

EU Public- Private Smart Move High Level Group



Background Paper



safe



user - friendly



green



efficient



affordable

// Background paper

This Background Paper consolidates the Smart Move High Level Group (HLG) intermediary reports on:

- group tourism by coach
- intercity and long distance bus and coach regular lines
- urban mobility and commuting
- taxis as part of the public transport chain into one easy to consult single document.

It follows the main structure of the reports as decided by the High Level Group at its first meeting.

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Introduction

The work of the EU public-private Smart Move High Level Group (HLG) was launched on 24 May 2012. Its objective and mandate, as approved at the first meeting, were to work out policy and business recommendations, and an Action Plan on how to substantially increase (double) the number of users and the share of collective passenger transport by road, in particular by bus, coach and taxis, as an optimal alternative to private car use, and a key part of the integrated intermodal transport chain, in cooperation with the other transport modes.

Following a year of joint work, HLG Members came to a shared vision on the role and place of buses, coaches and taxis in the multimodal mobility chain, which encompasses two main elements:

1. Buses, coaches and taxis are a key part of an inclusive and competitive EU public mobility chain

Together, buses, coaches and taxis form the largest commercial mobility and travel provider in the European Union and its Member States, second only to the private car. Collective short and long-distance transport, especially by buses, coaches and taxis, is the backbone of efficient public mobility and an optimal alternative to the private car, offering a 24-hour/365-day availability, coupled with a unique door-to-door customised service.

As such, buses, coaches and taxis are well placed to contribute substantially to achieve the ambitious EU objectives for sustainable growth and competitiveness. These modes also fulfill the requirements of EU transport policy, thanks to their intrinsic characteristics of door-to-door flexibility, environmentally-friendliness, wide availability and high standards of customer care and accessibility. As an integral part of the social fabric of communities, affordable collective transport is a lifeline to work, education and leisure, including for citizens with disabilities, and low-income EU citizens, households, regions and countries.

2. Doubling the use and the modal share of collective transport to become a formal EU policy and business objective

It is in the public interest to place buses, coaches and taxis, and their role in the mobility and travel chain, at the heart of policy making at EU, national and local level. Setting a clear policy and business target to increase their use and share – indeed to double it by 2025 – will facilitate the development of a pro-active public, financial, fiscal, legislative, market and operational environment, which will encourage service provision and thereby produce a shift in travellers' behavior, and achieve inclusive, efficient and sustainable mobility for all European citizens and visitors, at the lowest cost for society.

Doubling the use of bus and coach services alone is expected to potentially yield¹:

- a reduction of road fatalities in the EU by up to 1500 per year, with a considerable reduction of serious and less serious injuries;
- a reduction of CO₂ emissions of between 40 and 50 million tonnes per year, and a reduction of other transport-related airborne pollutants;

1 See attached fact sheet.



- a significant reduction of congestion in cities, as a result of the expected 10-12% fall in car traffic; and
- the creation of up to 3 million new stable green jobs - all at the lowest cost to taxpayers.

It is the HLG Members' belief that further quantifying scientifically the impact of achieving this objective of doubling the use and modal share of collective passenger transport would help EU citizens and politicians to better understand the advantages of the proposals made in this paper.

The HLG stresses that the recommendations contained in this paper aim at achieving progressively, by 2025, the objective of doubling the use and modal share of collective passenger transport in the EU, in a genuine public-private partnership.

They are addressed to EU policy decision makers, EU Member States, businesses, citizens, operators, regulators, local authorities, and all other public and private stakeholders at EU, national and local level.

// Buses, coaches and taxis for growth, competitiveness and social inclusion

1. Group tourism by coach

Europe is the world's top tourist destination, with more than 40% of all global tourist arrivals. In addition, domestic tourist activity is even stronger, with the number of domestic tourist trips significantly higher than international arrivals. These figures are expected to grow in the future, meaning also that tourism already represents and will represent in the future an important economic factor and mobility challenge for Europe.

And although an important business and job creator in itself², in particular at local level, group tourism by coach - as opposed to individual tourism - is often ignored by European transport and tourism policy makers, but also in many cases in regional and city mobility planning and policy making.

As a result, from the more than 900 million often multimodal tourist trips in Europe, the share of those made by coach is still marginal: 5.5% of all tourist trips in the UK; 9% - in Germany. The potential of this safe, green³, affordable, accessible and comfortable door-to-door way to travel and enjoy Europe's unique historical, cultural, artistic, industrial and sport's heritage, without increasing overall traffic congestion and having a detrimental effect on air quality and CO₂ emission, is unrecognised and largely underexploited. All the more so, since the vast majority of Europe's tourist destinations are conveniently situated at a "coach distance" from each other.

This is partly due to the lack of customer visibility of group tourism by coach, as well as to the lack of knowledge⁴ and recognition of tourist coaches' current and potential contribution to European economy, mobility and indeed tourism, by policy decision makers at all levels – European, national and local, where many of the barriers, in terms of sometimes discriminatory city taxes and access restrictions arise. In addition, the very specificity of group tourism – as opposed to individual tourism – , as a distinct and fully-fledged economic and tourist activity, is often not recognised by policy decision-makers. In some cases, group tourism is wrongly amalgamated with individual tourism, leading to fiscal, administrative and other types of barriers and burdens being wrongly applied to group tourism.

On the other hand, the perception that the coach is only a means of carrying tourists for travel companies is one which is considerably misplaced. Although coach operators do perform work for specialised travel companies, this is only a small percentage of the overall number of trips by coach. Coach operators throughout the EU organise and operate themselves international and national tours, day trips, school trips, as well as private hires⁵. Without this contribution from the coaching sector the business of many hotels and tourist attractions would

2 EUR 10.5 billion turnover in Germany. Recent German figures (Source: BDO) show that 1 job created in the coach tourism industry is generating 4.7 additional non-outsourcable jobs in related industries. A coach tourist spends on average 40% more than other tourists in visited cities and tourist destinations.

3 According to the American Union of Concerned Scientists (December 2008), coach tourism is the most carbon efficient way to travel among all modes and in all travel scenarios (number of passengers and distances). This is particularly important at local level, where coaches could contribute and enhance the sustainability of local mobility and transport systems.

4 No statistics whatsoever about group tourism by coach exists at EU level.

5 Coach companies have a long standing tradition of being creative and innovative in the types of all-year-round tours and destinations they offer, which appeal to many age groups and ensure that coaches are used throughout the year by as many of their customers as possible, particularly the over 50's, who regularly take 2 to 3 tours each year plus numerous day excursions to both summer and winter destinations.



be adversely affected⁶, with all the detrimental consequences on the local economy, jobs and social welfare.

In addition, the very image of group tourism by coach is outdated and subject sometimes to a clichés-treatment by the media and, as a result, in some cases by authorities themselves. Joint public-private initiatives are needed in order to overcome this misperception, which is detrimental to both customers, businesses, destinations, city mobility and planning, and tourism policies.

Yet, the proposed EU target of doubling the number of group tourists by coach is realistic, provided the right business-friendly policies, legislation and incentives to encourage greater tourism by coach are put in place. One example of this is the seaside resort of Southport in the UK, where, thanks to its long term business-friendly and customer-oriented policy, the town has succeeded in almost doubling (from 2883 to 5252) the number of visiting tourist coaches in the period between 2000-2010.

2. Scheduled intercity bus and coach transport

Scheduled intercity bus and coach transport in Europe is a large and growing business. However, unlike in many other world regions, it is also still struggling for recognition by policy decision makers at EU, national and local level, in particular as far as medium- and long-distance scheduled bus and coach services and their customers are concerned.

The lack of appropriate data and the lack of recognition often leads to non-adapted or sometimes restrictive legislation, which prevents scheduled intercity bus and coach services from delivering the best of their mobility and travel potential to society and customers.

The European Commission White Paper of 2011 did not provide a clear vision and strategy on how scheduled intercity bus and coach services, and indeed their customers, could be integrated into the future EU transport, mobility and travel chain. An EU approach to mobility and travel as a multimodal chain, in which seamless mobility and travel by buses and coaches is a key constitutive element – since 97% of all individual trips carried out by of EU citizens are of less than <100 km - was not provided either.

In some European countries, in particular from the old “EU core”, scheduled intercity and long-distance bus and coach transport has long been seen merely as a corollary and a “support mode” for other modes, thus leading to political, legislative and infrastructure neglect and underinvestment, which in turn leads to a poor image with the customer.

As a result, Europe is lagging behind other more advanced regions worldwide in innovation in scheduled bus and coach transport, both short-, medium- and long-distance. European citizens are not fully benefiting from the affordable mobility benefits offered by intercity and long-distance bus and coach services.

In addition, compared to other commercial passenger transport modes in Europe, the scheduled intercity coach sector is lagging far behind in terms of on-line services (information, booking and ticketing) provided to customers. This leads to sub-optimal or even non-visibility of scheduled intercity coach services for customers and, hence, a massive loss of potential customers and business for service suppliers, and foregone opportunities for citizens and society as a whole.

⁶ Indeed, in cases where coach tourism is restricted, tourists could opt for other, less environmentally friendly modes of travel, such as the private car.

On the other hand, should intercity coach services become part of such integrated internet multimodal facilities and journey planners, it is likely that these services will most of the time appear on top of customers' search results and preferences, thus generating a significant amount of additional business for coach companies. In addition, a better internet visibility of scheduled bus and coach services will considerably improve customers' choice, including for the elderly and people with disabilities and reduced mobility, in terms of the customer being able to better exploit the potential of the multimodal transport chain.

And yet, bearing in mind the current political and economic situation, scheduled intercity and long-distance bus and coach transport in Europe has the strongest potential for green mobility growth. This can be achieved without massive public subsidies – at the lowest cost for the European taxpayer. With the opening of intercity markets in some large European countries, such as Germany (from the beginning of 2013) and (potentially) France, market incentives and private sector initiatives will draw in millions of new customers for buses and coaches, most likely from among car users, rather than from other commercial modes. Indeed, both scientific research and recent practical evidence (Norway, 2002-2007) consistently support this conclusion of modal shift from individual cars to bus and coach transport after an intercity coach travel market opening.

In addition, both research and practical evidence consistently shows that consumers in countries which have liberalised to a large extent their long-distance intercity market enjoy a much better offer and service quality, at a lower price for the consumer and a lower cost for the taxpayer, whilst at the same time improving the performance of other commercial modes and the entire mobility and travel chain.

In this respect, the role of pro-active, cooperative and future-looking city and regional authorities is paramount in devising mobility plans, which take fully into consideration the mobility and travel potential of scheduled intercity and long-distance bus and coach transport and its infrastructure. They can ensure coordination and stability of services, in particular on short-distance scheduled routes, to better serve the mobility and travel needs of both their citizens and visitors, whilst at the same time saving public money.

3. Urban transport and commuting

Public⁷ transport is an essential mobility provider across Europe contributing to achieving environmental improvements, such as better air quality, reduced CO₂ emissions and dependence on fuel imports, and reduced noise pollution and congestion, since it accounts for 900 billion passenger-kilometres a year, equivalent to 45 million private cars. A 1% shift in passenger kilometres from the private car to public transport would reduce the number of cars on European streets and roads by 2 million at any time.

Public transport, especially by buses, coaches and taxis, is the backbone of efficient public mobility and the closest complement, competitor and substitute to the private car. As such, buses, coaches and taxis will inevitably contribute substantially to achieving the ambitious objectives of the EU transport policy. This is also due to their intrinsic characteristics, such as door-to-door flexibility, private sector adaptability, proximity and care to customers. As an integral part of the social fabric of communities, affordable public transport is a lifeline to work, education and leisure, in particular for citizens with disabilities, as well as low-income citizens, households, regions and countries.

7 Here and further in the text, the term "public transport" is used as a synonym of "collective transport", including all kinds of transport services, offered both on a purely commercial basis and under a public service contract.



Establishing the collective or public transport chain at the heart of European transport policy and setting clear policy and business targets to double its use by 2025 will create a practical and effective legislative, commercial and operational environment at all levels, to produce a shift in customers' behaviour. This shift can create an inclusive, efficient and sustainable mobility solution for all European citizens and visitors, at the lowest cost for society. To achieve this shift, however, citizens' needs, expectations and lifestyles must be put at the heart of any transport and mobility development strategy, initiative and activity.

So far, European legislation has helped to create a framework for greater liberalisation and market opening. It has enabled taxpayers to benefit from lower costs and passengers to enjoy greatly increased service quality and, in many cases, quantity. Yet, the basis for success must be a reasonably-governed, carefully regulated and adequately-resourced framework, based on efficiency. The legislative framework should ensure that only practical, affordable, reasonable, efficient and sustainable solutions are promoted. However, a time has now also come to introduce European legislation that incentivises travel by public transport over the use of the private car.

On the other hand, public transport must meet demand effectively and use resources efficiently. The aim is to achieve a high standard of public service, while maximising value from the expenditure on public transport by passengers and public authorities.

Yet, future development of public transport is challenged by the current financial situation, as passenger, capital and operational expenditures are all coming under increasing pressure. Innovative new solutions and potentially a revised framework will be required to attract new private investment into public transport.

Public transport is a locally planned and organised business, requiring little regulation by European legislation. This should comprise appropriate controls on support for public transport from direct and indirect funding sources, facilitating European-wide best practice exchange, and focusing EU initiatives and actions on an open, fair and non-discriminatory legal framework which encourages an entrepreneurial approach. Tools, such as fair regulation, infrastructure development policy and research support may be required to mitigate externalities. In addition, in order to maximise use of public transport it is essential that all future housing, business, retail and leisure developments throughout Europe are planned and constructed in such a way so that they can easily be served by public transport services. It is the HLG belief that the objectives of this initiative will not be fully realised if easy access to the public transport network is denied due to ineffective planning within EU Member States, regions and cities.

It is important therefore that European intervention and legislation should be carefully assessed with input from the industry and its representatives, and in close cooperation with local and regional authorities. As a principle, any relevant EU legislation and action in this field should define intended outcomes, rather than outputs, and leave the solution to be determined and implemented at the local level. In order to increase passenger numbers and limit travel by private car, European support would be best directed at opening funding opportunities to:

- a) encourage investment in public transport capital assets (vehicles, real time information, bus stops, terminals and intermodal hubs, dedicated lanes and related equipment etc);
- b) promote modal shift from the private car to collective passenger transport (journey planning tools, multimodal ticketing etc);
- c) facilitate best practice exchange, and
- d) introduce regulatory and policy measures to ensure fiscal incentives that can be passed onto passengers in terms of lower fares (0% VAT, lower duties on fuel etc.).

Regulation 1370/2007 on public passenger transport by rail and road should remain an essential piece of legislation to achieve open, fair and transparent mechanisms to introduce competition in the public transport market for bus and coach services.

4. Taxis as part of the public transport chain

Taxi services are an individual, mostly door-to-door service, offered to the public predominantly at a local level. By the very nature of their services, taxis are an integral element of the multimodal public transport chain⁸ in both urban and rural areas.

Thanks to their unmatched flexibility, which equals and sometimes even surpasses the flexibility of the private car, taxis also contribute to empowering other public transport modes, since they complement the multimodal public transport chain with a 24-hour/365-day availability, coupled with a unique door-to-door customised service offered to the individual passenger. Statistical evidence shows that in some cases (night, airport, people with disabilities, and sparsely populated rural areas), taxis are the only or the preferred public mobility service provider.

However, these facts are rarely known or acknowledged by the large majority of the travelling public and policy decision-makers at all levels, be it EU, national and often even at local level.

As a result:

- taxis are under-represented on the political agenda, and in urban and infrastructure planning and sometimes completely absent from it;
- very often taxis and their image are amalgamated, in particular as far as politicians are concerned, with the private car;
- many potential customers tend to undervalue or even ignore taxi services by not considering them as a potential travel option;
- the mobility potential of taxis in the multimodal public transport chain is often considerably underutilised.

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⁸ Although in many countries this is not yet properly recognised.



// Full list of the comments, proposals and recommendations made by the EU public-private Smart Move High Level Group

1. Users' needs

- Coach customers and efficient policy making requires local authorities, tourist destinations, hotels and coach operators to work together, in partnership, to be able to deliver the required infrastructure and ensure easy access to destinations without any unnecessary barriers. These include appropriate touring coach parking place, loading and unloading areas in proximity to tourist sites and hotels, and suitable facilities for people with reduced mobility and senior tourists, to enable them to board and alight from a coach. These should become an integral part of all urban mobility planning developments.
- It is the customers' preference that road-side controls for coaches are carried out at places where passengers are not on board, rather than at the road-side. This could be achieved through EU legislation, i.e. on roadworthiness and control, by the implementation of company risk rating practices, by public-private agreements between industry and enforcers at EU and national level, by enhancing industry quality and safety labeling etc. Where this is not possible and bearing in mind the priority of road safety, these checks should be undertaken at safe locations with suitable waiting and refreshment facilities, to minimize the disruption to passengers whilst the check is being undertaken. The information to passengers at road-side controls should be improved.
- Industry initiatives should be encouraged to achieve higher visibility and an improved marketing image of coach tourism to all customers, including customers with reduced mobility, senior citizens and specialised groups (schools, sport clubs, associations etc), as well as to hotels and city authorities.
- Coach operators and travel companies should take initiatives to ensure that appropriate information on accessible group tourism by coach services is widely available, including via active promotion through modern communication tools and social media to people with reduced mobility and senior citizens. EU and national websites should be created with information on companies offering accessible coach services.
- Coach operators and travel companies should take further initiatives to support safety, vehicle quality and comfort, and quality of services (via quality and comfort classification systems, labeling etc.), and to better communicate these initiatives to the public.
- Assistance should be provided for operators to understand new customers' demands and behavior, with a focus on group tourism, as opposed to individual tourism (via EU funded research and studies, including in the framework of urban planning and multimodality). The exchange of best practices at EU level (via EU projects, industry initiatives, awards etc.) should be promoted.

The following is also proposed:

- develop a public-private (city authorities, industry, customers' organisations etc.) EU group tourism by coach charter or partnership, taking into account users' needs. In particular, such a charter would enhance the commitment of coach operators to provide environmentally-friendly door-to-door quality services that meet the needs and expectations of customers, whilst at the same time establishing a common public-private partnership framework with cities;

- place the emphasis on passenger-friendly scheduled (regular) lines' terminals with adequate staff and other security and information facilities, accessible for all customers, and with adequate interchange facilities with other modes, including taxis, taking into account the needs of the elderly and persons with disabilities and reduced mobility;
- support training programmes and awareness training for staff on regular coach lines, including on customer care, before, during (where possible) and after the journey. Open a regular channel for consultation between business' and users' representatives, including on complaints - the outcome of which should be reflected in training programmes;
- carry out an EU study on how elderly people and people with disabilities and reduced mobility use regular lines' coach services in Europe;

in urban transport and commuting, in cases where market needs are not already being met by commercial operators, competent authorities at local and regional level are best able to define the necessary and appropriate quality and quantity requirements to serve the public. Only they are able to take into account their existing and available financial resources. It would, therefore, be helpful to develop and support, at EU level, the sharing of best practice, aiming to develop local and urban policy metrics to achieve the best value for money. As an example, the development of Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP) should be promoted, taking into account the mobility needs of those without access to a car, whilst developing and implementing "carrot and stick" measures to facilitate a shift of passengers from the private car to collective and public transport. Sustainable urban mobility plans should aim at ensuring a fast and frequent urban transport service network, with early and late services, and good multi-modal connection hubs, whilst also including taxi services with clear taxi fares and widespread fare information to customers;

support and promote innovative provision of passenger information and ticketing. Such initiatives must take into account the real needs of the large majority of passengers, and actions must be led by efficiency, whilst respecting the existing local organisation of passenger information and ticketing. In addition, to the extent possible, encourage a gradual harmonisation of information and ticketing in Europe to meet the needs of an increasingly (cross-border) mobile European population. Provide easily accessible advance information to city visitors about local collective and public transport, to encourage them using local public transport;

the development of the EU passenger rights policy is an important issue. An exercise is required, led by the European Commission, to measure and analyse the benefits and costs resulting from the implementation of the new legislation on Bus and Coach Passenger Rights (in force as of 1 March 2013). This could form the basis of a discussion platform, with different stakeholders represented, under a pan-European umbrella. Should there be found to be ongoing problems, solutions could be designed based on voluntary commitments from operators, based on the principles of practicability, affordability and efficiency;

the European Commission should support industry own initiatives and further research in the field of accessible public transport. It could also organise stakeholder platforms to facilitate discussion and exchange on voluntary best practices of accessible urban transport;

best practice guidance should be freely available, covering safe and accessible stops and infrastructure, internal vehicle design, use of information technology for service information for all customers, including customers with disabilities;

in areas which are difficult to access, in particular during winter conditions, traffic should remain open, in particular for buses and coaches, in order to secure the basic mobility needs of the population.



2. Legislative and administrative frameworks

Recognise at all levels – EU, national, regional and local - private group coach tourism as a necessary complement to and a full part of the multimodal collective and public transport chains, in the same way as it is the case for the traditional narrowly-defined “public transport”, covering mainly urban public transport, such as metro, tram and bus⁹.

- Systematically take into account bus and coach operational specificity (i.e. compared to road freight transport), arising from passengers’ needs, when devising or amending social (driving and rest time rules), fiscal, and technical legislation.

Work towards a transparent, cooperative and efficient EU framework for traffic restrictions and Low Emission Zones (LEZs) in Europe, in the interest of both industry, customers and cities.

- Review existing control documents, taking into account technological and other progress (“towards control documents for the 21st century”), and consider harmonisation and digitise of control documents, and removal of those that have no added value, such as the journey form for international occasional transport inside the EU. Create a single European road side control form, to avoid repetitive controls in different EU Member States. Ensure transparency of national enforcement practices, including national rules applicable to foreign-registered operators (provide EU and national multi-lingual websites). Support and promote cooperation, agreements and exchange of best practices between enforcers and industry, including on the possibility to carry out road safety and other related checks at terminals and stops (without passengers on board) rather than at the road side. Regularly exchange “best practice” covering enforcement and regulatory control practices (via EU forums, funds, field visits etc.).

Increase the maximum authorised weight for two-axle coaches in international EU traffic to at least 19.5 tonnes.

Recommend 100 km/h maximum speed for coaches on European motorways and first class roads.

Cooperate with national authorities to revise/remove existing national restrictions, such as traffic bans for group travel by coach.

Promote competition-neutral and transparent access of intercity scheduled (regular) bus and coach services to terminal infrastructures, including terminals of other transport modes. Also promote transparent, fair and non discriminatory access to terminal infrastructure in local public transport systems, to connect the passenger to access points for other transport modes.

Guarantee fair and efficient treatment of applications for authorisation of international regular lines, and freedom of cabotage in international regular lines within the EU.

EU Member States to ensure the fair and equal treatment of scheduled coach and rail services, and promote their complementarities, including through a better use of their physical terminal infrastructure and journey planning.

- Promote the collection of statistics on scheduled long-distance bus and coach transport, to base policy and business decisions on facts. Develop innovative methods of gathering reliable and timely statistics on EU group tourism by coach (using modern automated

⁹ In many cases the coach tour may include other modes before and/or after the coach trip (such as rail or air) and other collective transport modes (e.g. tram, preserved or scenic railway, boat trip) to access sites of interest or as part of the overall holiday experience. What users need is a full, seamless, intermodal and integrated accessibility of transport services that allows a seamless travel chain for all passengers throughout their journey, capable of competing with the private car.

statistics collection tools, with no additional burden on coach operators and no mandatory legislation). Promote the establishment and maintenance of a sectoral collection of statistics (EU observatory) on urban transport, including bus transport.

EU Regulation 1370/2007 is setting a clear and comprehensive framework for public transport contracts and compensation in Europe:

- currently, European Commission (EC) interpretative guidelines on the implementation of the provisions of Regulation 1370/2007 are being prepared. Incentivising and further enhancing the involvement of private initiatives is key to achieving a strategic shift in customers behaviour from the private car to collective public transport;
- in addition, by 2014 Member States are required to report about the implementation of Regulation 1370/2007 into their national legislation, whilst by 2019, the Regulation should be ready for a recast and review. In this perspective, the EC should commence supportive review activities early in this process in order to have a basis for the further development of the legislative framework, in support of more market incentives. Such a new framework should also be supportive of and encourage private investment and initiative in the public transport sector.

In order to prevent inadvertent undesirable consequences, introduce a mandatory impact analysis, to assess the effects of legislation and regulation in the fields of passenger information and ticketing on competition and the raising of potential barriers for new entrants.

3. Fiscal matters and user charging

As a priority, ensure that any new EU, national or local decisions or legislation in the field of taxation and user charges do not increase the fiscal burden on the European collective or public transport sector. The EU and its Member States should refrain from introducing new or extra user charges affecting public transport as these costs will have to be borne by the taxpayer and the passenger.

Incentivise the use of collective land passenger transport, including coach tourism, and ensure a favourable fiscal treatment for all collective land passenger transport modes and their customers compared to the use of the private car by:

- ensuring equal fiscal treatment of all collective passenger transport modes (in respect of VAT, excise duties on mineral oil, etc.) and equal treatment of modes in respect to State aid;
- maintaining and establishing “low-tax” commercial diesel for professional transport;
- harmonising and simplifying existing VAT-related procedures to facilitate intra-EU and international bus and coach transport. Promoting and maintaining a “0 rate” VAT for international bus and coach transport;
- making a strategic long-term political commitment to incentivise the use of collective land passenger transport through fiscal incentives, such “0 rate” VAT, as well as exempting collective bus and coach transport from congestion charging and user charges¹⁰.

¹⁰ The general objective of the Commission's proposed strategy to internalise external costs generated by transport (on the principle of “polluter and user pays”) is welcomed. Fair attribution of these costs to transport would assist users in their choice of the most sustainable transport mode, whilst improving the efficiency of infrastructure use and reducing negative externalities. Buses and coaches are considered significant contributors to the reduction of pollution and CO₂ emissions, and to maintaining social mobility, whilst reducing system inefficiencies caused by congestion.



Stimulate further the use of group tourism by coach by:

- incentives (reduced or no motorway tolls, special rebates for group tourism travellers during off season or for senior or disabled travellers) when using green coaches;
- fiscal and tax incentives available to traditional narrowly-defined “public transport” to be made available to coach tourism as well;
- refraining from introducing city access restrictions and city entry taxes for visiting coaches in cities and tourist destinations (if payment is required – then it should correspond to a specific service offered);
- reviewing the current application of VAT on coach tourism activities (top priority for coach operators and travel companies) to efficiently meet customers’ requirements.

Re-invest the income from the internalisation process to support sustainable transport choices, particularly public transport (modernising existing systems, creating new capacity, upgrading operations, etc.), and provide sustainable, efficient and competitive alternatives to private car use within new developments of land-use.

Acknowledge and support by incentives the private sector’s investments in innovative public transport infrastructures.

Facilitate cooperation between road infrastructure managers and bus and coach businesses, to ensure the equal treatment of single deck 2 and 3-axle coaches when applying motorway tolls, based on the rates applicable to 2-axle coaches.

4. Infrastructure and seamless intermodality

Recognise tourist coaches and their infrastructure as an integral part of urban and interurban mobility planning¹¹. Ensure that all buses and coaches have the same right to use infrastructure and facilities, such as terminals, bus stops, dedicated lanes and traffic priorities. Allow the use of existing dedicated infrastructure and separate lanes inside and outside cities by intercity and long-distance coaches, to boost reliability and punctuality.

Create a European multilingual portal with information on coach parking in cities and tourist destinations (via an EU project).

Ensure optimal access conditions for coaches to other modes’ terminals to ensure genuine seamlessness, intermodality and customer satisfaction, including for customers with disabilities and reduced mobility. Start by carrying out a study on the shortcomings and barriers related to access of collective and public passenger transport by road to terminals and infrastructure and terminals/infrastructures of other modes, with policy recommendations. Open access should be the first principle of terminals and stops, in the interest of the passenger, but allowing terminal operators to secure a reasonable contribution to their costs of operation.

Give priority to creating a European network of multimodal bus and coach terminals (hubs), including as part of the Trans-European Network (TEN), with the EU’s political backing and financial support, meeting also the needs of people with disabilities and reduced mobility.

11 In practice, this would mean the following: a coherent strategy for integrating high-quality group tourism with other interests; consultation with interested parties, including the coach tourism industry; investigation of the possibility to allow the use of dedicated bus lanes in cities and out of the cities by tourist coaches (top priority for businesses and their customers), including possibly through quality partnerships between local authorities and operators (bear in mind related ITS aspects); instructions and signs for visiting coach drivers, including in foreign languages; secure coach parking facilities and unloading areas in proximity to key tourist sites and hotels; wherever possible suitable rest and refreshment amenities for drivers should be provided.

Create a European website with a list of coach stations in Europe, their facilities and connections.

Prioritise collective and public transport, including by bus, coach and taxis, and its associated infrastructure in all sustainable urban mobility planning (SUMP) developments.

Where passenger journey time benefits can be realised, support the building of new dedicated infrastructure and separate (high occupancy) public transport lanes in urban areas, to also be used by taxis, including by making increasing use of modern ITS solutions¹².

Encourage stronger commitment from local and regional authorities to the maintenance and development of new passenger facilities.

Support new management and technological innovations, such as Bus Rapid Transit, and encourage the sharing of best practices among public and private stakeholders.

Develop partnership schemes to facilitate the safe integration of bike users into conventional public transport.

5. Easy access to services through better information and new technologies

Provide information from cities' tourist offices and tourist destinations to coach tourism companies, with a specific emphasis on the needs of group tourism. In this respect, make better use of modern technology.

Provide assistance to European bus and coach small and medium sized companies (SMEs) enabling them to close up the information and technology gap.

Ensure the integration of scheduled bus and coach services in current and future multimodal journey planners. Make collective urban public transport the key part in any future EU multimodal journey planner.

Support genuine intermodality in terms of information supply to customers, including information on access to other modes, safety, help and services, including to customers with disabilities and reduced mobility. Develop EU-wide solutions enabling passengers to obtain travel information, whilst preserving and supporting existing locally developed solutions; maintain them rather than allow them to wither at the expense of broader solutions where the latter confer no greater benefit. Make EU-initiated best practice readily available.

Support (European Commission) public transport operators' initiatives and encourage the development of agreed common standards and protocols for the supply and exchange of passenger information. The latter should be based on open access to existing sources of information. Any such initiative at EU level must be customer-focused and demand-led in the areas of ticketing and customer information, and avoid any unintended adverse consequences on operators through the imposition of inappropriate and unnecessary cost burdens.

Promote EU research into the benefits from, and support for public-private partnerships, as in many Member States public-private partnerships have delivered excellent local systems. This would allow the use of such best practice in the development of innovative solutions in markets not yet exposed to such mechanisms.

¹² Where no alternative exists for cyclists, they might be allowed – on a case by case basis, to avoid the reduction of the commercial speed of public transport and not jeopardizing safety - to use bus lanes, which should – in that case – be 4.75 m. wide.



6. Safety and environment

- Carry out an accident causation study for buses and coaches, similar to the ETAC truck accident causation study, to develop recommendations to be used in training and raising the awareness of drivers, operators, customers and other stakeholders.
- Work out a voluntary industry bus and coach safety programme, with recommendations (including legislative) to industry (managers and drivers), manufacturers and policy decision-makers. Raise awareness, including through public-private partnership, of coach safety and social rules with customers and partner businesses, including travel agents and tour organisers. Support the creation of adapted voluntary safety and green (self) audit systems for bus and coach SMEs.
- Work towards improving safety and security for customers, including at bus and coach terminals and stops.
- Support industry and public-private initiatives to further improve the environmental and safety credentials of coach travel, such as eco-driving and labeling, independent travel comparison sites and CO₂ reference calculators¹³ for all transport modes.
- Develop a concept of a safe, green and customer-friendly bus and coach of the future. Provide sustainable financial support from EU funding for research in the bus and coach sector for the technical and economical development of such a concept of bus and coach vehicles of the future.
- Support targeted projects and programmes to promote safe and environmentally friendly ways of (commuting and) travelling for all potential customers, including school children and seniors (including off season – a definition of “off season” in Europe may be needed).
- Within the evolution of European technical standards (engine emissions), prioritise, encourage and support further technical development leading to growth in the use of collective and public transport, via:
 - assessing ongoing initiatives, including the CIVITAS projects, and the lessons learned from them, in particular regarding the application of EURO-standards (to avoid unintended adverse consequences, such as opposing the use of hybrids in zero emissions mode due to the arguably “dirty” start up characteristics of diesel engines);
 - studying the safety-related aspects of using alternative fuels, such as CNG;
 - incentivising the use of clean and safe alternative fuels in bus and coach transport.

Ensure a fair treatment of environmental standards for the bus and coach manufacturing industry compared to the private car manufacturing industry.

Support the development of a CO₂ measurement methodology which takes into account real driving cycles.

Further investigate the internalisation of external costs in urban transport.

Promote additional priority measures to remove buses and coaches from the adverse effects of congestion on journey times and their variability¹⁴.

¹³ With coaches being part of them, since, regrettably, most existing ones do not contain a coach module.

¹⁴ Not only do increased journey times and variability make services less attractive to passengers, thereby acting against any incentivisation of modal shift from car to bus, but congested conditions also create the greatest adverse impact on carbon production as heavy duty engines are constantly operating at the least efficient part of their operating cycle.

Carry out a study, together with vehicle manufacturers, to examine the best ways of reducing the unladen (empty) weight of buses and coaches by investing in and using the latest construction and engine technologies.

7. City-related aspects

Recognise private group travel and coach tourism as a necessary complement to and a full part of the multimodal collective and public transport chain, including for urban mobility planning, as is the case for the traditional narrowly-defined "public transport", covering mainly urban public transport, such as metro, tram and bus. Tourism, group tourism, and tourist coaches and their infrastructure should become an integral part of sustainable urban mobility plans (SUMPs), through:

- a coherent strategy for integrating high-quality group tourism with other interests;
- consultation with interested parties, including the coach tourism industry;
- promoting the use of dedicated bus only lanes in cities by tourist coaches¹⁵;
- instructions and signs for visiting coach drivers, including in foreign languages;
- safe, secure and accessible coach parking places and loading and unloading areas in proximity to tourist sites and hotels;
- safe, secure and accessible (intermodal coach) terminals, as group tourism interfaces;
- safe and secure amenities for drivers and passengers;
- marketing plans (cities) to promote group tourism by coach, in partnership with industry.

Work out, in a close public-private partnership, an EU framework for city access restrictions and Low Emission Zones (LEZs) for cities in Europe. Provide a European "one-stop-shop" with information on and registration facilities for operators and their vehicles, for the purpose of meeting the requirements of LEZs, city access restrictions, user taxes, environment certification, coach parking areas in cities, etc. Develop a public-private EU group tourism by coach charter¹⁶, taking into account users' needs (i.e. based on the existing ETOA-IRU-ECM model).

Promote long-distance bus and coach services and their terminals and other related infrastructure, as an integral part of any (future) urban mobility planning. Ensure genuine intermodality and seamless access for collective bus and coach services, when designing and planning multimodal passenger terminal platforms;

Develop a concept of an intercity "coach express travel" system or network and promote its systematic integration in sustainable urban mobility planning.

15 Including through quality partnerships between local authorities and operators (bear into account related ITS aspects).

16 Such a charter would enhance, in particular, the commitment of coach operators to provide environmentally-friendly door-to-door quality services that meet the needs and expectations of customers, whilst at the same time establishing a common public-private partnership framework with cities. It could also be used for urban planning, as a communication tool for business and city promotion, but also for raising the awareness on the rights and obligations of passengers.



Clearly prioritise public transport, including taxis and visiting coaches, within urban mobility planning, over the use of the private car in sustainable urban mobility plans:

- national, regional and local authorities should ensure alignment of land use and transportation policies to ensure that new developments are located where they can be best served by efficient and attractive public transport services;
 - this should mitigate against development of out of town retail and employment facilities which are not integrated within the patterns of supply and demand “churn” which facilitate efficient and cost effective public transport facilities;
 - better coordinate mobility planning, road operations, and spatial planning, by means of transparent and efficient institutional settings, e.g. via a single transport authority. Develop tools to determine the right balance of infrastructure, park-and-ride, collective public transport (including taxis) and charges to keep cities moving¹⁷;
 - support new management and technological innovations, such as Bus Rapid Transit, and facilitate the exchange of best practices.
- Establish, within sustainable urban mobility plans, achievable incremental targets for increasing the number of public transport journeys within a given period of time.
 - Encourage Member States to allow commuters (individual citizens, companies, associations) to buy public transport tickets from their “before tax” income for all types of commuting (home-workplace, home-school, home-leisure, etc.).
 - Promote and support car recycling schemes, with commitments to use collective transport instead.
 - Promote and facilitate the use of alternative fuels and the acquisition of greener vehicles by taxi operators.
 - Carry out a study on the impact of the introduction of clean car technologies on collective passenger transport and the related risk of subsidising clean car technology while ignoring proven collective or public transport technology, resulting in “clean congestion”.

8. International dimension

- Extend the geographical scope of the Interbus Agreement on international occasional (tourist) transport by bus and coach to all countries and regions neighbouring the EU. Conclude an international agreement with neighbouring third countries, to facilitate regular bus and coach lines, controls and procedures, and to harmonise conditions of competition.
- Facilitate the issuance of visas for drivers and tourists.
- Harmonise and facilitate controls at external EU borders, to speed up border crossing, including by making use of available best practices. Ensure priority treatment of tourist and scheduled service coaches at external borders.

¹⁷ Car parking policies in urban areas should be designed to balance the need to maintain the economic prosperity of these areas against any incentivisation to use private rather than public transport. In particular, research into the successful adoption of residents’ parking schemes, limitations on parking supply for new development, workspace parking charging and large scale Park & Ride systems would promote and encourage best practice and aid sustainable development whilst minimising adverse environmental impact.

- Eliminate identity controls at internal and Schengen borders.
- Ensure fair and equal treatment of all transport modes and their passengers within the European single transport market and travel area.
- Study and spread best urban transport industry practices from regions outside Europe, where proven and efficient public transport solutions (such as Bus Rapid Transit) have been implemented.

9. Innovation and best practices

- Support targeted initiatives and projects to promote off season group tourism, seniors' and overseas visitors' group tourism in Europe.
- Promote and assist the collection and exchange of best practices at EU level (via EU projects, and industry initiatives and awards). This should also include the dissemination (through EU support) of training guidelines and best practices to raise drivers' awareness about the needs of disabled customers and customers with reduced mobility.
- Increase the awareness of destinations about the specificity and advantages of group tourism by coach.
- Promote passenger-friendly terminals across Europe, focusing on passengers' needs, when planning, designing and building terminals throughout the mobility and travel chain.
- Establish an interactive website and dissemination channels to promote service, technology and management innovation and best practices, to support their take-over by bus and coach service providers across Europe.
- Provide European support to identify, promote and disseminate best practice to support transition programmes for public transport operators regarding assessment, understanding and response to social changes in an ageing society.
- Maximise the attractiveness of the public transport sector for private sector investors and for funding from other sectors.
- Further promote research and dissemination of good practice in the field of congestion charging and parking pricing for further development of sustainable transport modes.
- Provide more information on availability of and access to existing funding measures, targeted to the collective and public transport communities, to raise awareness of these opportunities¹⁸.
- Future CIVITAS programme and projects to include measures related to the modernisation of public transport business models, notably pilot projects on market segmentation and product differentiation.

¹⁸ From a general point of view the whole process of applying for public funding from EU sources is perceived to be very bureaucratic and inefficient. Simplifying this needs to be addressed to attract a greater range of bids direct from bus and coach operators. The reflection on future funding needs requires, as a prerequisite, a better understanding of public transport funding programmes in different European countries.

// ADDENDUM 1

Taxis as part of the public transport chain

1. Users' needs

- Promote cooperation with other modes, such as rail, bus and coach, to ensure better customer services, to improve the competitiveness of the public transport chain in relation to the private car.
- Promote clear taxi fares and widespread fare information to customers in advance of the journey.
- Provide easily accessible and secure taxi stops for both drivers and passengers, including signage and shelters (i.e. at train stations, shopping and sport centres, hospitals, cinemas and theaters, attractions, hotels etc.).
- Give the right for taxis to stop (short-time parking) while serving disabled customers in areas where parking is normally not allowed (e.g. pavements).
- Promote on-demand taxi services.

2. Legislative and administrative frameworks

- Recognise taxis as a necessary part of the collective and public transport chain. Promote the use of taxis in public contracting, including in periods of low demand for conventional public transport (late night and early morning) and for special categories of travellers, such as people with disabilities, schoolchildren etc..
- Recommend the use of bus priority or dedicated lanes in cities by taxis, i.e. as part of EU recommendations and best practices for sustainable urban planning.
- Carry out a study on the impact of access to the profession regime for taxis in EU Member States. As a second step, propose an EU regulation on an adapted access to the profession regime for taxis in Europe, with high quality standards for training.
- Maintain taxis within the scope of the General Working Time Directive.
- Secure a mandatory use of safety belts for all taxi occupants, including the driver (remove EU Member States possibility to exempt drivers from wearing safety belts).

3. Fiscal matters and user charging

- Encourage Member States to apply the lowest VAT rate to taxis, when taxis form part of integrated taxi, bus, tram and metro tickets.
- Exempt taxis from congestion charging in cities (as part of public transport).
- Promote, including through fiscal incentives, the use of alternative fuels and the acquisition of greener vehicles by taxi operators.
- Make taxis eligible to use low-taxed professional diesel.

4. Infrastructure and seamless intermodality

- Mobility planning (city, national) to include a “taxi strategy”, including establishing (more) taxi stands (i.e. depending on demand or on the number of inhabitants) and the possibility to use bus priority or dedicated lanes in cities by taxis.
- Facilitate taxi access to the terminal infrastructures of other modes.
- Provide map locations for taxi ranks.

5. Easy access to services through better information and new technologies

- Assist, through EU-financed studies and pilot projects, enhancing the role of taxis as the door-to-door “link and extension” of other public transport modes;
- Promote the inclusion of taxis in multimodal journey planners.

6. Safety and environment

- Promote taxi passenger’s driver safety and security, including through the wearing of safety belts by all taxi occupants, including the driver.
- Ensure the enforcement of strict rules and surveillance to prevent “black taxi services” and to ensure the safety of customers.

7. City-related aspects

- Urban mobility planning to include a taxi strategy.
- Consider allowing the use of bus stops as taxi ranks when bus lines are not functioning (night, bank holidays etc.).
- Recommend the use of bus priority or dedicated lanes in cities by taxis.

8. International dimension

- The European taxi industry to come with a proposal on the cross-border taxi traffic framework in the first half of 2013.

9. Innovation and best practices

- Promote best practices and innovative taxi projects of making taxis a genuine part of the public transport chain.

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// ADDENDUM 2

Statistics

Reduction of EU road traffic

Bus and coach use in the EU in 2010: 510,000 million p.km
 Private car use in the EU in 2010: 4,738,000 million p.km

Source: European Commission

Doubling scenario

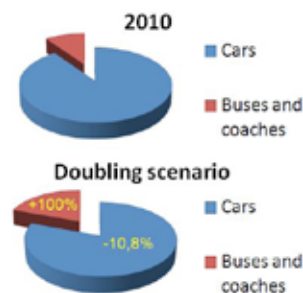
Bus and coach use: 510,000 million p.km + 510,000 million p.km
 = 1,020,000 million p.km

Private car use: 4,738,00 million p.km - 510,000 million p.km
 = 4,228,000 million p.km

Benefit

-10.8% reduction in car use in the EU

Reduction of EU car traffic resulting from doubling bus and coach use (in Mio p.km)



Reduction of CO₂ emissions

Total CO₂ car emissions in the EU in 2010:
 573.3 million t

Total CO₂ bus and coach emissions in the EU in 2010:
 18.9 million t

Source: European Environment Agency

Doubling scenario

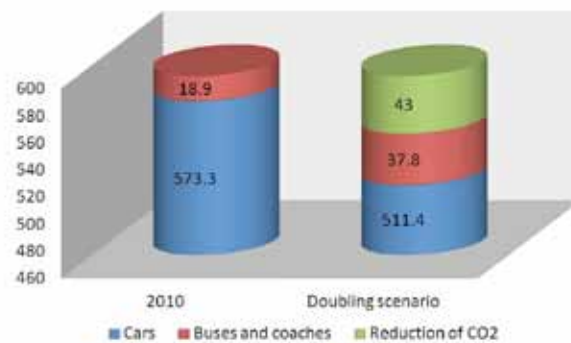
CO₂ car emissions: 573.3 million t - 10.8% = 511.4 million t

CO₂ bus and coach emissions:
 18.9 million t + 18.9 million t = 37.8 million t

Benefit

-43 million t reduction in total road transport
 CO₂ emissions **every year**

Reduction of total EU road transport CO₂ emissions resulting from doubling bus and coach use (in Mio tons)



Reduction of fatalities

Fatalities of car occupants in the EU in 2010: 15,385

Fatalities of bus and coach occupants in the EU in 2010: 123

Source: European Commission

Doubling scenario

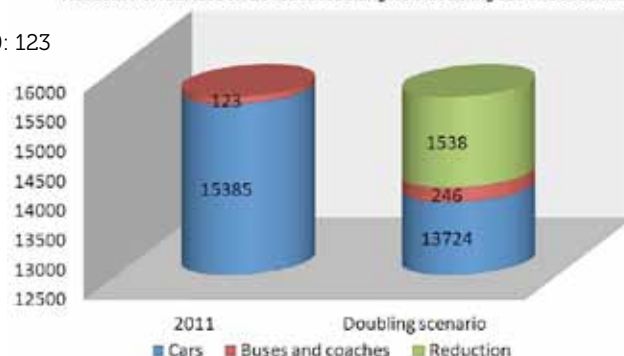
Fatalities of car occupants: 15,385 - 10.8% = 13,724

Fatalities of bus and coach occupants: 123 + 123 = 246

Benefit

-1,583 reduction in total fatalities **every year**

Reduction of fatalities on EU roads resulting from doubling bus and coach use



Creation of new jobs

"For every person directly employed by bus and coach operators, at least **three more jobs are created** in related industries".

Source: CPT, bdo

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