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Boosting European coach tourism & travel through more business-friendly rules

The 6th European Bus and Coach Forum will focus on best practices in policy-making to offer optimal solutions to businesses, customers and politicians.

Kortrijk, Belgium – The 6th European Bus and Coach Forum, jointly organised by [ECTAA](#), [ETOA](#), [FBAA](#) and [IRU](#) on 16 October 2009, will identify best and worst practices in travel and coach-travel legislation. The Forum will also focus on the increasingly restrictive low-emission zones in European cities, as well as on the current and upcoming EU legislation on the rights of passengers.

The Forum will take place during the largest global bus and coach exhibition, [Busworld Kortrijk](#), to be held from 16 to 21 October 2008 in Kortrijk, Belgium. Some 200 business leaders from around the world will join decision makers and representatives from local, national and international institutions to exchange experience and best practices.

Graham Smith, CEO of Heyfordian Travel (UK) and Vice President of the IRU, said, "In recent years, the bus and coach industry has been increasingly suffering from a 'one-size-fits-all' approach in policy making. In this debate, we want to show to our partners, politicians and customers that in most cases, buses and coaches are the solution, rather than the problem, including in providing optimal mobility solutions for cities and quality services to our customers – if rules and regulations are adapted to the specificity of our sector."

Tom Jenkins, Executive Director of ETOA, commented: "What more does a thinking client want? A coach has a driver, space to accommodate luggage and a commentary to spark the imagination. Its scope is limitless, bound only by the chains of over-regulation. Rules regarding access to European cities and passenger rights need to be practicable. In all cases of regulatory change, proper consultation with industry stakeholders is vital, to ensure that this sector can continue to offer the most economically and environmentally-sound mode of transport."

Roman Skrabánek, President of ACCKA and treasurer of ECTAA, added, "The bus and coach industry will face many challenges in the near future that can turn into opportunities for the travel industry and the travelling public. However, they can also become threats, if overregulation stifles the operations of undertakings, especially those of small and medium-sized companies. Excessive and unnecessary constraints will result in fewer and more costly services, to the detriment of travelers."

Yves Mannaerts, Director of FBAA, concluded, "Our companies are not able to make the most of the many advantages in terms of the level of sustainability, mobility and environmental protection that coaches offer to the tourism sector. This is due to the fact that many politicians at European and local levels of the decision-making process completely disregard the specificity, as well as the economic and social importance of

our sector. Our message is clear: this must stop immediately. The survival of the tourism sector, thus the European economy, depends on it.”

On the eve of the key decisions to be made by the European Parliament and the Transport Council with regards to the 12-day derogation and passenger rights, this initiative from the European travel and coach industries to launch a core debate on business-friendly legislation and rules, within the framework of the 6th European Bus and Coach Forum, should provide much needed insights and contribute to avoiding such misguided policies in the future.

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Click [here](#) to see the preliminary programme

See the highlights of the [5th European Bus and Coach Forum](#) in 2007

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