

Preface

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The CROSSMOBY (acronym of: Cross-border, sustainable and inter-modal mobility planning and passenger transport services) project was conceived with the aim of reactivating cross-border railway services between Italy and Slovenia, as well as developing an in-depth cross-border discussion on mobility planning. The project is providing a concrete contribution to improving cross-border mobility. It is based on two pillars: the planning of sustainable mobility and the implementation of new transport services. Such pillars are, in fact, the basis of a medium- and long-term strategy that is being developed with the active participation and support of political decision-makers and main stakeholders in the area of the Interreg Italy-Slovenia Cross-border Cooperation Programme.

The CROSSMOBY project was born as a result of discussions, both at technical and political level, which took place between 2016 and 2018 in the context of the working table on transport of the Joint Committee Friuli Venezia Giulia - Republic of Slovenia. Co-financed by the European Regional Development Fund, it was approved on 25 July 2018 and started on 1 September 2018. The total duration of the project is 42 months.

The first tangible result achieved is represented by the cross-border railway services activated as of 9 September 2018, which run, on the section between Trieste and Ljubljana, on the “Southern Railway”, a 577 km long railway, built in the mid-19th century upon a project by the Venetian engineer Carlo Ghega, connecting Vienna with Trieste and its port. In fact, the project revived the historic connection between Ljubljana and Trieste, also allowing Venice to be recon-

nected to Ljubljana through synchronised connection from Trieste to Venice and vice versa. In addition, the new Udine/Trieste-Ljubljana cross-border connection, with a total length of 223 km, also makes it possible to further spread the rail service throughout the territory, both for the Friuli Venezia Giulia and the Slovenian parts (the rail services provided until 2008 by the “Casanova” Eurocity train, on the Ljubljana-Trieste-Venice route, only stopped at some of the locations along the route).

The new railway services, which are the result of positive cooperation between the two railway operators involved (Trenitalia and Slovenske železnice), give a new meaning to railway mobility, the cross-border one, ensuring a widespread connection between the territories and directly linking not only Trieste, Udine, and Venice, with the Slovenian capital Ljubljana, but also other important centres in Slovenia, Friuli Venezia Giulia and Veneto, which are significant for their tourist values and intermodal mobility.

The implementation of the cross-border railway service Trieste/Udine-Ljubljana, however, is not the only experimental activity within the CROSSMOBY Project. The partnership has launched a series of pilot actions focused on sustainability and intermodality (bike-train, bike-boat, bike-bus), offering the population of the cross-border cooperation area and tourists visiting it new options and new forms of mobility. All this is supported by mobility planning that is no longer only focused on the urban area but seeks to propose new solutions on a regional and cross-border basis.

In addressing the issues of cross-border transport and mobility, the CROSSMOBY project and this book make a significant contribution to what the European Union has been calling for several years: to achieve a seamless mobility system in order to strengthen European cohesion and integration. Creating the conditions for structuring an effective mobility system is also a prerequisite for regional economic growth, territorial cohesion and the development of the potential of cross-border regions. Economic development and job creation in the border regions also depend on the benefits that border regions derive from cross-border trade. Improving the supply and quality of rail, road and water links and services also contributes to improving the quality of life of the inhabitants and making these areas more attractive for tourism.