



**To: Ursula von der Leyen
President of the European Commission**

**To: Charles Michel
President of the European Council**

**To: David Maria Sassoli
President of the European Parliament**

Brussels, 25 March 2020

**OPEN LETTER:
Basic continuity and survival of urban public transport
and local mobility services in Europe**

Dear Ms. von der Leyen,
Dear Mr. Michel,
Dear Mr. Sassoli,

While fighting this unusual crisis, **ensuring the basic continuity and survival of the public transport and local mobility services is essential for Europe and all European citizens** and especially for the many professionals depending on a well-functioning local transportation network to execute their essential daily functions.

In order to ensure this continuity, **the competent authorities have to guarantee the availability of the relevant medical equipment and products to the public transport and local mobility operators to protect the health and safety of their employees, as well as their passengers.**

In this unprecedented context public transport operators and local mobility providers are committed to apply to the extent possible health and safety recommendations in line with the requirements set by local, national and European authorities.

The undersigned organisations acknowledge and underline the high commitment of their staff in providing the required level of service in these difficult times.

Public transport and local mobility stakeholders have already put in place a set of preventive measures and are continuously sharing information and best practices in order to protect both staff and passengers and to keep transit systems running. **However, for a broader outreach and to be more effective the support of Member States and of European institutions is needed.**

These best practices include:

- Ensure that all workers receive the latest and most accurate information about COVID 19 including ways to limit/avoid transmission;
- Provide staff, especially drivers, with hand sanitising products and other appropriate means to limit the spread of the virus, taking into account the availability of the local facilities;
- Regular deep cleaning and disinfection of transport vehicles and assets touched by the transport users (such as ticketing devices...);
- Limit the interactions of drivers with passengers (for example no cash ticket sales onboard, allowing rear-door boarding only ...);
- Adapt the level of service according to the reduction of travel demand in line with regular business procedures and with decisions taken by public authorities (e.g. night services and school services are suspended in some cities, some networks are following weekend or school holidays timetables...);
- Provide dedicated services to healthcare personnel and any other category of personnel falling under essential services;
- Temporarily release from active service, staff members with a higher risk of infection (e.g. older staff members over 60, people with a chronic health condition, etc.).

We trust that the EU institutions coordinate the appropriate advice and guidance to the Member States to optimise the exchange of good practices and newly built expertise.

At this stage, we are unable to assess the economic and financial impact of the pandemic on the urban and local mobility sector. **However, based on the first available data, for example from Italy, Spain, France or Germany, we can be sure that the local passenger transport sector's ecosystem will be heavily affected in multiple ways** (including local public transport authorities, public transport operators, private operators, SMEs, subcontractors, new mobility providers and the supply industry). The impact relates mainly to the decrease in revenues (in some cities the reduction in patronage reaches 85%) and the additional costs needed to disinfect and implement social distancing measures in transport vehicles and infrastructure.

In order to limit these social, economic and financial consequences as well as to facilitate continuity of service, exceptional measures will need to be adopted very rapidly. In this context, we especially welcome the Commission's proposal to activate the general escape clause of the Stability and Growth Pact. We call therefore on the Council to endorse the Commission proposal: budgetary flexibility is crucial to allow Member States and competent local authorities in charge of mobility to respond adequately to this crisis.

Once the public health situation in the context of COVID-19 stabilises, public transport and local mobility services will play an even greater role in revitalizing the European economy. Financial cash flow is critical now more than ever in order to sustain the capacity and delivery of the passenger transport services. Also after the COVID19

crisis, financial support should be extended to the stakeholders in the passenger transport sector as this will only assist in the subsequent economic recovery.

We are committed, under these exceptional circumstances to ensure continuity of service and limit these social, economic and financial consequences for the various stakeholders in the local passenger transport sector while still ready to contribute to the future ambitious environmental objectives as defined in the EU Green Deal.

We remain at your disposal for any further information you may require.

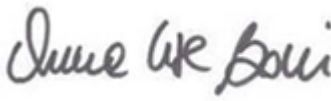
Yours sincerely,



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Director



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