



EACT Position Paper on Coach Tourism & Tourism Economy

The European Alliance for Coach Tourism (**EACT**) represents the interests of Coach Tour operators in Germany, France, Italy, Ireland, Hungary, Belgium, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

The coach tourism industry across the EU directly employs millions of citizens in the tourism sector through, coach drivers, tour guides, and sales advisors to administrative and engineering employees. All of these jobs are solely dependent on the success of the coach tourism sector which carries millions of customers every year contributing € billions in revenue for the tourism sector within the EU area.

Additionally further jobs in hotels, restaurants, leisure and tourist attractions are also dependent on the thousands of coach tours and day trips which operate across the EU. Without the coach tourism business many of these businesses would cease to exist bringing additional unemployment to many areas of the EU where alternative jobs are difficult to find. This leads to social deprivation and additional demands upon member states to provide benefits to areas already struggling to cope and develop following the economic crisis of the past decade.

As any business knows attracting coach tours is a vital part of any attraction or hotels business plan. Coach Tour passengers in general tend to be either the over 55's or student and young people groups. In the cases of the former they tend to be financially sound, with disposable income which they are seeking to spend and the latter group tend to be regular customers, which assists in planning company cash flows.

Economic Benefits of the Coach

The coach enables a uniquely broad customer base to access local businesses and services whilst presenting a positive modern solution to issues such as congestion, emissions and climate change.

Tourism by coach across Europe is a large contributor to the economies of member states as it promotes the opportunity for all citizens to participate and experience the rich cultural heritage which Europe has to offer and also enables them to travel when they would otherwise find it difficult to access other forms of public transport.

Tourism by coach is not just about carrying senior citizens, it is carrying all members of society including,

- Corporate travellers
- School children
- Sports Teams
- Inbound European Tourists
- Senior Citizens

Overall across the EU there are:-

Number of coach companies 65.000

Number of jobs depending directly on the coach 1.55 million

Number of jobs depending directly and indirectly on the coach 7.5 million

Number of coach drivers 1.1 Million

Source: European Commission data, Study of passenger transport by coach, June 2009.

Benefits of the coach:-

Sustains Employment in

- Tourist Attractions
- Hotels
- Restaurants
- Theatres
- Entertainment attractions
- Cruise Ferries

On average each coach passenger on an organised holiday coach trip spends £84 per day * compared to the average holiday expenditure of £63 per day.

On day trips by coach the average spend per passenger is £42.55p which is 27% higher than the normal expenditure on a day trip.

The UK alone carried by coach in 2013 over 1.9 million passengers who spent in excess of £752m in other EU members states.

In the UK in 2013 there were 3 million domestic holidays involving the use of the coach which contributed directly £835 million to the UK economy.

In Germany in 2014 there were 5.4 million domestic coach holidays. The average expenditure was €716 per person, per holiday, contributing €3.8 billion directly to the German economy.

Factoring the UK experience into the wider EU economy which is smaller than the tourism numbers for France, Spain, Italy and Germany indicates that tourism coach is a multi- billion € industry and one which grow quickly if nurtured correctly by EU Governments and their Tourism Policies.

Source: Visit England statistics 2012 and RDA review of the German coach tourism market 2015.

Employees

The recent EU study and conference on education and skills gaps within the tourism sector completely missed the role played by coaches in bringing tourists to the attractions. The conference highlighted as a success the growth in the numbers of tourists visiting the EU from Asia and China. The numbers of tourists expected from these areas is expected to grow yet the point has been missed that without investment in coach tourism operators staff, then many of these tourists will be left without the opportunity to venture very far beyond the immediate confines of their EU arrival airport.

There has been very little investment in attracting new coach drivers to the industry. The reliance has been on continuing with an ever increasing aging workforce. Whilst this position will enable existing levels of business to be maintained, it is not investing for the future. To do so will require the job of a tourism coach driver or tourist guide to be promoted and appreciated as a skilled and worthwhile job to young people and paid accordingly. It is appreciated that promoting employment in the coach tourism industry is the primary responsibility of the employers in the sector themselves.

Barriers to Coach Tourism

Currently across the EU there are a number of artificial barriers which limit the expansion of tourism by coach.

1 Access to cities



Coaches are one of the greenest forms of transport and their contribution of harmful emissions is extremely small when compared to private cars. It is useful to remember that one coach carries on average 45 to 55 passengers the equivalent of 30 private cars. Coaches can be greener still further through the use of alternative fuels such as Gas to Liquid (**GTL**) which reduces CO₂ by 80 to 100% and NO_x by 70 – 90% depending upon Euro engine type.

In spite of this environmental benefit, Coaches still find themselves restricted from central city tourist areas, (particularly in Italy) unable to use “bus only lanes”, very few dedicated coach parks close to tourist attractions, and a lack of dropping off/picking up locations outside hotels.

The EU should be encouraging member states, to use tourism by coach as part of the solution for increasing tourism within the EU. Removing access charges to cities for the most environmentally friendly coaches should be a priority. Followed by, developing a network of secure and accessible parking areas for coaches.

2 Mobility Impaired Passengers

Whilst great investment has taken place in enabling those with mobility impairments to be able to use local bus services, virtually nothing has been done to recognise that these very same people like to go on holiday and enjoy their leisure time as do able-bodied people.

Very few coaches currently on the market are capable of carrying wheelchair users. The numbers are steadily increasing particularly in Sweden, UK and Germany. Consequently virtually no facilities exist for coaches that have been built to carry wheelchair passengers to load and unload safely at tourist attractions or coach parks across the EU.

In reality facilities for disabled citizens should be a major part of EU tourism policy yet so far it has not been an important part of policy with very little facilities actually in existence.

Stephen Smith

Chairman European Alliance for Coach Tourism

14th December 2015