this industry to grow. Tourism is also a significant contributor to rural EU economies; greater access by rail opens up new destinations for cycle tourists.

On a practical level, bicycles can help to extend the catchment areas of train stations and providing dedicated space for bicycle carriage onboard enables commuters to use their bike before and after the train ride, which consequently eases traffic both at home and at the destination. The trend towards more



bicycle usage does not only have the potential to reach the EU climate goals but also to significantly increase the health of the average EU citizen. It is therefore imperative that Europe's train network enables and encourages citizens to cycle more and more often.

The importance of bicycle carriage.

Most cyclists would prefer to use their own bicycle at the beginning and the end of their journey for reasons of comfort, convenience and cost. There are circumstances where bicycle and train journeys can be combined in other ways for certain types of users (e.g. where integrated public bike share systems and/or high-quality bicycle parking is provided). Nevertheless, there will always be a demand for bicycle carriage for customers, particularly cycle tourists whose numbers continue to grow.

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Annex

Occupancy rates of trains across in European countries

Country	Trains	Occupancy
<u>Germany's DB</u> 2018	Long distance trains (ICE, IC)	56.1%
<u>Netherlands' NS</u> 2018	Average / peak hour	41%
<u>France's SNCF</u> 2016	TGV (national highspeed)	67%
	Intercités (regional)	42%
	TER (local)	25%
	Average	43%
<u>Swiss Federal Railways</u> 2017	Long distances	31%
	Regional lines	22.4%
	Average	28%
<u>Belgium's SNCB</u> 2016	"S" trains (regional)	60-90% (during rush hour: 6 – 9 am; 3 – 7pm)
	"IC" trains	70-90% (during rush hour: 6 – 9 am; 3 – 7pm)
<u>Spain's RENFE</u> 2015	Highspeed trains	72%
	Average	68%
<u>Sweden</u> 2015	MTR Express (Stockholm – Gothenburg)	65%

