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To
Press

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Brussels / Strasbourg 23 April 2009 Parliament votes on impractical framework for passenger rights

At the end of its Parliamentary term and in election time the European Parliament has adopted the proposals on bus and coach passenger rights in first reading and introduced an unfeasible and impractical framework for passenger rights.

While EPTO welcomes initiatives to improve the attractiveness of bus and coach services, and recognise the value of creating comparable regimes for passengers throughout the travel chain, EPTO has strong reservations about the adopted proposal.

Commenting on the outcome the president of EPTO Michel Quidort said ' We feel disappointed about the outcome as the Commission's proposals were written with long-distance coach services in mind; local and regional bus services have very different characteristics. In particular, we believe that the proposal has not considered the specific needs of local and regional public transport.'

Secretary General Jan Möllmann adds 'Most worrying is that some of the Commission's proposals are impractical for bus services – especially as they have not been considered in the EC's Impact Assessment. Especially the inclusion of buses in the proposed Regulation (but not other local transport modes) is illogical' .

New liabilities for matters that are outside the control of operators would make it difficult to secure appropriate insurance. Without insurance, services to the public could not continue.

The very good safety record of buses and coaches has shown in the past that action is not necessary to increase the financial and legal burden on bus operators and their passengers. Urban transport networks often offer travel options involving different modes (including regular bus, metro and light rail services).

EPTO believes that local transport services require a Regulation of this nature and are optimistic that the Council and the member states will help to develop a wise, realistic and feasible solution.

EPTO is the association of European Passenger Transport Operators and represents one of the leading transport services organisations in Europe, whose members are the ten largest public transport companies in Europe: Arriva, First Group, Grupo Barraqueiro, Go-Ahead, Keolis, National Express, Stagecoach, Transdev, Transdev-Connexion and Veolia Transport. Members operate a fleet of nearly 75.000 vehicles, employ nearly 230,000 people and carry 10.6 billion passengers every year.