



Ministers of Transport of EU Member States

Brussels, 22 June 2009
Ref: EDF-009-046/CB/ip
ANEC-ML-2009-0172

Re: Regulation on passengers' rights in bus and coach transport

Honourable Minister,

In view of the next discussions under the current and the forthcoming Presidencies and on the eve of the Council Working Group on Land Transport of 25 June European associations and networks representing millions of citizens from a broad range of economic and societal backgrounds – including the individual consumer, those with families and those facing special challenges due to disability or age - have united to promote the importance of a coherent European, national, regional and local transport system able to serve the needs of all passengers.

AGE, ANEC, BEUC, EEB and EDF would like to express their members' deep concerns at the proposals to narrow the scope of the *bus and coach passenger rights regulation* now under discussion.

Universal access to transport for all people - irrespective of their abilities, age, and personal or economic circumstances – should be a fundamental right in a modern society. It needs to be recognised as a means to ensure the inclusion of all in employment and in educational, social or cultural activities. A universal transport system can accordingly help sustainable development and contribute towards meeting the challenge of climate change.

Bearing these points in mind, we are convinced that the European Commission proposal offers a real opportunity to ensure universal access for all passengers, including those with disabilities, and reduced mobility, as well as elderly persons, enabling them to enjoy the right to free movement as enshrined in the EU Treaties.



In addition to their local dimension, urban and regional transport is also an essential part of any cross-border journey. Consumers do not just move from an international station in one country to an international station in another. Access to transport is a continuum as people need to be able to leave their homes, often served only by local transport and arrive at their final destinations, often by local transport, particularly in cross-border areas.

In addition, including urban and domestic transport in the scope of the regulation will not only make a crucial and very positive difference for passengers, but it will also contribute to a reduced impact of mobility on the environment and strengthen the public transport sector. Studies conducted in cities as diverse as London and Grenoble show not only that the number of passengers with disabilities and reduced mobility has significantly increased since the introduction of low-floored buses into the urban transport system, but the satisfaction and use of all passengers has improved as a consequence¹.

May we also remind you that on 23 April, the European Parliament voted to support the rights of passengers travelling by buses and coaches at local level and proposed further improvements through introducing a reference to standards in order to facilitate implementation of the Regulation.

We hope and believe that your decision will send a powerful message to European citizens during the future discussions starting on 25 June, by deciding to improve their everyday lives when travelling locally as well as more occasionally across borders. We urge you to maintain local and domestic transport within the scope of the Bus and Coach Passenger Rights Regulation.

¹ http://www.eltis.org/study_sheet.phtml?study_id=101&lang1=en; Éléments de fréquentation du réseau TAG par les PMR par SEMITAG

Accessible Bus services – UK Demonstrations by Jan O York & Richard J. Balcombe, Transport Research laboratory, UK Government

Department for Transport Annual Report 2005, <http://www.dft.gov.uk/about/publications/apr/ar2005/annualreport2005?page=8>



Not to invest in passenger rights will place an economic burden on citizens who will need to rely increasingly on the use of private transport. It would also lose the chance to increase employment in the transport sector and undermine efforts to reduce pollution caused by the transport sector, for the benefit of the environment and the health of individuals.

We are ready to discuss more fully, both with your ministries and with the transport industry, how to address specific concerns in the proposal. We are certain a solution can be found in the interests of passengers, citizens, industry and government.

Yours sincerely,

Anne Sophie Parent, AGE Director

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Stephen Russell, ANEC Secretary General

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S Russell'.

Monique Goyens, BEUC Director General

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John Hontelez, EEB Secretary-General

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Carlotta Besozzi, EDF Director

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AGE - the European Older People's Platform is a European network of organisations of people aged 50+ and directly represents over 25 million older people in Europe. AGE aims to voice and promote the interests of the 150 million inhabitants aged 50+ in the European Union and to raise awareness of the issues that concern them most.

ANEC is the European consumer voice in standardisation, representing and defending consumer interests in the development of technical standards, in the application of certification schemes to standards, and in the creation or revision of legislation on products and services. ANEC brings together national consumer organisations from the EU Member States and EFTA countries in order to define European positions on matters affecting consumer protection and welfare. ANEC receives funding from the European Commission's DG SANCO and the EFTA Secretariat. In the EU context, consumers ensure that the public interest is represented in the standardisation work that complements European legislation and broader public policy initiative

BEUC – Bureau Européen des Unions des Consommateurs founded in 1960 is composed of independent and representative national consumer organisations from some thirty European countries (EU, EEA and applicant countries). BEUC acts as a sort of “embassy” for these organisations in Brussels and our main task is to represent our members and defend the interests of all Europe's consumers.

EEB is a federation of over 150 environmental citizen' organizations based in most EU Member States, candidate countries and a few neighbouring countries.
EEB's aim is to protect and improve Europe's environment and enable its citizens to play a part in achieving that goal, by promoting environmental policy integration and sustainable policies, particularly at EU level.

EDF is the European umbrella organisation of persons with disabilities and families, gathering national platforms in all EU member States as well as European federations representing a variety of groups and interests ranging from physical to sensory, to intellectual, and psychosocial disabilities as well as chronic illnesses. EDF is striving to promote human rights and equal opportunities for 50 million persons with disabilities in Europe in all policies and legislations that have an impact on them.