



PRESS RELEASE

Intermodality for visitors at tourist destinations presented and discussed at the 2nd Thematic Workshop of DESTI-SMART Interreg Europe project in Bremerhaven, Germany

“Intermodality for visitors at tourist destinations” was the topic of the 2nd Thematic Workshop of the Interreg Europe DESTI-SMART project, which took place on September 24-25, 2019 in Bremerhaven, Germany. The Workshop was hosted by the Erlebnis Bremerhaven GmbH. Representatives and stakeholders of all ten project partners participated.

“Intermodality is high on the political agenda, as it has been proven to enhance the destinations competitiveness, increasing the passenger numbers, allowing them to benefit fully from “seamless” travel and achieving modal shift towards public transportation” said Dr Derek Robbins, representative of the University of Bournemouth, UK, advisory partner of the DESTI-SMART project. *“Intermodality’ remains a neglected and under research topic, focused mostly on freight transport instead of public transport. Intermodality also concerns two (2) distinct groups of users – visitors/tourists and residents – with different needs, who however use the same transport network”* Dr Robbins also added.

The Project Coordinator, Mr Manos Vougioukas, presented the purpose of the Workshop and stated that through DESTI-SMART, partners should set their local/regional issues and priorities towards intermodality by presenting their plans on intermodality facilities and systems for sustainable tourism mobility, potentially to be included in their Action Plans. He also stated that good practices might be adopted by projects such as InnovaSUMP (Interreg Europe) DESTINATIONS (Horizon 2020), SEEMORE (Interreg Europe), LAST MILE (Interreg Europe) MaaS4EU (Horizon 2020), IMOVE (Horizon 2020) etc.

Mr Vougioukas also referred to the recent report of UNWTO on ‘Overtourism’ titled “Understanding and Managing Urban Tourism Growth beyond perceptions”. The report elaborates on how public transport can become better for visitors by setting up specific facilities for visitors during peak periods, safe and attractive walking routes and

creating safe cycling routes and stimulation bicycle use. He also mentioned the Public Consultation of the European Commission on 'Urban Mobility in the EU' taking place from 11/09/2019 – 4/12/2019 (midnight Brussels time). He encouraged the partners to participate in the consultation, as DESTI-SMART could contribute to the discussion, presenting ideas and solutions for the enhancement of urban mobility while reducing congestion, accidents and pollution.

Improved cycling infrastructure, thematic routes for visitors/tourists within the urban areas, multimodal facilities in the suburbs, improved railway and bus connections are some of the initiatives that the partners presented in the Workshop transferring their experiences from their countries. Bus networks cannot support the large seasonal flows of tourists and measures should be taken to promote intermodality for tourists.

"Actual intermodality is not applied, meaning that the use of private cars remains high. 97% of the residents use only one mode to travel. Traffic jams are the No1 problem" stated Philippe Alvaro of the Mallorca Island Council in Spain, addressing the situation in most of the Mediterranean mass tourism destinations, such as in Italy, Spain, Greece and Cyprus and Portugal as well. *"There is still long way towards the achievement of good intermodality. Improving public transport conditions as well as connections among rail, bus, bike network still need to be improved"* said also István Hegedűs of Lake Balaton Development Coordination Agency in Hungary.

On the other hand, countries in the Central and Northern Europe - Germany, Latvia, UK - seem to have already integrate intermodality in their urban transportation network. From the partners view, as well as from the good practices presented in the workshop, facilities and transport modes that support and promote intermodality seem to allow passengers to benefit fully from a "seamless" travel experience, to increase both passenger numbers and achieve modal shift away from private transport.

Along with the adoption of low-carbon and e-mobility solutions, intermodality constitutes a one-way option towards sustainable mobility in tourist destinations. A great example of this practice is the Madeira 'Smart Fossil Free Island' project which aims to zero emissions in the island of Porto Santo.

Limitation of car use and use of technologies and innovation solutions to support intermodality is in main focus. Innovations in technology and information, such as web applications, are crucial for linking tourism and transportation needs. Sustainable tourism development cannot exist without intermodality. One more challenging aspect for the near future is interregional intermodality and connection with other countries.

The Workshop ended with a discussion in four smaller groups were topics such as the implementation of intermodality facilities for visitors, preliminary results of the implementation of joint surveys on travel behavior in the partner-destinations, implementation of feasibility studies and improvement of policy instruments were elaborated.

Two study visits followed the workshop. The first visit was organised in the Climate House Bremerhaven 8° East, where partners experimented with the climate conditions and had the opportunity to understand how human activities affect climate conditions and what would be the results of them in the climate and in the environment. The second visit concerned past and present intermodality points within the city of

Bremerhaven, such as the city port, the public bus (new bus connection) “Hafenliner” from the tourist area Harbor Worlds to the tourist area Shop Window Fishery Harbor, as well as in the Emigration Museum which was the 1st barrier-free/accessibility certified museum in Bremerhaven.

DESTI-SMART's overall objective is to improve the transport and tourism policies of EU destinations, by integrating strategies for sustainable mobility, accessibility and responsible travel with efficient & sustainable tourism development. DESTI-SMART promotes the transition to a low-carbon economy, through efficiency, resilience, multimodality, novel low-carbon transport systems and the promotion of cycling & walking.



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