"Towards EU-wide Multimodal Travel Planning, Information and Ticketing Services"

PUBLIC HEARING FOLLOWING THE PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON ACCESS TO MULTIMODAL TRAVEL AND TRAFFIC DATA IN THE EUROPEAN UNION

15 November 2013

European Commission, Charlemagne building, Sicco Mansholt Room

9h30-12h30

Short summary

The public hearing was organised following the public consultation on Access to Multimodal Travel and Traffic Data in the European Union¹ that was open between 31 July 2013 and 25 October 2013. Both public consultation and public hearing were organised in the scope of the on-going Impact Assessment accompanying the Initiative on access to multimodal traffic and travel data.

The focus on questions related to traffic and travel data is related both to the ITS Action Plan, e.g. Action 1.5 "Promotion of multimodal journey planners"² and to the priority action (a) of the ITS Directive (2010/40/EU) "provision of EU-wide multimodal information services"³. The reflection builds on conclusions of a number of studies (e.g. "Towards a European multimodal journey planner"⁴) and cross-fertilises with other on-going initiatives of the European Commission, e.g. the Preparatory Action "To develop and validate an European passenger transport information and booking interface across transport modes".

Introductory remarks of the public hearing presented the policy context. They were followed by the presentation by the "All Ways Travelling" Consortium, introducing the current state of work on the aforementioned Preparatory Action. Then, the preliminary results and conclusions of the public consultation were presented. The follow-up stakeholders' panel, further discussed issues raised in the public consultation. The presentations are available online⁵.

The first part of the stakeholders' panel included six panellist representing different stakeholders: associations of transport operators from different transport modes (rail, air and maritime), national and local public authorities, and service providers. Each panellist presented insights related to access

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¹ http://ec.europa.eu/transport/media/consultations/2013-accessstraveldata_en.htm
² http://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/its/road/action_plan/promotion_multimodal_planners_en.htm
to multimodal travel and traffic data and his or her vision for creating an interoperable multimodal transport network. The topics that were discussed by the panellists included:

- the current situation regarding access to and availability of data within different transport modes,
- the benefits for public administrations of opening data resources, following carefully devised Open Data strategies;
- a possible step-wise approach towards opening different datasets:
  - static data, such as timetables, could be open first, for free to anyone,
  - dynamic data, e.g. real-time information, could be accessible via APIs, for free to trusted partners or for charge to others, etc.
- the modalities and costs related to:
  - Data collection, and making data compliant to common standards or specifications, if such would be defined at the European level
  - Data updating (guaranteeing its quality and reliability)
  - Data sharing;
- data ownership and licensing, ensuring fair, non-exclusive and non-discriminatory conditions of use and re-use;
- the need of promoting common standards (within transport modes), keeping them updated and making them interoperable across modes, e.g. with proper interfaces;
- questions related to commercial privacy of some datasets
- business models for the emergence of multimodal travel planning services and the distribution of costs and benefits along the value chain.

After the presentations, the floor was open for comments and questions from the audience and the discussion focused around a number of topics:

- The question of data standards and interfaces

The work and projects led by DG DIGIT on linked data can help to resolve problems related to different data standards by rendering the data format irrelevant. In any case, there is a need to make data standards light and usable, because it allows for their better maintenance and update.

The question of creating better interfaces between different transport modes, also for data exchange, was raised. It would not only help to organise better transport and mobility solutions, but also to construct more robust business models for the provision of information and new services. The discussion shouldn’t be focused only on the "classic" transport modes such as air, rail and road but should also take into account mobility services such as car-sharing.

Safeguards against potential 'misuse' of data (understood here as provision of erroneous information, because of lack of sufficient knowledge e.g. how to combine different datasets) could be built into data itself, i.e. data on train connections could come with integrated information about how much time is recommended for the transfer. In this way, data would not need to be shared only
with trusted partners who respect additional guidance, but could be open for all to build services on it.

The second part of the panel also included six speakers representing different stakeholders: local transport operators and authorities, industry association, academia and the European Data Protection Supervisor. Each panellist focused on questions related to extending the access to data in transport, and also on the benefits that Open Data and its interoperability can have for the provision of good quality information services such as multimodal journey planners. Some of the topics brought up in the second part of the panel were related to:

The importance of urban transport dimension and of local initiatives of Open Data:

- Cities handle a number of transport related challenges, notably growing congestion. Local authorities strive for a better integration of different transport modes, in order to make their transport networks more efficient and opening access to data helps improving modal integration, and in the long term, also improves transport efficiency and usage of public transport.

- In order for traffic and travel information to generate the most benefits for network management, they need to be based on high granularity real-time information (exact positioning of public transport vehicles, etc.), not only on static data concerning e.g. the timetables.

- Promoting the creation of Public-Private Partnerships can foster the exchange of data between authorities and private sector, and contribute to the emergence of an efficient information market and business models, and to the provision of better quality and reliable services for citizens.
The devising of sustainable business models for the provision of Multimodal Information services is of crucial importance, because only in this way they can generate benefits for services providers and incite both public authorities and private companies to share their data.

- The question of access to data of transport operators could be addressed partly in the public service contracts that operators have with authorities; duly protecting their commercially sensitive data.
- Once data will be accessible, numerous information services will emerge, and only the best applications will survive; the key element is to ensure that apps developers have access to reliable data. The public authorities will not have to provide all services, but could focus on some specific targeted ones, if they are not provided by the market, which would also be less costly for them.

- Various modalities of data provision: raw data, via feeds, or standard interfaces, such as APIs, and the importance of promoting machine readable data formats. The question of interoperable licensing and conditions of use was also underscored.
- The importance of data privacy and protection of personal data, notably when it comes to preventing possibilities of tracking people (using their ticketing solutions or mobile phone apps), or surveillance. Data identifying people should not be stored, or used for commercial or enforcement reasons. In addition, personal data of passengers shouldn’t be in the open domain as well as security relevant data and information protected by copyright. Very important is the consent of the end-users in order to use their data.

After the presentations, the floor was open for comments and questions from the audience. The discussion highlighted the importance of clear distinction between different types of data (notably traffic and travel data). It was also underscored that the access does not have to be the same to all types of data, but some can be made available for free, while others against a charge or within specific framework agreements. Participants draw the attention to the commercial value of data and to the necessity to avoid any preferential display of certain operators. It has also been underlined that the question of cooperation is key, in order to guarantee a better data quality. Also, for smaller regions or urban areas, the cost of making data available can be high. However, the benefits on long run could compensate it, e.g. by reducing the costs linked to current information services provided to citizens.

**Conclusions**

The results of the public consultation and discussions led within the public hearing proved that stakeholders call on the EC to look into questions related to access and availability of travel and traffic data, and to assess costs and benefits related to it (e.g. for collecting missing data, making data accessible, using specific standards). The key point will be to promote opening the access to travel and traffic data respecting the principles of fairness and non-discrimination, and tackling questions of liability, data protection and protection of commercial interests. Any intervention in this policy domain would have to be proportional and take into account the services already existing in the market. The need of trust building and of stronger cooperation between authorities, operators, passengers and other stakeholders has been underscored, in order to advance faster.