

I. The French regionalization: a deep reform

For France and its centralised tradition, the regionalization is not a light reform. It represents a whole program (Chavineau, 2002). If it starts "silently", excepting the different logos of experimental regions that have flourished on the TER (Express Regional Trains) and on the inter-regional one, the transfer of this new competency to Regions has immediately taken an important place in the budgetary choices of the Regions as the investment in transport, and consequently in the railway, are situated just behind the education and training department (between 25% and 30% of budgetary expenses on average for transports and approximately 40% for education and formation, Rhône Alpes Regional Council, 1997). The region Provence Alpes Côtes d'Azur expects to multiply by 10 its investments in the railway. The region Bretagne will increase its effort in the railway by a factor of 6 in comparison with the previous contract of State-Region Plan. Regions equip themselves with new high quality railroad materials (conditioned air, panoramic windows, low floor); they recruit in all directions and they negotiate with the French Network Operator (R.F.F.) to develop investments in the railway infrastructure: it takes a great step forward in terms of decentralisation; the region establishes itself as a central crux of transports, services and eventually information networks. It is at the heart of the link between the

Regionalization of passenger regional railway transport: experiences from France and Italy

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Railway regional passenger transport is experiencing since 1970 in France and Italy but also in the main European countries a decline in modal split facing car mobility. To inverse this trend, the regionalization of railway regional passenger transport is today implemented in France and Italy. This reform is still in both countries in process and will have some impacts on the regional service by opening the field to service's contracts between transport authorities and operators (only the national operator SNCF in France is allowed). In this paper, we will analyze the framework of regional railway passenger in France and Italy. We will then highlight the impact of the regionalization reform for both countries. We will show that regionalization is based on a double negotiation process : first, with the central State, it deals with the determining of financial grants due to this transfer of competence without transfer of charges. Secondly, it deals with a negotiation for establishing a convention Transport Authority / Regions and Operators. Organization and financing competence, communication, pricing, quality control will be competencies of the regions. We will then conclude by showing the challenge and limits of the reform. What are the brakes of the regionalization reform in France and Italy?

The regionalization of railways passengers transport doesn't hit the French and Italian news ! It is not in the centre of citizens' expectations who don't stop using massively their car for urban and regional mobility. In that way, for the Rhône Alpes region (France), 83% of daily travels from their domicile to the office are done for example by personal car (Rhône Alpes Regional Council, 1997). Only 13% of them in the Rhône Alpes region and approximately 20% in French big towns use collective transports, which is first due to urban transports (subway, bus, tramway) before regional railway transport (Rhône Alpes Regional Council, 1997). What's the point continuing to address the issue of regional railway transport?

Nevertheless, this reform is a deep reform unprecedented that concerns first the national operators in Italy and France, FS (I) and the SNCF (F), with the affirmation of the region as the organising authority for the financing and the organisation of the regional railway transport, but also public policies and the decentralisation with the transfer of a new competency from the central government, via the national operator, to the Regions. In view of the huge number of discourses concerning the institutional rubble and the impossibility of reforms in France, the regionalization thus demonstrates that a dynamic of deep reform of the State action is possible in a complex environment where many actors interfere : territorial authorities and the organising authorities, urban areas, national operators, newcomers maybe, the network administrator and the State. This reforms also demonstrates that the regional railway transport begins to be accepted as fundamental in management strategies of great metropolitan areas mobility, as it enables to develop at the same time efficiency, effectiveness and sustainable development of transport.

The aim of this article is to present the characteristics and the progress of this reform in France and Italy. Starting from the regional railway transport situation, in decline in France and Italy the last two decades, our study will be focused on the development of the railways' reform by insisting on the regionalization dynamic in operation and on institutional blockages : no real liberalisation and no opening to third operators and newcomers on the French railway market, the SNCF being the sole railway operator concerning the regional transport as in long distance ; start of tendering process and competition in Italy.

global – the TGV (High Speed Train) – and of the local – the urban transport. Consequently the success of the regionalization includes the awareness of this logic of interface and interconnection between the Trans-European High Speed Train Networks, National High Speed Trains Networks and local networks of railway transport. It positions itself as an actor that can't be ignored for the mobility of tomorrow and it reinforces the attractiveness as the competitiveness of their territories (Chavineau, 2002). Seeing the exceptional results of the regionalization, one could think that this new competency won't be the last one. The fiscal autonomy of the regions first will have to be reinforced that are still too dependant on budgetary transfers of the State. (Guihéry, 2002).

The region at the centre of the daily mobility requirements of tomorrow

The daily mobility of the French is before all regional since, for the Rhône Alpes region for example, 97% of the 18.6 millions of daily trips are made within the region (cf. table 1 that is to say 3.4 trips per inhabitants and per day on average against 3.2 for the French average). In front of this demands of mobility, the market shares of collective transport remain marginal (table 2): 83% of the daily trips from home to work are done for example in personal cars.

Only 13% of them use a collective transport in the Rhône Alpes region and 20% in big French and Italian cities, which