



1st IRU/EU Presidency Road Transport Conference & Ministerial Meeting

“Efficient, Safe and Sustainable Road Transport for the Future”

Brussels, Belgium, 1 December 2010

Panel Session 1 – Efficient and Safe Road Transport

Why are buses, coaches and taxis the Smart Move for efficient and safe passenger road transport?

Graham Smith, Vice-President and President of the Passenger Transport Council,
International Road Transport Union (IRU)

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen, Dear Colleagues,

In my capacity of Chairman of the IRU Passenger Transport Council, which covers bus, coach and taxi businesses in Europe and around the world, it is my privilege and honour to raise one issue with you – an issue we brought to public attention only one year ago, something we feel is largely forgotten and underestimated in today’s policy-making, in particular at European Union level.

I am talking here about bus, coach and taxi services – buses, coaches and taxis, which were practically non-existent in the previous White Paper on the European Transport Policy and which should find the role and place they deserve in policy making – namely, as a key constitutive element of the mobility chain.

One year ago, we started talking about the need to make a smart move – a smart move in policy making, a smart move in doing business and a smart move in linking policy and business; one year ago we launched our global campaign, Smart Move.

(Since then, DG TREN changed its name to DG MOVE – indeed a step closer to the Smart MOVE...)

And yet, why campaigning?

The answer is simple. Among us, industry professionals, buses and coaches are considered as the safest and the most environmentally-friendly, flexible, efficient, affordable and inclusive means of transport. Used effectively, they provide an optimal solution to a range of current mobility problems including safety, climate change, connectivity, social inclusion and congestion.

The same is true for taxis. Together, buses, coaches and taxis equal and even surpass in many cases the mobility potential of the private car, whilst at the same time empowering the other collective transport modes, thus constituting the backbone of the mobility chain.

However, this perception is not shared by most of the politicians. On the contrary, our industry is often associated with problems commonly attributed to road traffic in general and private cars in particular, such as the more than 40 000 fatalities on European roads and streets, pollution and congestion, while the opposite is true.

This misperception has led to a situation where buses and coaches, but also taxis, are not only underperforming in terms of customers’ use and contribution to mobility and welfare, but



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they are also the victim of political negligence and often improper, non-adapted and even restrictive legislation.

What a mistake, Ladies and Gentlemen, and what a loss for society and citizens alike!

And yet, we are the smart move, Ladies and Gentlemen, we are the mode that has the potential to unlock and further enhance the mobility potential of the European transport system at all levels – local, national and even international, since the advantages we offer to the travelling public go hand in hand with the current and future needs and preferences of European citizens in terms of safety, environmental-friendliness, affordability, flexibility and accessibility.

This is the reason why we are advocating the doubling of the use of our services as a business objective, but also as a stated political objective, including in the future European Commission White Paper on Transport Policy for the period 2010-2020.

Doubling the use of our services will mean:

- reducing road fatalities by more than 3000 per year;
- reducing CO2 emissions by at least 50 million tonnes per year;
- reducing congestion in cities at zero cost for taxpayers, as a result of the expected 10-15% fall of car traffic;
- creating 4 million new, green jobs.

Where is the politician who would not subscribe to such objectives?

But there is more about it. Next year, we are focusing our efforts to further improve our yet very good safety record. We have also taken upon ourselves commitments in the field of comfort and quality of services to our customers...

Changing the mindset and the perception of buses, coaches and taxis in our society, starting with policy decision-makers is, therefore, the first step, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Once the mindset has begun to change, the legislation should follow. And this is a challenging task, since it affects all aspects of our functioning and our ability to deliver the services our customers demand.

It covers rules and regulations at European level, such as public service obligations, access to profession and market access, cabotage in international regular lines, practicable passenger rights rules, and driving and rest time rules, to name but a few.

But it also covers national rules and rules decided at local level, such as sustainable urban plans, availability of multimodal bus and coach terminals and easy access to them, and industry-friendly city traffic rules and low-emission zones.

Doubling the use of our services therefore means:

- ***Doubling the political attention and resources devoted to buses, coaches and taxis*** by policy decision-makers at all levels, to offer an appropriate legislative and administrative framework that allows collective passenger transport to thrive;
- ***Doubling public investment in collective passenger transport services, and in multimodal bus and coach infrastructure, terminals and stops***, to offer an interface, where car drivers can actually be “converted” into passengers;
- ***Doubling customer care and efforts by company managers and their drivers***, to offer car drivers a credible long-term alternative to the use of their private car; and



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- ***Doubling our willingness and readiness to work together*** – politicians, businesses, partners – to achieve this commendable objective of doubling the use of collective passenger transport.

I thank you very much for your attention.
