

Over 60 pct of the total facilities granted for train travel in 2019 are for students

The gratuities for students in train travel represented last year nearly 60 pct of all travel facilities granted by the Romanian state, being the highest percentage, according to the study regarding the evolution of the main indicators of the passenger rail market in Romania in the 2016-2019 period, conducted by the Authority for Rail Reform (ARF).

Analyzing the situation of financing received from the state budget by rail operators in the 2016-2019 period, it was noted that the sums allotted recorded an accentuated increases starting with 2017, when the gratuity for rail transport for students was introduced. If in 2016 the subsidies (compensation + travel facilities) totaled 1.312 billion RON, in 2017 they "jumped" to 1.654 billion RON (of which 326.106 million RON in facilities), in 2017 to 1.801 billion RON (465.631 million RON facilities), and in 2019 they exceeded 1.967 billion RON (535.419 million RON facilities).

"An increase can be noted of the value of facilities granted following the issuing of HG 42/2017 [Government Decision 42/2017] for the approval of methodological norms regarding the granting of internal rail transport and subway facilities for pupils and students. It's worth mentioning the fact that, in 2019, of the total sums paid monthly for facilities, 63 pct represented the payment of facilities for students," the ARF study shows.

Beside students, facilities for discounted train travel are also received by other social categories, such as pensioners, war veterans, pupils and participants in the 1989 Revolution.

The data published by the ARF also indicate the fact that, of the total of 535.419 million RON facilities granted for students in 2019, the largest part ended up with state operator CFR Calatori - 498,842 million RON, followed by Regio Calatori - with 13.641 million RON, Transferoviar Calatori - 9.553 million RON, Astra Trans Carpatic - 5.578 million RON, Interregional Calatori - 4.235 million RON, and Softrans - 3.570 million RON.

In the 2016-2019 period, the passenger rail market in Romania saw the participation of six rail operators: National Passenger Rail Company "CFR Calatori" SA, SC Transferoviar Calatori SRL, SC Interregional Calatori SRL, SC Softrans SRL, SC Astra Trans Carpatic SRL and SC Regio Calatori SRL, who is operating since 2016, when they took over activity from SC Regiotrans SRL.