

**Cross border public (rail) transport
problems in North West Europe**

**Proposals for action on EU level on the basis of selected
operating and project experiences**

**Submission to the EC in relation to the first draft of the 3rd
framework programme 2010-2020
(White Paper on European Transport Policy)**

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Samenvatting

Het is de bedoeling van deze paper voor de komende Witboek over het Europese vervoersbeleid 2010 aanbevelingen te geven. De input werd vooral geleverd door de leden van het 'Openbaar Vervoer Coördinatie Comité in de Euregio Maas-Rijn' en de partners van het INTERREG-project 'RoCK - Regions of Connected Knowledge'.

Om hun doelen te bereiken stellen de deelnemende partners voor, dat de EU haar inspanningen in de volgende belangrijke kerngebieden zoude versterken, met bijzondere aandacht voor regionale grensoverschrijdende spoorverbindingen:

- Verder stimuleren van de harmonisatie en tegelijkertijd de ontwikkeling van een functionerende markt voor spoorwegvervoer
- Systematisch monitoren van spoorwegcapaciteit problemen, doorzetten van capaciteitsvergroting en installatie van ETCS of zelfs de reactivering van spoorweginfrastructuur
- Doorzetten van de EU-brede harmonisatie van ETCS niveaus
- Helpen versnellen en vereenvoudigen toelatingsprocedures van rollend materieel, dat al is toegelaten in ten minste een lidstaat
- Helpen de extra kosten voor de multi-systeem rollend materieel te dekken door middel van eenvoudige financiering procedures
- Doorzetten van klantvriendelijke grensoverschrijdende tarieven systemen
- Vermijden, dat nationale, regionale, lokale overheden openbaar vervoer tarieven invoeren, die niet kunnen worden compatibel gemaakt over de grens
- Standaardiseren van elektronische en conventionele ticketing systemen en vermijden, dat nationale, regionale, lokale overheden niet-compatibele systemen ontwikkelen
- Ter beschikking stellen van een minimum standaard voor reisinformatie (pre-trip, on-trip) aan de gebruiker van de regionale (grensoverschrijdende) openbaar vervoer (bus en trein)
- Versterken van bevoegdheden van de regelgevende instantie op EU-niveau (bijvoorbeeld het European Railway Agency) om de verwezenlijking van de bovengenoemde doelen te monitoren en actief te stimuleren

Voor sommige van de bovenstaande aspecten kan de Single European Sky-initiatief één model zijn, zogezegd een "Single European Rail"-initiatief. Vele andere delen van de EU worstelen met dezelfde problemen. De bedoeling van dit document is de ontwikkeling van EU-brede oplossingen of het beleid, bijvoorbeeld in de commissies "White Paper on European Transport Policy 2010", te ondersteunen.

De deelnemende partners zijn geïnteresseerd om te dienen als een "laboratorium" om EU-strategieën, nieuwe technologieën en normen, nieuwe administratieve of contractuele procedures enz. te ontwikkelen en te toetsen, voordat ze officieel zijn werkzaam in de gehele EU.

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1. Introduction

Focus of this paper

It is the aim of this paper to propose recommendations for the next **White Paper on European Transport Policy 2010**. This paper does not include rail freight, because the authors are representing public transport authorities or local and regional governments / administrations who are primarily dealing with passenger services.

It has not been the original intention to focus on cross border rail sections, but experience during the past and today show that because of different national power and signalling systems, different forms of rail market organisation, there are many challenges facing transport stakeholders in our particular cross-border region. Cross border transport in general requires the co-operation of at least two member states, it requires guidelines and regulation above member state level. That is why activity on EU level is needed.

This paper tries to sum up practical experiences of day-to-day-business as well as different strategy and position papers by cities and regions, public transport authorities and operators etc. The input was mostly delivered by the members of the "Public Transport Co-ordination Committee in the Euregio Maas-Rhine¹" and the partners of the INTERREG-project "RoCK – Regions of Connected Knowledge²".

The objective of the "Public Transport Co-ordination Committee in the Euregio Maas-Rhine" is the co-ordination of day-to-day-business of cross border public transport, the implementation of concrete cross border public transport projects and the elaboration of future strategies³.

RoCK is a major European project which has secured € 5.9 million of European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) under the EU INTERREG IVB North West Europe programme. The lead partner, the City of Eindhoven, together with many partners from the Netherlands, France, Belgium, Germany and the UK, is encouraging co-operation between knowledge regions. In addition to the partners, a large number of strategically important organisations are associated with the project and have signed a letter of support. Strategic partners include local and regional governments, chambers of commerce, development organisations, regional cooperatives and transport bodies. Together they have the critical mass to build on North West Europe's economic strength.

The RoCK-project focuses on getting the most out of the existing rail infrastructure and developing smart rail services to improve the transport networks between centres of knowledge regardless of national borders. It is based on the assumption that

¹ Société Nationale des Chemins de Fer Belge (SNCB), Vlaamse Vervoermaatschappij De Lijn, Limburg Province (B), Limburg Province (NL), Transport en Commun (TEC), Aachener Verkehrsverbund (AVV), City of Aachen

² City of Eindhoven as lead Partner, Parkstad Limburg, City of Maastricht, City of Venlo, City of Aachen, Aachener Verkehrsverbund (AVV), City of Mönchengladbach, Vlaamse Vervoermaatschappij De Lijn, Région Nord-Pas-de-Calais, Reading Borough Council

³ z.B. Gezamenlijke intentieverklaring „Samen werken aan openbaar vervoer“, 30.06.2008

- as transnational public transport connections are more expensive to build, carry fewer passengers and tickets are more expensive than on national networks
- national borders are still a bottleneck for the free flow of people and ideas, which is an essential prerequisite for a single European knowledge economy.

Smooth circulation of knowledge workers is crucial for knowledge regions, and face-to-face contact is still a vital business requirement. A strong national and international transport infrastructure is a prerequisite for business. As the RoCK partners come from different knowledge regions, co-operation is essential for each of those areas. In general, RoCK seeks to make smart small-scale investments with a large impact on connectivity. The project addresses barriers in the area of rail market organisation, infrastructure and ticketing and marketing.

Infrastructure actions as part of the RoCK-project are

- IC Eindhoven – Venlo – Mönchengladbach – Düsseldorf and IC Eindhoven – Heerlen – Aachen as connection between the Dutch Intercity network and the German HST-hubs
- The construction of a new cross border light rail line between Maastricht and Hasselt partly on an old freight line
- Transmanche Metro: New inter-regional rail services using existing high-speed rail infrastructure to connect cities and regions in Kent (UK) and Nord-Pas-de-Calais (F) not served by Eurostar with each other and with the existing transnational point-to-point services to London, Paris and Brussels

Activities include also a feasibility study for an innovative “people mover” between Aachen HST station and Aachen University, international integration of ticketing systems and marketing of (new) cross border rail links.

Some of the RoCK-project partners are also represented in the “Public Transport Co-ordination Committee in the Euregio Maas-Rhine”. In total we have partners from all the member states in North West Europe: France, Belgium, the UK, the Netherlands and Germany.

On the basis of experiences made by day-to-day-business and the results of the transnational RoCK-project the participating partners want to give the EC an comprehensive overview about problems and solutions encountered in the area of cross border public transport. Though there might be a focus on member states in North West Europe or especially on the Dutch-Belgian-German region (for instance Euregio Maas-Rhine) the intention of the document is to develop general solutions, which have the potential to be applicable in all member states on the basis of concrete examples given by the partners.

The North-West Europe partners want to subdivide the vast number of particular aspects of cross-border rail transport into the following thematic sections:

- **Rail Market Organisation**
- **Infrastructure**
- **Rolling Stock**
- **Passenger Issues (Tariffs, Ticketing Systems, and Passenger Information)**
- **Regulatory Body**

This paper goes through each of the above sections by proposing **possible EU Actions** which have the potential to be applicable in all member states.

The instruments to create an efficient and powerful rail market in the EU need to be made consistent with the shared objectives of European Economic, Social, and Territorial Cohesion. One of the key goals for the next decade is to prepare the railway for a prominent role by increasing efficiency and carefully targeting investment on a major scale to raise the quality of service. Also, a strong consideration of the customer and the decarbonisation of transport will help increase the rail market share of the transport market. This is synonymous with the future sustainability of the EU project.

Intention of this paper

The Commission plans to publish a new White Paper on European Transport Policy in 2010. This upcoming EU publication will replace the 2001 White Paper on European Transport Policy and lay out the transport policy framework for the coming decade. We regard this as a highly important exercise. The rail sector will have to face a number of challenges in the coming years. Therefore Europe and her regions need the right policy framework that can help overcome these obstacles.

This paper is a first draft which the participating partners regard as a supporting contribution to the White Paper on European Transport Policy 2010. Furthermore the partners want to work more closely together with the EC to exchange and share experiences, knowledge etc. on a regular basis. They are aware of the fact that future solutions in the public transport sector must be cost-efficient, technologically advanced and aim at standardisation on EU level in general.

2. Rail Market Organisation

Possible EU Actions

For regional cross border public (subsidised) rail transport there is in general no economic justification in developing an additional network to the existing ones. It is more important to connect the existing national networks and make better use of subsidies already in place for the interior rail services.

In the Dutch-Belgian-German area different modes have been or will be tried to improve regional cross border rail transport:

A Member State could insert powers, relating to the establishment and operation of regional cross border connections in their contracts with public rail transport operators, with the consent of a neighbouring public transport authority. For example, a Belgian state contract or a Dutch state contract could permit a transport authority to run an agreed service to the next rail transport node (preferably high speed station) behind the German border (for example Aachen or Düsseldorf central station).

In the case of Germany, the above arrangement could be achieved by tendering a regional cross border rail connection to the free market in co-operation with the neighbouring public transport authority. The problem is that there is a high possibility that the cross border tendering of an economically interesting regional cross border rail connection would conflict with already existing Member State contract concessions. That means that this solution would be difficult to apply in the case of Belgium. It would also be challenging in the case of the Netherlands. Though the Dutch provinces already have a certain kind of autonomy to contract rail operators (or bus and rail operators combined), the common use of one rail track, which is being used by one concessionaire, by another (cross border) rail operator is not evident. In this case a solution could be the cross border harmonization of contract durations to rail operators.

The Commission should issue guidelines and/or Directives that oblige Member States and/or public transport authorities or member states to take cross border rail connections into consideration when preparing rail networks or rail lines for contracting (see Belgian state contract and next Dutch state contract). Public transport authorities should have to explain to the EC which contractual measures they want to take to connect their network with the one of their neighbour. The connecting of HST-hubs (such as Aachen, Liège, Lille etc.) via regional rail services across the border can dramatically increase efficiency and have significant socio-economic benefits for the EU and furthermore through the networking effects produce a considerable added value on top of the funding of TEN-axes.

It often occurs that a unilateral interest to improve cross border rail connections is not returned by the neighbouring member state. If by means of negotiations between the neighbouring public transport authorities no progress can be made, the interested member state needs stronger support from the EC. The EC should reflect on how to put stronger pressure on the inactive public transport authority, when no progress can be made through negotiations. At least the inactive public authority / member state should be obliged to consent to a tendering process for a regional cross border rail connection

to the next important (high speed) node initiated by the interested neighbouring public authority / member state, even though the tendering affects railway sections with already existing concessions to other rail operators.

3. Infrastructure

Possible EU Actions

There could be an enlargement of the TEN-T framework with two further rail programs; HST-connect and cross border projects. Additional funding could be given as an incentive to encourage neighbouring authorities to working closer together. For example, an extra 20 % of the infrastructure costs could be given to a cross border project when the two neighbouring member states apply together. Also, there needs to be stronger supervision of partnership activity from the European Institutions.

There are serious questions about the current CBA methodology on member state or regional level. There needs to be a methodology that takes into account the added extra value of cross border programmes and the positives coming from the economies of agglomeration.

Special consideration should be given to smaller projects generating a capacity increase in the network (e.g. bottleneck relief, improvements in nodes, freight transport bypass routes around agglomerations, overtaking tracks) with comparatively small investments. This should be part of a larger package focused clearly on the highest priorities and providing a coherent plan which might encompass renewal and maintenance of the entire viable rail network, reform, infrastructure charges and the level and funding of social obligations

There could be two possibilities to get onto the programs:

1. Member state or even better two or more neighbouring member states apply with projects
2. EC actively initiates a capacity enhancement plan when there are severe congestion problems being recorded or forecast. This key information could be forwarded by any public transport authority, public transport operator or infrastructure company to a newly empowered ERA (See regulatory body section).

Any coordination process concerning the allocation of train paths that should be undergoing problems due to conflict between different transport authorities or operators should be reported to the ERA. The aim would be to obtain a spatial overview of capacity problems so enlargement projects could be developed. In case of inactivity of member states, the EC or the ERA should have more power to actively initiate and enforce capacity enhancement plans without questioning the principle of subsidiarity.

An enlargement of the ETCS-program is also required. The EC should insist on the harmonization of ETCS levels, provide extra subsidies for making railways conform to ETCS (also secondary routes, not only TEN-users routes) and integrate the ETCS-

program into the TEN-, the HST- and the cross border programme. EU funding only should be given when the proposed ETCS complies with EU standards or, if an EU standard is not in place, two neighbouring countries agree on installing the same or fully compatible ETCS levels (also in case of upgrading ETCS already in place) for cross border sections.

4. Rolling Stock

Possible EU Actions

The major objective of the EU should be to streamline approval procedures, especially in the case of already existing given approvals by at least one member state, without the lowering of safety demands.

Approval procedures of rolling stock should be closely monitored by the European Railway Agency. The European Railway Agency should be informed of any application for approval of rolling stock that already is approved in at least one member state. The European Railway Agency in those cases should be able to intervene out of its own will or on request of the applicant (the national approbation body or the public transport authority) to mediate approval procedure.

Even though approval of rolling stock in the member states can be accelerated, there is still a need for installing many different power and signalling systems on one train set. This makes train sets expensive and approval procedures longer.

While the harmonization of power systems is not an option, the EU should concentrate on the harmonisation of signalling systems. In addition to the existing guidelines the EU should put more pressure on the member states to harmonise ETCS levels with the clear objective that there should not be different interpretations of ETCS levels by member states in the near future.

We propose a research and development program for common ETCS levels based in the knowledge centres of North West Europe. The ambition should be to develop common ETCS levels for within the region, at least. The EU should support a funding program for the upgrading of rolling stock for cross border passenger rail services and cross border (secondary) railway infrastructure sections. This funding program should also comprise the installation of technically up-to-date overhead traction lines and power system changing locations.

Another aspect is the covering of extra costs for regional cross border rolling stock. When a public authority invites to tender cross border rail connections often play a minor role in the total of the rail network. The comparatively small number of train sets needed for cross border sections often considerably increases the amount of necessary subsidies to be paid by the public transport authority to the rail operator. To reduce the pressure on public transport authorities and rail operators from the disproportionate cost of regional cross border rail services, the EU should cover the extra costs for necessary multi-system rolling stock. In the case of an invitation to tender for a cross border rail line all bidders could be obliged to state the extra costs for cross border rolling stock in their offer, so

that market forces would be still existent. In the case of a planned direct contracting for a regional cross border rail connection a member state / public transport authorities or two neighbouring member states / public transport authorities together should have the possibility to apply for EU funding for the additional costs for rolling stock.

Also for the development of technologically advanced multi-system rolling stock the knowledge centres in North West Europe could play a key role in a research and development program issued by the EU.

5. Passenger Issues

Tariffs - Possible EU Actions

There has been slow progress made in the area of cross border public transport tariff systems. Therefore the supporters of this document favour stronger binding guidelines on the subject. Our conclusion is that the autonomous actions of the member states have not succeeded in providing suitable cross border tariff systems for their travelling public.

We propose the following basic guidelines at EU level that should be followed with special regard to cross border tariffing:

- Public transport tickets must be made available to any member state citizen. Possible preconditions should be determined at EU level, for example for the following groups: child (agree on age limit), elderly person (agree on age limit). Other groups such as pupils / students / apprentices / people with reduced mobility (with certificate) should
 - o receive direct state aid and not indirectly via public transport tariffs
 - o or all member states agree on standardised certificates for the mentioned groups (pupils, student etc.) that have to be recognized by every member state.
- No fixed combination of national schemes (for example student grants) with public transport tariffs; if a member state decides to subsidy certain groups, first it should be independent from nationality or residence and second it should not be integrated into the standard tariff systems to avoid complications. For example, if a member state or region wants to subsidy pupils, it should not create a special public transport tariff, but pay the subsidies via other channels (school, parents etc.) on the basis of the standard child tariff, or make separate contracts with certain groups (for example AVV-JobTicket for employees, AVV-SemesterTicket for students)

There should be no need for the passenger to buy more than one ticket for cross border (regional) public transport connections. This can be achieved by:

- o placing an additional cross border tariff system on top of national / regional systems without interfering with the domestic tariff systems (for example: the euregoticket in the Euregio Maas-Rhine, the cross border tariff Aachen - Heerlen)
- o agreeing on expanding one of the tariff systems into a neighbouring member state (for example: Belgian SNCB-tariff to Maastricht station)

- o merging two neighbouring tariff systems at the border and creating cross border tariffs in accordance with the respective national tariff system (for example: AIXpress-tariff between Aachen and Liège) combining the above methods

The EC should intervene with stronger regulation and insist on transparent and accountable tariff systems to the customers' advantage. These activities regions should be monitored on a regular basis by the EC.

Ticketing Systems - Possible EU Actions

The current development of electronic ticketing schemes shows that many public transport authorities give the introduction of new and fancy ticketing schemes priority over the interoperability of electronic ticketing systems. Instead of recognizing the benefits of the former, many public transport authorities and operators run high financial risks with regional electronic ticketing systems.

We propose the following basic guidelines on EU level that should be followed with special regard to cross border ticketing:

- In North West Europe the language interface of conventional ticket machines in the public transport sector should be in English, Dutch, German and French. All regional cross border tickets should be available to purchase at ticketing machines. All ticket machines should accept at least credit cards.
- The electronic ticketing sector is in urgent need for EU wide operational standardisation. There should be no need for the customer to buy and carry an extra device for every region. We believe, due to its flexibility, the mobile phone is a suitable device that could function as an EU wide recognised public transport ticket carrier.
- The intention to introduce electronic ticketing schemes should involve notifying the EU. The public transport authority or operator in question should have to explain how the requirements of interoperability and cross border travel can be fulfilled within the EU rail system. There should be no EU funding for non-interoperable systems. Furthermore the EU should see the investment of public member state money into non-interoperable electronic ticketing systems as retrogressive.
- We also propose an EU initiated research and development program for the standardisation of electronic ticketing systems on the basis of mobile phone devices. There is expertise available in the knowledge centres in North West Europe. The ambition should be to make this system available for on-site installation on short call. University institutes or other comparable technology centres should be in charge of the program instead of public transport authorities or operators. Public transport authorities or operators should perform some important advising duties. The development of application software with extra services (for example GPS, social

navigation) in addition to the basic standardised system should be left to private enterprises.

There should be also an establishment of an EU award scheme for authorities with the most successful ticketing practices. Financial aid could be possibly given to electronic ticketing systems that try to solve the compatibility problems by putting into service EU standardised schemes in the form of pilot trials. Innovative schemes are currently evident in some regions of North West Europe. Note the successful *euregioticket* scheme in the Euregio Maas-Rhine involving mobile phone ticketing (SMS and Java application).

Passenger Information - Potential EU Actions

The goal in the long term should be the installation of a European-wide intelligent framework to support standardised customer information systems to provide compatible technology between member states and across transport modes (train, bus, car-sharing etc.). The ERA could play an important role in this process.

Comparing the EU guidelines on passenger information with the usual practice in North West Europe shows that a common binding standard concerning the public bus transport sector and other potential transport sectors is still missing. To extend this existing EU guideline from rail transport only to public bus transport should be a first step taken by the EU.

In general public transport operators should be obliged to provide the necessary travel information (pre-trip and on-trip, both real-time) to the customer. This should be done via a third independent party that collects the data and puts them at the customers' service, for example by means of a website.

It seems that many public transport operators are still reluctant to provide their (real-time) data to third parties, for example public transport authorities. It should be regulated by EU that every public transport operator which receives public subsidies should be obliged to provide the necessary (real-time) data to centralized consumer information systems.

Pre-trip and on-trip information

There should be a standard on how to make pre-trip and on-trip information available to the consumer. For border regions this is of particular importance, because consumers don't want to deal with all the different systems the often numerous public transport operators a region provide.

EU guidelines should aim at the following minimum standard for passenger travel information:

- All information given to customer should take into the consideration the whole (cross border) public transport network. If neutral parties with no economic interest with regard to one of the public transport operators, such as public transport authorities, don't want to or can't provide the necessary trip information, a third neutral party should do the job (for example [www.9292ov](http://www.9292ov.nl) in the Netherlands). In

case a private transport operator does the job (for example www.bahn.de), the offer should be controlled by the public transport authority or member states or the ERA whether its service complies with the required standards for consumers.

- Pre-trip information should be available at every station or bus stop (information given by staff at every major station, plans and static time tables at smaller stations or bus stops), on websites and via mobile phone. The information given by staff and the information via mobile phone and website should be real-time. The staff should be able to deal with customers in the required languages.
- On-trip information should be available in every means of public transport (real-time), at every station (real-time) or bus stop (real-time at major bus stops) and via mobile phone (real-time).
- The website and the mobile phone should offer at least an electronic timetable and a routing function (both real-time). The website also should provide maps, tariffs etc.
- To avoid the parallel existing of various websites with time tables for the same region the responsible public transport authority or another third party should provide a centralised website which is fed by the (real-time) data input of every public transport operator in the region.

6. Regulatory Body

Potential EU Actions

We have seen that cross border regional public transport is not developing because of mainly lacking cross border administrative co-operation, funding and EU wide regulation.

For the following activities a stronger role of the EC – for example by means of a supporting body on European level - with a special focus on cross border public transport is seen as an advantage:

- stimulate harmonization of the national rail markets to make the connecting of rail networks over the border easier,
- improve safety levels and harmonization of technical requirements with regard to infrastructure and rolling stock (already core responsibilities of ERA),
- better monitor rail capacity, capacity allocation procedures and the setting up of capacity enhancement plans,
- stimulate harmonization of tariff and ticketing systems as well as ticket distribution
- set standards for public transport customer / passenger information

- create and enforce a “Single European Rail” concept based on the experiences made with the Single European Sky initiative⁴ .

Instead of forming a new European Railway Body to do some of the above, a strong overhaul of the ERA should be considered by the EC. It should be more prominent in public life (better communication with relevant authorities, advertising, etc.) and given additional powers. It should be able to control compliance of public transport market with EU guidelines, but primarily see its role as an independent mediator between national or regional interests. Moreover the European Railway Agency could play a more central role in overseeing the activities the national regulatory bodies.

7. Conclusions

The experiences in North West Europe illustrate that in spite of many EU guidelines or directives being in place, on the way to creating international (regional cross border) interoperable and consumer-friendly rail services many obstacles still have to be overcome.

This document wants to give some hints where possible areas of future EU action concerning (cross border) public rail transport can occur.

To achieve their goals the EC should strengthen their efforts in the following key areas:

- enlarge the EC’s perspective on the rail market organisation from mainly long distance (high speed) free market connections to regional cross border connections between two existing neighbouring rail networks, which in general have to be subsidised
- find instruments (for example by means of guidelines etc.) and incentives for the rail market development that help and stimulate and convince public transport authorities or member states to find (on the administrative and financial level) simpler solutions for the financial maintenance or creation of regional cross border connections
- systematically monitor railway capacity problems, enforce the capacity enhancement, enforce the installation of ETCS or even the reactivation of rail infrastructure with special regard to (regional) cross border sections that improve connections to HST-hubs (HST-Connect) by means of particular funding programs which should be additive to national funding programs and reward joint application by neighbouring public transport authorities or member states
- enforce the EU wide harmonization of ETCS levels

⁴ In the Single European Sky initiative a Community regulator will merge upper European airspace, currently divided into national regions. This body will organize this airspace uniformly, with air traffic control areas based on operational efficiency, not national borders. The airline industry after its deregulation developed common security standards, common booking systems and has a common business language. For the airline sector also common safety certificates exist, handed out by the European Aviation Safety Agency.

- help speed up and simplify approval procedures of rolling stock that already is approved in at least one member state
- help cover additional costs for multi-system rolling stock through easy to handle funding procedures which give financial security to public transport authorities that invite to tender cross border lines; reward the joint invitation to tender by two neighbouring member states
- enforce consumer friendly cross border tariff systems
- discourage national, regional, local authorities from introducing public transport tariffs that are fixed combinations of common public transport tariffs and national, regional or local grant or welfare schemes and therefore have no cross border compatibility
- standardise electronic and conventional ticketing systems; discourage national, regional, local authorities from developing non-compatible systems
- set minimum standard for travel information (pre-trip, on-trip) that has to be made available to the user of regional (cross border) public transport (bus & train)
- strengthen powers of regulatory body on EU level (for example European Railway Agency) to monitor and actively stimulate the achievement of the above mentioned goals

For some of the aspects mentioned above the Single European Sky Initiative can be a model. One could speak of a "Single European Rail" initiative.

8. Follow Up

In this document there is a focus on experiences made in North West Europe with special emphasis on cross border public (rail) transport. Many other parts of the EU are struggling with the same problems. The intention of this document is to support the development of EU wide solutions or policies, for example in the Commissions' White Paper on European Transport Policy 2010.

The participating partners aim - with this document as a contribution to the White Paper on European Transport Policy 2010 as a starting point – is to establish a close and long-term co-operating relationship with the EC. The aim is to exchange and share experiences and knowledge, which is also useful for currently running INTERREG-projects, such as "RoCK – Regions of Connected Knowledge", and future INTERREG- or other EU initiated programs.

To go a step further, the participating partners are interested to serve as a "laboratory" to help develop and prove draft EU policy strategies, new technologies and standards (for example ETCS), new administrative or contractual procedures (for example in the EU rail market) etc. before they come officially operative in the whole of the EU.

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EURegio Mass-Rhein

http://www.euregio-mr.org/emr_site/site_fr/emr/home.php

RoCK (Regions of Connected Knowledge)

<http://www.rock-project.eu/>