

EuregioFamilyPass

The family card for Euregio Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino

Abstract of feasibility study of EuregioFamilyPass



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UNIVERSITY OF TRENTO - YEAR OF PUBLICATION 2021

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Feasibility study realized within the framework of a cooperation agreement between the EGTC "Euregio Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino" and the University of Trento under the scientific direction of dott. ssa Giulia Cambuzzi and translated into German by Dr.ⁱⁿ Verena Egger.



1. EUREGIOFAMILYPASS

The EuregioFamilyPass is a project of the EGTC “Euregio Tyrol-South Tyrol-Trentino” (in this paper called “Euregio”), of the Department of Society and Labour of the Land Tyrol and the Family Agencies of the Provinces of Trento and Bolzano/Bozen, and was approved in 2014 and launched as an INTERREG project in 2017 with the aim of integrating and developing the family cards in the three territories and thus making them usable at Euregio level. The EuregioFamilyPass gathers the existing family cards in the three territories: “Tiroler Familienpass” (Tyrol, introduced in 2001), “EuregioFamilyPass Südtirol/Alto Adige” (South Tyrol, introduced in 2017) and “Family Card” (Trentino, introduced in 2016). Holders can take advantage of the benefits offered by partners not only in their area but also in the other two territories. In the framework of the EuregioFamilyPass, political/administrative agreements have been made to consolidate it beyond the expiring date of the Interreg project. Aligned teams and governances are in constant contact to encourage participation in family events shared between the three territories, prize competitions awarded on a regular basis, dispatch of the periodical EuregioFamilyPass News, promotional videos, information about the project on the webpage of the institutional website, an interactive map including all the advantages offered with a search filter and the provision of “branded” giveaways.

1.2 METHODS AND AIM OF RESEARCH

This study aims to provide important insights into the evolution of the EuregioFamilyPass through examples and reference models in the European context. Short, medium and long-term objectives were taken in consideration, in order to find new possibilities to implement the use of the card and to improve the services for families, to find out which digital tools facilitate the use and/or the obtaining of the family card, adapted and designed specifically for the whole family, as well as analyse the facilitation of its use.

A “multiple case study” approach was used, focusing on realities comparable to the EuregioFamilyPass. This means that several realities were studied, in order to comprehend differences and similarities. Eleven European realities have been selected for their structural, managerial and cultural characteristics as determining and strategically significant for the objective of the feasibility study. Quantitative and qualitative methods were involved to allow an understanding of how executives, administrators and civil employees offer an useful and most easily usable service for the community.

Four categories were identified (services for families, digitalization, cross-border aspects and technical/structural aspects) for the development of criteria suitable to create an ideal situation for the EuregioFamilyPass. Each of the four key points mentioned above has been deepened through the analysis of case studies that have contributed, according to their own characteristics, to explain one or more categories.

2. Implementation of the study

The analysis provided a basis for the study and research of projects, to which the EuregioFamilyPass can be compared with, and thus obtain ideas for developing and making it more advantageous and useful. The study investigated best practices that can be identified in four groups: technical/structural aspects (methods of managing the various services, administrative and bureaucratic aspects linked to the different project administrations); cross-border aspects (methods of managing and recording the mobility of families between the territories involved); digitalization (digital tools adopted, their implementation, use, management, operation and dissemination) and finally services to families (sectors involved in the offers, events of interest and relevance of the services).

Table n. 1, case studies

NAME OF CARD	AREA	TYPE OF CARD
CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION	Tornio and Haparanda (Finland-Sweden)	Cross-border card
E-CHILDREN'S CARD, MUDRICA	Croatia	National app for families with children
EUROCIDADE CARD	Chaves and Verín (Portugal-Spain)	Cross-border card
FAMILYNET	Austria, Slovakia and Czech Republic	Cross-border card for families with children
GEZINSPAS-FAMILIENPASS	Vaals, Aachen and Düren (Netherlands-Germany)	Cross-border card for families with children
INTERNATIONALE BODENSEE-KONFERENZ	Costanza Lake (Austria, Germany, Liechtenstein e Switzerland)	Cross-border card
NÖ FAMILIENPASS	Lower Austria (Austria)	Regional card for families with children
OÖ FAMILIENKARTE	Upper Austria (Austria)	Regional card for families with children
RODINNĚ PASY	South Moravia (Czech Republic)	Regional card for families with children
RODINNÝ PAS	Bratislava (Slovakia)	Regional card for families with children
VORARLBERGER FAMILIENPASS	Vorarlberg (Austria)	Regional card for families with children



3. Outcomes

Best practices were divided into the ones applicable “immediately” and others applicable “in future” according to a time parameter: short term for the former and medium/long term for the latter. For this step, the political aspect was considered too, which in this situation is decisive, because the Euregio is a transnational area, subject to different state as well as local regulations. This is also the reason that certain decisions can not be applied in the same way and at the same time throughout the entire EuregioFamilyPass territory.

As far as short-term best practices are concerned, a key point that emerged from the case studies analysed was the direct involvement of families in the decision-making phase, as it is the case with the Vorarlberger Familienpass. They structure the direct contact (feedback and management advice) with the families, which then suggests various collaborations with partners, including foreign ones. Another strategy, commonly adopted by the realities studied, for a greater involvement of families is the organization of competitions with prizes aimed at stimulating the gain of knowledge of the territory and the community concerned. The organization of shared events between the territory (Eurocidade Card) to raise awareness of the cross-border aspect and the integration of cultures which, although different, share important and decisive traits for the purposes of collaboration, has also been placed within the same framework in all territories.

Moreover, there are promotional activities, including the sending of newsletters with games for children on a regular basis to involve and raise awareness of the project. This activity is well-structured within the Rodinný Pas which regularly promotes information or play activities for children, similar to the EuregioFamilyPass News. Social networks are very strategic too, allowing families to communicate with the project administrators and other families in a more informal way, and to set up an almost free promotion channel.

Finally, the importance of features related to the website and governance in general was highlighted. Among these, the need emerged to have a well-organised and detailed filter structure for the selection of advantageous partners, both on the website, but also on a possible app and/or interactive map, (e.g. NÖ Familienpass and the Rodinný Pas). In this way, the identification of the service that you need is immediately required, without having to consult a static list, but by selecting the requirements in order to allow an immediate retrieval of clear and precise information from the website.

Relating to this, worth pointing out the pre-established deadlines between and within territories. The example of the Cross-Border Cooperation between Tornio and Haparanda is significant during the phase of beforehand planning. They define a maximum time limit within which decisions taken must be implemented in both territories in order to facilitate the operations of the administrations involved, should they have to deal with certain issues to be addressed or initiatives to be promoted.

In terms of future best practices, the introduction of a smartphone app is a key feature that could not only simplify the use of the cross-border service, but also reduce waste associated with printing cards and furthermore facilitate data collection. However, this step poses a number of challenges, including legal obligations on the side of administrators and individuals to respect and ensure a privacy policy of those using the app, as well as the need to convince users and operators on the use of a new digital tool introduced. The introduction of the app, if structured in agreement with the suppliers and with the same purposes and characteristics as the current card, could facilitate the registration phase of the discount, the promotion and the management of the provision of the service itself, all regards as benefit for the partners involved. Thus using a single app (the same for families and suppliers) as it is the case of the E-Children's Card, Mudrica which, however, depending on the access login, would allow these two figures to be kept separate.

The study of the Croatian context highlighted the usefulness of having partners in the healthcare sector such as pharmacies, para-pharmacies and private health facilities that could provide discounts and economic advantages for families with children, all in addition to the inclusion of the family card in the digital platform of the state healthcare system. Although this does not correspond to the purpose of the EuregioFamilyPass, with this arrangement it would not be necessary to update data periodically (the healthcare platform would provide all the information)

and, the updating would become an automatic step with which families would access directly.

The partnership with the local healthcare system could be a critical step, especially since the territories belong to different states and are therefore managed differently. Partnerships with other platforms have been studied, such as the one that stipulated the NÖ Familienpass with Outdooractive, which allows families to have additional information about walking and cycling routes. Other, very useful partnerships are those with the local transport service, thanks to which with a future and hypothetical digital app it would be possible to buy train or bus tickets for families at discounted prices dedicated without having to access the individual regional public transport app. In this way, the family card app could also be used as electronic ticket for the transport system. Obviously, the partnership should then be adopted by all Euregio territories to offer complete reciprocity of services within the entire region, thus avoiding unpleasant inconveniences for families and demonstrating the equality that the EuregioFamilyPass is intended to convey.

The technical aspect that was analysed regarding best practices applicable in future is related to the management of the cards. First, regarding the number of cards issued, it would be useful if they were issued for all parents, as it is already the case in Tyrol. So a family with two parents would have two cards, and in the case of separated and remarried parents, the number of cards could come up to four, so as not to discriminate against any type of situation and to guarantee all families the same rights. However, in order to limit the waste of unnecessary card issuances, a digital updating of card data would be necessary. The idea would be to adopt a digital system that the same card could be kept, which, if the basic requirements were not met (the child's age having changed or change of residence), the system would automatically reveal, a feature already present in some Euregio territories, but not in all of them.

Making services to families as accessible as possible, as for example within the OÖ Familienkarte and the NÖ Familienpass, by issuing the card to people other than parents, such as grandparents, could directly help families that often, for work reasons, have to entrust their children to individuals who take care of them at various times of the day.

4. Discussion and conclusion

A SWOT analysis for the EuregioFamilyPass, identified a well-structured steering committee and a clear and recognizable design of the family card in the three territories as strengths of the project. Weaknesses are the different management of family policies among the territories, the lack of absolute reciprocity of services and treatment as well as the lack of homogeneity in the number of services in the three Euregio territories. As opportunities, the following were defined: neighbouring areas rich in benefits for families, an excellent infrastructural connection network in the Euregio and a common historical past. Finally, possible threats are increasingly demanding families, the decreasing availability of leisure time for families and the rising cost of living.

As a key element of the study and its discussion, the list of best practices that are already applied within the Euregio territories is provided. In some cases, these practices are shared and integrated in all three areas, such as the organization of prize competitions, the filter for the selection of partners and geolocation (both within the interactive map), a news item published four times a year, the organization of events, the website, the use of digital channels for the publication of news related to the EuregioFamilyPass and the meeting of pre-established deadlines. While, in other cases, such as the use of a common digital app, the automatic update of the card, the number of cards issued based on the number of parents and the issuing of the card to people other than parents, are services and features already provided by the EuregioFamilyPass in some Euregio areas, but not standardized throughout the area.

Although digitalization favours and facilitates the use of the service for families (or the users in case of advantage cards for residents or tourists), from the partners' point of view the use of an app has a different management aspect. Although they are in favour of its introduction and understand its potential and usefulness (also seen from the perspective of easier promotion), it is necessary for all to accept the family card in electronic format and to have a unique system of recognition of the service. In order to ensure proper and functional cooperation, the objective of equal treatment must be pursued at all times. All projects, agreements, decision, costs and benefits must be managed within a strict equal sharing of burden, resources and benefits.

For the transnational aspect, it is necessary to stimulate the use of the family card with offers and benefits described in this report. In this way, a perception of the card, its usefulness and its potential are consolidated to allow the EuregioFamilyPass to continue to evolve over time.

Last but not least, as seen in the Austrian-Slovak cross-border project that was interrupted, constant collaboration and cooperation between the territories becomes strategic. Before being able to promote the service externally (to families), strong and transparent internal communication is necessary, which has continuity over time and can guarantee the passage of information in a clear and immediate manner. Only in this way it will be possible to maintain a constant service and avoid the mistakes that have been made in other projects similar to that of the EuregioFamilyPass.





www.familypass.eu