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COM(2016) 619 final

**REPORT FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND  
THE COUNCIL**

**Report on the application of Regulation (EU) No 181/2011 concerning the rights of  
passengers in bus and coach transport and amending Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. Background**

Regulation (EU) No 181/2011<sup>1</sup> ('the Regulation') lays down a series of rights for passengers who travel by bus and coach in the European Union. It became applicable on 1 March 2013.

The Commission is submitting this report under Article 32 of the Regulation, which requires it to report to the European Parliament and the Council on the operation and effects of the Regulation and, if necessary, to make proposals for legislation to implement the provisions of the Regulation in more detail or to amend it.

The report is based on: data on the implementation and application of the Regulation gathered directly by the Commission; the national authorities' reports on the enforcement of the Regulation<sup>2</sup>; consultations conducted among bodies representing passengers and the industry at European level<sup>3</sup>; and the Comprehensive Study on Passenger Transport by Coach in Europe, an external study carried out for the Commission in 2015 and 2016<sup>4</sup>.

### **1.2. Importance and features of the EU bus and coach transport sector**

Buses and coaches are a flexible transport mode and, unlike trains or aircraft, are generally able to pick up and set down passengers anywhere with a minimal provision of fixed infrastructure.

In passenger-kilometre terms, bus and coach transport holds a 9.2 % share of all land passenger transport in the EU and is the most important means of land passenger transport after private cars (81.7 %)<sup>5</sup>. The liberalisation of the international coach market more than a decade ago<sup>6</sup> and the recent liberalisation of the domestic coach markets in several Member States (including Germany and France<sup>7</sup>) has created steady growth in the coach sector.

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EU) No 181/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 February 2011 concerning the rights of passengers in bus and coach transport and amending Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 (OJ L 55, 28.2.2011, p. 1).

<sup>2</sup> National authorities designated by the Member States to enforce the Regulation were required to publish a report by 1 June 2015 on their enforcement of the Regulation over the previous two calendar years. Most authorities published their reports on their homepages.

<sup>3</sup> The Commission invited organisations representing passengers (including those with disabilities), carriers and terminal operators at EU level to send observations on the operation of the Regulation in writing and to attend a meeting held in Brussels on 1 March 2016. The following organisations responded to the invitation to send contributions: the Association of Pan-European Coach Terminals (APC), the European Alliance for Coach Tourism (ECTA), the European Disability Forum (EDF), the European Passengers' Federation (EPF), the European Passenger Transport Operators (EPTO), the International Road Transport Union (IRU) and the International Association of Public Transport (UITP). In addition, spontaneous contributions were received from a German passenger organisation, ProRail and a French coach company, Ouibus.

<sup>4</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/transport/modes/road/studies/doc/2016-04-passenger-transport-by-coach-in-europe.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> EU Transport in Figures — Statistical Pocketbook 2015.

<sup>6</sup> COM(2008) 817 final.

<sup>7</sup> Following the liberalisation of the German market in 2013, the number of authorised long-distance regular coach services rose from 86 to 277 between December 2012 and January 2015. These services transported

Bus and coach transport is characterised by a number of distinctive features, which affect both operators and passengers.

Unlike aviation and rail transport, the bus and coach sectors consist largely of small and medium-sized undertakings and buses and coaches share the road infrastructure with other actors. These specific features are taken into account in certain provisions included in the Regulation<sup>8</sup>.

Surveys carried out in several Member States at national level<sup>9</sup> show that passengers using this mode of transport tend to be vulnerable, as they are often on low incomes (a very high percentage of bus and coach users are students or elderly people with small pensions) or live in geographically isolated areas, where bus and coach is the only available mode of public transport. Passengers often do not hold a driving licence or do not own a car, and bus and coach services are therefore essential for them to be able to go to work or school, to visit family and friends or to enjoy leisure and tourism. Poor access to bus and coach transport can severely impede their integration into society.

## **2. THE SCOPE AND CONTENT OF THE REGULATION**

The EU adopted legislation on passenger rights for all modes of transport (aviation, rail, waterborne and bus/coach transport) in order to give members of the public a guaranteed minimum level of protection when they travel in Europe, and thus to facilitate their mobility and social integration. The existence of a common set of passenger rights guaranteed by law across the four modes (with provisions reflecting the specific features of each mode of transport) also helps to create a level playing-field for operators within and across the modes.

### *Scope*

The Regulation applies, in general, to ‘regular services’ (services provided at specified intervals along specified routes, where passengers are picked up and set down at predetermined stopping points) for non-specified categories of passengers, where the boarding or alighting point of the passengers is situated in the territory of a Member State<sup>10</sup>.

### *Content*

Passengers travelling on any type of regular service, irrespective of the scheduled distance of the service, benefit from the following core rights:

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between 17 and 19 million passengers in 2014. The French domestic market was liberalised in August 2015. In the first 6 months following the change in regulation, long-distance coaches transported 1.5 million passengers between 168 destinations (in the whole of 2013, only 110 000 passengers travelled by long-distance domestic coaches, and there were only 68 destinations on offer). Source: Comprehensive Study on Passenger Transport by Coach in Europe (2016).

<sup>8</sup> e.g. unlike other transport modes, long delays or the cancellation of a journey at arrival does not trigger compensation.

<sup>9</sup> The 2013 National Travel Survey in the UK, the 2012 NTA National Household Travel Survey in Ireland, and a survey conducted by IGES consultancy in Germany in 2013.

<sup>10</sup> In addition, a limited number of provisions (the most important being on the compensation and assistance that carriers are required to provide in case of death, injury, loss or damage caused by road accidents) also apply to ‘occasional services’, where the group of passengers is constituted on the initiative of the customer or the carrier.

- 1) non-discriminatory transport conditions (notably non-discriminatory tariffs);
- 2) access to transport for people with disabilities or reduced mobility at no additional cost (carriers can only refuse to transport passengers with disabilities if carrying them is physically impossible given the design of the vehicle, the bus stop or the terminal infrastructure, or if doing so would breach health and safety requirements);
- 3) minimum rules on the travel information provided to all passengers before and during their journey including information on their rights;
- 4) a complaint handling mechanism that carriers must make available to all passengers; and
- 5) independent national enforcement bodies in each Member State, which have the mandate to enforce the Regulation and, where appropriate, to impose penalties.

Passengers also benefit from the following additional rights when travelling on regular services where the scheduled distance of the service is 250 km or more:

- 6) provision of tickets (electronic or paper) or any other documents giving entitlement to transport;
- 7) compensation and assistance in the case of death, injury or loss or damage to luggage caused by an accident;
- 8) information if the service is cancelled or delayed on departure;
- 9) right to reimbursement of the full ticket price or rerouting in the case of a cancellation or a long delay at departure;
- 10) adequate assistance in the case of a cancellation or a long delay (only applicable when the scheduled duration of the journey is more than 3 hours);
- 11) compensation amounting to 50 % of the ticket price if the carrier fails to offer the passenger the choice between reimbursement of the ticket price and rerouting when there has been a cancellation or long delay; and
- 12) specific assistance at no additional cost for people with disabilities or reduced mobility both at bus terminals and on board.

#### *Exemptions from the scope of the Regulation<sup>11</sup>*

Member States may grant exemptions from the non-core rights to regular services that are purely domestic for a period of up to four years (ending on 28 February 2017 at the latest), which may be renewed once. The basis for such exemptions must be transparent and non-discriminatory. A total of 12 Member States (Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Greece, Hungary, Latvia, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and the United Kingdom) are currently applying exemptions of this type.

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<sup>11</sup> <http://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/passengers/road/doc/exemptions-from-bus-coach-passengers-rights-and-obligations.pdf>

Member States may also grant exemptions from the application of the entire Regulation to regular services where a significant part of the service (including at least one scheduled stop) is operated outside the EU. These exemptions which must also be awarded on a transparent and non-discriminatory basis, will expire by 28 February 2017 at the latest and may be renewed once. A total of 13 Member States (Austria, Croatia, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Latvia, the Netherlands, Slovakia, Slovenia and the United Kingdom) are currently applying exemptions of this type.

#### *Other EU legislation applicable to bus and coach passengers*

Passengers who travel by bus and coach as part of a package trip enjoy additional rights under Directive (EU) No 2015/2302<sup>12</sup>.

Regulation (EC) No 661/2009<sup>13</sup> stipulates the accessibility requirements that all new buses and coaches shall fulfil in order to authorize their sale, registration or putting into service within the EU.

A significant part of coach transport occurs in an intra-community context: passengers are either travelling on cross-border services, or on domestic services outside their own Member State. In order to protect the interests of such passengers, Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004<sup>14</sup> provides an appropriate framework within which national enforcement bodies can cooperate with each other and defend the collective interest of consumers in a cross-border context.

### **3. MEMBER STATES' APPLICATION OF THE REGULATION**

The Regulation requires Member States to designate national enforcement bodies (NEBs), which are responsible for enforcing the Regulation and laying down effective, proportionate and dissuasive penalties in their national law, in order to sanction operators that breach the Regulation. Member States are also required to designate bus and coach terminals where passengers with disabilities or reduced mobility may receive appropriate assistance.

#### *The designation of NEBs<sup>15</sup>*

Most Member States have designated NEBs that were previously responsible for passenger rights in other transport modes. The NEBs are either transport authorities or consumer protection authorities. Some Member States designated several NEBs: a consumer protection authority is often responsible for handling complaints while a transport authority carries out

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<sup>12</sup> Directive (EU) No 2015/2302 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 25 November 2015 on package travel and linked travel arrangements, amending Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 and Directive 2011/83/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council and repealing Council Directive 90/314/EEC (OJ L 326, 11.12.2015, p. 1). This Directive has to be transposed within the national laws of Member States by 1 January 2018. Until that date, Directive 90/314/EEC is applicable.

<sup>13</sup> Regulation (EC) No 661/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 13 July 2009 concerning type-approval requirements for the general safety of motor vehicles, their trailers and systems, components and separate technical units intended therefor (OJ L 200, 31.7.2009, p. 1).

<sup>14</sup> Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 27 October 2004 on cooperation between national authorities responsible for the enforcement of consumer protection laws (OJ L 364, 9.12.2004, p. 1).

<sup>15</sup> For a list of NEBs responsible for enforcement of the Regulation, see:

[http://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/passengers/road/doc/2011\\_0181\\_national\\_enforcement\\_bodies.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/passengers/road/doc/2011_0181_national_enforcement_bodies.pdf)

inspections, imposes sanctions and monitors the accessibility of vehicles and terminals for passengers with disabilities. Most Member States designated NEBs at national level only, but there are a small number of Member States where regional authorities also play an important role in enforcing the Regulation.

### ***Complaint handling***

Passengers may submit complaints about alleged infringements of the Regulation to the carrier (the Regulation obliges them to have in place a complaint handling mechanism) or to the NEB.

The Regulation does not stipulate a chronological order in which complaints must be lodged, but it does allow Member States to require that passengers submit their complaint to the carrier first, with the NEB only acting as an appeal body if the passenger is not satisfied with the answer. In total, 20 Member States have chosen this option. It has the advantage that NEBs can process complaints more efficiently and rapidly, as they will have access to the correspondence between the complainant and the carrier from the outset, and will thus have a more comprehensive overview of the case from both parties' points of view.

There are no publicly available figures on the number of complaints submitted by passengers to carriers between 2013 and 2015. Although such data would be useful for assessing the operation of the Regulation, carriers are not obliged to collect data on complaints or to report to the NEBs.

It is, however, known that the NEBs have handled very few complaints (see table below). There are various reasons for this: i) the Regulation is relatively recent and many passengers may not be fully aware of their rights; ii) in most Member States, passengers must first submit their complaints to the carrier, and these companies appear to settle most complaints satisfactorily, meaning that complaints do not reach the NEBs; and iii) in some Member States, only tribunals can impose a binding decision on operators, and the slow and costly litigation process discourages passengers from defending their rights.

### ***Sanctions***

Most Member States' national legislation provide for a penalty system based solely on fines, but some NEBs can also withdraw an operator's licence if it deliberately and systematically breaches the Regulation.

NEBs have imposed very few sanctions in the first two years since the Regulation became applicable (see table below). Most have found that operators are keen to comply and resolve complaints before it becomes necessary to impose a sanction.

**Table — Number of complaints handled and sanctions imposed by NEBs<sup>16</sup>**

<b>Member State</b>	<b>Number of complaints handled</b>	<b>Number of sanctions imposed</b>
Austria	N/A	N/A
Belgium	1	0
Bulgaria	9	0
Croatia	0	0
Cyprus	0	0
Czech Republic	132	9
Denmark	0	0
Estonia	0	0
Finland	12	0
France	21	0
Germany	192	0
Greece	N/A	N/A
Hungary	24	16
Ireland	4	0
Italy	N/A	N/A
Latvia	0	0
Lithuania	0	0
Luxembourg	N/A	N/A
Malta	0	0
Netherlands	N/A	N/A
Poland	N/A	N/A
Portugal	N/A	N/A
Romania	0	0
Slovakia	0	0
Slovenia	0	0
Spain	1194	54
Sweden	2	0
United Kingdom	4	0

<sup>16</sup> The figures are taken from the NEBs' activity reports and show the situation for the period from 1 March 2013 to 1 January 2015. Where no figures are available (N/A), this indicates that there was no operational NEB in that Member State during the reporting period, that there was no penalty system in place to sanction operators that breached the Regulation, or that the NEB did not publish its activity report.

Not all NEB reports indicate the reasons for the complaints, and the above figures might include complaints that fall outside the scope of the Regulation.

### ***Other enforcement and communication activities***

Handling complaints and penalising non-compliance are just two of the examples given in the Regulation of the possible measures that can be used to enforce bus and coach passenger rights. Many NEBs have been proactive and have taken additional action<sup>17</sup>.

### ***Designation of bus and coach terminals where passengers with disabilities and passengers with reduced mobility can receive assistance***

The Regulation requires Member States to designate staffed and equipped bus and coach terminals which will provide appropriate assistance to passengers with disabilities or with reduced mobility. Providing assistance at bus and coach terminals is of paramount importance, as passengers with disabilities or reduced mobility most often need help when boarding or alighting from buses and coaches, and this requirement can, in the majority of cases, be most easily met at terminals with a high volume of passenger traffic.

The approach taken by Member States varies: some of the larger and more highly populated Member States have designated only one or a very small number of terminals, which does not correspond to either the size of the country or the volume of passengers carried by buses and coaches<sup>18</sup>.

A number of other Member States also initially designated unstaffed bus stops without proper facilities, which clearly did not satisfy the requirements of the Regulation<sup>19</sup>. They withdrew these designations following the Commission's intervention<sup>20</sup>.

## **4. OPERATION OF THE REGULATION AND ACTION FOR IMPROVEMENT**

### **4.1 Assessment of the operation of the Regulation**

#### ***Results of the consultation***

In January 2016, the Commission invited various bodies representing passengers and the industry at EU level to share their views on the operation of the Regulation<sup>21</sup>.

All participants agreed that two factors have a major impact on the operation of the Regulation:

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<sup>17</sup> e.g. the Bulgarian, German, Estonian, Spanish, French, Lithuanian, Finnish and Swedish NEBs inspected carriers and terminals. In addition, the German NEB organised meetings with the operators before the Regulation became applicable to prepare them for its application and published leaflets on bus and coach passenger rights. The Finnish NEBs attended travel fairs to educate passengers about their rights.

<sup>18</sup> Although, in order to provide passengers with disabilities or reduced mobility with appropriate assistance, all staffed terminals with significant passenger flow should be designated as being able to assist passengers, Member States can comply with their obligation under the Regulation by designating only one terminal. Furthermore, they are not required to designate a terminal with a significant number of passengers departing or arriving.

<sup>19</sup> For the definition of terminals, see Article 3(m) of the Regulation.

<sup>20</sup> Please find the list of terminals designated by the Member States and notified to the Commission at: [http://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/passengers/road/doc/designated\\_bus\\_terminals.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/transport/themes/passengers/road/doc/designated_bus_terminals.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> See footnote 3.



- The lack of suitable bus and coach terminals in several Member States is one of the most significant barriers to the development of bus and coach transport: modern, accessible, and safe terminals connected with other modes of transport could convince new users to opt for bus and coach transport. Bus and coach terminals also play a key role in applying the Regulation: a high quality terminal can give passengers easier access to information about the services and about their rights at terminals, terminal staff can provide passengers with disabilities with the assistance they need, and passengers can be better assisted when there are transport disruptions.

- The Regulation did not introduce new accessibility requirements for buses, coaches and terminals, and it therefore did not contribute significantly to improving the accessibility of vehicles and of the transport infrastructure (bus stops and terminals) for passengers with disabilities or reduced mobility. In order to make bus and coach transport accessible for these passengers, both the vehicles and the terminals must be accessible. The measures introduced by several Member States, under which operators will in future be required to use only fleets that can carry passengers with disabilities or reduced mobility<sup>22</sup>, will therefore have only limited results if the infrastructure remains inadequate. The Commission is, however, also aware of local and regional initiatives where operators have worked closely with organisations representing people with disabilities to make their services accessible to them<sup>23</sup>.

Whilst the various parties consulted agreed on the points above, there was a clear division between organisations representing industry and passenger organisations as to the impact of the Regulation. The organisations representing carriers felt that the Regulation reflected the optimal balance between the carriers' obligations and passenger rights, taking the specific constraints of the sector into account, and provided the necessary level of flexibility.

Organisations representing passengers (EDF and EPF) regretted that most provisions contained in the Regulation applied only to regular services with a scheduled distance of 250 km or longer. In practice, this means that the overwhelming majority of regular bus and coach journeys are only subject to the core provisions of the Regulation<sup>24</sup>. Passengers' organisations also criticised Member States for granting too many exemptions<sup>25</sup>. In their opinion, the extensive use of exemptions deprives passengers of the full enjoyment of their rights and of legal certainty (particularly as it is difficult for passengers to know which Member States apply which exemptions).

The parties consulted felt that there was no need to amend any specific provisions of the Regulation, but that the current Regulation should be better applied by operators and more strictly enforced by the national authorities.

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<sup>22</sup> France and Germany will require operators to use only coaches that are able to carry passengers with disabilities by 2018, Spain and the UK by 2020. Source: Comprehensive Study on Passenger Transport by Coach in Europe (2016).

<sup>23</sup> Among others, the public transport company in Wallonia (Belgium), the Société Régionale Wallonne du Transport, has been carrying out an audit of the accessibility of its bus lines since 2013, with the help of local organisations representing people with disabilities, and the owner of the Riga International Coach Terminal worked with the disability organisation Apeirons to make the terminal fully accessible for passengers with disabilities or reduced mobility.

<sup>24</sup> See Section 2 of this report.

<sup>25</sup> See Section 2 above on the use of exemptions by Member States.

## *Assessment by the Commission*

The Commission has not identified any deliberate or serious breaches of the Regulation. Most individual complaints of which the Commission is aware relate to the lack of information, assistance or compensation provided in the event of long delays or cancellations<sup>26</sup>. The reports provided by the NEBs suggest that many complaints fall outside the scope of the Regulation<sup>27</sup>.

Despite this positive overall picture, the Commission identified a number of factors that are preventing the Regulation from being applied more efficiently:

a) *Passengers and operators are not sufficiently aware of their rights and obligations*

As the Regulation is relatively recent, members of the public are not sufficiently aware of it. NEBs and representatives of parties concerned indicated that many operators were not aware of the Regulation when it was adopted, and lack of awareness is still a problem in certain Member States. It is therefore essential for NEBs, national and EU-level representative bodies, and the Commission to continue to educate passengers about their rights and operators about their obligations.

b) *Enforcement is lagging behind in some Member States*

Member States were late in taking measures to apply the Regulation. By 1 March 2013, the date on which the Regulation became applicable, none of the Member States had adopted all the national measures needed. Some Member States adopted the required measures with a delay of two years.

The approach taken by NEBs to enforcing the Regulation varies widely. While some are very proactive in informing passengers about their rights and monitoring the Regulation's application, others do little beyond handling complaints.

There are also significant differences in the actual enforcement of passenger rights. Some Member States have no alternative dispute resolution mechanism<sup>28</sup>, meaning that passengers have to pursue their claims in court, which is costly and time-consuming, and therefore discourages them from enforcing their rights.

c) *Difficulty in interpreting certain provisions*

Some provisions in the Regulation have been interpreted differently by different NEBs and operators.

The representative bodies and the NEBs agreed that the Regulation does not need to be amended in order to clarify these provisions, but that the Commission and NEBs should agree on how the provisions should be applied in practice.

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<sup>26</sup> Some NEB reports indicate the reasons for complaints. In addition, Europe Direct Contact Centre (EDCC), a service financed by the Commission which provides information on EU law free of charge to the general public and businesses, indicated that over 80 % of the 99 queries they received since the date on which the Regulation became applicable relate to passenger rights in the event of delay or cancellation.

<sup>27</sup> e.g. if a passenger's luggage was lost or stolen during the journey, or a passenger could not sit in the seat he/she had reserved.

<sup>28</sup> According to Directive 2013/11/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council of 21 May 2013 on alternative dispute resolution for consumer disputes (OJ L 165, 18.6.2013, p. 63) consumers resident in the EU should have access to alternative dispute resolution procedures for contractual disputes with EU-established traders, including those in the transport sector.

## 4.2 Commission action to improve application of the Regulation

The Commission took the following measures to address the issues identified above:

a) *Actions to raise awareness of passengers' rights and operators' obligations*

In June 2013, the Commission launched a two-year information campaign on passenger rights for all modes of transport, including bus and coach. This included the publication of posters and leaflets that were distributed throughout Europe, the use of social media, a mobile phone application and attendance at tourism fairs.

The Commission published a summary of the Regulation, which is widely used by NEBs and operators to inform passengers about their rights.

b) *Actions to improve enforcement*

The Commission launched infringement procedures against Member States that had failed to designate a national enforcement body, to lay down penalties in their national law to sanction operators that breach the Regulation or to designate bus and coach terminals where passengers with disabilities or reduced mobility may receive appropriate assistance.<sup>29</sup> By July 2015 all the Member States had adopted the necessary measures and the infringement proceedings were closed.

The Commission organised annual EU-level meetings at which NEBs and stakeholders could share their experiences about the application of the Regulation and exchange details of good practice.

In addition, the Commission provided guidance and information on good practice at the annual meetings held with the NEBs, in order to improve their cooperation with one another.

c) *Actions to ensure uniform application of the Regulation*

At the annual meetings with the NEBs and representative bodies, and through written correspondence, the Commission provided clarification as to the practical application of several provisions in the Regulation. This has helped to ensure uniform application of the provisions throughout the EU<sup>30</sup>.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS AND NEXT STEPS

In the light of the limited experience of application of the Regulation gained to date, the Commission considers there to be no justification for amending it.

The stakeholders and the NEBs agree that several of the obstacles that are preventing passengers from enjoying their rights or having them enforced can be removed by applying the current Regulation more effectively. The Commission is therefore taking action and recommending to stakeholders and NEBs as follows:

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<sup>29</sup> Reasoned opinions were sent to Austria, Greece, Italy, Luxembourg and Portugal and letters of formal notice were sent to seven other Member States.

<sup>30</sup> The Commission clarified, for example, that in cases where the scheduled distance of a service is 250 km or more, the provisions of the entire Regulation should apply to all passengers, even if they travel with the service on a journey which is shorter than 250 km.

- The Commission organises its third information campaign between the spring of 2016 and the end of 2017 to raise passengers' awareness of their rights, focusing on social media. It invites NEBs, the industry and passenger rights organisations to combine their efforts and to launch similar campaigns at their level.
- NEBs are encouraged to carry out inspections of buses, coaches and terminals, *inter alia* to verify how the Regulation is being applied in practice and to educate operators about their obligations under the Regulation. NEBs are also encouraged to check carriers' homepages to ensure that they contain information on passenger rights and that general contract terms comply with the Regulation.
- Member States that do not currently offer an alternative dispute resolution mechanism for passenger rights are encouraged to put such a mechanism in place, in accordance with Directive 2013/11/EU<sup>31</sup>, so as to give passengers quicker and less expensive means to seek redress.
- The Commission will continue to organise regular meetings with NEBs and representative bodies, with a view to reaching a common understanding on the interpretation and implementation of the Regulation, and to promoting cooperation and the sharing of experiences (relating to both difficulties encountered and good practice).
- The Commission will, if the need arises, publish general interpretative guidelines to accompany the Regulation, in order to clarify the meaning of certain provisions (as it has done in the past for other transport modes), and/or good practice documents on specific issues (e.g. how to respond better to the specific needs of people with disabilities or reduced mobility).
- The Commission is collecting information on local and national good practice for improving the accessibility of bus and coach transport for passengers with disabilities or reduced mobility. It will present these to NEBs and representative bodies at their regular meetings. It is also considering publishing information on good practices related to the transport of passengers with disabilities or reduced mobility in all modes of transport.
- The Commission encourages national and local authorities and private investors to ensure multimodal connection of bus and coaches stations and terminals to other modes, notably to railways and to regional and local transport in urban nodes, in line with the objectives of the TEN-T Regulation<sup>32</sup> and to refurbish the existing bus and coach terminals or build new state-of-art terminals which are also fully accessible for persons with disability or reduced mobility. Such actions might receive EU support from the funding instrument entitled Connecting Europe Facility<sup>33</sup> if the terminal in question is located at the urban node of the TEN-T network, or otherwise from the European Structural and Investment Funds which also support the development of collective transport.

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<sup>31</sup> See footnote 28.

<sup>32</sup> Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network (OJ L 348, 20.12.2013, p. 1).

<sup>33</sup> See for the detailed conditions for the application to Connecting Europe Facility funds Regulation (EU) No 1315/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 on Union guidelines for the development of the trans-European transport network and repealing Decision No 661/2010/EU (OJ L 348, 20.12.2013, p.1) and Regulation (EU) No 1316/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2013 establishing the Connecting Europe Facility (OJ L 348, 20.12.2013, p. 129)

- The Commission encourages Member States that currently grant exemptions from the Regulation<sup>34</sup> or parts of it to review whether, in the light of current experience, it is necessary to continue these exemptions.

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<sup>34</sup> See Section 2 above.