

European cross-border bus and train travel made simple

August 19 2019



Credit: Nout Gons from Pexels

Imagine crossing borders on a bus or train in Europe with journey information in the language of your choice and without having to shop for the best price or worrying about payment or inspection. Picture also being able to control your own data using chip cards, smartphones or

printed paper tickets that involve different interconnected national systems. traveling with such ease and trust simply on the basis of your account is now made possible by a technology developed under an EU-funded project.

The ETC, an initiative that brings together several European e-ticketing schemes in [public transport](#), various industry partners and the Account-Based traveling for European Public Transport (ACCEPT) Institute, has tested a new technology to deliver a solution for interoperability in cross-border ticketing. The aim was to introduce and test the concept of account-based ticketing on the border-crossing bus lines connecting Aachen in Germany and the Dutch cities of Heerlen and Maastricht. As explained in an article on the "Intelligent Transport" website, "participants received a chip card containing both the national standard electronic ticket as well as an interoperable ID that would be recognized and processed in the neighboring country. With this set up, [pilot](#) participants were able to travel on buses in the city of Aachen as well as on Dutch bus lines using only one chip card."

Roll-out of ETC pilots

The article notes that 500 participants subscribed to participate in the pilot that demonstrated the successful implementation of an account-based ticketing service across national borders using a secure ID as an identifier. "Having finished the pilot, the former ETC project partners and new partners are now working on a strategy for a follow-up project to further develop the system itself and to roll-out the approach geographically."

The further roll-out will see the implementation of the technology on the new direct train between Aachen and Maastricht. "This reflects the central objective to continue the work and further develop the system. In this context, the system will be extended to new modes, especially to

cross-border train services. Furthermore, new functionalities will be implemented, such as the integration of the smartphone as a user medium and the ability to enable distance-based pricing for journeys."

The ETC (The European travelers Club: Account-Based traveling across the European Union) project ran between 2015 and 2018. Researchers developed a pilot in Germany using the account-based traveling concept for both regional and cross-border travelers with online planned and booked tickets. Another pilot was tested in the Netherlands based on pay-as-you-go, while in Luxembourg transport and non-transport services such as parking were integrated through account-based traveling. The systems developed by ETC partners were tested at the European Travel Lab in the Netherlands that was also used as a facility to inform the public, stakeholders and local authorities.

More information: ETC project website:
www.europeantravellersclub.eu/

Provided by CORDIS

Citation: European cross-border bus and train travel made simple (2019, August 19) retrieved 28 April 2024 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2019-08-european-cross-border-bus-simple.html>

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