

## High-level international forum explored steps towards globally interoperable mobility services

On 29<sup>th</sup> November, forty high-level experts and professionals met in Tampere, Finland, to discuss steps to foster interoperability and roaming in the Mobility as a Service (MaaS) ecosystem. In the context of MaaS, roaming is defined as the ability of a MaaS customer to access mobility services in markets other than his/her own, regardless of whether these mobility services are purchased in a package or as individual trips.

The roaming of MaaS, from city to city and across borders, was identified as one of the key elements for the success of MaaS in the [White Paper](#) of the MaaS Alliance, published in September 2017. By enabling service roaming, we ensure not only quick scalability but, more importantly, unprecedented usability for the end-users. Given that people already cross European borders with their vehicles, it is important to allow them that same freedom of movement without vehicle ownership. The scope of roaming in mobility services should eventually become global.

The MaaS Summit gathered international high-level experts from the transportation industry, public administrations and academia. In her opening remarks Finnish Minister for Transport and Communication, Mrs Anne Berner highlighted that MaaS is a prominent solution which should be used to tackle the existing challenges of the transport system. Similar roaming issues have been solved in the telecommunication and banking industries and we should learn from their experience, she said. In addition, Mrs Berner emphasized that the active collaboration between public and private sector is significant for the development of roaming. She also highlighted that one of the main components of the roaming ecosystem is trust.

The roundtable discussion explored different options to foster interoperability and transferability of MaaS. Participants emphasized that roaming of mobility services is more an issue of payment than mobility - integration and clearing of the payment is the part of the process where roaming happens or does not happen. The need for public authorities or dedicated committees to promote roaming was also discussed. This could help aggregate different players and ease the complexity of negotiations. However, participants found that an industry alliance (similar to airline alliances) would be a more flexible and prominent platform. Participants also

emphasized that, provided fair competition and an open ecosystem is in place, the market will deliver and make roaming happen. They stated that any bureaucratic or centralized structures should be avoided. Instead, what could be useful is procedural assistance for the negotiating parties, e.g. protocols or templates for contracts in order to reduce the time and transaction costs related to operator-to-operator negotiations. This support could be provided by a kind of mobility broker or wholesaler.

Also, the expectations and desired level of roaming were discussed. In the telecommunications industry, interoperability of all solutions is required. The telecoms industry has established several clearing houses around the world and similar structures could be useful in the mobility sector. However, the differences between telecommunications and transport industry were highlighted by noting that in transportation the number of players with different services and regional coverage is manifold compared to telecom industry.

From the user perspective the ultimate goal of roaming is that the user should be able to expect the same level of connectivity everywhere, regardless of whether the user is in their home country or abroad. The effortless user experience provided by a single payment carries the pivotal attractiveness factor of MaaS. A study on MaaS customer expectations, carried out in Vienna as part of the SMILE project, stated that users most appreciate the full transparency of information in MaaS, as well as the opportunity to compare all existing options. Uber was mentioned as a benchmark and good example of roaming and global usability. It was also highlighted that, from the user perspective, the availability of roaming is not enough - pricing also matters. Costs should be predictable and reasonable. It is worth noting, however, that the establishment of roaming might cause some additional costs for operators.

In terms of data availability, the issue in practice seems to be reliability and concentration of the data, not the technical interoperability. The local public subsidy schemes could also hinder the transferability of MaaS since local governments often prefer allocating subsidies only to their residents / taxpayers and want therefore to separate the different users.

Regarding regulation, participants agreed that it should be used to create fair competition and a level playing field for all operators and to enable access to the market. The summit participants underlined that the digital age transportation system should be based on openness and co-creation instead of monopolies, exclusivity and control.

As a final remark, summit moderator Ms Catherine Kargas encouraged participants to name one fast track solution to promote roaming of services. Participants suggested abolishment of all subsidies in the transport system and incentivising the end users instead. More subsidiarity was urged and there was also a proposal to motivate national and local governments to prohibit company cars, instead giving tax advantages to mobility services, and applying congestion charging schemes. Participants also discussed further market opening as one possible tool and urged market actors to base their services on open data and standard open APIs and to provide each other with access to their ticketing systems. There was a suggestion that the European Commission should prepare a specific mobility package proposal to address urban mobility issues. The importance of leading cities sharing best practises was again emphasized.

In his closing remarks Mr Jacob Bangsgaard, President of the MaaS Alliance, thanked all participants for their dedication to the development of MaaS and promised that the MaaS Alliance will continue to actively support the whole community in the creation of an open and “roamable” ecosystem. Ms Catherine Kargas encouraged all players to quickly position themselves in the new mobility market and reminded that the disruption and revolution initiated by the few newcomers in the digital economy will only get faster and deeper when the already established players with robust financing will manage to catch up.

*The MaaS Summit was organized in conjunction with 1<sup>st</sup> International conference on MaaS (ICoMaaS) in Tampere. This was the 3<sup>rd</sup> annual MaaS Summit and it was hosted by [the MaaS Alliance](#), in co-operation with [the Finnish Ministry of Transport & Communication](#).*