

French Court orders end to mandatory gender titles on train tickets

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The ruling follows a CJEU judgment and marks a major step for data protection and gender inclusivity in the EU.

France's Supreme Administrative Court (Conseil d'État) has ruled that the country's national railway company, SNCF, can no longer require passengers to select between "Mr" or "Ms" when purchasing train tickets. The decision, issued on 31 July, follows a [judgement](#) from the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) earlier this year, in a case brought by LGBTI rights organisation, the Mousse association.

The case challenged SNCF's long-standing practice of forcing customers to choose a binary civil title, with no third or neutral option available. The company had argued that the titles were needed to personalise its commercial communication in line with passengers' presumed gender identity.

However, applying the CJEU's interpretation of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), the Conseil d'État found that such data collection is not strictly necessary either for the performance of the transport contract or for legitimate commercial interests. The Court confirmed that omitting gendered civil titles does not affect the ability to identify passengers for travel purposes.

The judgment is grounded in Articles 6(1)(b) and 6(1)(f) of the GDPR, which state that processing of personal data must be lawful, proportionate, and strictly necessary for the purpose for which it is collected. As a result, the Court overturned an earlier decision by France's data protection authority, CNIL, which had sided with the railway company.

SNCF will now be required either to stop collecting civil titles altogether or to make the provision of such data optional.

Importantly, the implications of the ruling extend beyond SNCF. All public and private organisations operating under the GDPR across the EU are expected to comply with the principle that gender markers must not be collected unless absolutely necessary.

The judgment also highlights a broader issue faced by trans and non-binary individuals, who are routinely forced to choose between gender markers that do not reflect their identity. It is expected to reduce instances where individuals, including binary trans people whose legal documents may not match their gender identity, are required to disclose unnecessary personal information in everyday transactions.

Welcoming the judgement, ILGA-Europe's Senior Strategic Litigation Officer, Marie-Helene Ludwig said: "It is a victory that the company has already complied and stopped its unnecessary data collection. We look forward to seeing other companies and public entities comply with [the CJEU ruling](#) and provide inclusive services for non-binary and trans people forced to choose incorrect gender markers in their daily lives."

ILGA-Europe and TGEU provided support to [Association Mousse](#) and its lawyers in the CJEU procedure.