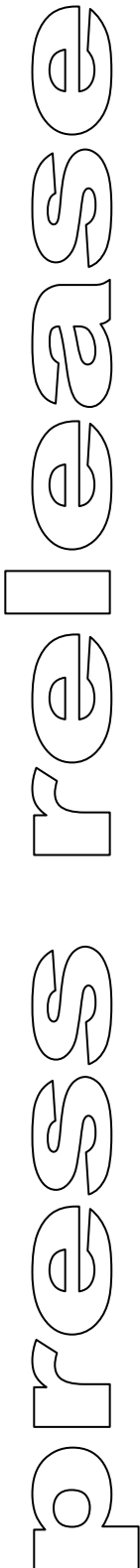




20 March 2009



Practical rules on passenger rights needed

On the eve of a crucial debate and vote in the European Parliament, the European collective passenger transport and travel industries call for practical and adapted passenger rights in EU bus and coach transport services, based on a sound impact assessment.

Brussels – Prior to the pivotal Parliamentary debate and vote on 30-31 March 2009, [ECTAA](#), [ETOA](#), [UITP](#) and the [IRU](#)*, the four associations representing the European collective passenger transport and travel business, call upon Members of the European Parliament's Transport and Tourism Committee to privilege practical and adapted passenger rights rules, in the interest of customers and businesses alike.

The European bus and coach transport and travel industry calls for a thorough impact assessment of the overall cost implications resulting from the implementation of the proposed rules, in order to guarantee an informed debate before any decision is taken.

Tom Jenkins, ETOA's Executive Director, insisted that "Like all legislation, these measures seem virtuous: extending rights to coach passengers looks just. It feels tidy. But such measures do not take place in a vacuum. Coaches are both the safest form of road transport and have the least environmental impact. Yet, every year, we see a decline in the proportion of people choosing to take holidays by coach. The reasons for this drift towards cars are complex, but it is manifestly bad for road safety and the environment. One thing we can say is that this drift is not caused by lack of "rights": what comparative rights do car users enjoy? This proposal is obviously counter-productive. It is an attack on a socially beneficial but fragile industry, and provides help to people who do not require or seek it".

IRU Vice President, Graham Smith, highlighted: "The bus and coach sector has a vested interest to improve quality and extend the range of services it provides, in order to improve the care of its customers, including customers with disabilities. However, the industry calls for proportionate and feasible rules on passenger rights. Indeed, if requirements are impractical and operators cannot afford to run the service, passenger rights are useless."

According to the Chairman of the UITP EU-Committee, Guido del Mese, "the multi-modal integration of road, rail and waterborne public transport is key for the attractiveness of our urban and regional networks, which are used by 60 billion passengers annually. The proposed modal approach is counterproductive and should be abandoned for our sector. In addition, the proposed regulation ignores the reality in urban and regional public transport and many provisions could not be applied".

Akis Keleşhis, President of ECTAA, said, "The introduction of similar rights for bus and coach passengers to those granted in other modes of transport will increase the appeal of the sector, and is therefore much welcomed. Yet, certain provisions, including the proposed liability regime, must be adapted to the specificity of the sector, which is dominated by small and medium-sized companies".

* **The European Travel Agents' and Tour Operators' Associations (ECTAA)** is the voice of European travel agents and tour operators. It counts travel agents' and tour operators' associations of 26 EU Member States, of two EU candidate countries, as well as Switzerland and Norway.

The **European Tour Operators Association (ETOA)** offers European level representation for the interests of inbound and intra-European tour operators, wholesalers and their European suppliers. Today, ETOA is the voice of European Inbound Travel, with over 400 Members.

The **International Association of public Transport (UITP)** is the international network for public transport authorities and operators, policy decision-makers, scientific institutes and the public transport supply and service industry. It is a platform for worldwide co-operation, business development and the sharing of know-how between its 3,100 members from 90 countries. UITP is the global advocate for public transport and sustainable mobility, and the promoter of innovations in the sector.

The **International Road Transport Union (IRU)**, through its national associations, represents the entire road transport industry world-wide. It speaks for the operators of coaches, taxis and trucks, from large transport fleets to driver-owners.

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