

TEMPLATE

Output factsheet: Pilot actions

Version 1

Project index number and acronym	CE886 - CONNECT2CE
Lead partner	Central European Initiative - Executive Secretariat
Output number and title	O.T2.1 - Pilot actions enhancing peripheral and cross-border passenger transport accessibility in CE <i>(D.T2.2.5 - Pilot action no. 3 - Harmonisation of bus and train timetables in the Hungarian border area)</i>
Responsible partner (PP name and number)	PP6 - KTI
Project website	https://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/CONNECT2CE.html
Delivery date	06/2019

Summary description of the pilot action explaining its experimental nature and demonstration character

PA3 focuses on the Austrian-Hungarian border, specifically on the Vas County (NUTS3). Here the border is crossed in the east-west direction by only two rail lines (ca 150 km far each other): Sopron-Wiener Neustadt (north) and Szentgotthárd-Graz (south). Two bus lines offer other cross-border connections, but only three times a day. To improve this supply, PA3 elaborates a study for the timetable harmonization of rail and bus services.

By a consultant phase among stakeholders has provided further feedback. According to them, the final version of the study has been carried out. This includes suggestions for the optimal harmonization of the two cross-border bus lines planned in the study of the PA4 in accordance with the timetable modifications already planned for the year 2021. Concrete future applications of these harmonisations are supported by both Hungarian and Austrian authorities and have been discussed in the Stakeholders' workshop organized in June 2019. The workshop has highlighted that: 1) tenders for the assignment of regional bus services to perform after 2021 are now ongoing in both Styria and Western Hungary; 2) the timetables of the buses serving main Hungarian train stations have been already adjusted for the period 2021-2031 according to planned rail improvements. Based on these conditions, partners have agreed that a first possible step for the year 2021 could be the introduction and harmonization of two medium-distance lines (Szombathely-Oberwart and Körmend-Güssing). To officially bear the implementation of such measures and achieve a political endorsement of relevant bodies, KTI will enforce its dialogue with the Ministry for Innovation and Technology and with other stakeholders.

NUTS region(s) concerned by the pilot action (relevant NUTS level)

NUTS3 - Vas County HU222

Expected impact and benefits of the pilot action for the concerned territory and target groups

The timetable harmonisation showed that there is a vast and robust PT network in Hungary with interconnections of other TEN-T corridors in the region, thus a major modification at Körmend or Szombathely is not possible. The planned acceleration of the Budapest-Vienna Railjet trains and its impact on the connecting timetable structure, together with the planned service developments and their required infrastructure upgrade will slightly modify the current timetable structure at Szombathely and consequently at Körmend too. Since the existing services in Austria are not sufficient (basically only school traffic except for the Vienna-Güssing G1 trunk route) the planned new buses should replace some Hungarian domestic buses to Bucsú/Pinkamindszent and they would be new service in Austria. However, in order to ensure attractive connections, they would be adapted to the new timetable structure on both sides effective from 2021. Once it is achieved a modal shift should be from private car usage to public transport modes which at the same time ensures inclusivity for people who cannot drive due to economic or health problems.

Sustainability of the pilot action results and transferability to other territories and stakeholders

The sustainability largely depends on the political willingness since in the current socio-economic environment these rural area services are loss-making. The environmental aspect is growing on both sides so in the near future the political support is expected. Timetables harmonization require continuous monitoring which takes into account the temporary and permanent service changes. Results can be transferred to other EU and non-EU border areas with similar connectivity issues.

Lessons learned from the implementation of the pilot action and added value of transnational cooperation

- Several differences across borders (about e.g. service hours, frequencies, tariff systems) make difficult the planning of new cross-border services harmonized on both sides of the border
- The regional network plans should cooperate at a higher level (cross-border or interregional)
- Sparse cross-border travel patterns (both in terms of space and time) are predominant and difficult to serve with public transport

There is no active EGTC between AT and HU. This makes more difficult a joint financing and management of cross-border public transport services

References to relevant deliverables and web-links If applicable, pictures or images to be provided as annex

- D.T2.2.2.5
- A similar ongoing project in Southwest-Europe: <https://emobask.eu/>
- The image was taken at Körmend intermodal station where the new bus service from Güssing will terminate.

