

# TRANS-BORDERS

Improving accessibility in peripheral cross-border regions



## Newsletter Volume 4

May 2019

### SYMPOSIUM TRANSPORT SERVICES IN THE BORDER TRIANGLE

On 12 February 2019 we organized a symposium “The border triangle is not the end of line” to present and discuss the possibilities of connecting the people of the border triangle to the European railway network. During this meeting, initiated by Liberecký kraj and co-organized by our partners from Saxony and Lower Silesia, we presented our vision of the infrastructural evolution of the cross-border transport services and the compatibility to important national projects.

The demand for cross-border railway connections in the border triangle of Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic and the connection to the Trans-European Transport Network with the junction Görlitz-Zgorzelec has great importance for the region. Especially the north-south axis from Berlin via Cottbus, Görlitz, Zittau and Liberec to Prague as well as the connection from Dresden via Görlitz to Breslau are essential for sustainable development of the Euroregion Neisse.

Within TRANS-BORDERS we want to join with important actors in the border triangle to achieve closer cooperation between regional and federal governments as well as national railway operators and infrastructure companies. The current transport services are disadvantaged by the fact, that the national railway infrastructure companies pursue the development of infrastructure for their own national territory, not regarding links with neighbouring countries.



Representatives of ministries, district administrations, cities, railway companies from the three countries and the car manufacturer Skoda, attended the transport conference. Our local partners of TRANS-BORDERS presented the visions of rail transport in the German-Polish-Czech border region.

A memorandum is to be drafted by summer 2019 and handed over to the national administrations. The memorandum should demand for the border triangle to be connected to the trans-European railway network and, in particular, for infrastructure to be developed. Among the focal points is the construction of a continuous high-speed connection from Prague via Liberec, Zittau and Görlitz to Berlin and the rapid electrification of the connection from Dresden via Bautzen to Görlitz. Poland will soon be electrifying the last section of the track from Zgorzelec to Breslau.

### CONSTRUCTION OF MOBILITY NODES IN CARINTHIA

A multimodal mobility behaviour of society can be observed more and more in Europe. People are no longer interested to reach their destination; they are increasingly interested in using the means of transport best suited to their destination or the best combination of these. The development of mobility nodes give cities and municipalities the chance, to can support climate protection goals and make a decisive contribution to the success of the traffic turnaround.

Within our project, mobility nodes will be established in Lavamünd and Bleiburg, which enables access to information and modern mobility services and enhances the time spent in public transport.



On 17 April 2019, the first two stations in Lavamünd Badesees and Marktplatz were set up. In addition to modern information boards, the stations have facilities for bicycle parking and equipment for repairing bicycles.

### TRANS-BORDERS AT REGIONAL FAIRS

To draw further attention to our cause, improving accessibility from peripheral cross-border areas to the main axes of the European transport network, TRANS-BORDERS recently presented itself at two regional fairs.



On 27 and 28 April 2019, as one of 200 exhibitors, TRANS-BORDERS were at the KONVENTÁ. It is a regional fair in the border triangle of Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic with around 20,000 visitors. The primary goal

was to inform the general public on our project in general, the objectives and the anticipated results within TRANS-BORDERS.

Once in the flow, Saxon and Czech's project partners presented our project under the slogan: “public transportation does not care about the borders“ at the open-air festival in the border triangle near to Zittau. The occasion of the event was the 15th anniversary of Poland's and the Czech Republic's membership in the European Union.



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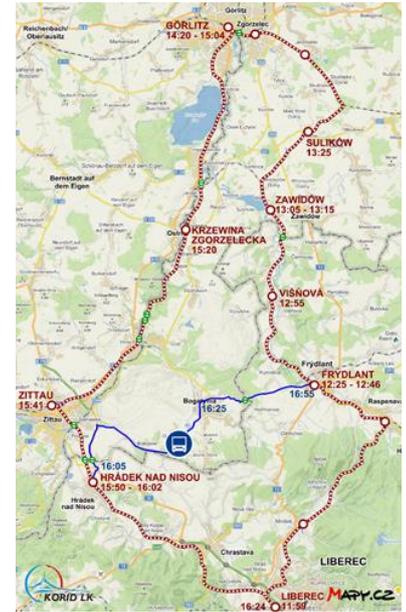
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### TRAIN PROMOTION TOUR AROUND THE CZECH-POLISH-GERMAN BORDER TRIANGLE

“The border triangle is not the final destination!” With this slogan, a promotional trip through the border regions of the Czech Republic, Poland and Germany took place on 09 April 2019. The trip was organized by our Czech project partner KORID LK, spol.r.o., the leading public transport planning institution of Liberec region. Our journey started in Liberec and ran via Frydlant and Zawidow to Zgorzelec and Görlitz, then via Zittau and Hradec n.N. back to Liberec. On the 199 kilometers long journey the train took stakeholders, decision-makers and representatives of the press across the three countries and crosses the border eight times.

The purpose of this promo ride was to highlight obstacles, for example in terms of rolling stock, infrastructure and legal framework, which make cross-border transport services so difficult to plan and maintain. This rail-bound round trip through the wonderful landscape of the border triangle, unfortunately, does not exist anymore. On the Czech side, trains end in the last town before the Polish border. The rails continue in principle. In the past, a long-distance connection from Berlin to Vienna used this section. On the Polish side, however, the track is only used by freight trains due to its condition up to Zgorzelec since 1991.



The common goal now is to reactivate this route for regular passenger transport services. But it is also important to keep an eye on the overall system. An important goal is also the electrification of the railway track from Dresden via Görlitz and Zgorzelec to Wrocław, which is in different stages of the national modernisation programs in the rail infrastructure. However, we have been able to show the public that these cross-border connections exist in the remote peripheral regions of the countries, but they are not ideal yet.

### CROSS-BORDER SUMMER TRAIN BETWEEN SLOVENIA AND AUSTRIA

A train service between the regions of Carinthia and Koroška was often the subject of discussion. Through the commitment of our project partners, the successful test operation of a cross-border seasonal train was carried out last summer. From June to September, trains operated on 11 Saturdays within the TRANS-BORDERS project pilot area from Maribor (Slovenia) to Bleiburg (Austria).



The high popularity of the trains and the promising results are a good foundation ahead of another summer season of the Saturday cross-border train in 2019, which will operate on additional days. Our analyses have shown that cross-border connections between Carinthia and Koroška have not only a potential in sustainable mobility for leisure time. There is as well a high potential for daily mobility.



Through the cooperation of key national and regional stakeholders, a cross-border bus in addition to the cross-border summer train will be presented this year. The busses, equipped with trailers for bicycles, will connect Lavamünd (Austria) with Velenje (Slovenia). The new established public cross-border lines thus support the Drava bike and Štrekna bicycle route.

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

On 9 and 10 April 2019, our consortium met for the fourth time to discuss the progress of work over the last six months. The event in Frýdlant (Czech Republic) also had a very special occasion: it took place under the motto of the Mid-Term Review. The working process has reached an advanced stage and the project entered the hot phase, the representatives of our partner regions explained their pilot actions and planned measures in detail.

Interesting issues came to light: measures previously intended were discarded and replaced by others, in other regions the analyses and first implementations revealed even more far-reaching measures. Interesting and therefore helpful for the future was the different approach to similar problems. A SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) between the Austrian and Slovenian partners, for example, led to the discontinuation of efforts to extend the bus service between Klagenfurt and Ljubljana. Instead, a connection between Dravograd, Lavamünd and Wolfsberg starts with the construction of two mobility nodes.



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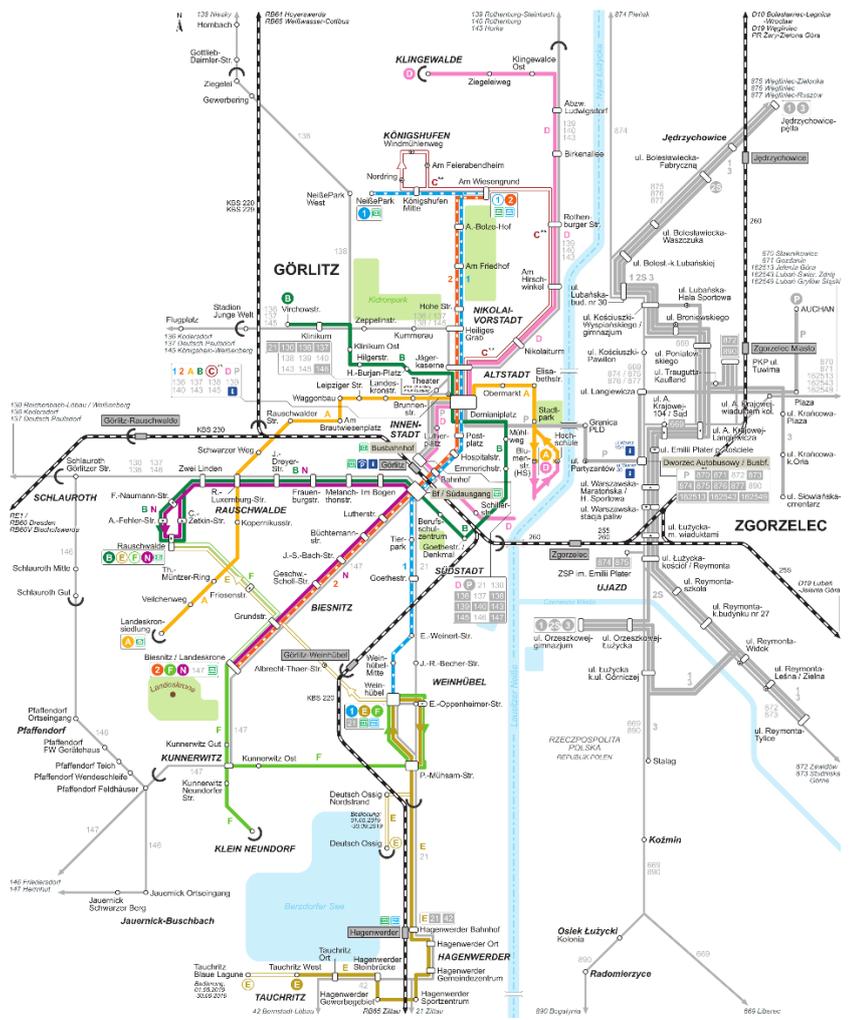


### PLANNING FOR THE EUROPEAN CITY OF GÖRLITZ-ZGORZELEC

The cities of Görlitz and Zgorzelec, like few other cities in Europe, represent the European history: until 1945, the cities on both banks of the Neisse river were one municipality, and then the separation after the Second World War and since the political change after the former GDR in 1989 there is again an intensive common development. In 1998, Zgorzelec and Görlitz declared themselves as the European city Görlitz/Zgorzelec and provide an example of how the people of the two nations can overcome national borders.

Regarding public transport, however, the two cities are still largely independent of each other. On 09 September 1991, the cross-border bus line “P” started operation. Additional trains connect the two cities via the Neisse viaduct. In connection with studies on our regional action plan “Planning for railway connection of Liberec Region - Görlitz/Zgorzelec”, we have established that bus transport should also be taken into account, to promote public transport as an overall system.

Ideas and concepts for the reorganization of the existing line “P” and for additional cross-border bus services in the city centre of Görlitz and Zgorzelec as well as for the connection of the Polish side with the German recreation area “Berzdorfer See” were now worked out. For presenting the ideas, a conference was held “Ideas for the future of urban transport in the European city of Görlitz/Zgorzelec” on 12 March 2019 in Görlitz. The parties involved were cities of Görlitz and Zgorzelec, the bus company Bielawa and the new management of GVB Görlitz.



The next steps now are the Preparation of a test service between Zgorzelec and “Berzdorfer See” during summer 2019. This includes the optimization of the timetable, investigation of attractive family tariff and possibilities of ticket recognition. Furthermore, a working group for the reorganization of the city line “P” is to establish.

### WHAT IS UP IN THE NEAR FUTURE

We are now up to concretize our pilot projects due to the findings of the Mid-Term Review. We will further present our project at regional fairs and events, for example at the 25th Bolestawiecki Festival of Ceramics, which will take place from 14 to 18 August 2019, as well as at scientific conferences, for example at 7th Croatian Geographical Congress in October 2019, to lobbying and raise awareness for our aim.