

The Smart Move Hight Level Group will mainly focus its work on three areas, which are crucial to address in order to effectively double the use of buses and coaches within the next 10-15 years: Intercity and long distance regular lines by bus and coach, Group tourism by coach, and Urban mobility and commuting including taxis.

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// Urban transport, commuting and taxis as part of the public transport chain
Brussels, Belgium

Buses and taxis are the largest commercial passenger transport service providers in both urban and rural areas in Europe. Due to their unparalleled flexibility, they are **the closest complement, competitor, and substitute of the private car**, with 97% of all individual movements of European citizens below 100 kilometres.

As such, buses and taxis together constitute the backbone of the public mobility chain. They **complement and empower other commercial transport modes 7 days a week, 24 hours a day**, and can therefore contribute more than any other commercial passenger transport mode to achieving the extremely ambitious objectives of the EU transport policy.

Only by placing buses and taxis at the heart of the policy debate and by setting a clear policy and business target to double their use in the next 10 years can European, national and city policy-makers at all levels **create a legislative, market and operational environment conducive to encourage people to change their mobility behaviours**. Such a shift would result in a socially inclusive, efficient and sustainable mobility solution for all European citizens and visitors, at the lowest cost for society.

The change in customer behaviour and policy focus can help **unlock the full mobility and customer care potential of the private bus and taxi industry**, while helping Europe catch up with other regions of the world in implementing novel and highly customer-focused mobility concepts and technologies, such as Bus Rapid Transit.

Meeting's outcomes

Read the press release

See the meeting's [presentation.pdf](#) (2.1 MB)

Background paper on [urban_mobility_commuting_taxis_background.pdf](#) (384.9 KB)

Speakers' contributions:

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// Intercity and long distance regular lines by bus and coach

Brussels, Belgium

Intercity bus and coach transport in Europe is a large and growing business. Experience has shown that European countries such as Spain and Norway, which have opened their intercity travel market to private bus and coach businesses, have achieved spectacular results, benefiting both customers and businesses alike, in terms of **higher service quality and steadily increasing ridership**. In Norway, ridership on long distance bus and coach lines in Norway has more than doubled in five years, attracting most of these new passengers from cars, rather than from competing train and air services.

However, Intercity bus and coach transport is still **struggling for recognition by policy decision makers** at EU, national and local level. In some European countries, intercity and long-distance bus and coach transport has long been seen merely as a “support mode” for intercity and long-distance rail transport, thus leading to political, legislative, and infrastructure neglect and underinvestment. This added to the lack of appropriate data have resulted in non-adapted or sometimes restrictive legislation, which prevents buses and coaches from delivering their full potential benefits to society and customers.

An EU approach to mobility and travel as a multimodal chain, in which door-to-door bus, coach and taxi services are key elements is still missing today, despite **private bus and coach travel offering today the optimal policy and customer mobility alternative**, in particular in intercity travel in Europe, where over 97% of all trips are below 100 kilometres - on the condition, however, that business-friendly policies, legislation and infrastructure are provided.

The HLG will seek solutions to remedy this situation where Europe is lagging behind other world regions in innovating for bus and coach transport across all distances, and to ensure that European citizens fully benefit from the mobility gains offered by intercity and long distance bus and coach services. **Bus and coach transport strong potential for green mobility growth can be achieved without massive public subsidies**, henceforth at the lowest cost for the European taxpayer. Given the current political and economic climate, let us hope that an ever increasing number of European governments will soon consider bus and coach travel as their preferred policy alternative intercity to ensure affordable yet safe, green and efficient intercity mobility for all citizens, at the lowest costs for society.

Meeting's outcomes

Read the [press release](#)

See the meeting's [presentation.pdf](#) (1.9 MB)

Background paper on [intercity_bus_and_coach_regular_lines.pdf](#) (251.5 KB)

Speakers' contributions:

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// Group tourism by coach

Brussels, Belgium

Europe is the world's top tourist destination, with more than 40% of all global tourist arrivals, both amongst Europeans and visitors from other continents. These figures are expected to grow significantly in the future.

Yet, within these 370 millions tourist trips in Europe, the share of those made by coach is still marginal. **The potential of this safe, green and comfortable door-to-door way to travel and visit Europe's numerous places of interests is largely underexploited.** This is due to the lack of recognition of group tourism by coach and its contribution to European economy, mobility and indeed tourism by policy decision makers at all levels - European, national and local.

This under utilization has led to a situation where coaches are not only underperforming in terms of customers' use and contribution to mobility and welfare, but they are also the victim of political negligence and often improper, non-adapted and even restrictive legislation.

And yet, used effectively, with an appropriate and business-friendly legal and administrative framework, coaches offer an optimal solution for solving a range of current mobility problems including climate change, safety, connectivity, social inclusion and congestion. At the same time **coaches can bring additional income and boost the local economy and tourism industry.** A coach tourist spends on average 40% more than other tourists in the places (s)he is visiting.

Doubling the number of group tourists by coach is **not a utopia if the right policies are implemented.** Thanks to its long term business-friendly and customer-oriented policy, Southport, England's classic resort, the winner of the IRU City Trophy competition 2011, succeeded to double the number of visiting tourist coaches (from 2883 to 5252) between 2000 and 2010.