

Students call for the operationalization of online purchase for train tickets

The **National Alliance of Student Organizations in Romania (ANOSR)** and the **National Council for School Students (CNE)** urgently request the operationalization of online procurement for fee-waiver train tickets.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, **protection measures** have been put in place for the whole society, without exception. In accordance to the measures taken at national level to limit the spread of the new Coronavirus, the Ministry of Transport issued a communique on the 16th of May, containing a series of measures and rules that must be implemented in the field of **rail transport** during the State of Alert in Romania, **including the promotion of online tickets sales and the priority use of electronic tickets.**

With the establishment of the State of Alert, the National Railway Company (**CFR Călători**) announced the plan to reactivate some of its routes, on which occasion it recommended passengers to **purchase tickets online**, in order to avoid cash manipulation. However, the **possibility of purchasing travel tickets online from CFR does not exist for students and pupils.** In the case of school students, according to a Company's internal note, they **will no longer be able to purchase online tickets** once the Government's Emergency Ordinance regarding their right to travel free of costs by public and railway transport will be applied. Thus, those school students who need to travel by train during this period of time **are put in the situation of choosing between fully covering the cost of train tickets by purchasing them online or exposing themselves to the risks of infection by manipulating cash and staying in line at CFR counters while purchasing them free of costs.**

ANOSR, as the first representative structure that brought the issues of facilities granted for railway transport to the public agenda, has **requested multiple times the urgency of synchronizing the National Database of Students (RMUR) with railway transport operators' databases.** This measure would make the **online purchasing of costs-free train tickets possible** and in accordance to the national legal framework (*Methodological norms on the provision of national railway and subway transport facilities for pupils and students*, approved by the Government Decision no. 42/ 2017).

Following these steps, **ANOSR received assurances from the Ministry of Education and Research (MEC) representatives**, regarding their availability to provide the necessary data to railway operators. However, the **Ministry of Transport does not have the proper resources and infrastructure to securely manage the data**, although **3 years have already passed since the adoption of Government Decision no. 42/ 2017.**

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At the moment, the online procurement of travel documents does not only mean more comfort and time savings, but it is also a **matter of safety for pupils and students** and, respectively, for their families.

Therefore, we **call on the representatives of the Romanian Government, the Ministry of Transport and the Ministry of Education and Research** to urgently **provide students and pupils with the opportunity of purchasing online travel documents for railway transport**, by synchronizing the necessary databases. At the same time, **we ask the Ministry of Transport and railway operators to provide the necessary IT&C infrastructure** (i.e. secure databases) for the proper management of pupils' and students' personal data.

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