

Open letter

Multimodal Digital Mobility Services Regulation - Environmental NGOs call for cross-border travels to be fully covered

As representatives of civil society, we are calling on the EU Commission to unlock the potential of MDMS to reduce GHG emissions and the climate impact of aviation. The MDMS Regulation is a tool that should enable modal shift from air to rail at both national and cross-border levels.

To support the European Green Deal, the MDMS Regulation must enable consumers to seamlessly combine low carbon transport modes such as rail and bus across borders. One of the barriers faced by consumers to travel cross-border by rail is the lack of ticket information shared by rail operators to booking platforms, forcing them to do burdensome multiple ticket bookings. This is particularly relevant to business travelers, who are increasingly looking for more sustainable travel options, but often encounter obstacles. They must too often use booking tools showing mainly flight options.

The initial goal of MDMS was to solve this issue. But, for the past two months, the EU Commission's DG MOVE has seemed to willingly reduce the ambition of this file, despite the much-needed evolution required. DG MOVE's latest option only requires operators with a share over 50 percent in the domestic market to permit the sale of their domestic tickets on other platforms, therefore excluding cross-border journeys from MDMS. It is totally incompatible with the objectives of the European Green Deal and will restrict the ability of climate-conscious consumers to shift from air to rail transport.

Aviation in Europe has a climate problem. Aviation traffic grew 67% between 2005 and 2019 and its CO2 emissions by 24%. Unless we take action now, aviation emissions are projected to grow by a further 38% from 2019 to 2050, even with aircraft efficiency improvements. Rail is a very low-carbon transport. Trains have on average a climate impact 5 to 6 times lower than planes. As an example, on a cross-border journey from Paris to Madrid, travelers can reduce their carbon footprint by 82% if they choose train over plane. An increasing number of companies are asking their employees to privilege rail for business trips, but this potential can only be maximized if the proper tools are in place.

With the MDMS Regulation, the Commission should not miss this window of opportunity to give consumers stronger capacity to travel cross-border and on multimodal journeys, enabling a large number of passengers to shift from air to rail and reduce GHG emissions.

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