

PRESS RELEASE

Multimodal platform FromAtoB closes down: the market dominant rail incumbents are succeeding in killing off the independent ticketing market

BERLIN, 13th January 2021: twelve years ago, the independent multimodal booking platform “FromAtoB” was founded. Based in Berlin, it understood that people need door-to-door digital booking solutions combining different multimodal operators. This is one of the best ways to rival the convenience of the private motor car.

However, state-owned rail incumbents dictate punitive contractual conditions wherever they are market dominant. As a result, one of the EU’s few multimodal booking platforms – FromAtoB – has now had to close. The winners are those incumbents whose strategy it is to kill off the independent ticketing market.

Last month, the EU Commission published its new Sustainable & Smart Mobility Strategy (‘EUSSMS’). Paragraph 580 of the Staff Working Document identifies the need for: “*EU-wide, multimodal information, ticketing & purchase services*”¹ – like what FromAtoB did.

Indeed, over the years, FromAtoB spent many millions of private investment capital creating one of the few well known EU-wide multimodal platforms, to help end the fragmentation of public transport. This contrasts greatly to Europe’s market dominant rail incumbents who help cause this fragmentation by only selling their own products.

But, in order to succeed, independent multimodal platforms need access to all data and Fair, Reasonable & Non-Discriminatory commercial terms from the same dominant rail incumbents: the same as they give to their in-house booking platforms.

Sadly, these rail incumbents dictate punitive terms instead – leading to independent platforms neither having a comprehensive offering nor being economically viable.

ALLRAIL’s President Dr. Erich Forster states: “*Private investors are willing to invest in independent multimodal platforms. However, FromAtoB’s demise shows that there is market failure – antitrust action is urgently needed. **EU & national stakeholders need to act fast before the independent ticketing market is completely killed off***”

¹ **MUST READ:** paragraphs 580–584 on pages 145–146 of the EUSSMS Staff Working Document: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52020SC0331&from=EN>