



## 7<sup>th</sup> European Bus and Coach Forum

Kortrijk, 20 October 2011, 9:00 – 13:30

Greening travel and tourism: *Policy and transport sector contributions to green travel and tourism*

*Concluding words, Graham Smith, Vice President, IRU -*

Dear Vice President of the European Parliament, Dear Colleagues and Guests,

It is not easy to conclude a forum debate which has had such a wide participation and such a variety of interventions from the floor, emphasizing key aspects of our topic today – greening the travel and tourism chain.

Indeed, industry's best practices are needed and their dissemination over the largest possible scale is essential, in order to support and increase excellence within our industry.

This is a guarantee that customers will follow us and will opt for our services, both in terms of coach travel and coach tourism. For our customers are the ones we - transport and travel businesses - have to convince of the quality and the long-term credibility of our offer.

This was the case for our Bus Excellence Award 2011 winner, the company RSV from Germany, which, by introducing two innovative services – an express airport line and a night bus line - was able to attract 100 000 additional customers to each of these pioneering services.

And yet, look at the example of the city of Southport, in the UK, winner of the City Trophy 2011 Award. By implementing long-term customer and business-friendly policies, the municipal authorities have achieved a doubling in the number of visiting coaches. The city of Southport has effectively achieved the objective of our Smart Move campaign, by introducing and maintaining, over the years, high quality services to both coach drivers and tourists, and dedicated incentives for them to repeatedly visit the city.

These two examples show, Ladies and Gentlemen, that the objective of doubling the use of bus and coach services is not a utopia, but is something that a well-designed, pragmatic and future- looking policy – at business, city and Government level - can achieve.

The same is true for Europe, which nowadays produces 80% of the legislation applicable to our sector.

If 90% of all European citizen's mobility and travel movements are below a distance of 100 km, than isn't it obvious, Ladies and Gentlemen, that the most credible customers' alternative is indeed the bus and the coach.

Only by placing buses and coaches at the heart of policy making and by setting a clear policy and business target to increase their use – indeed to double it in the next 10 to 15 years - can policy-makers at EU, national, regional and local level create a conducive legislative, market and operational environment, to produce a shift in customers' behaviour and achieve an inclusive, efficient and sustainable mobility for European citizens and visitors, at the lowest costs to society.

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buses and coaches and achieve  
sustainable mobility for all





“At the lowest costs to society”, Ladies and Gentlemen, let us not forget this in times of increasing budgetary constraints and recall it to policy decision-makers, since they are not always aware that the solution might be at their fingertips and within the reach of their severely cut budgets – if they bet on buses and coaches in their policy priorities.

### **And how to achieve this objective, Ladies and Gentlemen?**

Well, changing the mindset and the perception of buses and coaches in society, starting with policy decision-makers is the first step.

The legislation should follow, or in many cases even precede, this change in mindset. And this is a challenging task since it affects all aspects of the bus and coach market and companies' ability to deliver the services their customers demand.

It covers rules and regulations at European level, such as public service obligations, access to profession and market access (with the much needed simplification or even removal of some control documents, such as the journey form for occasional transport), cabotage in international bus/coach regular lines, practicable passenger rights rules, sector-specific driving and rest time rules, VAT, energy taxation, user charges, weights and dimensions of vehicles, to name but a few.

But it also covers national rules and rules determined at local level, such as sustainable urban mobility plans, availability of parking areas, stops and multimodal bus and coach terminals (as part of the trans-European transport networks, TENs) with easy access, including easy access to the terminals of other transport modes, and industry-friendly city traffic rules and low-emission zones.

It covers incentives and sufficient public funding, where necessary, for collective passenger transport services by bus and coach at European, national, regional and local level.

It involves a policy and legislative decoupling of professional commercial transport by bus and coach - indeed, incentivising their use - from the treatment of private cars, as well.

At the same time, it also involves a recognition of the complementarities, and of the public benefits from establishing a level playing field for competition between commercial transport modes and, in particular, between commercial passenger transport by rail, air and road, for the benefit of customers and society as whole.

Doubling the use of bus and coach 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 market, legislative and administrative framework, and public funding that allows collective road passenger transport to thrive;
- ***Doubling public investment in collective road passenger transport services, and in multimodal infrastructures, 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 complement and alternative to the use of their private car; and indeed
- ***Doubling the willingness and readiness of all stakeholders to work together*** – politicians, businesses, partners, the organised civil society – to

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achieve the commendable objective of doubling the use of collective passenger transport, including by bus, coach and taxi.

I thank you for your attention.

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