

REPORTING FROM THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: The MDMS Regulation: Can it make travel easier and greener?

EVENT KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Implementing a robust MDMS will be difficult, but the benefits of increasing rail options and passenger rights to offer more sustainable choices are strong.
- The EU Commission needs to act on a proposal to allow the European Parliament to begin working on the file.

On the 10th of October 2023, the Global Business Travel Association (GBTA) participated in a high-level event at the European Parliament in Brussels to discuss the upcoming <u>Multimodal</u> <u>Digital Mobility Systems (MDMS) Regulation</u>. The proposal was due to be presented by the end of 2023 but has been delayed with an uncertain future this parliamentary term.

GBTA has been in contact with the European Commission over the past 2 years to express our views on the initiative on behalf of the business travel community and will join a further meeting with the Director of the Commission's Transport department (DG Move) in November. GBTA believes the initiative has the potential to transform travel in Europe by making it easier for passengers to book multimodal trips, therefore improving efficiency, increasing customer choice, and promoting more sustainable travel options.

EU OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE

- MEP Jan-Christoph Oetjen (Renew Europe, Germany)
- MEP Jakop Dalunde (Greens, Sweden)
- Commission representative Daniel Mes, transport official at newly appointed Climate Action Commissioner Hoekstra's cabinet.

OFFICIALS VIEWPOINT

Members of the European Parliament Jan-Christoph Oetjen (Renew Europe, Germany) and Jakop Dalunde (Greens, Sweden) kindly hosted the event in the Parliament with attendees representing a variety of stakeholders in the travel industry interested in this landmark initiative. Both MEPs called on the European Commission to present a legislative proposal on MDMS ahead of the European Parliament election in 2024. Commission representative Daniel Mes was also present but did not confirm if they will do so.



MEP Oetjen supported the initiative and asked the Commission to present a proposal soon, to give MEPs the time to work on it before the end of the Parliament's mandate next year.

This was followed by an intervention from **Daniel Mes**, transport official in newly appointed Climate Action Commissioner Hoekstra's cabinet, who previously worked for his predecessor Frans Timmermans. He mentioned that Hoekstra continues to support the initiative, keeping the same line as his predecessor. He acknowledged that the Parliament is pushing for this initiative before the end of the mandate but did not confirm when the Commission will present a proposal.

MEP Dalunde stated that people are "yearning for more sustainable travel in Europe" and explained that in Facebook groups about holidays by rail in Sweden, the main question from participants is how to book the trip. The MDMS, he said, should change this, facilitating passenger bookings and changing the main question be "where to go to".

INDUSTRY EXPERTS DISCUSSION

- Moderator: Euractiv's transport editor Sean Goulding Carroll.
- GBTA Panel representation: David Frangeul, Senior Director, Global Air & Ground Practices leader at Advito
- Panel 1: "What are the obstacles for the development of Multimodal ticketing services?"
- Panel 2: "How MDMS could be a game changer for modal shift towards more sustainable transport modes?".

Panel 1: What are the obstacles for the development of Multimodal ticketing services?

David Frangeul, from Advito and a member of <u>GBTA</u> explained that <u>GBTA</u> sees the value of common travel offers to make business travel more sustainable and that GBTA's members already have experience with reseller platforms in the airline sector that can be useful in the future for multimodal platforms. He added that business travellers are missing a harmonised framework to measure emissions, something that the recently presented <u>CountEmissionsEU initiative</u> can provide.

Christian Möller, from the <u>European Travel Agents' and Tour operators' Association (ECTAA)</u> acknowledged that there are discussions on how providers should share their content on fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory (FRAND) terms but underlined that resellers play an important role in making multimodal travel options available to customers.



Robin Loos from the <u>European Consumer Organisation (BEUC)</u> asked for regulatory action and emphasised the need for clear rules and clarity on who is responsible for possible delays or cancellations in multimodal trips, to prevent unfair competition. He recognised the need for agreements between companies involved in a multimodal trip to address their level of liability.

Bon Bakermans from the Dutch Infrastructure Ministry shared the experience of the Netherlands, mentioning that it is technically possible to offer multimodal ticketing but highlighting that it requires strong public-private cooperation, integrated contracts between transport operators and platforms, and a common authority responsible for it.

Panel 2: How MDMS could be a game changer for modal shift towards more sustainable transport modes?

Delphine Gradsaert, from the European Passengers' Federation, called for integrated multimodal tickets and for passengers to be protected from possible delays and cancellations.

Emmanuel Mounier, from <u>EU Travel Tech</u> presented policymakers with a choice: whether they want a market for multimodal trips with different products and different levels of protection for passengers, such as the one that exists today, or whether they want a market with products offering the highest level of protection in Europe, but at a price, with some products becoming more expensive.

Victor Thévenet, from Transport & Environment, criticized the Commission for dropping a legislative file that is essential for the decarbonisation of travel in Europe and said that it would make life easier for Europeans, simplifying their cross-border trips and making it easier to make low-emissions travel choices.

Laura Lassila, from the Finnish Transport Ministry, explained that if EU legislation does not create a common framework for multimodal travel in Europe, the market will be fragmented with different countries enforcing different national rules.

OUTCOME AND NEXT STEPS

In summary, speakers from across the travel eco-system <u>supported regulatory action from the</u> <u>European Commission</u> to make it easier for travellers to book multimodal trips, making travel in Europe more efficient, and sustainable, and giving passengers protection. The main obstacles that remain for this initiative are the attribution of liability in case of delays or cancellations, and the question of how providers should share their content with resellers. It is still unclear how the EU will deal with these issues and whether the MDMS regulation will be presented before the



European elections in June 2024. MEPs did show strong support for a presentation of a legislative proposal by the European Commission as soon as possible.

In a joint statement GBTA and other representatives of passengers, environmental groups, and ticket intermediaries, are calling on European policymakers of all institutions to continue supporting the <u>MDMS Regulation</u> and to make the MDMS proposal a key priority in EU transport policy. <u>MDMS Regulation</u> and to make the MDMS proposal a key priority in EU transport policy.

A special thanks to David Frangeul of Advito for his participation and Fulvio Origo, Member of the Board of GBTA Italy for representing GBTA at the event.

