



BDZ PASSENGERS HEAD OFFICE

3 Ivan Vazov str., Sofia 1080, Bulgaria
tel : (+359 2) 987 88 69
bdz_passengers@bdz.bg
www.bdz.bg

Member of CISQ Federation



REPORT

on the quality of the provided railway transport services

on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria

for the period January - December 2021

BDZ - PASSENGERS EOOD

Sofia, 2022

I. SCOPE

This report has been prepared on the basis of Art. 28 of Regulation 1371/2007 of the European Parliament and of the Council of October 23, 2007 on Rail Passengers' Rights and Obligations. The report contains information on the implementation of the offered rail service on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria in compliance with the quality standards.

The report covers the period January-December 2021 and provides information on the areas of development according to Annex III of Regulation 1371 / 2007- Minimum Service Quality Standards

- Information and tickets;
- Punctuality of transport services and general principles for overcoming service disruptions;
- Cancellation of transport services;
- Cleanliness of rolling stock and railway facilities (air quality in coaches, toilet hygiene, etc.)
- Customer satisfaction survey;
- Complaint handling, refund and compensation for non-compliance with the service quality standards;
- Providing assistance to people with disabilities and people with reduced mobility.

II. INFORMATION AND TICKETS

BDZ - Passengers EOOD uses the distribution channels for sales and for informing its customers and partners.

➤ At the end of 2021, passenger service is provided at 95 stations and stops and 5 city offices, and there is an additional office for clients only for the summer period. The total number of non-serviced stations and stops is 593, and the service of passengers boarding from these points is provided by the train staff.

➤ Launched in December 2017, the Integrated Automated Online Information, Reservation and Ticketing System is in use at 101 railway stations and offices and by the end of 2021 is fully operational for all trains and destinations.

➤ A new functionality of the Online Ticketing and Reservation System has been launched, allowing the purchase of travel documents for all trains. It is integrated on the BDZ website, allowing non-cash payment through two.

➤ 23 terminals for the sale of travel documents have been installed in 20 railway stations (out of a total of 30 delivered) which will soon be put into operation. A travel document sales software integrated into the Ticketing and Reservation System will be developed, delivered and implemented soon. Initially, only paper tickets will be sold, and later it will be possible to pay for season tickets through the device

➤ As of December 31, 2021, 78 portable devices /PDAs/ are in regular operation for validating all travel documents issued by the Ticketing System, including the online terminal, by scanning the QR code or entering the number of the relevant travel document.

➤ From the beginning of February 2021, in 16 railway stations and offices on the territory of the city of Sofia and Sofia region, the sale of travel documents (valuable samples) for the capital's public transport has been introduced with the aim of more convenient use of the transport service.

➤ With the launch of the continuation of the Sofia Metropolitan metro line 3 to Gorna Banya, the new Gorna Banya railway station came into operation, where all trains on the Sofia and Pernik route stop and there is a convenient train-metro connection for travellers from all over the South-West Bulgaria. The opening of a ticket office at the new railway station is also being prepared, as well as the installation of train ticket machines in the metro station

➤ The information service has been improved with a new vision of the BDZ website and integration of new functionalities for sales and passenger information

- Up-to-date information: in case of delay / stay of train for more than 10 minutes, information about the reasons is published.

- Live boards at all stations visualizing information about train arrival and departure times, tracks and delays.

- The railway network map is integrated and visualized in Google Maps, where train timetable information is also available.

- A new digital application – Radar - has been introduced, through which the movement of all passenger trains in the country can be tracked in real time.

- The provision of train traffic performance data has started in a phased manner, with information being updated in real time every 10 minutes. As a first step, information is available on the number of running passenger trains over the last 24 hours, segmented by two indicators - on time and late, as well as a dynamic graph of the delay of the same on the railway network.

- In order to ensure more open communication with customers, an additional opportunity for public communication has been provided through the single platform for submitting signals to the institutions helpbook.info, which enables direct submission of signals to a large number of state and municipal institutions.

➤ Update of the information through the BDZ website regarding:

- Train schedule, general tariff conditions, prices, schedule changes, train routes;

- Information on the application of Regulation (EC) 1371/2007 on Rail Passengers' Rights and Obligations;

- Contacts of railway offices in the country, telephone numbers for information, complaints and signals, etc.

III. PUNCTUALITY OF TRANSPORT SERVICES AND GENERAL PRINCIPLES FOR OVERCOMING SERVICE DISRUPTIONS

In case of train delay at initial or way station passenger information is provided:

- At the stations - in a visible place, through electronic information boards;
- Through the PA system by employees of the information desk or by an authorized person from the station staff
- Information by phone on 02 931 11 11;

- In trains – by the train staff;
- Online – the website of the company www.bdz.bg provides up-to-date real-time information on the movement and delays of all trains, as well as on arriving and departing trains at all stations throughout the country.

BDZ - Passengers strive to minimize train delays due to the fault of the railway carrier.

According to approved instruction for reporting delays of passenger trains, a report on the occurred irregularities in their movement is prepared daily. The reasons for train delays are indicated, which may be:

- Because of the Railway Infrastructure Manager (track, signalling and telecommunications, energy distribution, traffic, etc.);
- Because of the railway carriers BDZ – Passengers EOOD, BDZ – Cargo EOOD, etc.;
- Other unforeseeable causes.

In 2021, a deterioration in the punctuality of the service is reported compared to the previous year 2020. The total number of trains delayed by more than 5 minutes at the final station is almost 8%, while in 2020 it was 6,98%.

	2021			
	International trains	Express trains	Regional and suburban trains	Total
1. Trains delayed by more than 60 minutes from the starting station				
- number of trains according to the train timetable	4 776	28 494	167 332	200 602
- number of delayed trains	11	65	377	453
- % of delayed trains from the total number	0,23%	0,23%	0,22%	0,22%
Reasons for delay (%)				
- because of the NRIC(track; electrical systems; catenary)	9,09%	24,62%	16,45%	17,65%
- because of the BDZ (locomotives; coaches, transfers; passengers)	18,18%	43,08%	45,36%	45,02%
- due to external reasons (run over person; rock slide; traffic accidents at crossings, severe winter conditions)	72,73%	32,31%	38,20%	37,33%
2. Trains delayed over 5 minutes at the endstation				
- number of trains according to the train timetable	4 776	28 494	167 332	200 602
- number of delayed trains	525	4 564	10 907	15 996
- % of delayed trains from the total number	10,99%	16,02%	6,52%	7,97%
Reasons for delay (%)				
- because of the NRIC (track; electrical systems; catenary, speed restrictions due to track repairs)	28,57%	44,98%	37,99%	40,06%
- because of the BDZ (locomotives; wagons, passenger transfer)	24,76%	36,44%	41,42%	39,95%
- external reasons (run over person; traffic accidents at crossings, bad winter conditions)	46,67%	18,58%	20,58%	19,99%

In the event of an emergency situation, an action plan is prepared immediately after the occurrence of the specific event. Depending on the nature of the situation and the possibility of action, the movement of trains on an alternative route is organized or passengers are transported by bus.

In order to improve the efficiency of the railway network, the disturbances reduction system consists of the following components – minutes of delay and causes.

Depending on the reason for the delay, the minutes of delay are applicable to the Railway Infrastructure Manager, to the Carrier, BDZ – Passengers EOOD, or a third party. Any delay of more than 5 minutes at the endstation is considered a passenger train delay.

To establish the amount of delays on passenger trains and their causes, after the end of the current month and on the basis of daily reports bilateral protocol is prepared and signed by the Railway Infrastructure Manager and the Carrier.

IV. CANCELLATION OF TRANSPORT SERVICES

➤ Backup transport

BDZ - Passengers EOOD organizes backup transport in the following cases:

- After being notified by the Railway Infrastructure Manager NRIC about forthcoming planned repairs of the railway and facilities;
- Other previously known events that make the provision of the public service impossible.

➤ Emergency transport

Emergency transport is organized in case of:

- Disruption of railway traffic due to natural disasters;
- Disruption of railway traffic as a result of railway accidents and incidents;
- Damage to rolling stock and/or rail infrastructure;
- Other circumstances.

In 2021, the total realized train kilometres of backup and emergency bus transport are 386,852 km. In 2020 the train kilometres were 659,694 km.

Train / km			
Month	Emergency transport	Backup transport	Total
January	21,945	6,296	28,241
February	7,575	7,763	15,339
March	7,066	24,015	31,081
April	6,201	29,505	35,706
May	6,786	19,761	26,546
June	7,475	15,186	22,660
July	3,498	15,637	19,135
August	11,745	31,704	43,449
September	12,337	29,194	41,531
October	9,898	35,253	45,152
November	10,063	31,245	41,309
December	11,441	25,263	36,704
Total for 2021	116,030	270,822	386,852

V. CLEANLINESS OF ROLLING STOCK AND STATION FACILITIES (AIR QUALITY IN COACHES, HYGIENE OF TOILETS, ETC.)

The cleanliness of the rolling stock is one of the main key indicators for reporting the quality of the service.

During its activity BDZ-Passengers performs the following types of cleaning:

- **Complete thorough cleaning** is performed once every 4 weeks according to a pre-arranged 28-day schedule, in compliance with the approved process time;
- **External cleaning** of the rolling stock is performed once every 7 days according to a pre-arranged 28-day schedule, in compliance with the approved process time for the respective type of external cleaning (external machine cleaning and external manual cleaning);
- **Daily cleaning** is performed once every 24 hours according to a pre-arranged 28-day schedule, in accordance with the Train Timetable, train connections and train stay, as well as the approved technologies, process times and cleaning staff available at the respective point;
- **Cleaning at the station** is performed after each trip in case of stay of at least 15 minutes, according to a pre-arranged 28-day schedule, in accordance with the Train Timetable, trains connections and train stay, as well as the approved technologies, process times and cleaning staff available at the respective point;
- **Graffiti cleaning of the rolling stock** is done upon request at least 24 hours before positioning of the train on the sanitary site or track. Graffiti cleaning is carried out in the period April 1 - October 31. Outside this period, the cleaning of graffiti is carried out on request 48 hours in advance and in the event of a forecast of favourable weather conditions (*no wind, rain or snow, temperatures above 3 ° C*).

The cleaning and equipping of the rolling stock operates as a unified system of 34 points in the country, distributed in 3 wagon depots.

Since the beginning of the state of emergency related to the COVID 19 pandemic, BDZ - Passengers undertook disinfection of all coaches, DMUs and EMUs. Disinfection is performed at all cleaning points, as well as at all starting and ending stations.

A total of 74% of the coaches in the BDZ - Passengers fleet are equipped with air conditioning system (cooling/heating) or air duct heating. The air conditioned coaches are 26% of the total wagon fleet. This implies a constant passage of the air entering the coaches during heating and cooling through a filter element. Passenger coaches with air duct heating are 48% of the fleet. In this type of coaches, the passage of the air entering the coaches is through a filter element only during heating.

BDZ - Passengers EOOD operates in the suburban areas of major passenger centres - Sofia, Plovdiv, Varna with electric and diesel multiple units, equipped with air conditioning system and filter elements of the intake air. Air conditioned sleeping cars run on all night routes, except for the Sofia - Silistra line, where couchette cars with air intake filter elements run only during the summer period.

VI. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

The 2021 Customer Satisfaction, Public Opinion and Rail Behaviour Survey on the service “Transport of passengers by rail“ shows a satisfactory rating from the customers of the rail carrier. The following indicators were studied:

- regularity;
- timetable;
- train occupancy;
- internal conditions;
- comfort;
- travel information;
- prices;
- service at ticket offices;
- service on the train.

BDZ travellers rate the regularity of trains above average. The average score for this question is 6.84 among a total of 763 respondents (on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the most unsatisfactory and 10 the most satisfactory result).

Also above average is the opinion of train timetables. The average score of 6.83 indicates that, for the most part, they are convenient for commuters.

Train travellers rate train occupancy (availability of free seats) above average. On the other hand, however, the opinions about the internal conditions are divergent and lower. The average score regarding train occupancy (availability of free seats) is 6.84. The respondents' average score for their impression of the interior conditions and comfort in the trains is 5.04.

In general, the opinion of BDZ passengers regarding information on services, prices and the level of service at ticket offices and on trains is high. The average rating of citizens regarding the availability of information about BDZ services is 7.79, which indicates high satisfaction. Even higher satisfaction is observed with the prices of BDZ services with an average rating of 8.78. The opinion about the service at the ticket offices and in the trains is very high, with an average score of 8.86.

Out of a total of 271 citizens who stated that they do not travel by train, the majority (61%) indicated alternative transport as the main reason for this preference. Only 5% of those who do not travel by train cite as the reason that they do not travel often, and the reason for the remaining 34% are the unsatisfactory conditions on trains.

Of the citizens who do not use the BDZ services, slightly more than half indicate that they would use the BDZ services if the comfort on the trains increased. Lack of alternative transport for the travel route is the next major factor in the use of railways. Conditions such as faster trains, the presence of a station and a convenient connection with other transport and a more convenient timetable are of lesser weight (17% in total), and 8% indicate that they would not use BDZ services.

To the question of what kind of service you would like BDZ - Passengers EOOD to provide, which is missing at the moment, all 7 answers are given with almost equal weights. However, the most preferred new services are the availability of food and beverage on trains (16%) and fast direct services (16%). The next service in order of weight is free Wi-Fi Internet (15%). Sockets for charging mobile devices and providing disposable hygiene supplies are also important according to citizens (14%). Най-малко отговори, но въпреки това отново значими са услугите осигуряване на служители по обществен ред и контрол (12%) и вагон ресторант (13%). The least number of responses, but still significant, are the services providing public order and control officers (12%) and restaurant car (13%). From the similar results, we can conclude that all 7 answers regarding new

services indicated by the respondents are important for current and potential users of rail passenger services.

VII. COMPLAINT HANDLING, REFUND AND COMPENSATION FOR NON-COMPLIANCE WITH SERVICE QUALITY STANDARDS

In order to meet the needs of the population for passenger transport services, prior to the entry into force of a new train timetable, the Railway Infrastructure Manager together with the national railway passenger carrier BDZ - Passengers EOOD organize meetings with representatives of customer organizations and regional and municipal administrations. At these meetings the developed transport schemes are presented and coordinated. Suggested routes, timetables, periods of operation, train stops, etc. are discussed. In 2020 and 2021, due to the risk of the spread of COVID 19, live meetings were not organized. The discussions took place after the publication of a draft of the forthcoming train timetable on the carrier's website www.bdz.bg

Counting passengers in all train categories is an element of the passenger transport marketing research. They are held out three times a year within 7 (seven) calendar days - from Monday to Sunday inclusive. In 2021, the regular counts took place in March, July and October. On this basis, the number and type of coaches in the train compositions of the different categories of trains are determined.

Any passenger who is not satisfied with the quality of the service offered may lodge a complaint or warning to the railway undertaking. Contact details (telephone, fax, e-mail and address) can be found in all stations, railway offices, on the Internet, etc. It is possible to file a complaint through an online form on the carrier's website.

Each complaint is considered, an investigation is carried out and a response is prepared within 30 days, which must contain a comprehensive and substantiated explanation of the problem, in accordance with all regulations and the specific situation. In case of non-fulfilment of the official duty by an employee of the company and proven guilt, the strictest responsibility is sought and a disciplinary sanction is imposed according to the current legislation.

Warnings received from rail customers in 2021 totalled 2,195 in number, with service suggestions (19%) accounting for the largest share, followed by problems with advance travel information (18%), as well as poor behaviour and service by train crews and ticket desk staff (total 18%). Compared to the previous year, 2020, there was an increase in complaints by nearly 37%. Complaints from customers have increased in almost all areas, with the largest increase in cases related to service suggestions and provision of advance travel information.

Warnings about	2020	2020	2021	2021
	Number	Share %	Number	Share %
Service suggestions	217	14%	423	19%
Train crews - rude behaviour and failure to perform their official duties	213	13%	277	13%

Warnings about	2020 Number	2020 Share %	2021 Number	2021 Share %
Train delay	157	10%	195	9%
Advanced travel information	138	9%	392	18%
BDZ tariff policy	137	9%	169	8%
Ticket cashiers - poor service from staff at ticket offices and information desks	100	6%	99	5%
Cooling / heating system of railcars and coaches	94	6%	157	7%
Competence of NRIC	86	5%	103	5%
Hygiene in trains	86	5%	89	4%
Out of the competence of BDZ-Passengers	86	5%	28	1%
Cancelled train due to lack of rolling stock	53	3%	24	1%
No seat / berth is provided	45	3%	25	1%
Forgotten luggage during the trip	44	3%	78	4%
Appreciation	39	2%	26	1%
Incorrect / non-working timetable on the site	36	2%	48	2%
Inconvenient timetable	33	2%	3	0%
Failed (missing) connection at transfer station	28	2%	35	2%
Non-working electronic boards in the station and lack of information about BDZ delays	12	1%	24	1%
Total number of warnings	1 604		2 195	

Source of information; Customer Satisfaction department

Inspections regarding the regularity of the travel documents of passengers continue, together with the employees of the General Directorate Gendarmerie at the Ministry of Interior. For all trains for which there is information about an existing threat to the safety of passengers, information is immediately submitted to the Ministry of Interior for taking preventive measures such as: redirection of the patrol unit, inspection of passengers at an intermediate station on the route, and others.

In case of organized trips of groups of children, students, as well as during attraction trips, the presence of Gendarmerie employees is mandatory, after notification by BDZ - Passengers EOOD.

Measures to contain the COVID-19 pandemic have forced the suspension of all international train services from mid-March 2020. Since June 2020, the operation of two pairs of trains between Bulgaria and Romania has been restored. In 2021, only the two pairs of trains between Bulgaria and Romania, namely: Craiova – Vidin - Craiova and Bucharest - Sofia - Bucharest, with a transfer in Ruse, remained in operation in international traffic. The lack of international trains in 2021 resulted in no refund claims from passengers with international travel documents due to train delays, under *Regulation 1371/2007* on Rail Passengers' Rights and Obligations.

VII. PROVIDING ASSISTANCE TO PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES AND PERSONS WITH REDUCED MOBILITY

The service for PRM is carried out in accordance with the tripartite agreement concluded between the Bulgarian Red Cross (BRC), Bulgarian State Railways EAD and the National Railway Infrastructure Company

To ensure an accessible environment for rail transport, the National Railway Infrastructure Company has equipped fifteen railway stations in the country - Sofia, Plovdiv, Stara Zagora, Varna, Burgas, Gorna Oryahovitsa, Pleven, Shumen, Pazardzhik, Sliven, Yambol, Vidin, Vratsa, Ruse and Petrich. Each of the listed stations has a lifting device - a mobile lift, and trained staff to work with it. There are two mobile lifts each at Sofia and Gorna Oryahovitsa

stations. Persons with reduced mobility or their representatives must request the service in advance, indicating the date, time and train of the trip in order to provide a mobile lift.

The company has five specialized wagons with separate seats and sanitary facilities, meeting international standards, to be included in the trains at the request of PRMs. Five of the sleeping cars in the composition of the night express trains have two special cabins each for the transport of persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility.

The company provides specialized transport services with diesel multiple units (DMUs) and electric multiple units (EMUs), operating on various suburban routes in the country. Each railcar is equipped with mobile folding ramp. No prior request is required when traveling on these trains. Service during boarding and disembarking is provided by the train staff.

Information on the organization of transport of persons with reduced mobility by rail, the access rules and their annexes, as well as contacts of our associates and the stations where this service is available are published on the website of BDZ-Passengers EOOD.

Quality Management System of BDZ - Passengers EOOD under ISO 9001
The company is certified under BDS EN ISO 9001 with the scope "Rail transport of passengers in international and domestic traffic; repair and operation of rolling stock and transport safety management". The organization has been certified according to the above-mentioned standard since April 21, 2016.