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Opening-up of rail international passenger transport market to competition on 1 January 2010: towards additional services offered to consumers

As of 1 January 2009 all European rail undertakings will be granted the right of access to the rail infrastructure in other Member States for the purpose of operating an international passenger service. This will offer new business opportunities to rail undertakings and infrastructures managers allowing them to provide new, innovative and customers-oriented services to passengers.

Antonio Tajani, the European Commission Vice-President with special responsibility for transport said that "This is a new stage in the process of strengthening the European rail sector in which the European Union has been engaged for several years. International passenger market opening will benefit both the industry and the passengers. It is expected to increase choice for passengers and lead to a quality leap in the service provided and/or lower prices. This is another important step contributing to the achievement of an integrated European rail area".

Under Directive 2007/58/EC¹, all railway undertakings which have a licence and the required safety certificates will be able to operate international services. To create realistic economic conditions to develop the services, it will include the right for international trains to perform cabotage, that is, picking up and setting down passengers at stations located in other Member States.

This market opening has been organised in such a way as to safeguard the economic equilibrium of public services which could have been affected. Member States will be allowed to limit the right of access on routes covered by public service contracts if certain conditions are met and to charge a levy on international rail passenger services to compensate the cost incurred through public service contracts.

[MEMO/09/570](#)

¹ Directive 2007/58/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2007 amending Council Directive 91/440/EEC on the development of the Community's railways and Directive 2001/14/EC on the allocation of railway infrastructure capacity and the levying of charges for the use of railway infrastructure (OJEU L315, 3.12.2007).