

France's ride-share site BlaBlaCar buys European rivals

PARIS, FRANCE: France's ride-share champion BlaBlaCar announced on Wednesday the purchase of its main rival, Germany's Carpooling.com, as well as Hungary's Autohop, as it consolidated its position as Europe's market leader.



(Image: Wikimedia Commons)

Created in 2006, Blablacar offers a site where people making the same car journey can get together and split travel costs.

It claims to have more than 20 million members across 18 countries in Europe and Asia, and in a record for a French start-up, managed to raise \$10m (€9.4m) in 2012 and then \$100m in 2014.

The company did not reveal how much it paid for Carpooling.com, which has been around since 2001 and was originally supported by German carmaker Daimler.

It said in a statement that the acquisition "will greatly increase the Blablacar community in Europe's biggest country."

The purchase of Autohop, based in Budapest, will add customers in Hungary, Romania, Serbia and Croatia, allowing the company "to offer a unified ride-share service in the whole of Europe with no borders from Amsterdam to Zagreb," the statement said.

Blablacar began in France before spreading to neighbouring countries. It reached Russia, Ukraine and Turkey in 2014, and this year made its debut in India.

The company's founder and president, Frederic Mazzella, already has his sights on new markets, notably Brazil.

The acquisitions were welcomed by France's Economy Minister Emmanuel Macron, who wrote on Twitter that "French Tech is on the way to becoming a new leader of the digital world".

Source: AFP, via I-Net Bridge, via I-Net Bridge

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