

**Committee of the Regions****COTER-V-051****109th plenary session, 3-4 December 2014****OPINION****Multimodal travel information, planning and ticketing services**

THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

- notes that an updated and functional Europe-wide information system covering all transport modes is a key instrument for exercising one of the EU's fundamental freedoms, namely the free circulation of people. To make this a reality, it is not enough merely to do away with any obstacles: it must be made as easy as possible for the public. It should be mandatory, therefore, to publish timetables and other travel information and make it fully accessible to all the EU's citizens in such a way that they can all use it as easily and effectively as possible;
- points out that the most complicated stage in terms of travel information and service provision is that of the first/last mile, which is generally that part of the journey in the hands of local and regional authorities. It is therefore absolutely essential to get local and regional authorities involved in the implementation and monitoring, to make sure the whole system functions well;
- thinks it would make sense, when connections between the different information systems are being put in place, to rely not only on the static information provided by predefined timetables, but also on the huge potential of information obtainable from GNSS systems, including Galileo;
- considers it essential that ESIF resources, mainly in individual corresponding operational programmes, be allocated to the actual implementation of systems and not merely to research and development or other related measures;
- points out that the following questions need to be resolved, so that local and regional authorities and the bodies operating under them can play an active role and drive the whole process forward:
 - a) public funding – if necessary by means of a block exemption for this sphere;
 - b) the right to give the private sector information it can use, the right to ask other public and private entities to provide information and the right to gather, process and use this information;
 - c) funding options for the entire process and for each activity that ensure the work carried out in the creation and the management does not place further strain on the already stretched budgets of local and regional authorities, but on the contrary generates savings and revenue for these budgets.

Rapporteur

Petr Osvald (CZ/PES), Member of Plzeň City Council

Reference document

Commission Staff Working Document "Towards a roadmap for delivering EU-wide multimodal travel information, planning and ticketing services"
SWD(2014) 194 final

**Opinion of the Committee of the Regions – Multimodal travel information,
planning and ticketing services**

I. POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

THE COMMITTEE OF THE REGIONS

1. notes that an updated and functional Europe-wide information system catering to drivers and travellers and covering all transport modes is a key instrument for exercising one of the EU's fundamental freedoms, namely the free circulation of people. To make this a reality, it is not enough merely to do away with any obstacles: it must be made as easy as possible for the public. It should be mandatory, therefore, to publish timetables and other travel information and make it accessible – fully and without distinction – to all the EU's citizens in such a way that they can all use it as easily and effectively as possible. The EU and all its Member States should also make sure that no public transport operator is favoured in this system at the cost of others. They should also guarantee all travel and transport operators equal access to such systems. European legislation – later transposed into national legislation – should therefore also be drafted with the broader picture in mind. This approach should be taken not only to "static" transport information – i.e., fixed timetables –, but also to "dynamic" information, such as the real-time location of public transport vehicles en route. This requirement to gather data on real-time location of vehicles will also encourage the use of the Galileo space segment;
2. welcomes the European Commission's attention to multimodal information for transport and ticketing services for travellers and finds the publication of the present working document a step in the right direction that will simulate further debate, the search for solutions and the implementation process;
3. is aware of the complexity of the whole question and, while welcoming the inclusion of individual as well as public transport in the Commission's approach, believes that a new extension of its field of application, while it undoubtedly has the merit of being comprehensive, nevertheless very much complicates the problem in its entirety at this stage, which means a solution will be delayed and more difficult to achieve; therefore recommends proceeding in stages, starting with public passenger transport and only subsequently adding individual transport to the operational systems of public transport. The pace of integration of the various transport modes is likely to vary in different EU regions depending on which part of the market runs a particular mode;
4. points out that, in the longer term, individual transport also requires careful attention and the development of legal and technical solutions; therefore calls for a schedule to be drawn up to make sure work is sufficiently effective;

5. points out that the working document shows quite clearly that the most complicated stage in terms of travel information and service provision is that of the first/last mile, which is generally that part of the journey in the hands of local and regional authorities. It is absolutely essential, therefore, to get local and regional authorities involved in both implementing all the methods and monitoring how they work to make sure the whole system functions well;
6. notes that there are a number of stages involved in using public transport (including ticketing services) that need to be addressed: 1) finding the right connections, 2) booking a seat, 3) paying for the ticket, 4) using the ticket while travelling; a method has to be found, then, for each of these steps – also bearing in mind the crucial importance of getting the first of these right (finding connections), since the rest depend on this;
7. points out that most Member States do not currently even have a national system bringing together all static transport timetables in operation and enabling public transport connections to be looked for and booked within a single country; thinks it essential, therefore, for each Member State to create such systems, since it is at the national level that legislation can be enacted to oblige transport operators – public and private – to give the State such information about their timetables. Each Member State should set up a national timetable information system, which should include all regional timetables of public and private carriers. Regular updating and maintenance of this system should also be assured, especially when timetables are altered. This is the first step needed to create a similar system for Europe as a whole. Each Member State should also guarantee the accuracy of the information in its national system; it should also be possible to use this system without restriction to book and pay online. This means that information must be provided not just about timetables but also about the fares of all carriers;
8. thinks that the way to get the minimum amount of information needed to guarantee the quality expected of the system is through consultation of interested parties and experts in the field and from the results of tests and a pilot programme;
9. believes that, since the regional, rather than the national, level gathers and processes timetable data most frequently and since there is even a raft of regional information systems, these systems should first be connected to one another and subsequently across borders. The Committee of the Regions welcomes that information on multimodal transport is part of the thematic objective 7 on "Promoting sustainable transport and removing bottlenecks in key network infrastructures", but points out that a better coordination and concentration of the instrument within, and between, individual operational programmes of the European Structural and Investment Funds has to be ensured, in order to achieve such interconnection, especially cross-border;
10. considers it essential, if information and ticketing services for all modes of transport are really to be taken forward, that ESIF resources, mainly in individual corresponding operational

programmes, be allocated to the actual implementation of systems and not merely to research and development or other related measures;

11. stresses the need, on this front, to start addressing the issue as a whole by tackling some of its simpler yet tangible challenges. These include harmonising current terminology and symbols within the EU, compiling static timetables in each Member State and ensuring their use across borders. When it comes to ticketing, a reference model should be created for the entire sector that shows both the system's failings and its potential, while seeking ways to open up booking systems on a reciprocal basis among all transport operators and providers;
12. points out that modern electronic ticketing systems using rechargeable smart cards that do not work in neighbouring countries erect new borders and encumber cross-border movement; calls, therefore, for a new European smart ticketing system to be designed for public transport that would work in all the Member States and for journeys across borders;
13. thinks it unrealistic in the short term to frame Europe-wide mandatory standards on this question, but sees a need to ensure interoperability - i.e. that different systems can communicate with one another. To this end, it would be expedient to establish a joint specification for the various interregional and cross-border connections, to be tested in a pilot operational phase. It would make sense to use this as the basis for a "joint technical specification" that would enable existing or newly created systems in a particular area to communicate with one another. To this end, it would also be good to ensure that compliance with this "joint technical specification" is not seen as a discriminatory criterion in procurement procedures;
14. also thinks it would make sense, when connections between the different information systems are being put in place, to rely not only on the static information provided by predefined timetables, but also on the huge potential of information obtainable from GNSS systems, including Europe's Galileo navigation system. This would make it possible to use systems that process only static data as a basis for creating intelligent systems that react to real-time transport movements and the capacities of operators. These systems will then be able not only to give travellers traffic information in real time and give them alternatives, but also provide broader just-in-time information to public and individual transport providers, enabling them to respond swiftly. It is this transformation of existing local and regional systems to benefit from dynamic transport information – and at the same time their transformation into significantly better systems – that should deliver the main stimulus for establishing interconnected information systems. There are benefits to be had in enlisting the existing Galileo European navigation system for gathering dynamic transport information, since, unlike similar systems, it also offers a service with a defined quality of location signal. This information, which is essential to modern transport management, can be used not just by transport providers, but also by information systems for multimodal transport and by national, local and regional authorities. These can use the data obtained by various applications for

long-term planning (of timetables and itineraries, for example), strategic decision-making and crisis management;

15. proposes, with a view to solving various – especially crisis – situations and enabling public transport providers (in great part local and regional authorities) to respond rapidly, that multimodal transport information systems should also be interconnected with the EU Copernicus programme for monitoring and environmental security (formerly GMES). The various applications employed by these two sources would make it possible not just to identify potential crises, but also, for example, to propose the necessary measures not only to find alternative routes, but also the replacement means of transport that needs to be deployed and then to propose other itineraries to every traveller;
16. also points that, if travellers are to be able to use the multimodal transport information system fully and actively, they must have guaranteed access to broadband networks in public transport vehicles, waiting rooms and bus stops etc., ticket offices and boarding stages. This necessitates an uninterrupted, high-quality connection so that the system can operate smartly and travellers can enjoy the benefits offered by processed dynamic information on current network conditions;
17. notes that European passenger rights only apply separately for each contract of carriage; as it is impossible to buy through tickets on many cross-border journeys, or in case of multi-modal journeys, passengers cannot rely on the usual passenger rights; calls therefore for legislation establishing a European passenger rights scheme for multi-modal transport;
18. notes that systems providing information on multimodal transport must be as user-friendly as possible; to this end, they must be accompanied by up-to-date maps and geographical support. It would also be expedient, and appreciated by users, if these systems could be linked to applications relating to local and regional tourist information – accommodation options, for example, or tourist destinations, and cultural and other events;
19. stresses that the interconnecting of complex multimodal transport information systems with GNSS systems, especially Galileo, with maps and geographic support, with the Copernicus programme and other sources of information and data paves the way for creating a vast range of applications. These applications can be used to plan transport routes effectively, to react swiftly to requirements as they arise, to resolve various exceptional or crisis situations, to markedly improve the efficacy of transport (which means energy savings, a significant reduction in CO₂ emissions and environmental improvement in general), to boost people's mobility by giving them more opportunity to answer job adverts, and so on. Above all, however, an entirely new branch of industry will emerge in data processing, the creation and administration of applications and the exploitation of their outcomes, which will in turn create a large number of jobs. In many cases, these new jobs will have the advantage that they can be performed away from the workplace, thus providing work opportunities in outlying and less developed regions;

20. Notes that more and more mobile applications on multimodal travel planning and information services are available and that these are often developed by creative private developers; calls on the relevant operators and authorities to cooperate and make their data available on an open source basis;
21. points out, finally, that, because local and regional authorities are key pillars in the creation of this comprehensive system, the following questions need to be resolved if these authorities, and the bodies operating under them, are to play a far more active role and become a motor driving the whole process forward:
- a) public funding – if necessary by means of a block exemption for this sphere;
 - b) the right to give the private sector information it can use, the right to ask other public and private entities to provide information and the right to gather, process and use this information;
 - c) funding options for the entire process and for each activity that ensure the work carried out in the creation and, above all, the management as such does not place further strain on the already stretched budgets of local and regional authorities, but on the contrary generates savings and revenue for these budgets. This work will have significant repercussions not only on the budgets of Member States, but above all on the private sector, including in areas other than transport.

Brussels, 3 December 2014

The President
of the Committee of the Regions

Michel Lebrun

The Secretary-General
of the Committee of the Regions

Jiří Buriánek

II. PROCEDURE

Title	Commission Staff Working Document "Towards a roadmap for delivering EU-wide multimodal travel information, planning and ticketing services"
Reference document	SWD(2014) 194 final
Legal basis	Article 307(1) TFEU
Procedural basis	Rule 41(a) of the CoR's Rules of Procedure
Date of Council/EP referral/Date of Commission letter	Commission letter: 16 July 2014
Date of president's decision	
Commission responsible	Commission for Territorial Cohesion Policy (COTER)
Rapporteur	Mr Petr Osvald (CZ/PES), Member of Plzeň City Council
Analysis	10 September 2014
Discussed in commission	
Date adopted by commission	22 October 2014
Result of the vote in commission (majority, unanimity)	Unanimity
Date adopted in plenary	3 December 2014
Previous Committee opinions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Opinion of the Committee of the Regions on the "White Paper – Roadmap to a Single European Transport Area" (CoR 101/2011 final¹, COTER-V-014)– Opinion of the Committee of the Regions: "Urban Mobility Package" (COR-2014-00090-00-00-AC², COTER-V-048)
Date of subsidiarity monitoring consultation	–

¹ [OJ C 259, 2.9.2011, p. 6.](#)

² [OJ C 271, 19.8.2014, p. 18.](#)