

# Buses and coaches in tourism, travel and the economy

**Bus and coach as part of the travel industry (EU):** Although precise figures are not available, it is estimated that 10% of the companies in the EU tourist and travel business are bus and coach companies, predominantly SME businesses, offering both **tourist** (unscheduled) and **regular line services** (estimated 3,000 regular lines in Europe).

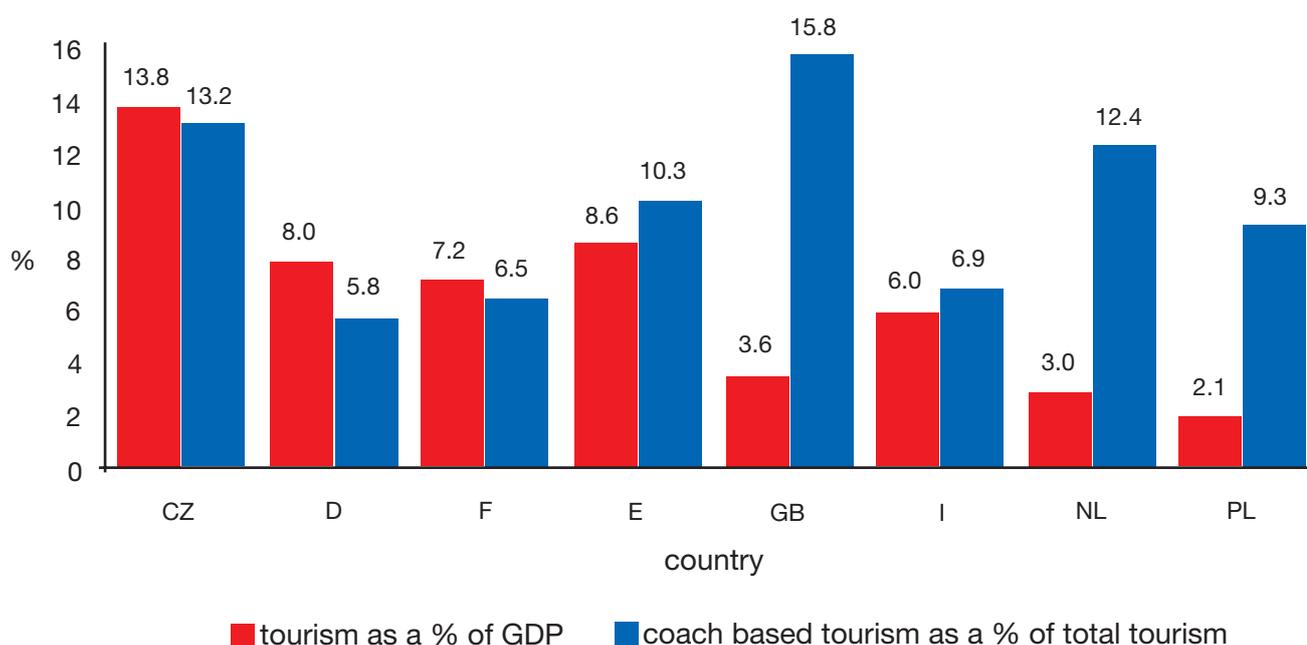
Coach trips are typically longer than the average train trip, and are usually shorter than air travel distances, thus complementing planes, trains, buses and ships. Coach travel represents 1-2% of the total of passenger trips, and accounts for 15-25% of all passenger trips by collective transport.

In terms of passenger-kilometres<sup>1</sup>, passenger car transport is the dominant mode with a market share in 2002 of 82.5%, followed by bus and coach transport (9.5%) and railways (6.8%); Furthermore, rail is twice as expensive and travelling by car is almost three times as costly as using the coach.

**Bus and coach enhance cohesion & social equality**, as they remain an affordable alternative for every citizen/traveller. With the aging population in industrialised countries, attractive bus and coach services are expected to serve this market, which is expected to increase by 25-30% in the next 25 years. Thanks to the recent and tremendous improvement in comfort and quality of services, as well as customer-oriented services, bus and coach will remain the most affordable means of collective transport for tourists and travellers around the world.

**Coach tourism and the economy (EU)<sup>2</sup>:** Travel and tourism by coach play an important role in the economy. Coach tourism accounts for up to 2% of national GDP in European economies and employs 0.4 to 0.8% of the EU working population. Moreover, for every 1 person directly employed by coach operators, 3 more jobs are created in the coach tourism sector, be it tour operators, guides, or specialised travel agents.

## Contribution of tourism and coach tourism to GDP in selected EU countries



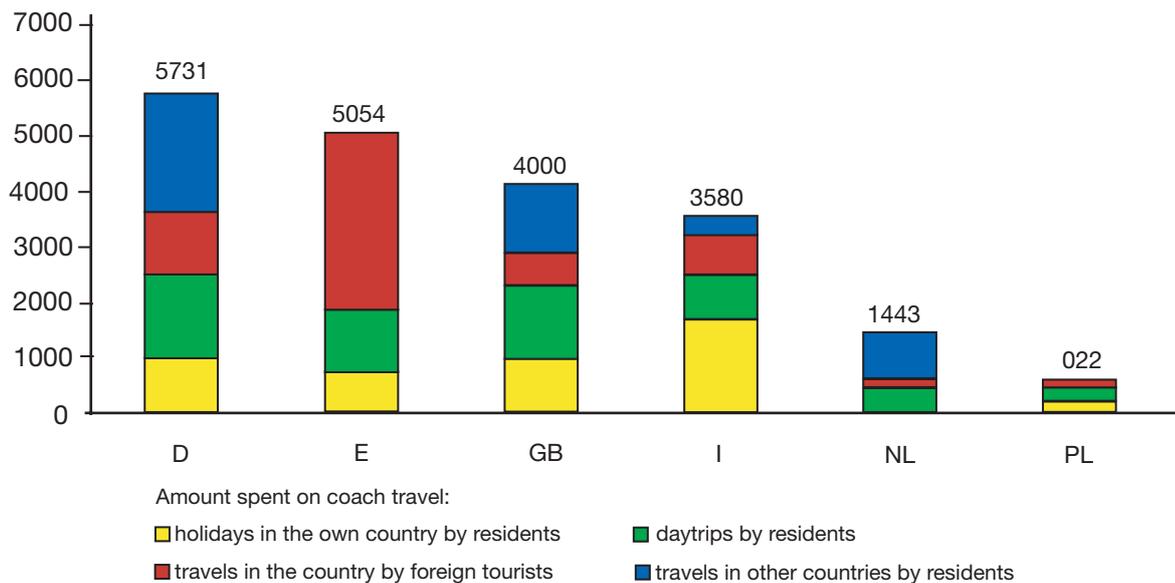
<sup>1</sup>Source: Selected statistics on bus and coach transport in Europe, IRU, 2006 (Available on the IRU's bookshop, [www.iru.org](http://www.iru.org))

<sup>2</sup>Source: The role of the coach in the economy, IRU, 2003

**Coach tourism and cities:** Coach tourists<sup>3</sup> spend 40% more, on average, per day than the typical tourist, and do so mostly on food, souvenirs and entertainment. In addition, 68% of all coach tourists stay in hotels, which is a higher proportion than those traveling by any other means, including air transport.

An NEA study conducted in 2001 concluded that tourism by coach is a stable part of the total tourism sector and is relatively unaffected by economic changes. Thus it can be reasonably argued that promoting coach tourism is a good investment, which will generate a continuous flow of income into the local economy.

**Amount spent by coach tourists in several European countries (in mio EUR, 2001)**



**Latest USA / Canada figures confirm these data<sup>4</sup>:** The motorcoach transportation service industry is the number one people-mover in the US. In 2005 the coach industry carried 631 million passengers in the United States and Canada alone. The coach transportation service industry carries 25% more passengers than the airline industry and twice more than Amtrak and commuter rail combined. The US coach industry binds the nation together, creates jobs and income throughout the economy, injects consumer spending in the local economies, and promotes inter-modality and seamless travel, all that at virtually no cost for US taxpayers.

**Best practice:** In 2005, the City of Dresden (Germany) was awarded the IRU 2005 City Trophy Award for its comprehensive and long term Coach Parking and Guidance System, consisting of a dense network of interconnected parking and waiting areas for coaches with appropriate facilities, signposting and guidance both for coach drivers and coach tourists, including when the latter turn into pedestrians. This long-term commitment has allowed the City of Dresden to achieve record levels of coach tourist visits of almost 1 million in 2004.

<sup>3</sup>Source: *The role of the coach in the economy*, IRU, 2003

<sup>4</sup>Source: *Motorcoach Industry impacts on Society and the Economy*, The American Bus Association, 2005