



# TRANSNATIONAL STRATEGY

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Transnational strategy for a better cross-  
border connection to TEN-T network

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Transnational Strategy on cross-sectoral Level is focused on improving the framework conditions for public transport cross-sectoral value chains and addresses the identified needs for further development and an increase of cross-border activities concerning the regional public transport systems and their rules.

The Transnational Strategy is a result of the first project activities, which were related to the regional analyses, and selection of needs regarding cross-border public transport in the project regions (Saxony, Lower Silesia, Liberec region, Carinthia and Koroška). This strategy contributes explicitly to foster cross-sectoral, transnational innovation activities concerning the other project activities: set-up of pilot activities and the establishment of trilateral public transport cooperation addressing the needs identified in the project. Taking into account the input from the regions, the project partners develop and jointly commit to this strategy. Besides, the Transnational Strategy addresses the real market need as a result of the several validation workshops that project partners organized in their regions, gathering relevant stakeholders from public transport and regional administrations.



# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1. BACKGROUND

Trans-Borders contributes to the programme result indicators with higher planning capacities of the public sector and related entities for regional passenger transport systems of the partner regions linked to national and European transport networks, the TEN-T corridors Baltic-Adriatic-Corridor and the Orient-East-Med-Corridor.

For both regions, transnational cooperation is well-implemented, public passenger transport excepted. TB wants to reach improved railway links and alternative bus lines in the peripheral regions. The project-based on three pillars, more governance, joint planning's, and operational implementations. One of the main results is the implementation of a Lasting Joint Steering Committee of Polish and German relevant stakeholders, like the Lead partner Saxon Ministry for Economic Affairs, Labour and Transport, the Lower Silesian Voivodship, the project partner ZVON, and other relevant actors for sustainable planning of cross-border transport. Another result is measured to reduce the travel times compared to the current situation, the main barrier for comfortable access to TEN-T corridors. With a Joint Action Plan for better cross-border connections to the TEN-T network Trans-Borders raises awareness for decision-makers on the European and national levels. With the development of a "Guideline to establish sustainable and sufficient links TEN-T links to peripheral cross-border regions" Trans-Borders creates a tool for other central European regions far from the TEN-T axes. For this purpose, Trans-Borders gets in contact with peripheral regions outside the Project with two transnational workshops in their regions.

Trans-Borders contributes to the overall goal "Cooperating beyond borders in central Europe to make our cities and regions better places to live and work" with implementing smart solutions answering to regional challenges in the fields of innovation, low-carbon transport, and public transport. Trans-Borders build regional capacities following an integrated bottom-up approach.

Through transnational cooperation and involvement of relevant actors from all governance levels, Trans-Borders provide new solutions in the frame of a coordinated transnational action which includes:

- New forms of governance,
- Mobility planning for public infrastructure, especially railway and buses,
- The involvement of the most important regional actors of the regional passenger transport systems
- Coordination to ensure that resources will be used most efficiently in pursuit of more governance and contribution to attractive and competitive cross-border passenger transport solutions.

Trans-Borders is focused on peripheral regions between TEN-T corridors and areas of the EU strategies of the Baltic Sea Region, the Adriatic and Ionian Region, and the Alpine Region. For both regions, the border triangle of CZ/PL/DE and the cross-border region Austrian South Carinthia / Slovenian Koroška. Trans-Borders creates conditions for the inhabitants through better interconnectivity which is the main requirement for more job opportunities and higher wage level, better access to higher educations and less outmigration.



## 1.2. OBJECTIVES AND EXPECTED RESULTS

The core objectives of the Transnational Strategy relate to the main specific objectives of the "Trans-Borders" project, which focus mainly on the promotion of cross-sectoral, transnational cooperation, and improved accessibility of TEN-T nodes from rural areas between the corridors and focus on strengthening territorial cohesion.

These objectives are to be achieved by setting up practical activities that allow for strong interaction between the traditional national public transport sector and transnational sectors. Another focus of the project objectives of "Trans-Borders" is to build up the necessary supporting capacities of the main actors - in particular new cross-border governance structures. The two main objectives of the Transnational Strategy of Trans-Borders can be summarised as follows:

### **1. More Governance - Professional intra-ministerial and interdepartmental cooperation**

Professional intra-ministerial and interdepartmental cooperation mean smooth decision and policy-making processes between cross-border regions to establish and to extend public passenger transport links and offers. For more cohesion and cooperation in Central Europe, clear schemes of operational and organizational structures must be achieved. In addition to different time horizons of tasks clear financing is crucial for the sustainable development of cross-border traffic and will be achieved. Trans-Borders will develop Joint Action Plan regarding an establishment of an encompassing steering committee for cross-border regions in peripheral regions far from the TEN-T network assisted by APs and other peripheral regions.

### **2. Contribution to attractive and competitive cross-border passenger transport solutions**

The contribution to attractive and competitive cross-border passenger transport solutions are dealing with different current barriers. On the one hand, Trans-Borders will be closed gaps in cross-border regions, e.g. between Dravograd and Lavamuend, which will be created technical basics for passenger rail transports between neighbouring regions and TEN T nodes and corridors abroad. Trans-Borders will provide better networking links from peripheral regions to the closest TEN-T nodes regardless of borders. It will be reached by different measurements like a mobility centre in Bolestawiec, measures for reducing travel times on track Dresden-Wroclaw, measures of interconnectivity in the Liberec region, and improved and extended bus lines between Carinthia and Koroška.

The expected impact of the Transnational Strategy goes beyond a period of five years due to the planned transferability and durability of the project results, which is particularly underlined by the action plans defined for each project region for regional measures to improve common cross-border infrastructure, which should and will be in line with the Transnational Strategy. The outputs of the "Trans-Borders" project will then be defined for the duration of the project with clear operational objectives. However, most of the actions are expected to be permanent, i.e. if the implementation during the project is successful, they are expected to be continued by the project partners or relevant regional actors as part of their portfolio of activities. Furthermore, the reproducibility of the project results will also contribute to the impact of this strategy, and then the methodological approach for the development of the Transnational Strategy and the Regional Action Plans will be documented as part of the strategy process and will be reusable for any region with similar needs to promote regional innovation systems.



Therefore, the expected impacts are as follows:

- Increasing the economic competitiveness of cross-border public transport at national and transnational level
- Improving the quality of life in towns and municipalities located in the direct and wider border area
- Achieving improved efficiency of support infrastructure
- Improving the institutional capacity of regional institutions
- Supporting regional leaders in building cross-sectoral partnerships to develop competitive, environmentally sound strategies for cross-border public transport and economic development
- Support for the development of innovation in cross-border public transport companies
- Transforming the underlying "best practice" framework for interregional exchange activities into the promotion of exchanges in a learning perspective





### 1.3. WHY ADOPT A JOINT STRATEGY?

The enhancement of the regional cross-border accessibility means the enhancement of the cooperation processes of all relevant stakeholders within one region and having a strategy for it is a good start. However, an even better starting position can be obtained by having a transnational strategy, which encompasses the analysis of challenges, approaches, and tools, as well as innovations implementation within the public transport providers, in each of the Central European border-region.

The joint strategy ensures an integrated and detailed approach supported by the long-term perspective, concerning the international dimension and improved cooperation within the EU regions. In that way, the key learnings acquired through the project activities highlight the key problem areas of the cross-sectoral collaboration topics of the public transport providers, and possible strategic approach in the future needed to better understand them and identify necessary adaption. The gained pertinent learning from the Transnational Strategy and Regional Action Plans as well as from the Pilot Actions will be integrated into the Transnational Sustainability Plan and coherent Regional Action Plans, which should ensure project results on improving the framework conditions for cross-sectoral value chains, including strategic but also operational objectives.



## 2. CROSS-SECTORAL COLLABORATION WITHIN CROSS-BORDER PUBLIC TRANSPORT: CHALLENGES AND PRIORITY AREAS

### 2.1. INTRODUCTION

The TRANS-BORDERS Transnational Strategy was developed in the process of project activities. The results of the starting activities are related to the regional analysis of cross-border public rail passenger transport and collaboration with other sectors and with the support of regional development plans directed the further focus of the project.

The following activities connected to the specification of transnational needs for successful cross-border transport showed that public transport associations across the Central Europe region struggle with the similar system gaps related to the activities (and its results) conducted within the framework of most cross-border solutions for public transport: ministries, public transport associations, transport operators, regional development agencies, higher education and research organizations, clusters and other relevant institutions and administrations.

These gaps could be grouped into three thematic sections and are recommended as priority areas for implementing the Transnational Strategy.

#### **Deliverables that led to the Transnational Strategy:**

##### **D.T1.2 Problems and need for cross-border public transport in Central Europe**

PT Saxony (DE) - Lower Silesia (PL) / Liberec region (CZ) - Saxony (DE) / Lower Silesia (PL) - Liberec region (CZ) / Carinthia (AT) - Koroška (SI).

Regional analyses describe the problems and needs of cross-border public transport in the regions. The analyses were the baseline for further project activities and pilot activities.

##### **D.T1.3 Best practice of cross-border public transport in Central Europe**

Workshop in a peripheral region of Central Europe and Stakeholder Workshop for all PP regions

The workshop addressed all PP and stakeholders from their related regions and realized to support comprehensive interaction and cross-fertilization. Contacts were made and intensified, to be used for the entire remaining project runtime.

##### **D.T2.1 Regional Action Plans**

Sustainable improvement of cross-border passenger transport for a better link to the cross-border region will be reached with adjusted and adopted action plans for improving public transport. Based on the problems of the needs of each cross-border region the action plans are a sustainable action to develop the ongoing project. Action plans of Saxony/Lower Silesia, Lower Silesia/Liberec Region, Saxony/Liberec Region, and South Carinthia/Koroška will be developed (serve as a basis for implemented pilots).





## 2.2. TRANS-BORDERS - TRANSNATIONAL STRATEGY ON CROSS-SECTORAL LEVEL

The Transnational Strategy of Trans-Borders at the cross-sectoral level addresses the following three priority areas with various joint and local actions:

- **Priority area 1: Better planning**
- **Priority Area 2: Excellent connections**
- **Priority area 3: More Governance**

Trans-Borders's Transnational Strategy is to tackle those priority areas, which mirror the main weaknesses of the cross-border public transport. This will be done by other project operations that are grouped around two major activity groups:

### **Set-up of pilot innovation environments**

The main goal is to develop a pilot innovation environment concept with regional but also transnational dimensions. Each concept shall clearly define the operational objectives, responsibilities, resources, and timeline for implementation. Each pilot will be implemented, with the aim to (1) test innovative approaches to foster environmentally-friendly innovation, and (2) involve public and private-public transport operators in cross-border innovation projects. The implementation of the pilots will be monitored during the whole duration of the testing phase based on qualitative and quantitative criteria, and by the end of the pilot phase, an evaluation of all pilots will be performed and provide a basis for learning interactions and replication in further Central European border regions.

### **Capacity-building activities**

Support organizations, enterprises and institutions (public transport providers, planning agencies, EGTCs, infrastructure providers) are one of the major tools for increasing cross-border accessibility in areas far from the TEN-T core network, and without building their capacities, it will be impossible to realize cross-border projects within public transport branch. The operations linked to those activities intended to improve the impact and efficiency of support organizations in the project regions - and beyond - by improving their internal skills and organization and strengthening their intermediary role between the transport sector and the planning institutions and administrations on regional, national but also transnational and cross-sectoral level. The implemented activities and pilots will be linked to the mutual learning & mentoring activities (via knowledge transfer, study visits etc.) and development of Regional Action Plans.



### 2.2.1. PRIORITY AREA 1: Better planning

To plan and realize the improvement of the rail connection of total length less than 200 km cross 3 states need a lot of coordination and patient. Each of the national rail infrastructure manager act according own priorities and rules.

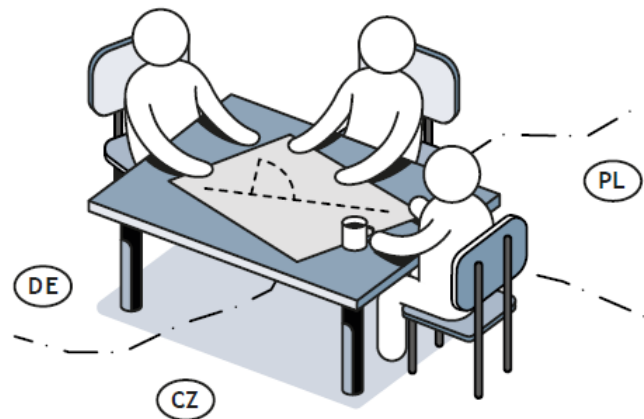
Generally, the main attention is paid to the rail tracks - part of the TEN-T network. The main investments from the EU and national funds goes to the improvements of the rail tracks they are part of the TEN-T network. The TEN-T European network consist not only from the main transport axis in Core network but also from the Comprehensive network which connect the second grade nodes and often the peripheral region to the main network and TEN-T nodes.

Regional rail tracks crossing the border not implemented in TEN-T network could have own potential (linking the touristic areas). Rail connection can be added to the TEN-T network (Core or Comprehensive) via the demand to any of the national Ministry of Infrastructure/Transportation. This demand is being proved by European Commission - SG MOVE. The ministry of infrastructure of the involved states are asked for their statements too such demand.

The arguments can be found and discussed with the ministries in all of the involved countries in advance to make the official process much smoother.

A joint plan for the improvement is necessary. Creating the idea from the really beginning with all of the involved parties is pivotal in the later phases when it is very hard to keep the idea alive during the long process of administrative preparation. The plan needs to be added in all of the important strategies, investment, and service plans of all of the national infrastructure manager and regions.

Not only state infrastructure manager are the initiator of the improvement. Even the regional government and municipalities especially in cross border regions can initiate it by persuading the manager and state authorities, about the benefits of the project. There could be some hidden benefits, they are not obvious from the state level point of view.



The investments do not need to be as huge as on the improvements on the mail rail axis. In the end it is not such a big difference to achieve the travel time from region to the main node (for ex. from Liberec to Praha) in 60 minutes or in 30 minutes. The 60 minutes of the travel time and max. 200 Km/hour with two rail just in the necessary sections for exchange the trains could be twice or more cheaply than 300 km/hour, 30 minutes of the travel time and double rail in all of the length. The activity of such connection will rise increasingly comparing the nowadays state and what is important, the economical evaluation of the project can be more successful.

Aside of big infrastructural investments there are much common tasks in organizing cross -borders public transport connection train or bus lines.

The structures are different in many countries. In Austria, in the Czech Republic and in Germany the regional authorities are responsible for the regional bus and train services and the states order the long distance train connections. In Slovenia, the Ministry of Infrastructure is responsible for all regional and long-distance trains and buses. In Poland the regional bus transport is still mainly on a commercial basis,



even this is changing slowly with new regulation enabling financing of the regional bus services by Wójewództwo. In all countries, the municipalities can organize their municipal bus transport. This is a solution for finding partners in Poland. This is the solution on the bus lines 831a Bogatynia (PL) - Zittau (DE) and 691 Hrádek n.N. (CZ) - Zittau (DE) - Bogatynia (PL) - Frýdlant (CZ)- Świeradów-Zdrój (PL) which were prepared in frame of TRANS-BORDERS project.

Even after obvious interests of all involved party it is not so easy to proceed it, it need time and meet all of the administrative process on all of the sides.





### 2.2.2. PRIORITY AREA 2: Excellent connections

The transport and spatial development policy objectives in the European Union are ambitious. In principle, they are in line with the transport and regional planning policy objectives in Carinthia. The objectives can only be achieved if they also form the basis of policy on the ground in the cities and regions. In cities and regions, it is particularly important to reduce traffic-related noise and air pollution such as CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, to promote a switch from cars to public transport and to encourage cycling and pedestrian traffic.

Traffic flows do not stop at national borders. The catchment areas of many European cities and regions often extend far into neighbouring countries. The organisation of local public transport is particularly difficult in such border regions. Here there are often gaps in the transport infrastructure, in public transport services, or there is a lack of cross-border fares. Beyond the connections between the city and the surrounding area, the European idea is brought to life in these border regions. Upgrading cross-border regional connections is therefore not only a concern of transnational relevance but also an important starting point for advancing European integration.

The Trans-European Transport Networks are the major transport axes linking the European metropolitan areas. They ensure the Trans-European transport of goods and passengers and are the central links for European integration. However, the Trans-European Networks must not only be viewed from their ends - their starting and finishing points in the European metropolitan regions - but also offer opportunities to bring growth impulses into the regions. If the trans-European networks in the regions they pass through are not only to be perceived as a burden - due to their land use, noise and pollutant emissions - the impetus for regional development must be taken up as effectively as possible.

Improving regional accessibility: the aim here is to improve local and regional links to national and transnational networks to overcome natural or administrative borders in the region. The most important strategy papers dealing with this topic are the "Mobility Master Plan Carinthia 2035" with the acronym MoMaK 2035 from 2015 and the "Reform Plan 2020+" from 2019. The goal of future traffic development must be to develop a networked overall traffic system that handles traffic in a sustainable, environmentally friendly, safe and efficient manner while ensuring affordable mobility for all sections of the population.

Current demand and commuting patterns data and information indicate considerable efforts should focus on further upgrading existing cross border possibilities provided by railway line corridor between Maribor and Bleiburg/Pliberk.

According to our estimations around 2.000 workers from Koroška region were in 2017 officially working in Austria. It is known around 450 of Slovenian citizens were employed at two production factories in St. Michael and 70 % of those are from Mežiška Valley. Within the preparation of "Mobility Master Plan Carinthia 2035" estimates of potential to change modal split from the car and carpooling to train for workers at two production factories in St. Michael were prepared. Just over 40 % of workers in five near the border municipalities were living within 1,5 km distance to the train station.

Just below 390 pupils and students from Slovenia, we attending programs in Carinthia in the school year 2017/2018 according to the gathered data. 62 pupils and at least 17 students were from Koroška region in Slovenia. Pupils and students from Koroška region often travel by car or as car accompaniment to Bleiburg and change for a train to Klagenfurt as revealed in interviews.

This railway line corridor, which will be directly connected to the Koralm Railway, has at least a potential like the Micotra - best practice railway line between Villach and Udine/Trieste. Since there is not the only potential in sustainable mobility for leisure time (tourism) as well as for daily mobility (e. g. work or education). By 2025 Koralm Railway, as a part of Southern Line, will be in operation. A new highspeed railway line will reduce travel time between Klagenfurt and Graz to 45 minutes. The new passenger train station is foreseen in St. Paul in Lavant River Valley. Bleiburg/Pliberk will not be directly on the new highspeed railway line. But it will be connected with it via so-called "Bleiburger Schleife" and thus importance of the "Koroška program" line between Maribor in Slovenia and Bleiburg/Pliberk will remain or even raise.<sup>1</sup>



European Commission *Comprehensive analysis of the existing cross border rail transport connections and missing link on the internal EU borders* has recognized rail connection Klagenfurt-Bleiburg-Maribor as on the potentially most beneficial projects along with other 47 cross border rail transport connections. Even more, rail connection Klagenfurt-Bleiburg-Maribor has along with other 18 project been put into the highest category "high need for improvement of cross border passenger services on operational infrastructure".<sup>2</sup>

As a short-term measure timetable change, common promotion, marketing, and ticketing would be needed to further develop the potential of cross border possibilities provided by railway line corridor between Maribor and Bleiburg/Pliberk. By implementing the timetable changes and making the best use of the existing resources, an attractive local cross-border rail service could be offered with special focus on commuters on working days and tourists (cyclists) on weekends and during the cycling season. As a further medium-term measures' infrastructure upgrading, new train compositions and traffic management measures would be needed on the Slovenian part of the rail connection.



<sup>1</sup> ÖBB,  
[https://www.oebb.at/infrastruktur/de/5\\_0\\_fuer\\_Generationen/5\\_4\\_Wir\\_bauen\\_fuer\\_Generationen/5\\_4\\_1\\_Schieneinfrastruktur/Suedstrecke/suedstreckeonline/index\\_en.html](https://www.oebb.at/infrastruktur/de/5_0_fuer_Generationen/5_4_Wir_bauen_fuer_Generationen/5_4_1_Schieneinfrastruktur/Suedstrecke/suedstreckeonline/index_en.html)

<sup>2</sup>European Commission, *Comprehensive analysis of the existing cross border rail transport connections and missing link on the internal EU borders*, 2018





### 2.2.3. PRIORITY AREA 3: More Governance

Cooperation in border areas has specific needs, depending on regional, geographical, economic, social, cultural and other conditions related to cross-border links. The desire for cross-border cooperation is met in a wide variety of ways in European border regions. A higher degree of cross-border cooperation is represented by joint Euroregions, such as the Euregion Nysa/Neisse/Nisa in the border triangle of Poland, Germany and the Czech Republic. The increasing degree of networking in cooperation also increases the demands on the tasks to be solved, and the organisational structures do not always grow to the same extent. The next highest form of cooperation in the above-mentioned border triangle is a trilateral EGTC.

An EGTC can be established for thematic tasks (e. g. environmental protection, transport association, management of education or health infrastructure) or cross-sectoral tasks (e. g. support for regional development). In this mentioned region, the need for cross-border coordination and cooperation is greatest in the area of transport infrastructure and public rail transport. When establishing an EGTC, it will be crucial to identify and formulate the exact need for deepening and/or stabilising cooperation, as the existing structures are not sufficient to achieve the desired level of cooperation. Also, the actors in the Free State of Saxony, the Lower Silesia Voivodeship and the Liberec Region, which have the competence for the tasks to be transferred to the EGTC, must become members of the EGTC.

So far, only very few topic-specific and three-country EGTCs have been established. However, as indicated above, it will make sense to provide various services of public rail transport and related infrastructure measures of general economic interest in cross-border territories through an EGTC, even if further clarifications are needed before sufficient legal certainty is achieved for this type of EGTC application. This does not imply the transfer of competences, but only the transfer of the task. It must therefore be emphasised that the competencies remain with the respective regional or local authorities.

Past experiences of established EGTCs, such as the EGTC PAMINA and the EGTC TRITIA, show that the EGTC instrument is anything but easy to apply. The establishment of an EGTC is usually time-consuming and requires considerable efforts from the parties involved. To establish an EGTC, the stakeholders from the regions in Germany, the Czech Republic and Poland - must agree on the design and structure of the EGTC, its tasks and working methods. To achieve these agreements, extensive knowledge of the legal aspects relevant to the operation of the EGTC in the respective countries is necessary. Also, the members of the EGTC must maintain a trusting and result-oriented cooperation.

The above conclusions apply to EGTCs in cross-border areas as well as to EGTCs of transnational or interregional cooperation. Ultimately, the establishment of a joint three-country EGTC between Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic will lead to a decisive boost in cooperation and considerably more governance, if only because the inclusion and upgrading of previous forms of cooperation will build up further capacities, which will ultimately also gain national and European significance.



### 3. IMPLEMENTATION

This Transnational Strategy is developed for five years and includes objectives to be achieved during the project but also beyond. The implementation is ensured via Regional Action Plans, which are specific for each project region, and defined for the duration of the project, with clear operational objectives. However, most of the actions are expected to be durable by nature, i.e. if the implementation during the project is successful, it is expected that the project partners or relevant regional stakeholders continue with those activities as part of their activity portfolio.

The project partners are also expected to integrate the outputs/findings in their regional strategic and financial planning to improve their effectiveness and efficiency. The challenges, approaches, and solutions observed from the project regions' pilot project implementation concerning monitoring, learning, and adaptation will be summarized in a Transnational Sustainability Plan beyond the project lifetime. This document is planned to be an after project output of Trans-Borders and will be dedicated to improving the framework conditions for public transport based cross-sectoral value chains, including strategic but also operational objectives, thus extending the initially this strategy. Also, here the project partners will develop joint plans aiming at ensuring coherent implementation of the Transnational Sustainability Plan in each project region, and this will include the preparation for larger investments enabling the implementation at a broader and durable scale of the pilot actions developed within Trans-Borders. The main characteristics of the described synthesis are:

- Linking local, national, regional, and global priorities, actions, and stakeholders
- Linking different sectors
- Linking the short-term to the medium- and long-term plans and actions.

This vertical and horizontal coordination represents basic linkages aiming to ensure the implementation of both strategies and experiences and lessons learned during the project implementation. However, those linkages also ensure the transferability and durability of the project outputs, especially in terms of replicability of the strategic processes for any region with similar needs related to the public transport providers and stakeholders, regional planning system, and cross-sectoral cooperation.



## 4. CONCLUSION

Although cross-border public transport services in Central Europe have a centuries-old tradition, they are often seen as outdated and old-fashioned. They tend to be perceived in a negative light because of the connection with long border controls, changing locomotives, or changing tariffs. The poor image of the sector is a result of poor lobbying and the modest attitude of the relevant interest groups, probably because the operators of local transport are providers of low cumulative importance, mostly located in rural areas. This also means that, in addition to the usual daily challenges of public transport, they have to deal daily with all the problems posed by their rural situation, and in this scenario lobbying, image, advertising, and similar activities cannot be their priorities.

The fact is, however, that public transport operators have a large base to become a major driver of a sustainable and cascading economy whose potential has yet to be tapped. New services are needed to meet the changing societal demands of 21st-century consumers and public transport operators can provide them. Focusing on sophisticated, higher-quality public transport services will be essential, not only for regional accessibility but also for the accessibility of TEN-T nodes and also for territorial cohesion.

These require new processes and business models, such as a cross-sectoral and cross-border approach, but also improvement of the quality and efficiency of the transport operation, and related services. Those can be and are already being developed as sustainable and environmentally cross-border solutions, which integrate also an added-value approach and innovations are an indispensable element of those processes. The transport actor's level of innovation implementation within the cross-border cooperation should be therefore significantly improved.

With the EGTCs, the European Union has an independent and effective instrument for coordinating cross-border public transport concepts and their implementation, but the establishment of an EGTC is a major problem for regions and local actors. This is particularly true for regions with three neighbouring Member States of the European Union.

To fully exploit the potential of cross-border public transport actors on the ground, some strategic changes must therefore be planned, and the intensification of the debate on the role of EGTCs as an essential element of European cross-border project development should be a starting point. The approach of regional stakeholders and transport actors to cross-border pilot projects at the European level needs to be improved, especially when dealing with cross-sectoral, i.e. intra-ministerial issues. The proposed measures are complementary and should ensure a general alignment of the potential of public transport service providers in terms of their contribution to the creation of sustainable and low carbon societies, not only in the region but also at the European level.