YouTube & Podcast

Passenger rail after COVID-19: Update from the Member States

12th May 2020:

Speakers:

- Mats Johannesson CEO MTR, Sweden
- prof. Andrea Giuricin Special Consultant Italo, Italy
- WESTbahn, Austria - Chief Communication Officer Ines Volpert
- Francois Coart, Rail and Intermodal Development Director, Getlink (France/UK),
- Nick Brooks, Secretary General ALLRAIL
- Barbora Mičková, Policy Officer ALLRAIL

Links:

- Key points (10min.): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QxoyLXpPxAY
- Full version (50min.): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fRWgq409qYw
- Podcast: https://open.spotify.com/show/4wUIckh7VYMWISRZZk420U?si=Vkaqnce8Rc-x4sOsSwmwhQ

After COVID-19 webinar in April 2020 ALLRAIL issued a discussion on YouTube and Podcast channels.

Mats Johanesson CEO of MTRX: "We are heavily affected. We are losing over 90% revenues but still have high degree of fix costs. So far in Sweden, there has been no aid approved for rail, whereas the credit guarantee scheme in amount of EUR 455 mil. to support airlines affected by the coronavirus outbreak was approved already a month ago.

"All of the transport sector is affected, aid to rail has to go in the same pace as for the others sector" adds Professor Andrea Giuricin who works for Italo "99% of the demand is gone. Economic measures for rail have to be taken to support the most sustainable mode of transport"

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Best practice so far is in Austria: WESTbahn's Ines Volpert explains how the government introduced a Temporary public service obligation (PSO) not only to the state-owned incumbent ÖBB but also to privately owned WESTbahn.

Getlink's François Coart states: "the aviation industry received immediate support. But it is the rail sector which really contributes to the goals of the EU Green Deal; it must get equal attention from the EU Member States"

ALLRAIL's Secretary General Nick Brooks sums up: "the following principles must be adhered to when allocating financial support for operators and ticket vendors:

1. It must cover lost income through of a direct grant (i.e. Temporary PSO) or a credit guarantee.

2. There should also be a reduction in access charges to state-owned track infrastructure, in order to reduce the high level of fixed costs

3. Any financial framework - including Recovery Fund & MFF - must be made fairly available to all passenger rail companies in urgent need of liquidity or long-term financial tools, irrespective of their ownership (state or privately owned)

4. The prioritisation of applications for financial support should be based on the carbon footprint and contribution to EU climate change objectives.

To conclude: a Single European Rail Market will provide prosperity and help the EU to reach its ambitious climate change goals. However, with privately owned rail companies going into bankruptcy, we risk that it will become out of reach – forever. We call on stakeholders to provide immediate COVID-19 aid programmes for the passenger rail industry.

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