

Press release

Regulation on Multimodal Digital Mobility Services (MDMS): lack of political will of the European Commission is leaving travellers and the EU green transition stranded

On Monday 19 June 2023, DG MOVE, the transport department of the European Commission, has presented policy options under consideration for the upcoming MDMS Regulation. ECTAA was amongst a large group of stakeholders representing Europe's mobility ecosystem including consumers and passengers, environmental groups, independent rail operators and ticket intermediaries that have pushed for an ambitious Regulation since the presentation of the MDMS initiative two years ago. The now presented policy options do not only lack ambition, but most of all political will.

Brussels, 22 June 2023 – When the considered policy options for the MDMS Regulation were presented during the workshop, it became clear that none of them is suitable to solve the current problems stated by the Commission two years ago – “planning and buying tickets for multimodal journeys is much too often too cumbersome”. The objective of the Commission back then was “to establish frameworks for commercial agreements for services re-selling mobility products”. That would help travellers to freely search and book at the channel of their choice, equipped with all relevant information at hand and to make well-informed travel decisions across transport modes and operators. It would not only make consumers lives easier, but also support new services and allow for a modal shift towards more sustainable transport.

However, Transport Commissioner Adina Vălean is today supporting only obligations for “re-linking” – meaning that travellers would be prevented from booking at the channel of their choice. Travellers would instead have to click through multiple different transport operator websites for the booking. While this is in the interest of dominant railway companies and large airline groups, this is clearly neither in the interest of consumers and competition nor making the EU transport system more sustainable.

While an obligation for “re-selling” under fair, reasonable and non-discriminatory (FRAND) terms is included in one of the policy options, this would only be applicable for transport operators exceeding a domestic share of 50 percent - and only for domestic transport products. Cross-border travel would be completely excluded.

Said Frank Oostdam, President of ECTAA: “the lack of political will of the Transport Commissioner to support travellers booking at their channel of choice, allow for a thriving competition amongst transport modes and operators and enable easy modal shift is worrisome. The Commission should instead broadly enable integrated booking via independent distribution channels in the interest of consumers, competition and the environment.”

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About ECTAA

ECTAA represents some 80,000 travel agents and tour operators in Europe, which provide consultancy and sell transport, accommodation, leisure and other tourism services as well as combined products to leisure and business customers.

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