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EU Smart Move High Level Group recommends doubling use of buses, coaches & taxis to save lives and cut emissions

EU public-private Smart Move High Level Group provides recommendations on “doubling the use of collective road passenger transport” to save lives and cut carbon emissions, for the European Commission to adopt as a formal EU policy objective to be reached by 2025.

Brussels – The [EU public-private Smart Move High Level Group (HLG)](http://www.busandcoach.travel/en/smart_policies/eu_public-private_smart_move_high_level_group/smart_move_eu_high_level_group.htm) presented recommendations on doubling the use of buses, coaches and taxis to save lives and cut carbon emissions, to European Commission Vice President Siim Kallas, at a concluding public debate today at the European Parliament and called on the EC to implement these proposals as a formal EU policy objective to be reached by 2025.

The HLG calculated the [benefits of doubling the use of bus and coach services](http://www.busandcoach.travel/download/factsheets/pk_factsheet_potential_benefits_2013_web.pdf): this alone could save 1500 lives per year, as well as considerably reducing injuries. HLG calculations also show a reduction of CO2 emissions of between 40 and 50 million tonnes per year and a reduction of airborne pollutants; a significant reduction of congestion in cities resulting from an expected 10-12% fall in car traffic; and the creation of up to 3 million new sustainable and green EU jobs.

The HLG proposed [16 short, medium and long-term measures](http://www.iru.org/cms-filesystem-action/mix-publications/smrecom.E.pdf) to achieve these objectives, including the creation of a permanent EU Smart Move Citizens Mobility Forum, involving multiple public and private stakeholders, to notably ensure the appropriate follow-up and implementation of these recommendations and propose future actions to be taken.

Commenting on the HLG’s proposals, IRU Vice President, Yves Mannaerts, said “This is an opportunity European decision-makers cannot miss. All public and private mobility stakeholders’ representatives have agreed upon ambitious yet realistic objectives. This is the only way to develop a sustainable and pro-active public, financial, fiscal, legislative, market and operational environment, conducive to the emergence of more and better services, thereby encouraging a shift in travellers’ behaviour across the EU”.

Vice-President of the European Commission Siim Kallas said “Buses and coaches belong to the most safe, economically efficient and environmentally friendly modes of transport. The High Level Group has been an excellent initiative that brought around the table all the main stakeholders of the sector for a constructive dialogue aiming to address the main issues of passenger mobility by road. The Commission will maintain an active role in the follow-up initiatives in order to maintain the momentum of such an important initiative.”

Members of the European Parliament also highlighted the importance of these recommendations, including Mathieu Grosch (EPP) rapporteur for the 2011 EC Transport White Paper, who said, “Buses, coaches and taxis can play an important role in terms of efficient co-modality, particularly in promoting sustainable transport and reducing congestion in cities. These HLG recommendations will be a useful tool to give answers to the question of how these aims can be reached”.

Isabelle Durant MEP (Green) said “The Public-Private Smart Move High Level Group was a prime experiment in participatory policy-design, whose concept, process and overall objective I could only support.  I am delighted to see its recommendations publicly debated and conveyed to Vice-President of the European Commission, Siim Kallas, and look forward to discussing the resulting new initiatives and legislative proposals in the European Parliament.”

Gesine Meißne MEP (ALDE) said “We have to recognise that group tourism by coach is an important transport sector in Europe, and not only for elderly people who cannot travel on their own any more. Therefore we should support this sector and set the right framework. For some issues, such as suitable drop-off points at tourist attractions, solutions need to be found at a very local level. But there are things which could be done at European level as well, such as adapting rest and driving times to the operational needs of bus drivers.”

Ines Ayala Sender (S&D) said ” “In my country buses and coaches have always been the most popular way of travelling as they represent an affordable and competitive means of transport with a remarkable offer of choice and services. It links main cities and regions and it is key to providing the only public mobility solution for people living in remote areas. Spain is a relatively large country with a very particular and difficult geography. Coaches and regular bus services play an important role in increasing territorial and social cohesion. They manage to keep communities of sparsely populated areas linked with the main cities as well as they bring schools and universities closer to students; and last, but not least they ensure a winning solution for our country as one of the main touristic destinations in the EU. Furthermore, Spain has also developed an extensive network of intercity connections competing and being complementary with other modes of transport, not only on price, but also on comfort and quality services".

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See:

* [EU public-private Smart Move High Level Group](http://www.busandcoach.travel/en/smart_policies/eu_public-private_smart_move_high_level_group/smart_move_eu_high_level_group.htm)
* HLG Final Recommendations (in [EN](http://www.iru.org/cms-filesystem-action/mix-publications/smrecom.E.pdf), [DE](http://www.iru.org/cms-filesystem-action/mix-publications/smrecom.D.pdf), [FR](http://www.iru.org/cms-filesystem-action/mix-publications/smrecom.F.pdf))
* HLG [Background Paper](http://www.iru.org/en_bookshop_item?id=358)
  1. The EU public-private Smart Move High Level Group (HLG) was launched on 24 May 2012, to ensure a follow-up of the European Commission 2011 Transport White Paper and contribute to the EU 2020 Growth Agenda. It is composed of Members of the European Parliament, representatives of other European institutions, representatives of the private bus, coach and taxi industry, customer representatives and representatives of European cities.
  2. Members of the High Level Group include: The European Commission; Members of the European Parliament Mathieu Grosch (EPP), Isabelle Durant (Green), Gesine Meißne (ALDE), Ines Ayala Sender (S&D); Committee of the Regions; European Economic and Social Committee; IRU; FBAA; FNTV; Svenska Bussbranschens Riksförbund; Koninklijk Nederlands Vervoer; Eurolines; European Passenger Transport Operators; European Passenger Federation; European Disability Forum; POLIS.

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