

Achieving sustainable mobility by implementing business-friendly rules for LEZs

A harmonised framework for low emission zones (LEZs) is needed at EU level, with a single information window for travellers and businesses, in order to meet ambitious objectives in sustainable mobility.

Brussels – On the occasion of the first European debate on “[Traffic Restrictions and Low Emission Zones in Europe](#)” organised today by the IRU, which brought together some 100 representatives from the European travel industry, city authorities, Members of the European Parliament, European Commission services and Member States’ transport attachés, the European bus and coach industry requests the European Commission to provide a harmonised framework that all EU cities would have to apply when introducing Low Emission Zones (LEZs) or other similar access or traffic restrictions.

IRU Vice-President and President of the IRU Passenger Transport Council, Graham Smith, stressed: “There are today close to 200 European cities with different LEZs schemes, which makes it extremely difficult and costly for travellers and businesses alike to find their way in this increasingly inhospitable administrative environment. Most affected are vehicles equipped with EURO III engines, despite being the best environmental deal only 5 years ago! Postponing city traffic restrictions that affect some 80 000 EURO III coaches until 2015 would save the European bus and coach industry up to 2 billion Euros, which could be invested in even cleaner vehicles.”

The lack of a harmonised framework to support the introduction of Low Emission Zones (LEZs) in the European Union results in the European single market and travel area being increasingly fragmented, which generates inefficiencies and soaring costs for individual travellers, businesses and their customers. By restricting the use of buses and coaches, and particularly visiting touring coaches, uncoordinated city policies actually contribute to increased CO2 emission and traffic congestion, and limit the contribution of coach tourists to local and regional economies, whilst negatively impacting the efficient functioning of the European travel and transport market.

Participants also stressed that such a harmonised framework should also contain provisions and recommendations for consultation with the industry, as well as timely and accessible multilingual information provided to EU travelers, as well as local and visiting operators.

Establishing an EU-wide public-private platform to deal with these issues, supported by the European Commission, could open the way for productive discussions and creative solutions jointly devised by public and private stakeholders.

Designing and implementing a bus and coach-friendly legal and administrative framework at EU level is instrumental in doubling the use of collective transport by bus and coach over the next decade and achieving sustainable mobility for all, as advocated by the [Smart Move campaign](#).

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Read [IRU policy recommendations on city traffic restrictions](#)

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