

Appendix

Railways, Tourism and Heritage

French National Charter for Development of Tourist and Historic Railways

Charter Objectives

The National Charter for Development of Tourist and Historic Railways signed (Table 1) on 15 February 2001 promotes development of tourist railways in France, a country that is the world's most popular tourist destination and which possesses an extensive rail network.

It clarifies the relationships between the partners to the agreement and lists the commitments of those partners in various domains, including promotion and enhancement of railway lines through publicity in France and overseas; guaranteed quality of services; safety and proper control of infrastructure; preservation of railway staff expertise; and development of local economies.

Clarification of Relationships between Various Partners

Railway enthusiasts spurred the development of tourist railways in France around the end of the 1950s. Their primary aim was to preserve rolling stock and line sections. Consequently, various tourist trains were launched on a case-by-case basis and each request was dealt with according to the conditions of the time and location. This led to a great disparity in operating methods, although safety was never called into question.

As a result, one of the Charter's principle objectives is to progressively codify relations between the French National Railways (SNCF), Réseau ferré de France (RFF), and the operators of tourist railways.

Promotion and Enhancement of Tourist and Vintage Trains

Information on excursion and vintage trains will be enhanced both in France and overseas. For example, a new brochure will be compiled and distributed overseas through the offices of Maison de la France (French Government Tourist Office) whose purpose is to promote France as a destination for travellers from other countries. Maison de la France is under the authority of the Minister of Culture and Communication (Mme Catherine Tasca) and her State Secretary for Tourism (Mme Michelle Demessine), and under the supervision of the Office of Tourism. It was given an EIG (Economic Interest Group) structure to reflect the desire of the national government and local communities and tourism professionals to work together.

SNCF and RFF will play an essential role in promoting and assisting development of tourist train services. Furthermore, when RFF receives a request from a non-profit society to make a line available for tourist train operations, it has agreed to consider the request favourably and to consider setting advantageous fees.

During the tourist season, SNCF will form partnerships with communities to ensure that travellers are well informed of services to important tourist and cultural sites.

In addition, SNCF, RFF, the French Federation of Friends of Local Railways and the Union of Tourist Railway Operators (FACS-UNETO) and Maison de la France will create links between their Internet sites

to facilitate access to information on tourist trains.

Greater Professionalism to Ensure Quality of Proposed Services

FACS-UNETO brings together 46 groups operating vintage trains on lines totalling 589 km in length (Table 2). It is committed to strengthening the professionalism and quality of services of its members and will offer assistance and guidance to groups wanting to launch a new service.

It will prepare a guide explaining the procedures required to establish a tourist railway or modify an existing line. The guide will specify conditions for making some line sections available, safety regulations, expert evaluation and control methods, the role of each party, and the responsibilities of the operators and local communities. It will also list national and regional resources.

Commitments of Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Housing

Upon receiving a proposal from RFF and SNCF, and after consultation with FACS-UNETO, the Ministry of Equipment, Transport and Lodging will draw up: reference guidelines to ensure safe operation of tourist railways that are permitted to use sections of the national rail network; guidelines governing infrastructure, rolling stock and operating conditions; and certification procedures to be followed by operators applying under the guidelines.

In addition, an edict is being formulated by the French state security transport services to cover safety issues pertaining to tourist and heritage railways operating outside the national railway network.

Table 1 Signatories to National Charter

Minister of Public Works, Transport and Housing
Minister of Culture and Communications
State Secretary for Tourism
State Secretary for Heritage and Cultural Decentralization
President of SNCF
President of RFF
President of FACS-UNETO

Table 2 List of FACS-UNETO Tourist and Heritage Railways

Department 68 68	Alsace Railway of la Doller Valley: St-André – Senthem Rhine Tourist Railway: Volgelsheim – Port Rhénan	Department 08/55 57 57 57	Lorraine South Ardennes Tourist Railway: Pont-Maugis – Stenay Forest Railway of Abreschviller: Abreschviller – Grand-Soldat Vallée de la Canner Tourist Railway: Hombourg-Budange – Vigy Tourist and Museum Railway of Coal Basin: Petite-Rosselle – Mariennau
Department 33 33 33 40 64 64	Aquitaine Guitres – Marcenais Tourist Train PGV Pointe-de-Grave – Soulac Cap-Ferret Tramway Ecomusée de Gascogne: Sabres – Marquèze Col de St Ignace – La Rhune La Sagette – Artouste	Department 46/12 46 81	Midi-Pyrénées Quercy-Rail: Cahors – Capdenac Haut-Quercy Tourist Railway: St-Denis-près-Martel – Martel Tarn Tourist Railway: St-Lieux-les-Lavaur – Les Martels
Department 15 43/07 63/43	Auvergne Haut-Cantal Tourist Train: Riom-ès-Montagne – Lugarde Railway lines of Velay: Dunières – St-Agrève AGRIVAP: Courpière – Ambert – Sembadel	Department 59 62	Nord Pas-de-Calais Vallée de la Deule Tourist Tramway: Marquette – Wambrechies Vallée de l'Aa Tourist Railway: Arques - Lumbres
Department 21 71 89 89	Burgundy Vallée de l'Ouche Tourist Railway: Bligny – Pont-d'Ouche Combes au Creusot Railway Yonne Railcar Association: Toucy – Villiers-St-Benoit Massangis Slow Train	Department 14/27 50	Basse Normandie Pontaurail – Pont-Audemer – Honfleur Contentin Tourist Train: Carteret – Port-Bail
Department 22 22	Brittany Paimpol–Pontrieux Cotes du Nord: St-Brieuc	Department 27 27/14 76	Haute Normandie Railway of Vallée de l'Eure: Pacy-sur-Eure – Breuilpont Pont-Audemer – Honfleur Tourist Train Etretat – Pays de Caux: Les Loges - Etretat
Department 37 37 41 45	Centre Touraine Steam Trains: Chinon – Richelieu Lac de Rillé Railway Val de Loir Tourist Train: Thoré-la-Rochette – Troö Pithiviers Transport Museum: Pithiviers – Bellébat	Department 72 72 85	Pays de Loire la Sarthe Tourist Railway: Connerré – Bonnétable Semur-en-Vallon Railway la Vendée Railway: Montagne/Sèvre – Les Herbiers
Department 08	Champagne Ardenne Tourist Railway of South Ardennes: Amagne-Lucquy – Challengeange	Department 02 80 80	Picardie Vermandois Tourist Train: St-Quentin – Origny-Ste-Benoite Baie de Somme Railway: Noyelles – le Crottoy et Noyelles – Cayeux Picardie Association for Preservation of Vintage Vehicles: Froissy – Dompierre
08/55 51 52	Tourist Railway of South Ardennes: Pont-Maugis – Stenay la Traconne Forest Tourist Railway: Esternay – Sézanne Blaise and Der Tourist Railway: Eclaron – Doulevant-le-Château	Department 17 17	Poitou Charentes Seudre Tourist Railway: Saujon – la Tremblade Saint-Trojan – Maumusson Tourist Tramway
Department 25 25	Franche-Comté Pontarlier – Vallorbe – Les Hôpitaux-Neufs Vapeur Val de Travers: Neuchatel-Pontarlier	Department 06/04 13 83	Provence Alpes Côte d'Azur Provence Railways Study Group: Puget-Théniers – Annot RDT13: Arles-Fontvieille Centrevar: Carnoules-Brignoles
Department 77 91 92 95	Ile de France Tacots des Lacs: Moncourt Port aux Cerises: Draveil Parc des Chantereines: Villeneuve-la-Garenne Valmondois Steam Railway Museum: Butry-Valmondois	Department 07 07 07/43 38 38 69 74 74	Rhône Alpes Vivaraire Railway: Toumon-Lamastre Viaduc 07: Vogüé – St-Jean-le-Centenier Railway Lines of du Velay: Dunières – St-Agrève La Mure Tourist Railway: St-Georges-de-Commiers à la Mure Haut-Rhône Railway: Montalieu – Sault-Brenaz Brévenne Tourist Railway: L'Abresle – Ste-Foy-l'Argentiere Mer de Glace Railway: Chamonix – Montanvers Le Fayet – Glacier de Bionnassay
Department 11 30 66 66	Languedoc-Roussillon Minervois Tourist Railcar: Narbonne – Bize Cévennes Steam Train: Anduze – St-Jean-du-Gard SNCF-Cerdagne: Villefranche-Latour de Carol Fenuouillèdes Railway: Rivesaltes-St-Martin du Lys	Department 87/19	Limousin Vienne Vézère Steam Train: Limoges – Ussel

Note: Infrequent tourist-train traffic on national railway lines, recreation park lines, cycle-rails, and museums not possessing a line in operation are not included.

Commitments of Ministry of Culture and Communication

A study commission will propose specific measures to ensure the continued existence of the specialized skills necessary for preserving restoring, maintaining and operating vintage infrastructure and rolling stock to ensure the longevity of tourist railways and the technical and cultural heritage they embody. In addition to the signatories to the Charter, the commission can also work with institutional partners, such as the Regions, and associate partners, such as the French Railway Historical Society (AHICF), and the French Railway Museum (Mulhouse).

Commitments of State Secretary for Tourism

To enhance tourist information, tourist railways will be listed and described in publications detailing tourist destinations, focusing on the cultural, heritage, historic, recreational and scenic attractions of the tourist rail network. A brochure providing information on tourist railways will be published with the assistance of organizations under the State Secretary for Tourism. The offices of the State Secretary for Tourism, especially regional delegations for tourism working in cooperation with the French Agency for Touristic Engineering (AFIT), will support the improvement of existing operations and launching of new projects. They will also suggest what types of specialized training programmes will be required, with emphasis on training service industry workers.

FACS-UNECTO Commitments

FACS-UNECTO is committed to improving the quality of service and the professionalism of its member operators. It will provide assistance and guidance to groups wishing to launch a new service and requesting assistance in operating a tourist railway or establishing infrequent

services on the national rail network. Member operators undertake to raise the level of their technical and commercial professionalism. As one important example, they will ensure that their advertising reflects the true nature and quality of services.

SNCF and RFF Commitments

SNCF and RFF are committed to enhancing their contributions to development of tourism in France, both nationally and locally. They will encourage development of tourist railways, especially on sections of the national rail network that are not in current use. Through ongoing dialogue, they will provide guidance and support to societies and local communities that are promoting tourist and heritage railways. SNCF and RFF are convinced that the preservation of vintage infrastructure and rolling stock and the operation of heritage, cultural and tourist trains will not impede the development of high-speed rail travel and other advanced operation modes, but will instead highlight France's transportation heritage. Indeed, they are well aware that tourist and heritage railways demonstrate the progress that has been made in rail travel, and contribute to the development of local economies.

Plans call for the progressive harmonization of fares to pay for tourist operations on available line sections of the national rail network. In the meantime, requests from local communities and non-profit societies will be viewed favourably. Fares will be raised gradually and payment conditions will be adjusted to take account of the large start-up investments.

A special fare schedule has been devised for infrequent traffic of a tourist, cultural or heritage nature on national lines used for regular traffic. This schedule will apply only to traffic organized by designated non-profit organizations (under the proviso that the tourist, cultural or heritage nature of the tours is amply demonstrated), during the

network's off-peak days and times, on sections that are not heavily travelled. The railways will offer the societies a fixed fare that includes usage fees received by RFF and which will be limited, in this case, to the sole right to operate on the line. A detailed invoice for extraordinary services will be sent to the societies. Permission to use a line will be granted provided that safety regulations are respected and regular services are not disturbed. Reasons will be given if an application for use of a line is rejected.

Railway and tourist information will be enhanced. The SNCF will increase its efforts in this regard, especially during the tourist season, working with the relevant societies to give tourists information on excursion services in major tourist and cultural destinations. Information on and identification of tourist railways will be enhanced, particularly at stations.

A guide explaining the procedures required to develop a tourist railway (or modify an existing operation) will be drawn up in cooperation with all Charter signatories. It is intended for local communities and societies, and will specify: conditions for making line sections available; safety regulations; expert assessment and control procedures; the role of each party; and the responsibilities of the operator and local communities. The guide will also give contacts with relevant national and regional bodies and will describe the type of guidance and services that these organizations provide.

Societies and local communities may contact RFF, SNCF or FACS-UNECTO to ask questions about procedures. Each group agrees to pass on requests to the competent organization(s). SNCF, RFF, FACS-UNECTO and Maison de la France will collaborate to establish links to their respective Internet sites, in order to offer easy access to tourist railway information. ■