

Newsletter

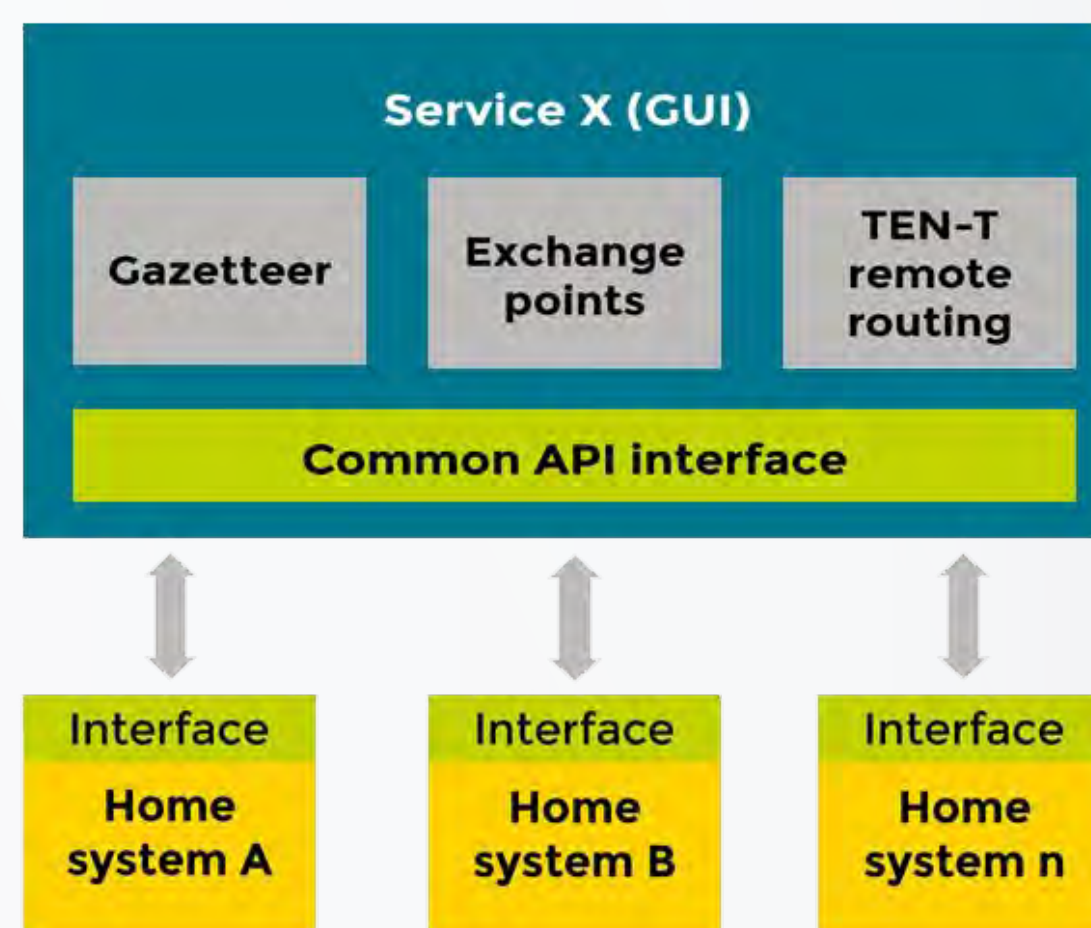
Six Countries of the Danube Region work on the transnational interconnection (“linking”) of Multimodal Travel Information Services

The EU-funded Project LinkingDanube started on January 1st in Vienna

Multimodal travel information services, such as journey planners, inform travellers about the details of their travel as well as about the best means of transport. They therefore contribute to intensifying the use of public transport. While high-quality information systems already exist for local and regional areas, cross-border information is lagging behind. This can be attributed to the fact that travel information systems are limited to local, regional or national means of transport, and only a small amount of cross-border data is integrated. The LinkingDanube project addresses this problem by linking the largely isolated systems across borders. LinkingDanube stands for "Linking transnational, multimodal traveller information and journey planners for environmentally-friendly mobility in the Danube region". The project is supported by the INTERREG Danube Transnational Programme of the EU.

While data exchange has been the focus of the approaches in past research initiatives, LinkingDanube is building on the concept of "linking services". Through a common, open application programming interface (OpenAPI), the services can communicate with one another and exchange routing results without integrating the other ones data. Thus such services can offer the travellers and especially the daily commuters in the border regions on their cross-border journey with seamless information for their travel from A to B, apart from the use of their own car. In LinkingDanube special attention is paid to transport on-demand services, which are currently rarely or inadequately integrated into the information systems. Thereby better information to rural residents will be provided.

System architecture in LinkingDanube



The project has brought together public institutions and transport providers from six different Danube Region countries to enable linking services across borders. LinkingDanube was launched in Vienna on 1st January 2017 and has a duration of 2.5 years. AustriaTech coordinates the project as Lead Partner with a total budget of nearly 3 million EUR.

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LinkingDanube Kick-Off Dissemination Event

The LinkingDanube Kick-Off Dissemination Event was intended a first major dissemination action to the project's target groups and liaison action with similar projects. The intention of the Kick-Off Dissemination Event was to raise the awareness and perception of the project and its objectives. For tapping the full potential, it was decided to connect the event to another major event in the mobility and in particular in the ITS (Intelligent Transport Systems) domain. Hence, the Kick-Off Dissemination Event was held on 27th of March 2017 back to back with the ISEP Symposium (International Symposium on Electronics in Transport) in Ljubljana bringing together stakeholder is the transport domain from Slovenia as well as the other member States, and some nearby countries in South Eastern Europe.



Dean Herenda, Secretary, Head of National Traffic Management and Information Centre Slovenian Ministry of Infrastructure provided a welcome address and emphasised the importance of transnational cooperation in regard to an improvement of traffic management.

The project goals and objectives were presented by Bettina Neuhäuser (AustriaTech), Project Manager of LinkingDanube. Franc Zepic, representative of the European Danube Region Strategy (EUSDR) coordinating Priority Area 1B (targeted on the improvement of Mobility and Multimodality – with focus on rail, road and air links) joined the Kick-Off Dissemination Event and EUSDR stakeholder and also in his role as Associated Strategic Partner of LinkingDanube.

Together with Franc Zepic the strategic impact of the project was outlined in terms of mobility and multimodality in the Danube Region.

It was stated that one of the most important goals of EUSDR is the territorial cohesion that should be achieved by good links between urban and rural areas, fair and affordable access to infrastructure and services.

In this context LinkingDanube will contribute to the EUSDR goal to better connect citizens, to enable greater multimodality and better connected transport links.



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Franc Zepic stated that the project fully tackles the deployment priorities of the Danube Region and is hence one of the Strategic Projects of the EUSDR addressing access to public transport data via a harmonised interface and the provision of multimodal traveller information service. It is focussing exactly on these agreed top priorities and will create outputs that are addressing these agreed needs. The envisaged Exploitation Strategy developed in LinkingDanube could be a booster for the ITS Roadmap of the EUSDR as well as for the objectives of the EUSDR PA1 in general.

Beside of the discussion concerning the added value for the Danube Region, Dorin Dumitrescu (Electronic Solutions SRL), whose organisation is leading the development work in the project, provided insight into the Danube Journey Planner Platform that will be developed in the course of the project. Further Zsolt Stegena (National Mobile Payment Plc) and Matej Gojčič (Regional Development Agency of the Ljubljana Urban Region), both Work Package Leaders in the project, outlined the impact and usage of the project developments within existing Journey Planners from the Hungarian and Slovenian perspective.



The Kick-Off Dissemination Event was also intended to create liaisons with similar projects right from the beginning in order to exploit the full potential of possible synergies. Therefore, those approved projects that are invited by the Danube Transnational Programme to form a so-called "Thematic Pole on Mobility" have been invited to the Kick-Off-Event. Representatives of CHESTNUT, eGUTS, CITYWALK and Transdanube. PEARLS participated at the LinkingDanube Kick-Off Event as a first step towards a regular exchange within the Thematic Pole, which has decided already on its common focus "Sustainable Transport Systems and Mobility".

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At the Kick-Off Dissemination Event Marko Govek (Municipality of Velenje), Danilo Čeh (Scientific research centre Bistra Ptuj) and Constantin Dumitrescu (Politehnica University of Timisoara) lead a discussion on the synergies of the projects and possible ways of cooperation between the projects. The common challenges are related to wider use of environmentally-friendly and safe transport systems and modes in order to contribute to more sustainable regional and local mobility. Possible actions of knowledge exchange and community building were discussed and “connection bridges” among the projects were elaborated.

Links

CHESTNUT <http://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/chestnut>

CITYWALK <http://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/citywalk>

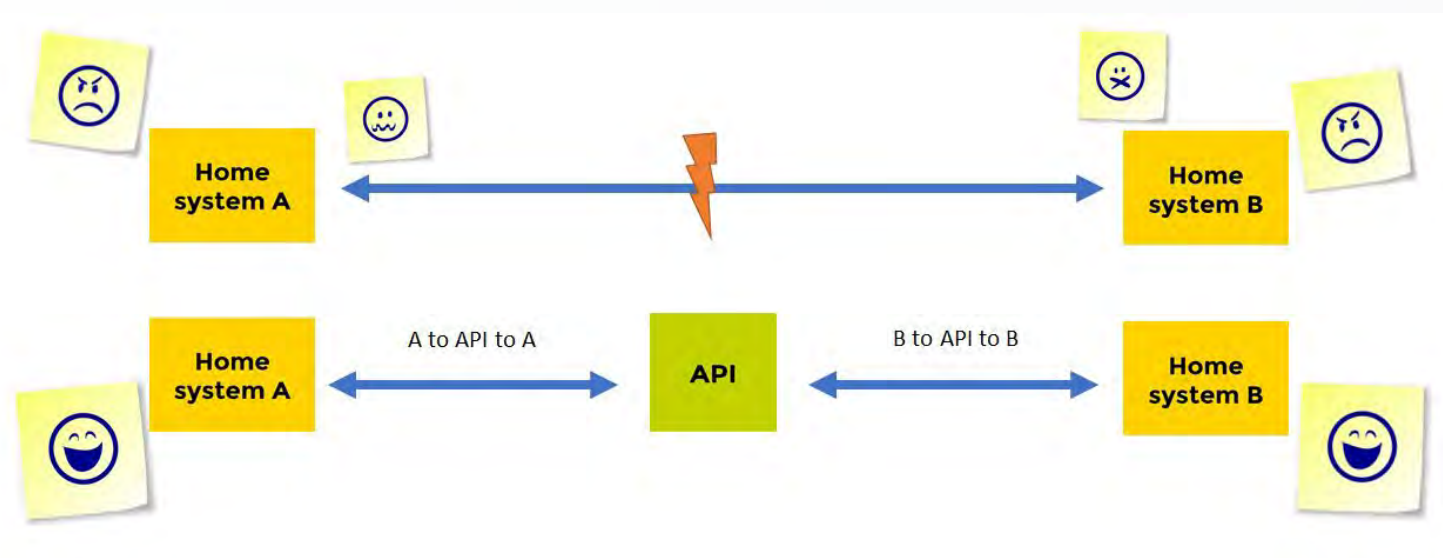
Transdanube.PEARLS <http://www.interreg-danube.eu/approved-projects/transdanube-pearls>

The LinkingDanube Consortium started to work on a Concept for Distributed Journey Planning

The linking of services across regional/national borders is the crucial element of LinkingDanube. Any solutions to be implemented within the project thus have to link to the main transport network and should build upon existing systems where it is possible. For the envisaged decentralised transnational routing service there are some technical details which need to be clarified in advance. As the different systems have been developed according to regional and national requirements, their functionalities differ just as well as the underlying system architecture.

In the first project phase the most important technical aspects have been enquired from the operators of the relevant services and representative use cases have been identified in order to implement and demonstrate the LinkingDanube proof-of-concept. These use cases will mostly be related to rail routing while multimodal and real-time use cases will be possible as well.

The need for a common interface



Before the actual development work in LinkingDanube can start, the consortium needs to develop a Concept for the implementation. This work has been launched recently. This LinkingDanube Concept Development work has to tackle in the first line a technical specification for implementation. Working groups in the Consortium started to work on the elaboration of the system architecture, the physical exchange format, as well as the metadata content specification, which will be the backbone of the common interface.

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In this regard the European Technical Specification entitled “Intelligent Transport Systems – Public transport – Open API for distributed journey planning 02278420” is taken as a basis to develop common exchange profiles. This Technical Specification is recommended in the forthcoming Delegated Regulation supplementing the Directive 2010/40/EU with regard to the provision of EU-wide multimodal travel information services that is currently in the approval phase in the European Parliament and the Council most probably published in September 2017.

The LinkingDanube Concept has to enable the linking of national systems via commonly developed interface that allows decentralised transnational journey planning. In the end this means that national services will be able to “plug into” a common interface and provide seamless information from multiple systems to cross-border travellers. After implementation the LinkingDanube Concept will be tested and proven in pilots where the partners will demonstrate the feasibility of specific use cases for multimodal traveller information and demand transport integration. Hence LinkingDanube will be able to demonstrate the early implementation of the Delegated Regulation on of EU-wide multimodal travel information services in the Danube Region.

CONTACT



Bettina Neuhäuser

Project manager

E-mail: bettina.neuhaeuser@austriatech.at

Mihai Niculescu

Communication manager

E-mail: mihai.niculescu@elsol.ro

<http://www.interreg-danube.eu/linking-danube>