

## **Fifth National Academic Conference 'Consumer in the Rail Passenger Market', Łódź, 9 May 2018**

On 9 May 2018, the Fifth National Academic Conference 'Consumer in the Rail Passenger Market' was held at the Faculty of Law and Administration of the University of Łódź (WPiAUŁ)<sup>1</sup>. The event was organised by the Student Society of Energy Law and Other Infrastructural Sectors of the University of Łódź, the Department of European Economic Law of WPiA UŁ and the Polish Foundation of Competition Law and Sector Regulation *Ius Publicum* in Warsaw.

At the conference, representatives of academia, administration and business from across Poland talked about the future of legal regulations of the rail passenger market. The agenda of the fifth edition of the conference included issues that have already been discussed as well as some new subjects. The issue of protecting consumer interests in the railway passenger market as well as the functioning of railway companies were some of the matters discussed. Furthermore, standards, problems and development perspectives of the Polish railway industry were analysed. The meeting helped to better identify as well as understand the processes of the railway market and was a great opportunity to exchange views and experience. Worth mentioning is especially the practical value of the conference – the debate included heads of railway companies as well as relevant offices and ministries. The concept of the conference assumed by the organisers helped to identify the current problems of the market and to attempt to comprehensively address them. The conference consisted of two discussion panels and four lecture panels.

The first discussion panel – moderated by Professor Mirosław Pawełczyk – focused on the current trends in the legal regulation of the railway sector. The panel included: Tomasz Buczyński (Director of the Department of Railways in the Ministry of Infrastructure), Alicja Kozłowska (Director of the Regulation Department in the Office of Rail Transport), Radosław Kwaśnicki, PhD (Partner in Kancelaria RKKW Kwaśnicki, Wróbel & Partnerzy, Deputy Chairman of the Supervisory Board of PKNORLEN S.A.), Piotr Rachwałski (Chairman of the Management Board of Koleje Dolnośląskie Sp. z o.o.) and Włodzimierz Wilkanowicz (Chairman of the Management Board of Koleje Wielkopolskie Sp. z o.o.). The main topic of the debate was the construction of an integrated ticket. The panellists had different opinions and referred to legal solutions in selected EU Member States. Moreover, they also tried to indicate the scope of ticket integration and how the consumers and carriers themselves will benefit from this integration. The speakers also referred to the integration of railway and bus transport. In their opinion the latter should complement the former.

<sup>1</sup> Previous editions: M. Kraśniewski, *Fourth National Academic Conference – Consumer in the Rail Passenger Market, Łódź (Poland), 26 April 2017*, YARS 2017, issue 10(16) p. 238–241; K. Chojecka, M. Kraśniewski, T. Mizioch, A. Sobierajska, *Third National Conference: Consumer in the Rail Passenger Market. Łódź, 25 May 2016*, YARS 2016, issue 9(14) p. 325–334.

In this part of the conference, a number of other topics was discussed also such as the issues of legal titles of PKP S.A. to lands communalised by municipalities as well as unbundling and third party access in the railway sector.

The second plenary discussion, devoted to conditions and development perspectives of passenger railway transport, was opened by its moderator – Rafał Zgorzelski, PhD (Executive Director in the Industrial Development Agency). The panel consisted of: Michał Beim, PhD (Poznań University of Life Sciences), Peter Jančovič (Executive Director in LEO Express Sp. z o.o.), Elżbieta Nowak (Director in Łódzka Kolej Aglomeracyjna Sp. z o.o.), Jarosław Oniszczyk (Member of the Management Board of PKP Intercity S.A), Teresa Woźniak (Director of the Department of Infrastructure in the Marshal Office of Lodz). In this part of the conference, panellists indicated measures taken by railway carriers in order to increase the competitiveness of Polish railways and assessed them from the legal point of view by referring to experience from European countries with advanced competitiveness in the railway sector. The representatives of regional bodies also mentioned that priorities imposed on individual types of trains needed to be addressed. In their opinion, this should lead to increased availability of regional services and to a higher number of passengers.

The lecture panel ‘The development of railway passenger transport – legal issues’ was moderated by Professor Maria Królikowska-Olczak, D.Sc. The panel included Stefan Jarecki, PhD (University of Applied Information Technology and Management), legal adviser Przemysław Ciszak (Polskie Koleje Państwowe S.A.) and Marcin Kraśniewski, M.A. The speech by Mr Jarecki was devoted to measures aimed at ensuring effective and non-discriminative access to rolling stock – he stressed that owning appropriate stock by railway carriers was one of the most crucial obstacles for the development of competition in the railway transport sector. P. Ciszak discussed the principles of functioning of fees for the use of railway stations by railway carriers (station fees). Finally, M. Kraśniewski in his speech titled ‘Compliance in the railway sector – codes of ethics in a railway company’ pointed at the importance of compliance procedures in external relations, especially with consumers, by referring to American experiences and the possibility to create a brand based on these procedures.

The final part of the conference included the panels titled ‘The functioning of railway companies’ (moderator: Łukasz Grzejdziak, PhD, University of Lodz) and ‘Offers and contracts in passenger railway transport’ (moderator: Professor Mirosław Pawełczyk). They covered such issues as liability for damages, consumer access to information, high-speed railways, choice of law for transport contracts, and insurance contracts. The final panel, ‘Access to rail infrastructure and service infrastructure’ (moderator: Marcin Kraśniewski, M.A.) was attended by students and postgraduates from various academic centres in Poland. The speakers discussed the current issues by referring to external experiences.

***Marcin Kraśniewski, M.A.***

Faculty of Law and Administration of the University of Lodz

Polish Foundation of Competition Law and Sector Regulation *Ius Publicum*

e-mail: mkrasniewski@wpia.uni.lodz.pl krasniewski@iuspublicum.pl