



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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Dear Chair,

The Commission would like to thank the Houses of the Oireachtas for their reasoned opinion on the proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Regulation (EC) No 1073/2009 on common rules for access to the international market for coach and bus services {COM(2017) 647 final}.

This proposal forms part of a broader package of ambitious measures designed to lead the fight against climate change, make European industry stronger and more competitive, and improve the quality of life and choice of citizens for their daily mobility.

The functioning of the internal road passenger transport market is hampered by obstacles in national markets hindering the development of inter-urban coach and bus services and there is a low share of sustainable passenger transport modes. This proposal would improve the mobility of citizens over longer distances and increase the use of sustainable transport modes.

The Commission takes seriously the assessment of the Houses of the Oireachtas as regards the incompatibility of the proposal with the principle of subsidiarity.

However, the Commission does not share the view that the choice of instrument in this proposal is problematic. For a policy intervention in the internal market, and more importantly in the field of international road transport sector, it is more convenient to ensure uniform implementation and enforcement of Union law across all Member States. In order to achieve those objectives, regulations are the most commonly used instrument as they provide clarity and, being directly applicable in all Member States, they do not need to be transposed into national law.

*Mr Fergus O'DOWD, T.D.
Chairman Joint Committee
Transport, Tourism and Sport
Houses of the Oireachtas
Kildare Street
IRL-DUBLIN2*

*cc. Mr Sean Ó FEARGHAÍL T.D.
President of President of Dáil Eireann
Houses of the Oireachtas
Leinster House
Kildare Street
IRL-DUBLIN2*

*Senator Denis O'DONOVAN
President of the Seanad Eireann
Houses of the Oireachtas
Leinster House
Kildare Street
IRL-DUBLIN2*

The Commission believes that the proposal does not exceed what is necessary to solve the problems that were identified during the evaluation of the existing policy framework and meet the objectives of the initiative. The scope of the current Regulation on common rules for access to the international market for coach and bus services includes the international carriage of passengers by coach and bus within the territory of the European Union as well as the conditions under which non-resident carriers may operate national transport services within a Member State. The proposal only contains some targeted amendments to this Regulation which would help to improve the existing framework in which the road passenger transport sector in the European Union operates. Furthermore, it would not create any additional regulatory requirements which would not be proportionate to the identified problems.

The Commission would like to reassure the Houses of the Oireachtas that the proposal is based on a thorough impact assessment in line with the Better Regulation agenda. As part of the impact assessment a range of regulatory and non-regulatory measures were rigorously considered. The Commission also took into account the experience gained from the evaluation of the existing policy framework. The Commission believes that the selected policy intervention matches the size and nature of the identified problems and its European dimension in particular.

The Houses of the Oireachtas' reasoned opinion has been made available to the Commission's representatives in the ongoing negotiations with the co-legislators and will inform these discussions.

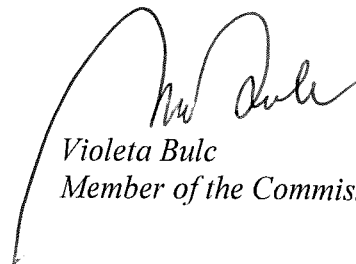
The points made above are based on the initial proposal presented by the Commission which is currently in the legislative process involving both the European Parliament and the Council.

The Commission hopes that the clarifications provided in this reply address the issues raised by the Houses of the Oireachtas and looks forward to continuing the political dialogue in the future.

Yours faithfully,



*Frans Timmermans
First Vice-President*



*Violeta Bulc
Member of the Commission*