

# European initiatives promote smart transport services

Jun 27, 2016 by Dugie Standeford

**The Mobility as a Service (MaaS) Alliance and ITS Observatory aim to put Europe in the lead in developing and rolling out intelligent transport systems (ITS).**

Add, edit or remove a portlet above the content

Smart transport systems and services are emerging across Europe, but there's no centralised resource for finding out about them or for enabling their large-scale deployment, according to officials from industry consortium ERTICO-ITS Europe. To counter those problems, ERTICO and 17 partners from public authorities, transport companies and various organisations have launched the ITS Observatory and the MaaS Alliance.

Unless the ITS community organises and takes the stick, it's unclear whether MaaS in Europe will be successful

The observatory is an EU-funded initiative to set up a knowledge centre and community for ITS activities, said Paul Kompfner, senior adviser for urban mobility and MaaS at ERTICO. The first step will be a survey next year which will allow people working with MaaS solutions to post information about them in a database. Once established, the database will allow users to see what ITS services have been deployed where, he said. The observatory will also feature technological insights in the form of editorials, news stories and other information.

The database will include information on where pilot testing is taking place in the 5.9 GHz band to connect roadside sites with vehicles, Kompfner said. The observatory will also have a section on standards and spectrum information relevant to ITS. Getting the 5.9 GHz band allocated to MaaS is the biggest issue now. There's a risk that without enough ITS applications in operation, the spectrum will be reclaimed for other uses, he said.

The ITS community is looking for hybrid communications models for smart transport, said Rasmus Lindholm, director of partnership development and communications at ERTICO. It's considering which services are fit for each communications mode, such as mobile and satellite, he said.

## "Mobility operator" definition key

Lindholm is heading up a research initiative to develop a pan-European e-market plan for mobile services. The idea is to develop an e-marketplace so that, for example, a driver in Belgium can use a French application to find a parking spot. The e-market project will be completed in June 2017.

It became clear during the project work that there was a need to define interfaces so that all of the proprietary apps could communicate with each other, Lindholm. Members of the alliance, which began in October 2015 but launched as an independent organisation in Brussels this month, decided to focus on the user. MaaS users, like mobile phone customers, should be able to choose their providers and services, use those services everywhere, but pay their local service providers, he said.

For that to happen, there must be a definition for the "mobility operator" that will provide packages in all modes of transport, from trains to bicycles and aircraft, said Lindholm. Those operators will work with transport operators, who will provide the data for the various modes of transport, and there will have to be an agreement on the business model to be used. The alliance will define the framework of how this system will work in Europe in order to avoid proprietary solutions, he said.

This will mean working with telecoms operators, and that raises the issue of who will be a mobility operator, said Lindholm. Some mobile network operators are considering a move into MaaS, as are vehicle manufacturers and public transport companies. There's a race to claim the space, and it's all about who has contact with the end-user, he said. Unless the ITS community organises and takes the stick, it's unclear whether MaaS in Europe will be successful. •

## Related content

- European C-ITS to take priority over Wi-Fi in 5.9 GHz band (**ATNewsItem**)
- EC Decision harmonises band for intelligent transport systems (**ATNewsItem**)
- Uncertainty about spectrum demands for transport services as experts contemplate next WRC (**ATNewsItem**)
- Transport management system set to move into former UK military band (**ATNewsItem**)

Add, edit or remove a portlet below the content

Add, edit or remove a portlet in the footer