

Hit Rail and ETTSA agree strategic partnership to help further joint initiatives in the travel industry

First joint actions to centre on Full Service Model travel industry initiative

Utrecht/Brussels, 05 October 2015 – ETTSA, the travel technology industry association representing travel distributors and global distribution systems, and Hit Rail B.V., one of Europe's leading organisations spearheading the drive towards interoperability, have concluded a cooperation agreement to help further joint initiatives in the travel industry, especially the promotion of the Full Service Model (FSM) initiative in the railway sector.

The agreement follows a formal invitation from ETTSA to Hit Rail to become a strategic partner, recognizing the significant mutual benefits their co-operation will bring to both organisations and to the wider industry of travel distribution technology and services.

ETTSA and Hit Rail have agreed to collaborate on issues of common interest and concern, which they will jointly address at European level. These will include all areas of rail and intermodality. The first collaboration will see Hit Rail and ETTSA work together on the Full Service Model (FSM) initiative, a joint travel industry initiative that aims to make use of modern IT developments to enhance rail booking opportunities, providing more accurate information about rail products for railways and ticket vendors.

Hit Rail will offer its technology expertise gained in building the HEROS message interoperability service on top of the Hermes Virtual Private Network (VPN), which aims to enable interoperability across disparate platforms in railway companies across Europe. This has created a platform that allows rail reservations systems to interconnect and interoperate even if they are using different standards.

ETTSA Secretary General Christoph Klenner said: "We are delighted to be partnering with Hit Rail at this important juncture of the FSM project. Hit Rail will work-side-by-side with ETTSA and in close collaboration with other key stakeholders to ensure that planning and booking of rail journeys becomes easier for consumers and allows travellers to more easily compare the fares and offers of different rail operators."

The agreement comes as the European railway community continues to seek greater integration and the European Union continues to encourage greater liberalisation at the same time as the introduction of EU Regulations, in particular the Technical Specifications for Interoperability (TSIs), requiring all EU railway undertakings and infrastructure managers to communicate using standard messages and a common interface.

Antonio Lopez, Managing Director of Hit Rail, said: *“This agreement is a further step in our strategy of becoming more involved with all the major players in the pan-European rail industry. We are very pleased to be working with ETTSA. Our expertise in building and operating dedicated platforms for data transmission and message interoperability services for interconnection of disparate passenger reservation systems will be invaluable to our cooperation as we all continue to move towards greater interoperability of railway and travel organisations to provide enhanced rail products for travelers in all countries.”*

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About Hit Rail b.v.

Hit Rail b.v. is a private Dutch company created in 1990 and owned by 12 European railway companies. Its purpose is to help European railway companies to carry out international projects in related fields of data communications and information technology. Hit Rail is responsible for managing international private data communications infrastructure and message brokering services on behalf of its shareholders and customers. Its services are used by some 40 railway companies from 21 countries. All Hit Rail customers' data centres and company networks are interconnected by a pan-European IP-based VPN (Virtual Private Network) named Hermes VPN, which is supplied by British Telecom (BT) and managed by Hit Rail. In 2013 the company launched its HEROS platform as a family of solutions that delivers benefits to the railway companies across Europe, by enabling message interoperability across disparate platforms between railway applications in passenger, freight and infrastructure for IT communications.

For more information please visit <http://www.hitrail.com/> or send an email to info@hitrail.com.

About ETTSA

The European Technology and Travel Services Association (ETTSA) was launched in 2009 to represent and promote the interests of global distribution systems (GDSs) and travel distributors, towards the industry, policy-makers, opinion formers, consumer groups and all other relevant European stakeholders. The association, based in Brussels, encourages and supports full transparency, fair competition and consumer choice in the travel distribution chain.

ETTSA's members include Amadeus, ebookers, Expedia, Odigeo (and its brands eDreams, GoVoyages, Opodo and Travelink), Sabre (including its affiliate lastminute.com), and Travelport. ATPCO and OAG are Supporting Partners of ETTSA.

For more information please visit: <http://www.ettsa.eu/>