



Introductory speech

IRU Secretary General, Martin Marmy

Dear Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen, Colleagues,

It is my privilege and pleasure to welcome you today to this 6th European Bus and Coach Forum, which we have organized together with our partners from ECTAA and ETOA, and our member organization in Belgium, the FBAA.

With such renowned and high quality partners, with the strategic support of Busworld and with your numerous presence today, we have practically taken the first step towards achieving one of our major objectives, namely, to place the service provided by buses and coaches and their contribution to sustainable mobility, travel and tourism at the centre of the political attention

The topics selected for this forum are indeed high on the business and political agendas.

Both, city access and low emission zones, as well as passenger rights, are indeed in the minds of most coach operators and transport-related politicians nowadays. I do not want to pre-empt your discussion today.

What I would like very much to do, at the outset of your debate, is to stress once again the willingness and readiness of the bus and coach industry to contribute constructively to the debate at both European and national levels, in the search for acceptable solutions for all stakeholders.

I must say that I am fully confident that the bus and coach sector has not only something to say in the debate, but that this exemplary sector has the capacity to become THE key contributor to achieving, by working together with the decision makers, safe and sustainable mobility for all. This objective should be increasingly shared by politicians and their voters in Europe and beyond.

That is the reason why this afternoon we are launching the global Smart Move campaign, whose objective is to place the service provided by buses and coaches on top of the political agenda.

For the IRU, buses and coaches should be seen as a vital tool to meet in an optimal manner the current and future mobility and travel needs. This is why buses and coaches

should be recognized by every decision maker and by every passenger as the most suitable transport mode due to their intrinsic qualities of safety, environmental-friendliness, affordability, user-friendliness and efficiency.

That is also the reason why we are proposing today a long-term public/private partnership to our partners from the public and private sectors in Europe, with the objective of achieving - in the next 10-15 years - a doubling of the use of collective passenger transport by bus and coach.

Indeed, buses and coaches, together with taxis, are the only transport mode, which equals, complements and can successfully compete with the private car. Investing policy attention and encouraging by incentives the use of buses and coaches, is, for us, the smartest way of achieving sustainable mobility at the lowest cost for society. Doubling the share of bus and coach transport in Europe is therefore not only a realistic policy and business objective, but also a most commendable approach from a public interest point of view.

This is the ambitious message we want to send today to our customers, including customers with disabilities, to our partners, to Governments, to city authorities and to European politicians. In fact, our message is clear, buses and coaches are THE solution. As representative of the buses and coaches industry we are committed to work together with you to achieve jointly the required strategic shift in mobility and travel behaviours, in the next decade.

I thank you for your attention and wish you fruitful debates during the forum.

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