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REPORT

**on the quality of the provided railway transport services
on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria
for the period January - December 2022**

BDZ - PASSENGERS EOOD

Sofia, 2023

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 2022 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 97 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 591, 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 2022 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 operators.

- 23 terminals for the sale of travel documents have been installed in 20 railway stations (out of a total of 30 delivered). 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

- Tickets purchased from the System, incl. from the online terminal are checked on the train by scanning the QR code or entering the number of the relevant transport document using portable validating devices (PDA). Due to the limited number of portable devices, this is only possible in certain sections and for certain trains. As of December, 2022, 78 portable devices /PDAs/ are available to the train staff.

➤ 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 stop all trains operating in the direction Sofia - Pernik 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 / stop 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 warning 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 warnings, 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 the information officers 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 on the railway network, 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 2022, there is no change in the performance of the train schedule compared to the previous year 2021 in terms of punctuality of the transport service.

	2021			2022		
	Fast trains	Regional and suburban trains	Total	Fast 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	28,494	167,332	195,826	29,713	170,248	199,961
- number of delayed trains	65	377	442	85	357	442
- % of delayed trains from the total number	0.23%	0.22%	0.22%	0.29%	0.21%	0.22%
Reasons for delay (%)						
- because of the NRIC(track; electrical systems; catenary)	24.62%	16.45%	17.65%	23.53%	28.57%	27.60%
- because of the BDZ (locomotives; coaches, transfers; passengers)	43.08%	45.36%	45.02%	48.24%	48.18%	48.19%
- due to external reasons (run over person; rock slide; traffic accidents at crossings, severe winter conditions)	32.31%	38.20%	37.33%	28.24%	23.25%	24.21%
2. Trains delayed over 5 minutes at the endstation						
- number of trains according to the train timetable	28,494	167,332	195,826	29,713	170,248	199,961
- number of delayed trains	4,564	10,907	15,471	4,626	11,340	15,966
- % of delayed trains from the total number	16.02%	6.52%	7.97%	15.57%	6.66%	7.98%
Reasons for delay (%)						
- because of the NRIC (track; electrical systems; catenary, speed restrictions due to track repairs)	44.98%	37.99%	40.06%	44.90%	40.98%	42.11%
- because of the BDZ (locomotives; wagons, passenger transfer)	36.44%	41.42%	39.95%	38.09%	41.63%	40.61%
- external reasons (run over person; traffic accidents at crossings, bad winter conditions)	18.58%	20.58%	19.99%	17.01%	17.39%	17,28%

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 2022, the total realized train kilometres of backup and emergency bus transport are 436,751.19. For comparison, in 2021 there were 659,694.00 train kilometres.

Backup transport and emergency bus transport

Month		Train / km
January	Provided emergency transport in case of damage, lack of serviceable traction rolling stock and backup transport in the sections with railway repairs: Plovdiv - Peshtera, Septemvri - Tsvetino, Kaspichan - Ruse, Belozem - Svoboda	43,263.98
February	Provided emergency transport in case of damage, lack of serviceable traction rolling stock and backup transport in the sections with railway repairs: Podkova - Kardjali, Plovdiv - Peshtera,, Septemvri - Tsvetino, Ruse - Kaspichan	33,950.56
March	Provided emergency transport in case of damage, lack of serviceable traction rolling stock and backup transport in the sections with railway repairs: Plovdiv - Peshtera, Kardjali - Podkova, Septemvri - Tsvetino, Ruse - Kaspichan, Krumovo - Asenovgrad	33,409.70
April	Provided emergency transport in case of damage, lack of serviceable traction rolling stock and backup transport in the sections with railway repairs: Plovdiv - Peshtera, Septemvri - Velingrad, Samuil - Silistra, Plovdiv - Krumovo, Ruse - Kaspichan	27,555.20
May	Provided emergency transport in case of damage, lack of serviceable traction rolling stock and backup transport in the sections with railway repairs: Septemvri - Velingrad, Plovdiv - Peshtera, Kazanlak - Karlovo, Plovdiv - Krumovo, Zimnitsa - Yambol, Ruse - Kaspichan	44,975.09
June	Provided emergency transport in case of damage, lack of serviceable traction rolling stock and backup transport in the sections with railway repairs: Septemvri-Velingrad, Dobrinishte-Razlog, Samuil-Silistra, Plovdiv-Krumovo, Ruse-Kaspichan, Plovdiv-Asenovgrad	29,196.42

July	Provided emergency transport in case of damage, lack of serviceable traction rolling stock and backup transport in the sections with railway repairs: Plovdiv - Peshtera, Dupnitsa - Blagoevgrad, Plovdiv - Peshtera, Varna - Dobrich, Ruse - Samuel, etc.	19,135.00
August	Provided emergency transport in case of damage, lack of serviceable traction rolling stock and backup transport in the sections with railway repairs: Plovdiv - Peshtera, Samuil - Silistra, Varna - Dobrich, Svoboda - Belozem, Ruse - Samuil, etc.	43,448.74
September	Provided emergency transport in case of damage, lack of serviceable traction rolling stock and backup transport in the sections with railway repairs: Plovdiv - Peshtera, Samuil - Silistra, Varna - Dobrich, Svoboda - Belozem, Kaspichan - Samuil, etc.	41,530.54
Oktober	Provided emergency transport in case of damage, lack of serviceable traction rolling stock and backup transport in the sections with railway repairs: Krumovo - Plovdiv, Belozem - Chirpan, Samuil - Ruse, Septemvri - Velingrad, Stara Zagora - Chirpan	38,142.83
November	Provided emergency transport in case of damage, lack of serviceable traction rolling stock and backup transport in the sections with railway repairs: Krumovo - Plovdiv, Belozem - Chirpan, Septemvri - Velingrad, Samuil - Ruse, Plovdiv - Peshtera, Kaspichan - Ruse	34,313.01
December	Provided emergency transport in case of damage, lack of serviceable traction rolling stock and backup transport in the sections with railway repairs: Vetovo - Ruse, Plovdiv - Krumovo, Belozem - Chirpan, Kaloyanovo - Hisar, Plovdiv - Peshtera, Septemvri - Velingrad	10,792.80
Total		436,751.19

Cancelled trains on the route, reasons and measures taken

Reason	Number of cancelled trains	Measures taken		km of cancelled trains for which bus transport was not provided
		Number of trains with emergency bus transport	Passengers carried on the next train, assigned add. stops, change in traffic scheme (number of trains)	
1. Because of the NRIC (disruption of traffic due to deteriorating condition of the railway, damage to the catenary)				
	153	78	53	2,215
2. Because of the carrier (failure of locomotives, EMUs, DMUs during a journey, lack of serviceable rolling stock)				
	3,513	3,128	310	16,310
3. Due to external reasons (natural disasters, rock fall, traffic accidents at crossings, people run over; locomotive/wagon derailment, derailment of a locomotive/wagon, train attack, etc.)				
	136	90	39	1,916
Total January - December 2022	3,802	3,296	402	20,442

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.

In its activity BDZ-Passengers carries out the following types of cleaning:

- **Complete thorough cleaning** is performed once every 28 days according to a previously prepared schedule, in compliance with the approved process times;
- **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 stops, as well as the approved technologies, process times and the available cleaning staff at the respective point;

➤ **Cleaning at the station** is performed after each trip, with a stay of at least 15 minutes, according to a pre-arranged 28-day schedule, in accordance with the Train Timetable, trains connections and train stops, as well as the approved technologies, process times and the 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 element operate.

VI. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION

The 2022 Rail Customer Satisfaction, Public Opinion and Behaviour Survey shows a satisfactory rating from the rail carrier's customers. The following indicators were studied:

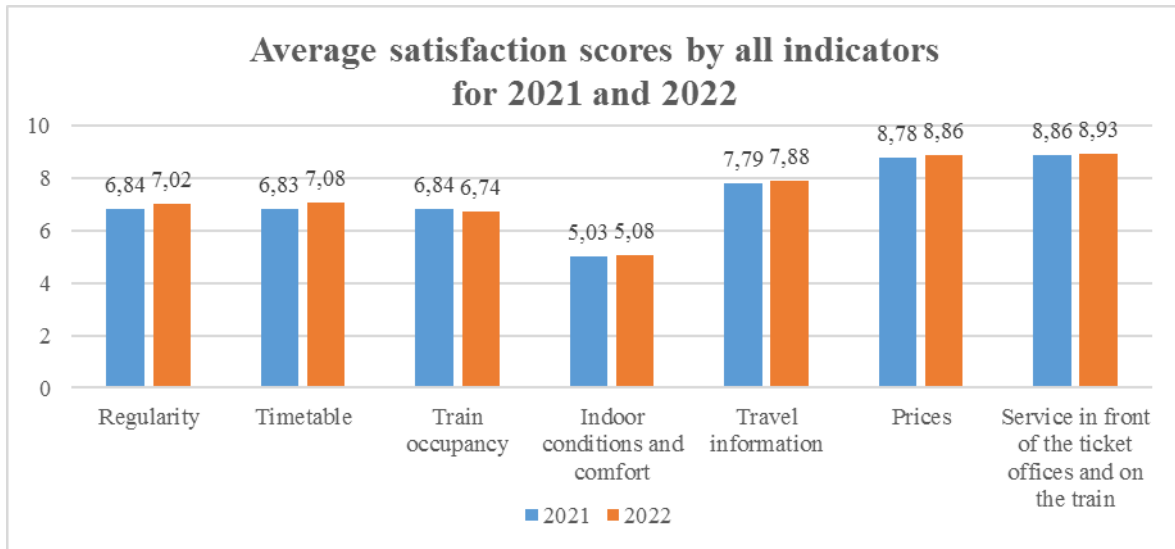
- Regularity;
- Timetable;
- Train occupancy;
- Internal conditions;
- Comfort;
- Travel information;
- Prices;
- Service at ticket offices;
- Service on the train.

For 2022, there is an increase in overall traveller ratings compared to the previous reporting period. All indicators, with the exception of train occupancy and seat availability, show an albeit slight improvement compared to 2021. The number of users of BDZ services is also increasing.

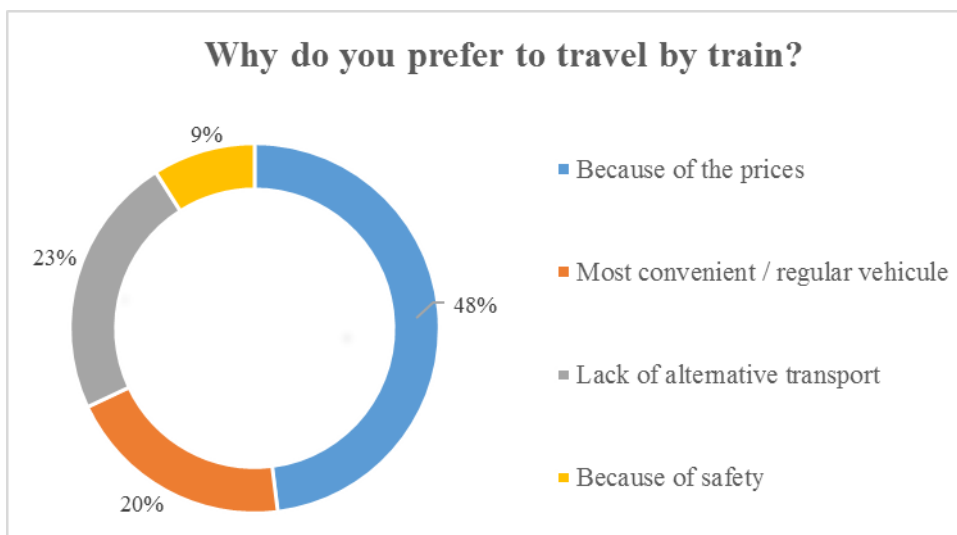
In 2022, rail travellers rate train timetables highly at 7.02, indicating the convenience of travel (on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the most unsatisfactory and 10 the most satisfactory score). The regularity score is 7.08, which is again a high score. The average score for train occupancy and available seats is 6.74. The respondents' impression of the internal conditions and comfort in the trains was on average 5.08.

In 2022, high average scores were noticed for information about services, prices and level of service at ticket offices and on trains. The average rating of citizens regarding the available information about

BDZ services is 7.88, which indicates high satisfaction. Even higher satisfaction is observed regarding the prices of BDZ services with an average rating of 8.86. The opinion of the service at the ticket offices and on the trains is also very high with an average score of 8.93.

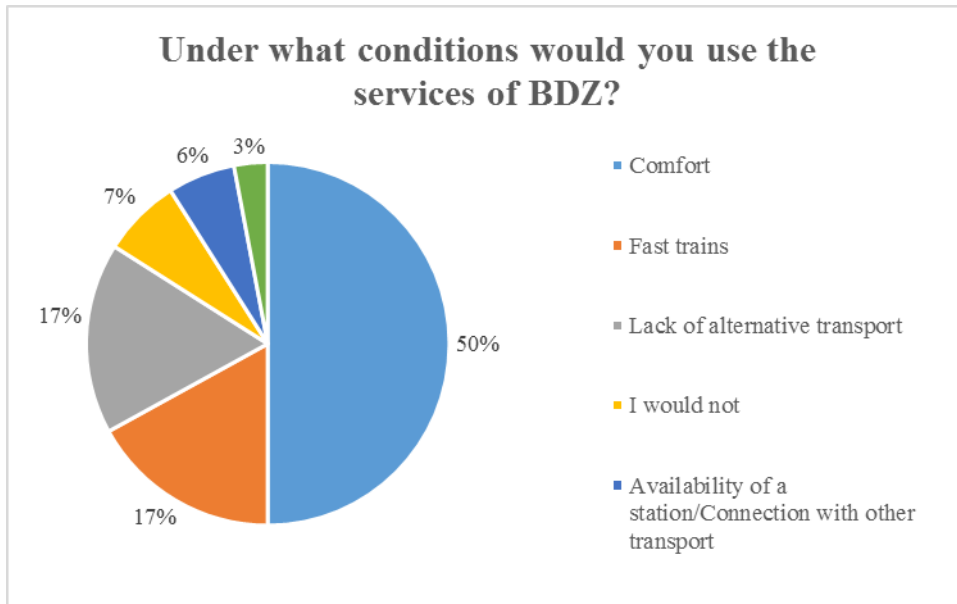


Of those traveling by train, 48% cited ticket prices as the main reason for their choice. With close results are the following reasons - lack of alternative transport (20%) and most convenient/regular vehicle (23%). Because of safety, 9% choose the train.

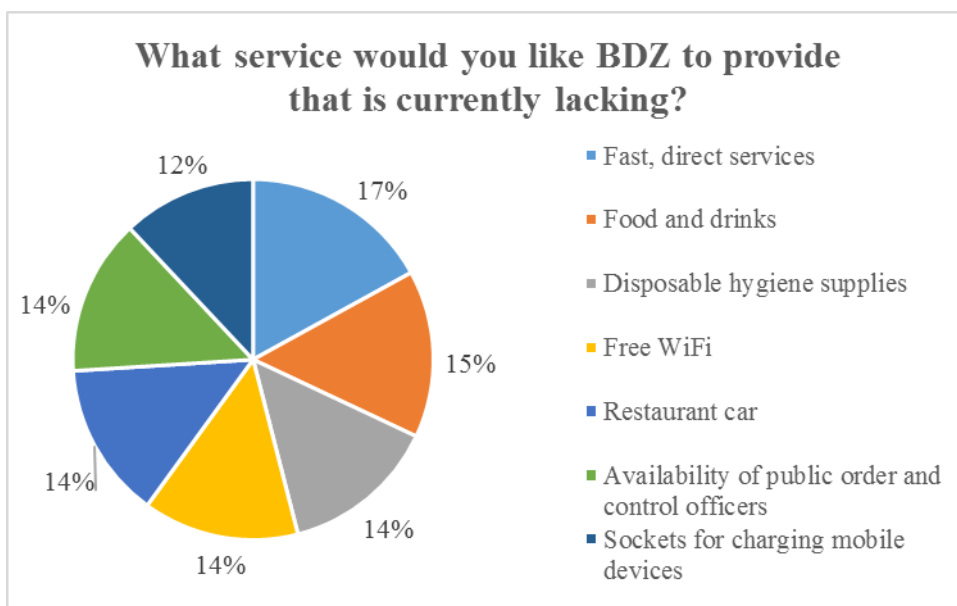


51% of citizens who do not travel by train state the preference for alternative transport as the main reason. 29% cite unsatisfactory conditions on the trains as the reason of not using BDZ transport. 20% indicate that they do not travel often.

Of the citizens who do not use the services of the BDZ, 63% indicate that under certain conditions they would use the services of the BDZ. We see the specific conditions in the following chart, with half of the respondents indicating "Increased comfort".



The attached chart provides information on the most desired new services (or those that users have not had the opportunity to use). The information provides a foundation and ideas for improvement that would positively impact the user experience. The most preferred new services are fast direct lines (17%). All other services have the same or similar values. The close results of the services indicate that all seven possible answers given by the respondents are important to current and potential new users of BDZ 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. Since 2020, 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 2022, 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 specified.

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, complaints and inquiries received from rail customers in 2022 totalled 3,211, with the largest share being queries related to advance travel information (18%), followed by service suggestions (16%), as well as complaints due to train delays (11%).

Compared to the previous year, 2021, there was an increase of 1,016 or 46% in the number of reported warnings, complaints and requests. Complaints from customers increased in almost all areas, with the largest increase in cases related to the shortage of seats as well as complaints about unprofessional service at ticket offices and information desks. Cases of forgotten items on trains are also increasing

Warnings about	2021 Number	2021 Share %	2022 Number	2022 Share %
Advanced travel information	392	18%	588	18%
Service suggestions	423	19%	528	16%
Train delay	195	9%	347	11%
Train crews - rude behaviour and failure to perform their official duties	277	13%	289	9%
Cooling / heating system of railcars and coaches	157	7%	270	8%
BDZ tariff policy	169	8%	228	7%
Ticket cashiers - poor service from staff at ticket offices and information desks	99	5%	195	6%
Forgotten luggage during the trip	78	4%	152	5%
No seat / berth was provided	25	1%	138	4%
Hygiene in trains	89	4%	127	4%
Competence of NRIC	103	5%	102	3%
Appreciation	26	1%	77	2%

Warnings about	2021 Number	2021 Share %	2022 Number	2022 Share %
Failed (missing) connection at transfer station	35	2%	47	1%
Incorrect / non-working timetable on the site	48	2%	44	1%
Non-working electronic boards in the station and lack of information about BDZ delays	24	1%	33	1%
Cancelled train due to lack of rolling stock	24	1%	27	1%
Out of the competence of BDZ-Passengers	28	1%	19	1%
Inconvenient timetable	3	0%	----	0%
Total number of warnings	2,195	100%	3,211	100%

Source of information; Service Department, Customer Satisfaction

Inspections regarding the regularity of the travel documents of passengers continue, together with the employees of the General Directorate “Gendarmerie” of 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 2022, only the two pairs of trains between Bulgaria and Romania, namely: Craiova – Vidin - Craiova and Bucharest - Sofia - Bucharest, with a train change in Ruse, remained in operation in international traffic

Summary data on refunds to passengers with international rail transport documents in 2022 due to train delays, under **Regulation 1371**. on Rail Passengers’ Rights and Obligations.

Amounts paid for 2022 according Regulation 1371 for train delays		
Month	Amounts /euro/	Number of passengers
January	----	----
February	----	----
March	----	----
April	----	----
May	----	----
June	22.00	5
July	----	----
August	----	----
September	----	----
October	----	----
November	----	----
December	----	----
Total for 2022	22.00	5

VIII. 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), BDZ – Passengers EOOD 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. BDZ - Passenger Transport" EOOD has one specialized coach with a mobile lift mounted on one of the doors, which is included in the regular trains, and on request serves people with reduced mobility.

The company has four 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. There are four second-class coaches with seats for people with disabilities that do not need to be booked in advance.

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. Four of these coaches are included in the compositions of the night fast trains serving daily the directions Sofia - Varna and Sofia – Burgas.

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.