

# CONNECT2CE

Improved rail connections and smart mobility in Central Europe

Newsletter 5



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## CONNECT2CE makes an impact on the Hungarian Parliament House!

PhD László Palkovics, Minister of Innovation and Technology in Hungary, used CONNECT2CE project and its pilot activity that explored the possibility of scheduled public transport in the cross-border area of Hungary and Austria, as a good example that will be used to schedule new lines between these areas. The pilot action of CONNECT2CE project tests the transnational tool for the improvement of regional/cross-border railway and public transport connections through the design of a cross-border Public Service Obligations (PSO) between Austria and Hungary involving micro public transport.

Recently Mr. Péter Ungár (a member of the Hungarian Parliament) pointed out that although Szombathely (HU) and Graz (AT) maintains a twin-city relationship and are only 40 kilometres apart, it is almost impossible to travel from one to another with public transport. Recent Google Transit search shows that it is easier and faster to travel this distance by foot. He then proceeds to ask a question about any negotiations between two countries to make more efficient public transport between two border settlement.

PhD László Palkovics, Minister of Innovation and Technology in Hungary, in his reply pointed out that, on Austrian school days, two buses take students to Austrian schools in the morning, and two separate buses take them home in the afternoon. However, he pointed out that more interesting is the possibility of improvement of the scheduled public transport which has already been explored in the CONNECT2CE project, co-funded by the Interreg Central Europe Programme. A total of six Vas County settlements, Szentgotthárd, Pinkamindszent, Pornóapáti, Bucusu and Kőszeg, were investigated and finally proposed to reduce the transit time between Austrian and Hungarian trains to Szentgotthárd.

## New prolongation of the cross-border integrated public transport service Trieste-Ljubljana

Trieste Trasporti and Slovenian railways signed the amendment of the agreement for the extension of the cross-border integrated public transport service (bus/train) between Trieste and Ljubljana, at the headquarters of Central European Initiative (CEI) on December 9th 2019. With the agreement signed by Mr. Diego Regazzo, director of Trieste Trasporti, and Mr. Nelson Sorgo, representative of Slovenian railways, the cross-border integrated ticket between Trieste and Ljubljana, active from 1 March 2019 and envisioned to last until 31 December, will be prolonged until 30 April 2020.



The service enables users to travel by bus from the centre of Trieste to the railway station of Villa Opicina and then to the centre of Ljubljana with the trains operated by Slovenian railways, with an integrated ticket (8 EUR) available for online purchase.

The integrated ticket is realised within the framework of the EU-funded project CONNECT2CE, coordinated by the CEI as Lead partner.

# 6<sup>th</sup> partner meeting in Zagreb

Connect2CE partners met for the 6th time on 26th and 27th November 2019, to share the progress made and activities completed in the framework of the project. The two-day meeting took place at the Croatian Chamber of Commerce in Zagreb.



Partners gathered to discuss the state-of-the-art of the project, the completed activities and each partner's responsibilities in the upcoming final activities of the project. The Work Package 3 leader PIL presented the activities performed on the development of the Transnational Toolboxes on three levels. The lead partner CEI presented the draft document Strategic Framework for the Advancement of Regional and Cross-Border Transport in Central Europe. Presentations of the Work Package Communication were also presented, showing to the partners their remaining activities. During the Work Package Management presentations, a detailed insight into the state of the project, which is scheduled for completion in May 2020. Partners are expected to be involved in disseminating the project, the pilot actions and presenting project ideas and outcomes to the general public.

## News on pilot actions

The cross-border passenger train service from Villach to Trieste has been prolonged for 2020. The main output of this pilot action is the extension of the service after the end of the implementation period.

The memorandum of Understanding between Croatian and Slovenian partners will be signed after the implementation of the cross-border Public Service Obligation between Croatia and Slovenia.

As for the timetable harmonisation and cross-border bus services between Hungary and Austria, two harmonized cross-border bus lines are expected to be introduced in 2021 as first steps of better transboundary cooperation.

The market study for modern railcars with innovative engines has entered implementation of the extension stage as part of the cross-border connections between Germany and Poland.

The ITS tools to enhance multimodal public transport options developed by the Pilsen Region have been completed allowing the comparison of fares between the current time tickets and the new one-way integrated tickets, which are going to be introduced in the following months and should be valid after July 2020.

In the following months, as part of testing a multi-lingual and multimodal passenger informative system, the transfer of one of the two installed monitors at the new multimodal platform in Kőszeg station is expected. The new platform will smoothly link rail and bus services coming and departing from the station.



# Transnational toolboxes have been finalized

The Transnational toolbox for improving regional and cross-border railway and public transport connection, the Transnational toolbox for applying multimodal integrated tariff schemes and ticketing in Central Europe, and the Transnational toolbox for implementing info-mobility systems in Central Europe have all finalized and are now available on the [CONNECT2CE website](#).

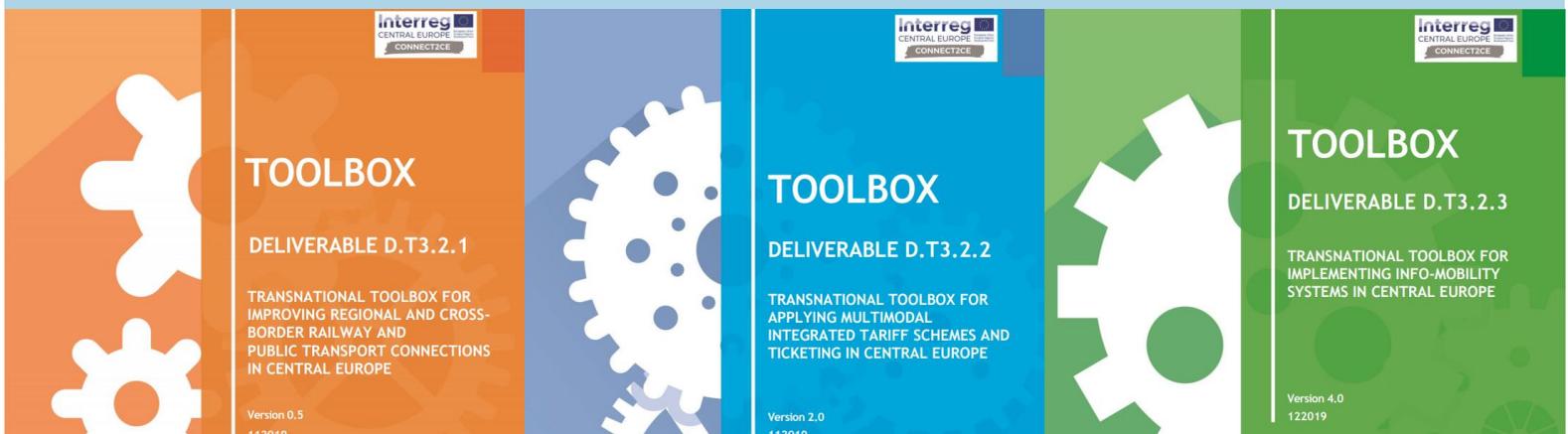
The aim of transnational toolboxes is to facilitate improvement of peripheral and cross-border accessibility in Central Europe to regional, national and European networks and hubs.

The objective of the transnational toolboxes is to provide practical guidance for public authorities and passenger transport operators for implementation of measures to improve public transport in the area.

Objective of transnational tools is to provide the user with identification of different options when strategically planning improvement of cross-border public transport connectivity and suggestions to choose among them (WHAT TO DO). The tools are available on [EUSurvey web platform](#).

The toolbox gives the user practical guidelines on implementation of improvement system or service in cross-border public transport - HOW TO DO a project implementation plan.

The transnational toolboxes serve as an important step forward in spreading knowledge about CONNECT2CE's identified solutions.



# Workshop on improving inland cross-border intermodal connectivity (Trieste)

The CEI-Executive Secretariat in Trieste hosted a workshop on 31st October focusing on identifying strategic priorities to improve inland and cross-border intermodal connectivity.

Speakers - following the implementation of the project's pilot actions in the region, Micotra train and Trieste Ljubljana integrated ticket - discussed the CONNECT2CE support to a strategic approach for the future development of multimodal and cross-border transport on land. Participants addressed the importance of institutional cooperation, the potential of innovative ICT tools for promoting public transport as well as new patterns for promoting modal shift and sustainable mobility (MaaS - Mobility as a Service).



The discussion - moderated by Paolo Dileno, CEI Project Manager - allowed local stakeholders to identify the aspects that can be improved as well as future opportunities for boosting intermodal connectivity (such as ESOF 2020).

## Recent meetings and seminars

During the last few months several internal & external meetings, as well as seminars were organised:

- On September 18<sup>th</sup> 2019, a local stakeholder seminar held in Ljubljana within “European Mobility Week 2019 - Let’s go on foot”.
- On 20<sup>th</sup> November 2019, a local dissemination event was held at the University of West Bohemia in Pilsen.
- On 6<sup>th</sup> December 2019, the 3<sup>rd</sup> stakeholder meeting was organized by HZPP and held in Zagreb.
- On 6<sup>th</sup> December 2019, an informative meeting about CONNECT2CE was held at the premises of the Veneto Region in Venice.

*CONNECT2CE team*

*wishes you*

*Happy holidays  
and a successful New Year*



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