



## Newsletter Volume 5

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### CROSS-BORDER BUS BETWEEN LAVAMÜND (AUSTRIA) AND VELENJE (SLOVENIA)

In May 2019, a bicycle-bus between Lavamünd, Dravograd, and Velenje got started. The bus was conceived by the cooperation of the Office of the Carinthian Government and the Carinthia Transport Association as well as the Regional Development Agency for the Koroška region. The idea is that with this special public transport offer the tourist offer of the Austrian-Slovenian border region with the Lavant, Drau, and Štekna cycle paths will be supported and sustainably strengthened. The new offer is at the same time sustainable in the sense of future generations and represents an offer to strengthen cycling tourism.

Among other things, additional adjustments were also necessary regarding the legal handling of the operation. The amended article 50 of the Road Transport Act - made possible cross border local/regional public bus service to the next bus station across the state border.

The Štekna bus offers 30 seats and a bicycle trailer for up to 20 bicycles. The bicycles are transported free of charge. The bus companies Postbus and Nomago are involved in the operation. In May, June, and September the bus operated on weekends as well as on Slovenian and Austrian holidays. In July and August, a daily operation was even carried out in order to provide tourists with the most attractive offer possible.



In connection with the start of operating, numerous measures were also taken to make the offer public. Previous studies in our project have shown that above all a comprehensive and coherent marketing concept is essential for the success of new offers in cross-border passenger transport. In addition to an official opening with numerous political representatives, the bus was also marketed in numerous regional newspapers. In addition, a homepage and a social media channel were set up for information purposes.

Between May and August, the total number of 1,089 passengers and 874 bicycles were transported by bus. The number of passengers shows that the service has become increasingly popular among passengers and the bus has been used intensively during the summer months.

Getting on and off the bus is always possible at the stops according to the timetable. This provides numerous exciting excursion possibilities along the route and thus additional passenger potential. The new mobility nodes in Lavamünd, designed and built as part of the TRANS-BORDERS project and set up in April 2019, enables access to information and modern mobility services and enhances the time spent in public transport. In addition to charging facilities for e-bikes, further service material is available and free surfing on the Internet is possible.



### 5<sup>TH</sup> MEETING OF THE TRANS-BORDERS STEERING COMMITTEE

On 17 and 18 September 2019, our steering committee met to discuss the progress of work over the last months. On the occasion of starting of the operation of the bicycle bus, we decided this time to meet in Slovenj Gradec. The town, with its renovated but abandoned railway bridge, is one of the highlights of the Štekna cycling path.



The project has reached an advanced stage and the pilot actions are in the experimental phase so that we were able to give an overview of the gained experiences in detail. The pilot actions are developing very well in all regions so that some additions to the project could be discussed. At the same time, it is our aim to learn from our experiences and to be able to transfer them to other regions. Therefore, it was especially

important to highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the passenger transport systems in the partner regions in order to be able to develop case studies. The partner meeting was rounded up by a field trip to explore cross-border offers cases of transport and tourism.

# TRANS-BORDERS

## Improving accessibility in peripheral cross-border regions



### CONNECTION OF THE LIBREC REGION WITH GÖRLITZ AND ZGORZELEC

Cross-border passenger services in the border triangle of Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic are restricted by obstacles in terms of rolling stock, infrastructure and legal framework, which make cross-border transport services so difficult to plan and maintain. Current solutions are usually complicated and exclude small-scale connections. On the Czech side, for example, trains end in the last town before the Polish border.

One of these examples, which we are examining as part of our project, is the connection of the Polish border town of Bogatynia. The situation today shows typical obstacles of cross-border passenger services: to travel from Bogatynia to Zittau there is only one bus service between Bogatynia and the last village before the German border (Porajów) under operation. Then a walk of 300 meters across the border is necessary to reach the city bus to Zittau. Liberec, the largest city of the region in the Czech Republic, is only accessible with three shift busses for workers. We aim



to conceive and prepare a new bus-line between Zittau (Germany), Bogatynia (Poland) and Frýdlant (Czech Republic) as a regional axis to connect Bogatynia with the next relevant rail nodes Zittau and Frýdlant.

A kick-off meeting took place in May, followed by further planning meetings between German and Polish partners. The start of the bus line is planned for spring 2020.

### PLANNING FOR THE EUROPEAN CITY OF GÖRLITZ-ZGORZELEC

Ideas and concepts for the reorganization of the existing line “P” and for additional cross-border bus services in the city center of Görlitz and Zgorzelec as well as for the connection of the Polish side with the German recreation area “Berzdorfer See” were worked out in spring 2019.

On 1 July 2019, a test service between the two city centers of Görlitz and Zgorzelec and with the use of interchanges a connection to the recreation area Berzdorfer See based on an optimization of existing timetables and application of the German day passes also for the Polish side. The test run was operated by the Polish transport operator FHU Bielawa and took place during the summer period in the months of July and August 2019.



The next steps now are to evaluate the results of the test run and to draw conclusions for the coming years, so that the networking progress of cross-border public transport services between Görlitz and Zgorzelec continues to realize the idea of European city Görlitz/Zgorzelec and provide an example of how the people of the two nations can overcome national borders.

