



The Voice
of European
Railways

Promoting security and the feeling of security vis-à-vis third-party violence in the European railway sector

Recommendations of the European railway sector social partners

1. BACKGROUND OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND INTENTIONS OF THE SOCIAL PARTNERS

The security of railway employees and passengers is of essential importance for the European social partners and their affiliated companies and trade unions. Although rail passenger transport is basically safe, the social partners are very concerned in particular about third-party violence against employees in rail passenger transport. We define third-party violence as „Incidents where staff are insulted, threatened or assaulted in circumstances related to their work, involving an explicit or implicit challenge to their safety, well-being and health“¹. Incidents of third-party violence have a physical, social and economic impact for the employees and the social partners. These might be physical injuries, mental distress, fear and the feeling of insecurity, absenteeism and avoidance behaviour, lost working days and sick leave, termination of the job, disability pensions for the employees, a negative image of the service

provider due to delays and cancellation of trains and other consequences. The duty to protect the health and safety of employees while at work lies with employers under both EU and national legislations.² But employees also shall behave as far as possible in such a way that their own health and safety is not impaired. The European social partners aim at a cooperative corporate culture for taking measures to prevent violence and to deal with the consequences caused by third-party violence, especially against railway company employees. The European social partners emphasise, that a joint approach promises to be the most successful.

¹ European Agency for Safety and Health at Work (OSHA): European Risk Observatory Report. Workplace violence and harassment: A European Picture. Luxembourg, 2010. P. 16.

² European Social Dialogue: Framework Agreement on Harassment and violence at Work. 2007. P. 1.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE JOINT RECOMMENDATIONS

In issuing these joint recommendations, the European railway sector social partners have the following intentions:

- To support their members – affiliated unions and companies – in taking measures that help to increase security and the feeling of security of staff and passengers vis-à-vis third-party violence;
- To contribute to improving working conditions in rail passenger transport;
- To initiate strategies aimed at preventing and handling third-party violence at work via practical measures in its communication, prevention, intervention and aftercare.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION FOR THE SOCIAL PARTNERS

Measures aimed at communication, prevention, intervention and aftercare should be tailored to the respective fields of work and company divisions. A global and joint approach is deemed to be the most promising here. Therefore, the European social partners recommend that a sustainable policy should be applied, which includes measures in the following areas:

• **Creating awareness**

Third-party violence can be reduced through raising awareness of this issue among employers, employees, customers and passengers. Therefore, the social partners on company or industry sector level should aim at a joint approach to tackle the problem. They should define a joint communication and prevention strategy, which includes a “zero tolerance” campaign, which contains appropriate guidance and training for the employees, preventive measures for the public along with a description of incidents needing to be reported. These descriptions should be formulated in a way suitable for classifying acts of violence in a computer database.

• **Establishing a specialised entity**

An entity should be established within the companies, with the official task of analysing and implementing the agreed measures. In any case the designated entity should cooperate closely with the security and personnel units and the affected business units. Within the scope of applicable law and possible adequate means, incidents of third-

party violence should be recorded and examined there using appropriate means. This entity can also be the contact point in the case of incidents or questions.

• **Reporting, recording and analysing**

All incidents clearly defined as needing to be reported (including insults and threats), should be recorded in an appropriate systematic way and assessed. Requisite measures may be designed and implemented. All those involved should be informed about the process. Employees should be encouraged to report all incidents and to suggest improvement measures if possible.

A European typology of incidents, which have to be reported, would help to harmonise the understanding of third-party violence on European level and should be established.

• **Security management and technical means**

Security management combines personnel and technical measures. A very important factor is to make available on trains and in stations active and present security personnel, specially trained for the railway, as well as, depending on the countries, the presence of the police. Preventive measures can also be specific procedures and/or facilities concerning ticket sales, access to trains, construction aspects of stations, video surveillance etc. Video surveillance systems can help to prevent, to identify and so to prosecute incidents and crimes.

- **Preventive training and sensibilisation for staff members**

Training prepares employees with possible customer contact and the respective management for third-party violence situations and teaches ways of prevention and of handling the consequences in the best way. Companies should provide appropriate training courses for these employees and their management on all necessary topics, including de-escalation, recognising potentially violent situations, etc.

- **Aftercare**

Appropriate and transparent procedures on support should be provided to employees who are victims of third-party violence, which, depending on the circumstances, could involve medical (including psychological), legal, practical, and/or financial support.

- **Law and order partnerships**

Cooperation between rail companies, the police and the authorities improves the overall ability to enforce security. The social partners also highlight the importance of working with other appropriate partners at national or local level to identify and prevent third-party violence by having a consistent approach.

- **Using good practices**

Good practices already exist with regard to the prevention, handling and aftercare of third-party violence against railway company employees in Europe. The measures foreseen need to take into account the size and type of company and their application should be validated. Good practices described in the guide "Promoting security and the feeling of security vis-à-vis third-party violence in the European railway sector. A good practice guide" can be used here.³

- **Dialogue with politicians, further stakeholders and with social partners / civil and social dialogue**

The demands of the rail companies, the employee representatives and the trade unions on politicians and possible other involved stakeholders should be brought to the attention of national and European politicians.

- **Awarding of public contracts for rail passenger transport**

The awarding of public contracts for rail passenger transport should require the submission of a section on the security of employees and passengers, which should be considered in the process of awarding the contract.

- **Conclusion of a social partner agreement**

Concluding social partner agreements is deemed worthwhile on different levels (company and / or industry sector level, etc.). Suggestions put forward by employees for improving weak points in security at work should be examined, and, where feasible, taken up.

- **Regular assessment of the effectiveness of the measures taken**

The European social partners recommend regular assessment of the measures taken on European and national level (e.g. annually). Experience, related developments in legislation and technology should also be taken into account to provide better solutions. Results should be assessed and agreement reached on ways of improving the measures. Assessment results can be taken up in new agreements.

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³ CER, ETF, EVA: "Promoting security and the feeling of security vis-à-vis third-party violence in the European railway sector. A good practice guide". Berlin 2012.

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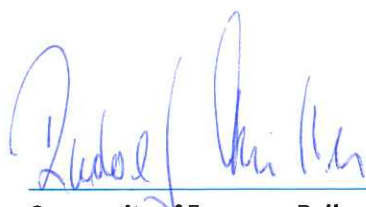
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