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THE FINAL MILE - AND THE MILE IN THE MIDDLE LE DERNIER MILE - ET LE MILE INTERMEDIAIRE DIE LETZTE MEILE - UND DIE MEILE IN DER MITTE

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

It is important that a passenger in a fast long-distance train can easily reach his or her final destination - which may not be the main line station. It is also important for the passenger to be able to reach the departure station easily from his or her home or starting point.

If the train ticket includes local public transport to the final destination; or the passenger can obtain that ticket before they arrive, that saves them time and is very helpful. It makes rail travel easier and more seamless.

This report is principally about long-distance travel but it also includes some examples of regional train tickets which cover some or all public transport at the destination town or city.

We have done this partly to show what can be achieved when a train operator negotiates with an urban transport authority or operator.

What is the situation in different European countries?

GERMANY

Passengers with a BahnCard can obtain a City-Ticket for journeys over 101 km, to use on public transport at their destination; and, with a return ticket, for local public transport at either end of the return journey. That includes most buses.

In 2012, the City-Ticket also became available for the journey to the origin station in 120 towns and cities, following suggestions from many BahnCard users.

Deutsche Bahn also offers a City-Mobil-Ticket for all passengers, even for those without a BahnCard. This costs €2-3 for a single ticket and €5-6 for a day ticket and is valid on the day of travel. For a return journey, the City- \ Mobil-Ticket is available from the start city only.

The NRW or "Schoener Tag" Ticket, in the Land of Nordrhein Westfalen (North Rhine Westphalia) includes urban transport (Bus, tram, underground) at the destination. This facility is comparable to the French regional tickets.

"Schoenes Wochenende" weekend tickets, "Quer-durchs-Land" ("Right through the country") Tickets and Laender-Tickets (such as the "Berlin-Brandenburg-Ticket") are aimed particularly at the leisure market. Their validity on city transport is variable.

The Luxembourg Railways (CFL) also offer a return ticket to Trier, in Germany, which includes a bus add-on on the outward journey; but customers have to pay the city bus fare to take them back to Trier main station.

FRANCE

The only "add-on" to a train ticket offered by SNCF is for the bus from Avignon TGV to Avignon Ville - and even then it is €3 whereas if you buy it from the bus driver it only costs about €1,50.

However, many Regional Councils have developed tickets that include free use of the city or local public transport system, such as the "Pass Mulhouse - Brisgau", which includes the Freiburg area, for rail passengers within Alsace. These facilities result from the initiative of Regional Councils and are not part of a nationally operated scheme.

DENMARK

For several years, Denmark has had a rejseplanen ("the journey planner") website. It is possible to type in your station of origin and final destination, which may entail a further bus journey from the station at which you leave the train.

Thus a train ticket from Esbjerg to Odense may include a bus ticket for the urban transport in Odense if you type in that you wish to go to "Odense Zoo."

A Rejsekortet ("travel card") is being phased in and will in due course give seamless public transport nation-wide.

Copenhagen and Aarhus have city cards which include public transport and admission to sights.

NETHERLANDS

The OV Chipkaart has replaced the former Strippenkaart. It is one way of meeting the challenge of seamless travel, by enabling the user to pay easily for public transport in the cities and well as the rail journey.

Visitors to Amsterdam can buy an I amsterdam City Card for 24, 48 or 72 hours, which includes public transport, boat trips and many museums; while many attractions also give reductions. A 140-page guidebook gives full details.

A GVB day card for the city is also available at €7,50.

ITALY

For passengers using its "Italo" fast trains and buying a single ticket, the high speed operator NTV offers an integrated train and urban transport fare to Florence, Naples and Salerno at no extra charge. The NTV ticket is valid for 24 hours on the urban networks of these cities.

In some metropolitan areas (Rome, Naples, Milan, Turin) there is a range of integrated daily, weekly, monthly or annual tickets. In Lombardy a ticket currently costing 15 Euro is valid on all train, bus and urban transport networks in the region.

Passengers arriving on DB or OeBB long-distance trains are entitled to a Sudtirol Museummobilitat Card giving 3 or 7 days travel on public transport in the Alto Adige / Sudtirol region.

SPAIN

Travellers in long-distance trains to 12 cities or regions / conurbations (Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, Bilbao, San Sebastian, Zaragoza, Malaga, Sevilla, Asturias, Cadiz, Santander, Murcia-Alicante) have, since 16/7/2012, been able to obtain free of charge a "Combinado Cercanias" ("Suburban combination") ticket enabling them to use suburban trains, operated by RENFE, at either end of their journey. Some special promotion fares are not eligible, however.

The regional company FGV has also recently introduced a similar "Combinado Cercanias" ticket in the Alicante region.

There is at present no "add-on" for other urban transport (bus, metro or tram) in Spanish cities.

AUSTRIA

OeBB has negotiated add-ons to its rail tickets with several city authorities, so that rail passengers can use the urban transport at no extra charge when they arrive.

A City Ticket costs an extra 2-4 Euro.

For the city of Vienna, a 3-day Wienkarte at 19.90 Euro also gives reductions in museums; and if you are travelling from Germany you can obtain a voucher for this from DB when buying your ticket.

SWITZERLAND

Monthly rail season tickets can include a City Ticket at either end in 41 towns and cities. See www.sbb.ch/en/travelcards-and-tickets/tickets-for-switzerland/individual-tickets/city-tickets.

A monthly rail season ticket can include a City Ticket at either end. Point-to-point tickets can be purchased to/from any public transport stop - one of the benefits of logical kilometre pricing.

There is also a "Direkter Verkehr" facility which gives seamless ticketing by train or bus to most villages.

GREAT BRITAIN

Rail travellers to 290 towns and cities in Great Britain can buy a PLUSBUS ticket for between £2 and £3 (with discounts for Railcard holders), either at their local station or on line.

It gives unlimited travel on buses within a particular zone and on trams in Birmingham, Blackpool, Nottingham, Sheffield and Wolverhampton.

PLUSBUS can be added to a day return, seven-day season or monthly season ticket.

It is also possible to buy a National Rail ticket to Newcastle which includes an add-on for the Tyne & Wear Metro.

Visitors to London by train can buy a One-Day Travelcard at many origin stations This costs £7.30 for zones 1 and 2 and gives travel on all buses, Underground and suburban trains within the central area. There is also a reduction for Railcard holders.

It is also possible to buy a ticket to "U1" which can be used on Zone 1 of the Underground when you arrive in London.

IRELAND

A rail ticket to Dublin using the main line along the eastern coast or the line from Sligo is valid to the main city centre station, Connolly, but also to Tara Street and Pearse (for which you may have to change to a suburban train).

Trains from the southwest and west of Ireland terminate at Dublin Heuston station and passengers can buy an add-on ticket (€1,60 adult, €0,90 child) for the Luas trams and buses 90 and 145 in the central zone.

If you buy a ticket to a suburban station on the Dublin Area Rapid Transit (DART) system, a "Feeder Bus" ticket including an onward bus journey from several DART stations can be bought at your station of origin.

A complex variety of multi-mode daily, weekly, monthly and annual tickets is also available.

In Northern Ireland, a rail ticket to Belfast, Derry/Londonderry or Newry can also be used on local buses to the city or town centre. This also applied to an international day return ticket from Dublin to Belfast. As in Great Britain, PLUSBUS can also be used in conjunction with Northern Ireland Rail services.

SLOVAKIA

It is possible to buy a return ticket from Vienna to the Slovak capital of Bratislava for €15, valid from any station within Vienna and via any of the three rail routes to Bratislava.

The ticket can also be used on the bus from either Bratislava main station or Bratislava Petržalka into the city centre.

HUNGARY

Rail passengers to Ferihegy station, on the main line eastwards out of Budapest, can buy an add-on for the bus to Airport Terminal 2. (Terminal 1 is only a short walk from Ferihegy station).

A train ticket to Budapest is only valid on city transport if there is major engineering work which requires re-routing or curtailing of trains.

NAHVERKEHRSWEGWEISER - www.nahverkehr.info

This website is an extremely useful tool when planning a rail journey to an unfamiliar town or city. It directs you quite quickly to tram, bus, metro and local train information.

"THE MILE IN THE MIDDLE"

LONDON

A passenger from, say, Newcastle to Southampton, on a through ticket, can use that ticket to transfer between termini on the London Underground.

A passenger from anywhere in Great Britain who has a Eurostar ticket can also buy a Euro High Saver (or ticket from their home station to London International CIV) which includes travel on the London Underground to St Pancras International. Experience has shown that these tickets need to be better publicised, however.

GLASGOW

Scotland's largest city has two rail termini, Central and Queen Street. If you are travelling from, say, Birmingham to Aberdeen, you need to cross the city. There is no direct rail link between them, but a direct bus, service 398, links the two stations and is free if you show your train ticket. A ticket to Glasgow should show "Central/Queen Street" as destination, enabling you also to use the bus, free of charge, to the other station or indeed to the bus station.

MANCHESTER

Manchester has two main line stations, Piccadilly on the southern edge of the city centre and Victoria on the northern edge. Both are linked to the Metrolink tram system.

However, PLUSBUS does not apply on Metrolink (though it does on trams in cities such as Sheffield and Nottingham).

The Metroshuttle (or City Link) free bus service operates on three routes in the city centre and so is useful for passengers arriving at Piccadilly or Victoria. Its routes do not duplicate, but supplement, those of Metrolink.

For a journey from, say, Birmingham to Huddersfield, or Stoke-on-Trent to Leeds, it is necessary to cross central Manchester and Piccadilly to Victoria. The train ticket does not include the Metrolink journey.

DUBLIN

It is possible to buy a ticket from any Irish Rail station to any other Irish Rail or Northern Ireland Railways station and vice-versa. Thus Cobh in the southwest to Larne in the northeast can be done on one ticket. The ticket can include the add-on fare for the tram journey between Heuston and Connolly stations in Dublin.

MADRID

For a journey between, say, Valencia and Valladolid, you must change stations in Madrid. City public transport is not included in the ticket.

PARIS

For a journey involving transfer between two Paris termini (such as from London to Perpignan) it is necessary to buy a metro ticket between the termini.

On TGV Lyria trains, the bar-buffet can sell you such a ticket.

A 10-trip carnet for the Paris metro can now be bought in the bar-buffet of Eurostar and at St Pancras International. This is useful for a group, such as a family, crossing Paris; but less useful for an individual traveller not making regular changes there.

PRAGUE

All long-distance trains now call at the Hlavni Nadrazi (main station), but many regional trains terminate at Masarykova (or sometimes Holesovice). We understand that some CD ticket offices can sell city public transport tickets, but most passengers buy these from an automatic machine when they arrive. CD ticket offices in the Brno area can also sell city public transport tickets.

However, the bus station at Liberec in northeastern Bohemia sells Prague city transport tickets as long-distance coaches from this area terminate at Cerny Most metro station.

OTHER MAJOR CITIES

Sometimes it is necessary to transfer between stations in Budapest, Lille, Vienna, Basel, Warsaw or Milan. As far as we have been able to ascertain, a through train ticket does not include city public transport, except in Lille, where it can be used on the short metro journey between Europe and Flandres stations.

EUROSTAR AND THALYS

Certain types of Paris metro tickets ("Paris Visite"; ten-trip carnets) can be bought at London St Pancras International, while certain types of London public transport tickets and ten-trip Paris carnets are sold at the bar-buffet on the train. Brussels JUMP tickets were sold in the bar-buffet but this facility was withdrawn on the grounds that not enough people were using them. However, the facility was often not advertised.

There are similar arrangements in the Thalys bar-buffet for public transport in some of the cities served. It is also possible to buy a Thalys ticket with the add-on "et toutes gares belges" and a similar arrangement exists for Eurostar. However, Thalys has stopped selling add-ons for public transport in the cities of Aachen and Cologne.

In Belgium, SNCB Europe/NMBS Europa offers a range of public transport tickets for Paris, London, Lille and Rotterdam to customers who buy an international train ticket to these cities

LOOKING FURTHER AHEAD?

In this short paper we have identified some examples of good practice in several countries and regions which - given the political and commercial will - could be copied elsewhere. The Danish travel-planner certainly merits careful study.

Developing technology may improve things further.

For example, some cities, such as London, have a contactless smartcard which can be used to pay for all public transport journeys.

A traveller regularly visiting several cities would, however, need to carry several such cards - as well as the credit or debit cards which he or she would normally carry anyway.

In North America, progress has been made with the issuing of smartcards which are valid in more than one city, with the support of a bank.

In the Czech city of Pilsen, a public transport smartcard has been developed in co-operation with a bank at whose cash machines it can be charged.

The German BahnCard also has a credit card version which can be used to pay for other items.

Thus the distinction between credit cards and public transport cards becomes blurred and seamless multiple transactions become possible.

Once the principle of seamless payments for conventional rail and urban public transport is established, many other developments can indeed be explored.

NEXT STEPS

This survey has shown many different ways of booking an onward journey for "the final mile."

How well are these facilities publicised? Visitors by train to a city should certainly be made aware of them.

Local circumstances vary, but is there perhaps a case for some harmonisation?

What is most important is that such facilities are mentioned as a matter of course in the publicity (digital or paper) of all longer-distance operators. Their customer-facing staff should be aware of them, as should all third-party ticket distributors.

We in EPF hope that information in this report will help rail customers when they visit other cities. We welcome updates and additional information.

We hope that the report will also give ideas to decision makers on how rail travel can be made easier throughout Europe.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

I have done my best to provide accurate and up-to-date information about "the final mile" and "the mile in the middle" in many European cities; but cannot be held responsible for any errors or changes.

Indeed, EPF may consider producing a second edition if there are significant improvements in the coming years.

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