Development of Integrated Ticketing
for Air and Rail Transport

**Public consultation document of the European Commission services
Directorate-General "Energy and Transport"**

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INDEX

1. INTRODUCTION

In its part "Placing users at the heart of transport policy", the 2001 White Paper of the European Commission on a European transport policy encourages the adoption of integrated ticketing between transport operators of the same sector and also between different transport modes in order to facilitate the transfer of passengers from a network or transport mode to another. In so doing, the Commission pursues a dual political goal: on the one hand, it ensures a widened choice of transport services for the European citizens by meeting their need for mobility; on the other hand, through better information on travel options by prompting the European citizens to make better use of the existing infrastructure when traveling, including more environmental friendly modes of transport, with a view in particular to fighting congestion and environmental nuisance within the European transport system.

The Commission Communication "Strengthening passengers rights within the European Union"[1]of February 2005 notes that the passengers' right to integrated ticketing is not yet acquired: *"It should be a simple matter for passengers to combine several modes of transport in one journey, but the traditional method of organising transport by sectors constitutes a barrier to intermodality. The traveller is too often dissuaded from combining different means of transport for the same journey and encounters difficulties for example in obtaining information and ordering tickets where the journey involves different modes".* The Communication announces the intention of the Commission to bring together representatives of rail companies and airlines in order to obtain a voluntary undertaking from them to set up an integrated ticketing system. This document is a step in that direction.

The Commission Communication "An action plan for airport capacity, efficiency and safety in Europe" [2] fosters intermodality/comodality between train and plane in order to improve accessibility to airports and to reduce the need for short haul flights through the integrated use of the train. The annex to the communication contains a fourteen point action plan. The eighth point says: *"The Commission intends to encourage integrated air-rail ticketing and will publish a consultation paper on the subject".*
Although a number of studies already exist on air-rail intermodality, a clear and detailed analysis of the potential market for integrated ticketing in this sector does not yet exist. The answers to the questionnaire which can be found at the end of this document will therefore be analysed with great attention.

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[1]   COM (2005) 46 final, 16.2.2005.

[2]   COM (2006) 819 final, 21.1.2007.

2. THE ISSUE OF INTEGRATED TICKETING

The issue of integrated ticketing arises when a passenger intends to travel using several transport modes and/or several transport operators within the same mode. Such a service requires the availability of easily consultable information on the various parts of the journey as well as the adoption of interactive reservation systems which give the possibility to make reservations for the whole journey. However, information is often available only separately for each mode of transport and/or by operator. Consequently, the introduction of integrated ticketing requires the development of integrated information, reservation and sales systems.

The adoption of integrated ticketing systems guaranteeing the transparency of the travel options and of the associated tariffs *is an essential condition for a user-friendly intermodal transport chain likely to attract numerous travellers*. This is also what the European citizens wish. According to a Eurobarometer survey on passengers' rights published on 1st July 2005, the vast majority of citizens would welcome a single ticket for international trips combining several transport modes, and more than three quarters declared that they would be willing to use a unified passenger information service should such a service be available.

As already underlined in the Communication on passenger rights, the issue of integrated ticketing arises first of all for the air and rail sectors, the two most popular public transport modes used by the Europeans for their long distance travel (over 100 Km). But, as we will see below, at present only four intermodal air-rail services are available.

3. THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION PROPOSAL

Based on the hypothesis that integrated ticketing can be an important factor to generate demand for intermodal air-rail services, **the objective of this document is to examine the organisational and technical opportunities related to the sale and promotion of such services and to open a debate on a voluntary engagement of the concerned stakeholders for the development of integrated ticketing as announced in the Communication on passenger rights and reaffirmed in the Communication on airport capacity.**

The Commission services wish to submit these ideas to stakeholders, in particular airlines and rail operators, the other concerned operators (air and rail reservation systems, airports, railway stations, travel agents) and to the associations who represent these sectors, as well as to other concerned actors (municipalities, local and regional authorities, NGOs), and also to the Member States of the European Union, in particular the regulatory authorities of the air and rail sectors, and to consumers' associations. The Commission services ask the interested parties to give their opinion on the ideas put forward in this document, in particular through the questions which are at the end of the document.

Please send your answer to this consultation by e-mail to the Commission services until 30 September 2008 at the following address:
tren-integrated-ticketing-consultation@ec.europa.eu

Although e-mail is preferred, you can also write to the following postal address:

European Commission – DGTREN F4
Integrated Ticketing Consultation
Rue De Mot 24 5/92
B-1049 Brussels

If you answer on behalf of an organisation, please include your details in your answer. Any response in the name of an organisation which does not indicate the interests that it represents nor its degree of representativity of the sector (number of members, size of the organisation in relation to the sector to which its members belong) will be taken into account as "response on an individual basis". On the basis of this consultation, the Commission services intend to put together the interested parties to seek an agreement on the solutions put forward in this document. A Communication may then be issued on the development of the integrated air-rail ticketing.[3]

Please note that this consultation document engages only the Commission services involved in its preparation. **This text was prepared as a basis for comments** and does not prejudice the final form of any decision to be eventually taken by the Commission.

4. EXISTING PRACTICES AND CURRENT LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

4.1. Integrated air-rail ticketing: the deficiencies of the current system

The objective of the integrated air-rail ticketing is to make it possible for a traveller to obtain - directly (from Internet or a vending machine) or through a salesman (travel agency or transport operator) – one or more transport documents enabling him/her to take successively at least a train and a plane, by obtaining the best possible combination according to criteria such as schedules, price or associated services. The integrated ticketing implies the integration at information level (schedule and price) and at reservation level (access to the inventories of available places and issuance of the ticket).

What is more particularly meant here by the term "integrated ticket" is the concept of the "one-stop shop", namely the possibility of obtaining a single ticket (or all the necessary tickets) in one place and one single operation. Today, even if the passenger makes use of a travel agent which could sell all the necessary air and rail services (which is far from being the case for all the agencies), the tickets for the various transport modes must be purchased separately and successively without any guarantee of being able to put end to end those segments in the best possible combination for the traveller.

4.2. Integrated ticketing in the air sector

For a long time the air sector has been using efficient systems that allow the issuance of integrated tickets for journeys involving more than one airline. This integration rests on the global distribution systems (GDS)[4] which act as an intermediary in the distribution

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[3] Unless otherwise specified at the beginning of the answer, contributions will be published on the Europa website "Your voice in Europe" (http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/consultations/index_en.htm). After the consultation deadline expires, the Commission services will establish a report on the main results of the consultation.

[4] Formerly called computer reservation systems (*CRS).*

chain of air tickets by providing real time information on the availability and tariffs of the air transport services. The airlines, on the one hand, provide to *GDSs* information on their own services and, on the other, use information available on *GDSs* to carry out reservations via this system. The system is used by airlines, but also by travel agencies and any person who makes his own reservation via an Internet portal which is connected to such a system.

The mechanism rests on rules developed by IATA (the International Air Transport Association) which in particular laid down the procedures relating to the mutual acceptance of tickets between airlines and the attribution of the income of the ticket sale and responsibility rules with respect to passengers and luggage.

The majority of the airlines are "subscribers" of one or more *GDS* on which all their reservation activity rests. *GDSs* are also used by travel agencies and Internet travel websites. Charter and low cost airlines make a very limited (or no) use of such facilities in order to save the cost of the fee allocated to *GDSs* for each reservation. Low cost carriers (LCCs) prefer to offer only point to point transport, with no connecting flights. As LCCs rely almost exclusively on their own Internet websites for their sales, all the traditional airlines have also the possibility to sell tickets directly on the web; however, the percentage of air tickets the latter sell via their Internet websites is still relatively modest[5].

4.3. Integrated ticketing in the rail sector

Compared to air transport, the integration of ticketing is less developed in the rail sector.

UIC (the International Union of Railways) developed a single database which can contain all the schedules of the 32 participating operators, supplied from data available in the national systems. It covers only the schedule aspects and is accessible only by UIC and participating operators.

UIC is working currently on the PRIFIS project (Price and fare/timetable information system): this is a more complete database which can calculate the possible fare of a rail journey and display schedules and associated conditions. This base and its fare calculation system will be available to the concerned operators and also to the public via the Internet. The project should be finished in March 2009.

ERA (the European Railway Agency) is currently working, on mandate of the European Commission, on the technical specifications of interoperability of telematics for passengers (TIS–ATP). The system will manage information to rail passengers before and during the trip, the reservation and payment of tickets, the transport of luggage and the connections between trains (but not with other modes of transport). First technical draft specifications should be ready at the beginning of 2009.

At present there is strictly speaking no *GDS* as exists in the air sector but rather some shared systems limited to some rail companies.

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[5] In 2005, the member companies of the AEA (Association of European Airlines) sold 15.6% of their tickets via their own web sites. In 2008 this percentage should climb to 38.8%, Source: AEA.

Taking as a model the airline alliances, on 2 July 2007 the rail companies SNCF, SNCB, Deutsche Bahn, Eurostar U.K., NS Hispeed, ÖBB and CFF, the founding members, and their subsidiary companies Thalys, Lyria and Alleo, the associate members, signed the founding contract of their **Railteam** cooperation which covers most of the European high speed lines. Railteam members decided to invest in an interconnection platform of their distribution systems. All the distributors will thus be able to access the offers of the partners. The interconnection platform should be launched in January 2009.

4.4. Air-Rail integration

There is no generalised, integrated air-rail system. The integration of ticketing between these two sectors, in Europe, is limited mainly to four cases plus a fifth which is currently being introduced. For the four existing cases, integration applies only between rail and certain airlines.

4.4.1. Airrail (Germany) and Flugzug (Switzerland)

The German system connects Stuttgart and Cologne railway stations to Frankfurt airport, while the Swiss system connects Basle station to Zurich airport fourteen times per day. In both systems, the railway is considered by the airline like an extension of the flight. Consequently, the served railway stations receive a standard "airport" code which makes it possible to include them in air *GDSs*. A unique air ticket is therefore issued, covering both the air and the rail leg, in IATA compliant format. It is therefore the airline (Lufthansa for Airrail and Swiss for Flugzug) which provides an additional service to its customers and not the railway operator. Comparing Airrail and Flugzug, while the German system includes the seat reservation onboard the train, with the Swiss system the passenger can travel on any train on the line concerned. Both systems allow for luggage handling on the whole journey.

4.4.2. Air France-Thalys

In contrast to German and Swiss systems, the service offered between Paris Charles de Gaulle (CDG) airport and Brussels (Air France - Thalys) does not envisage a unique ticket. When buying an "integrated" air ticket, the passenger receives a voucher to be exchanged against a train ticket before boarding the train. There is no luggage handling on the rail leg. The air passenger travels in 1st class ("Comfort 1") in a waggon reserved for Air France, irrespective of the kind of air ticket (economy, business, etc.).

4.4.3. TGV Air

SNCF (the French railways) concluded an agreement with eight airlines enabling them to combine flights with rail journeys from Paris CDG airport to 19 French stations (TGV connections). Like for the "Air France-Thalys" service, passengers receive with their air ticket a voucher that has to be exchanged against a train ticket. There is no luggage handling on the rail leg.

Since 2002, SNCF has also been proposing a check-in service from the TGV station when the rail journey is combined with an Air France flight from Paris CDG airport. This service ensures for the passenger with luggage a confirmed place on board the plane, while passengers without luggage can proceed directly to the departure gate.

4.4.4. Eurostar

In January 2008 Eurostar completed a project called GDS3 which allows the display of its services in GDS's primary screens; Eurostar becomes thus 100% compatible with airline screen display and ticketing rules (including the IATA obligation to issue only electronic tickets). As of winter 2008, Eurostar services can also be proposed and sold in conjunction with flights using interline e-ticketing, via *GDSs* including Internet sites accessible to the public. Regarding integration between high speed and conventional rail, since 14 November 2007 integrated tickets are available from 138 British cities to Paris, Brussels and other destinations in France and Belgium.

4.5. The Community legal framework

4.5.1. The air sector

Council Regulation (EEC) n° 2299/89 establishes a code of conduct for the use of computer reservation systems (CRS/GDS) containing air transport products. Although GDSs' predominance on the market regresses, nowadays the majority of reservations in the air sector are still carried out via such systems. This market is dominated by three large companies: Amadeus, SABRE and Travelport.

The subscription to a GDS enables the travel agent to access the offer of a number of airlines and to compare in an effective way the various options being offered to its customer. In addition, through this system travel agencies have a better possibility to combine various air services at the time of reservation.

The regulation aims at promoting free competition between airlines. To this end, it ensures that GDSs don't bias the information that airlines provide to them regarding their availability and their air fares. Thus, the regulation imposes that travel options be displayed in a neutral way on the GDS screens and ensures that GDSs don't favour reservations with any specific airline.

Regulation n° 2299/89 was amended in 1999 notably in order to extend some of its provisions to rail products when they are integrated in an air GDS, such as information displayed on the screens, calculation of fees, etc. It should be noted that, except in case of a specific request by the traveller, GDSs display the various alternatives for a given journey according to its duration, which very often penalises journeys combining airplane and train[6].

4.5.2. The rail sector

Regulation (EC) N. 1371/2007 of 23 October 2007 on rail passengers' rights and obligations[7], which is included in the "3rd rail package", envisages the adoption at the latest on 3 December 2010 of the technical interoperability specifications (TIS) of telematic applications for passenger services. The TIS which, as mentioned, will be developed by the European Rail Agency, and applied to the operators' systems. TIS –

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[6] The journey duration displayed on the GDS screen does not consider supplementary travel time in the air mode represented by check-in time and travel time from the city to the airport, while rail stations are usually located in the city.

[7] OJ L315 of 3.12.2007, page 14.

ATP will be a Commission Regulation which will oblige the sector to draw up a deployment plan of such telematic services.

4.5.3.   The use of the new technologies

The use of new technologies such as the Internet and mobile telephony revolutionised the ticket distribution market and paved the way for new added value services, such as real time information disseminated via mobile solutions, or the possibility of choosing its place onboard a flight and of printing the boarding pass via the Internet, etc.

In addition, certain countries (in particular Germany, Switzerland, Denmark, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom) have set up integrated door-to-door information systems by means of telephones, mobile phones or through the Internet. The British government's strategy goes further and consists of a centralised system which does not include solely information for passengers but also ticket issuance and dissemination of information through all the modern technological means, including digital television. Studying the successful cases, it becomes clear that the countries which have a nationwide passenger information system are those whose governments took the initiative in cooperation with industry to stimulate the development of such systems.

In the light of such developments the Commission adopted in 2001[8] a Recommendation which proposes to the Member States to develop a legal and economic framework for the participation of the private sector in the deployment of the telematics based Traffic and Travel Information (TTI) services in Europe. Its objective is to encourage the commercial deployment of added value services dedicated to travellers. It invites in particular the Member States:

- To cooperate for the establishment of pan-European services;

- To set up a legal framework to harmonise the requirements applicable to such services, to encourage the adoption by the authorities and public bodies of standard contracts and of agreements on the service levels and to promote the partnership between the public and private sectors;

- To report to the Commission on the progress achieved in the establishment of a suitable framework for these services.

The Council did not come to a formal conclusion about this recommendation, even if some Member States apply some of its guidelines.

5.   FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS OF INTEGRATED TICKETING

5.1.   Scope of air-rail integration

Concerning requirements on the physical quality of infrastructure, which is an essential condition for travellers' comfort, and taking account of organisational aspects, it is recommended initially to limit this initiative to complementarity between aircraft and

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[8]   Commission Recommendation of 4 July 2001 on the development of a legal and business framework for participation of the private sector in deploying telematics-based Traffic and Travel Information (TTI) services in Europe. OJ L199 of 27.07.2001.

high-speed train or conventional rail where services allow a good complementarity between these transport modes. This involves, globally considering those connections where:

- High-speed train serves a station located in an airport (for example Frankfurt, Paris Charles de Gaulle, Düsseldorf, Schiphol, Lyons Satolas and soon Barcelona);

- There is a high quality connection between the airport and the high-speed train station (for example Brussels, Madrid or Cologne).

Projected extensions of the high-speed rail network from here to 2020 (tripling of the network to more than 32 000 km of lines altogether) represent moreover a considerable potential for the promotion of air-rail intermodality.

In a second stage, it would also be advisable to ensure the continuity of the whole journey by adding public transport (buses, underground railway, train) which serve the urban centres. Trying to include now public transport into the intermodal scheme would be unrealistic and likely considerably to slow down the introduction of an intermodal service.

Promoting intermodality supposes implementing a variety of actions exceeding by far the mere issue of information on the transport services offered by the operators and the reservation of seats. On top of integrated ticketing one should also consider luggage handling throughout the journey, the coordination of schedules, and establishing clear signs of continuity (the change of mode of transport does not have to deteriorate the passenger's guarantees in terms of connections and of comfort) reasonable waiting times in case of delays on individual journeys, without forgetting safety. Lastly, it would be advisable to harmonise the contractual provisions applicable by the various carriers and in particular rules on responsibility.

Some of these actions are quite costly. Luggage handling in an intermodal journey involves the construction of new, expensive infrastructures as well as the introduction of new control mechanisms. As integration even within the rail sector is still in its initial stages, with no luggage handling foreseen, it would be premature immediately to include luggage handling within an air-rail integration framework. Regarding the air sector, competitive pressure coming from low cost companies and high fuel prices is not favourable to the development of heavy investments. Remote check-in and luggage handling/transfer involve an attentive analysis of security issues since air and rail are subject to different rules for these matters. Although there are some examples in Europe (AirRail service) and in other parts of the world (Japan), security implications add complexity and costs. A solid analysis of the financial viability of this option is in any event essential.

5.2. The institutional framework

In order to justify the cooperation between operators and thus to progress concerning the question of the integrated ticketing a coherent framework is necessary. Such framework could be reached either by voluntary engagement by the industry or by the introduction of a binding legal framework. The Commission services propose first taking the first option.

The Commission services intend to start discussions with rail operators, airlines, air *GDSs* and similar rail systems as well as any other interested party in order to reach a voluntary engagement from them to meet the aims set in the field of integrated ticketing

as defined in point 5.1. The agreement should comprise in particular the following clauses:

– The engagement to develop an integrated ticketing system open to all operators (including future high speed rail operators);

– The obligation to share certain data between the operators, in particular on the schedules, tariffs and associated services. This obligation will be extended in the long term to cover public transport operators (buses, metro, train) which serve the urban centres in order to be able to cover also "the last mile" of the intermodal journey.

Other actions such as schedules coordination, the guarantee of connections and reasonable waiting times pertain to the operators' commercial strategy. They will be consequently decided upon by the operators themselves in the framework of individual trade agreements.

Possibility of subscribing to such agreements will be given to all the operators who are on the market referred to under point 5.1. Its success will be determined by the rate of participation of the air and rail operators so as to ensure a sufficient coverage of services identified under point 5.1. The voluntary agreement should envisage technical progress reports and planning in order for the Commission to make sure that the various participants respect their commitments. As an additional guarantee in respect of the agreement, the Commission would specify in a recommendation that it will envisage regulations in case the agreement is not honoured. The agreement will have to be implemented in accordance with Community competition rules, more particularly with Articles 81, 82 and 86 of the EC Treaty. If the agreement answers the priorities of the Community project, the Commission will accept it in the form of a recommendation, after having consulted the European Parliament and the Council.

A monitoring committee of the agreement would be set up, to which the concerned industry would participate together with the Commission services. Initially made up of stakeholders of the agreement, its composition would be widened gradually in order to facilitate the extension of this project towards long distance conventional rail and local public transport.

5.3. Technical aspects of integrated ticketing

This involves identifying a technical solution which can be carried out quickly and at the least cost. According to the conclusions of the RAIFF, a solution would be that air GDSs incorporate information on rail services, allow the reservation of these services and support the issuance of the integrated tickets. The air framework is indeed sufficiently developed – from an informatics point of view as well as concerning operating rules - to be extended to another mode of transport.

Another solution would be to profit from the development of the systems which are under way in the rail sector although ticketing integration in this transport mode is still in its initial stages. In this case, it would involve developing a new rail GDS which would allow integrated ticketing with the air sector.

It is, by the way, interesting to note that Eurostar is now member of Amadeus GDS and that by this means it proposes its services exactly like an airline.

5.3.1. Design of the IT platform

On the hypothesis of a solution based on the air GDS, IT[9] developments will have to be carried out to allow integrated air-rail ticket sales. Data on rail services has indeed to be transcribed in a format that the air systems will be able to treat. Interfaces must be created to allow the production of integrated tickets.

GDSs have already shown their interest. IT developments will also have to be carried out by rail companies. Considering that Railteam rail alliance currently develops an interconnection system between operators which will be active in January 2009, this system represents a promising rail GDS for the introduction of an integrated ticketing system.

In any event, the systems' design has to be sufficiently evolutionary to be able to incorporate, in the future, data of rail GDSs and issue electronic tickets.

5.3.2. Operation of the system

Rail companies which would take part in the mechanism would pay to GDS operators a fee per reservation, therefore involving negotiations to determine the amount of such fee[10]. One could envisage the adhesion of each rail company to IATA in order to be able to participate to the Billing Settlement Plan (clearing house type) as well as for the attribution of IATA codes to railway stations (or maybe a "zone" code covering a series of stations) which would make it possible to identify them in GDSs.

Consequently, such a mechanism involves important negotiations for rail operators who will have to join the air ticketing systems, with a particular emphasis on cost sharing between the various concerned parties.

Lastly, the system requires the development of operational and administrative procedures which are in line with those developed within the IATA framework, for example for the mutual acceptance of tickets issued by other operators.

5.4. The revision of the existing legal framework

The Commission proposal of 15 November 2007 amends Regulation 2299/89[11] in order to adapt it to the current context of the market – in particular the development of new distribution channels – and to strengthen competition between GDSs' suppliers. Giving more flexibility to GDSs and airlines, the proposal enables GDSs to answer more effectively to competition from new distribution channels[12] concerning prices and services. The simplification of the regulation increases primarily the freedom of negotiation of those involved in the market: airlines and GDSs will be free to negotiate

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[9]   Information Technology.

[10]   Such a negotiation would be only possible after adoption of the Commission proposal on the amendment of the CRS Regulation.

[11]   Council Regulation (EEC) n° 2299/89 of 24 July 1989 on a code of conduct for computerized reservation systems. *OJ L 220, 29.7.1989, p. 1 –7.*

[12]   In the European Union, the new channels have a share of approximately 40% of air ticket reservations, against 60% for travel agencies and GDSs.

reservation fees charged by GDSs as well as tariff items communicated by the airlines. The restrictions established by the current regulation on tariff contents, on access to distribution channels and on reservation fees will be raised (except for safeguard measures against potential abuse of competition, in particular in the event of close relationship between GDSs and transport service providers).

As far as integrated ticketing is concerned, the fee currently applied to the air sector (three to four euros per service unit) would be excessive for the rail companies in relation to average rail ticket prices, and particularly in the case of short journeys and would oblige them to rise their fares. Consequently, only few rail services are displayed today in air GDSs. Abolishing the provisions on fees would enable air and rail operators to increase their presence in the GDSs.

Concerning the display of air-rail or HST[13]-rail services, in accordance with regulation n°2299/89, GDSs display the data for a given journey according to its duration (except if the passenger requires the use of other criteria), which could penalise[14] the selection of trips combining rail and air transport. The result of this criterion is indeed that air-rail solutions will be displayed in the majority of cases in the last screens while the majority of sales are done from the first screen.

In its proposal for amendment of regulation 2299/89, the Commission proposes the simplification of the provisions on data display. Although the proposal maintains the obligation of neutral criteria for display, criteria other than journey duration could be used, such as price[15]. That would possibly allow better positioning of the rail offer on the GDS screens.

5.5. Community participation in the project

In order to prompt stakeholders to conclude a voluntary agreement, the Commission could contribute to the process. However, the Commission is not willing to cover on its own the financial cost of necessary computer developments, nor to be responsible for the realisation of such updated systems, which is for the industry to look after. The main role of the Commission is that of a catalyst.

It is also advisable to think about the project management structure. This has to be created by the industry and should guarantee an effective management of the project. For the first phase the simplest forms have to be envisaged such as the creation of a consortium (which could even be the subject of a special annex to the voluntary agreement referred to above) or of an European Economic Interest Grouping (EEIG). Such an entity should firstly develop the technical specifications of the informatics system which will be the reference for a call for tender for the software development.

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[13]   High Speed Train.

[14]   See footnote n.6.

[15]   Or maybe CO2 emissions…

6. CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the situation leads to the following conclusions:

– The problem of integrated ticketing Europewide certainly has a technical dimension but it is primarily a matter of organisation and financing. In a strongly competitive environment, measures have to be taken to promote cooperation between the various modes of transport and to stimulate necessary developments if we want to set up a sustainable transport system. When studying the experiments undertaken at national level it becomes clear that the countries which have a national passenger information system are those whose governments took the initiative, in cooperation with the industry, to stimulate the development of such systems. The Commission will encourage stakeholders to follow this direction in order to foster the emergence of an integrated ticketing system for air and rail transport.

– The suggested approach has a relatively limited economic impact on Community and operators' budget. Yet, it will create economic opportunities for the operators by facilitating the emergence of a still underdeveloped air-rail market. From an environmental point of view the impact will be positive through better use of public transport. Considering that the existing cases of air-rail intermodality are limited to predetermined rail operators and airlines, the suggested approach will facilitate more open competition in this market and will consequently widen the choice of transport options for the passenger, including on routes which today are not covered by direct services.

– Integration between air and rail will be easier if based on functional systems and successful experiments within each mode. In the rail sector we are finally withnessing the introduction of the first database interconnections but much remains to do to generalise the use of the integrated information, reservation and distribution systems and to ensure sufficient access to them.

– Operational integration is of course strictly related to the integration of distribution. Experience shows that distribution raises less problems as soon as a solution is found to the organisational and technical problems for the integration of transport services.

7. QUESTIONNAIRE

Scope of air-rail integrated ticketing

Question 1. What is in your opinion the market potential for these services?

Question 2. What are your comments on the scope of integrated ticketing as proposed, as a first step, at point 5.1? Do you think that the scope should be extended to other modes of public transport?

Question 3. What are, according to you, the connections on which air-rail services are possible, in particular in relation to the criterion of the quality of the airport/railway station interface?

Institutional framework

Question 4. What is your opinion on the feasibility and the contents of the voluntary agreement as proposed at point 5.2? Would you be ready to take part in it?

Technical aspects of the integrated ticketing

Question 5. What are your comments on the technical solution proposed for the integrated air-rail ticketing and the operating mode of the system as described at point 5.3? Do you see any problems related to it and if so, which ones? Can you envisage any alternative solution which could be satisfactory as far as a swift and economical implementation is concerned?

Project management

Question 6. Which is the most appropriate management structure for the first phase of this project?

Operational aspects

Question 7. Are the problems involved in air-rail integration mainly of an *operational* nature or are they rather related to the *distribution* of the product? In the first case, please specify.

Question 8. How important is it to travel with registered luggage on the entirety of the intermodal journey? Which solutions do you envisage?

Your suggestions

Question 9. Do you have further comments on the text of the document? Do you have suggestions regarding action at Community level which was not mentioned in this document?

THANK YOU!