



FOLKETINGET
STATSREVISORERNE



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RIGSREVISIONEN

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The provision of information and compensation to passengers when their train journey has been delayed or cancelled

1. Introduction and conclusion

1.1. Purpose and conclusion

1. This report concerns the Danish state railways (DSB) and Banedanmark's (government-owned enterprise under the Ministry of Transport, Building and Housing with responsibility for maintaining, developing and expanding the Danish railway network) effort to inform and compensate passengers when their train journey is delayed or cancelled. Rigsrevisionen initiated the study in August 2018.

Previous reports on issues concerning the railways have shown that it has been a challenge for the DSB and Banedanmark to maintain and develop the trains as well as the infrastructure and to do so within the scheduled time frame. The Danish railways are in the middle of a transition process that involves new tracks, signals, electricity and trains. The implementation of these projects has a huge negative impact on the operational stability of the railways, which is expected to continue for the next ten years. This study was carried out in a period when the DSB experienced significant interruptions of services and loss of passengers.

2. In this report, we examine how the challenges identified in our previous studies affect the passengers. Timely and accurate travel information and an effective compensation system can reduce the inconvenience to passengers, loss of passengers and economic losses that follow from the interruption of services. According to Banedanmark, delays and cancellation of train journeys lead to annual economic losses of approximately DKK 1.1 billion.

3. The passengers have a right to be informed and in some instances also compensated when their train journey is delayed or cancelled. The DSB and Banedanmark are jointly responsible for keeping the passengers informed of delays and cancellations, whereas the responsibility for compensations lies with the DSB alone. The study is based on the objectives set out by the DSB and Banedanmark concerning the provision of information and compensation to the passengers in the event of delays and cancellations. The objectives flow from the requirements regarding travel information and compensation that follow from the EU regulation on rail passengers' rights and obligations, the DSB's traffic contract with the Danish Ministry of Transport, Building and Housing and Banedanmark's performance management plan.

Delays and cancellations

The study is based on the DSB and Banedanmark's definition of delays and cancellations of train journeys, i. e. trains that are delayed for three minutes or more, and cancellations that are not planned more than 24 hours in advance.

Rigsrevisionen's previous investigations in the area

- Train punctuality (report no. 3/2017)
- The DSB's effort to complete the IC4-trains (report no. 1/2017)
- The delayed signalling programme (report no. 9/2016)
- New capital budgeting model used in the development of the Copenhagen-Ringsted train line (report no. 22/2014).

4. The purpose of the study is to assess whether the DSB and Banedanmark inform and compensate their passengers in a satisfactory manner when their train journey is delayed or cancelled. The report answers the following questions:

- Are the DSB and Banedanmark providing adequate travel information on delays and cancellations?
- Is the DSB supporting the passengers' claims for compensation in connection with delays and cancellations?



Conclusion

It is Rigsrevisionen's assessment that the DSB and Banedanmark are not informing and compensating their passengers in a satisfactory manner in connection with delays and cancellations.

The travel information on delays and cancellations provided by the DSB and Banedanmark is not entirely satisfactory and meets neither their own objectives nor the passengers' expectations. Rigsrevisionen finds that, overall, the DSB and Banedanmark have established a sound basis for the provision of timely and accurate travel information to the train passengers, but in some areas there is room for improvement. The DSB and Banedanmark have not consistently measured the quality of the travel information they provide against the parameters that they consider important to the passengers. To this should be added that several of the measurements make it difficult to assess progress made, either because the DSB and Banedanmark have failed to define targets for the individual measurements, or because the measuring methods have been changed. Getting travel information on unplanned disruptions of train services and estimated delays out to the passengers as quickly as possible is a challenge; frequently, the passengers have to settle for general information on delays until specific information becomes available. Besides, the passengers are not satisfied with the information they receive on travel alternatives, when trains are delayed or cancelled.

DSB has not supported the passengers' claims for compensation in connection with delays and cancellations in a satisfactory manner. This assessment is mainly based on the following: 1. Awareness among the passengers of the opportunities for compensation is low, and only approximately 15-25% of the commuters had signed up for the compensation programme that automatically awards them compensation when the train service fails to achieve the passenger punctuality target. 2. The compensation guarantee applying to commuters is not entirely appropriate. For instance, commuters that have signed up for the guarantee experience that they are not compensated, if the terms of their commuter pass have been changed without prior notice. 3. Commuters that sign up for the travel time guarantee covering another route than the one they actually use, may receive higher compensation than they are entitled to. The DSB has informed Rigsrevisionen that it will address these three issues, including elimination of the possibility of signing up for an alternative route and making the system more user-friendly.

At a time when large projects challenge the operational stability of the railways, the passengers have an increased need for timely and accurate travel information and improved possibilities of being compensated when their journey is delayed or cancelled. The difficulties the DSB and Banedanmark are facing in providing timely and accurate travel information to the passengers on delays and cancellations and compensating passengers in accordance with the regulations, can cause inconvenience to the passengers and, in the long term, a loss of passengers. The Ministry of Transport, Building and Housing has overall responsibility for the area and should ensure that the DSB and Banedanmark in the future provide timely and accurate travel information and compensation to passengers whose train journey is delayed or cancelled.