Press release | 01.12.2010

Transport rights

Bus passengers to get short shrift under deal on new EU passenger rights rules

An agreement was hurriedly forced through by the European Parliament and Council last night on new EU rules setting out rights for bus passengers (1). Green MEPs expressed disappointment with the deal, which falls far short of guaranteeing necessary rights for bus passenger. Commenting on the outcome of the conciliation agreement, Green transport co-spokespersons **Eva Lichtenberger** and **Michael Cramer** said:

"Bus passengers in Europe are set to get a short shrift under the deal reached on new EU rules setting out their rights as passengers. Regrettably, the agreement reached by the Council and EP will fall short of guaranteeing the necessary rights for bus service users.

"Under the final deal, only bus journeys of more than 250km will be covered by the rules, leaving passengers on other bus services without any basic EU-level rights. Shockingly, the rules will not offer any improvement for persons with reduced mobility. Service providers will also be let off the hook in terms of providing binding comprehensive information on bus services (2). Furthermore, bus companies will be exempted from their obligations in case of 'extreme weather conditions', even though no attempt is made to define these conditions. This gives bus companies a carte blanche for concocting excuses.

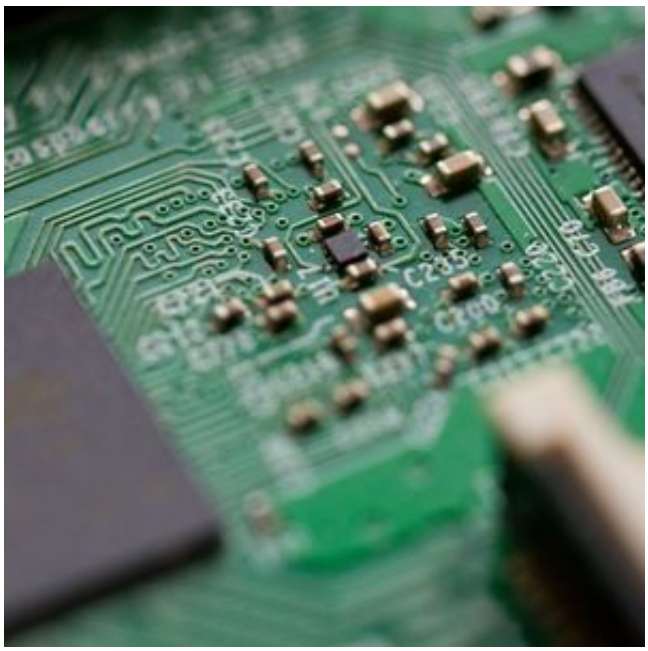
"There are some positive elements, including a Green proposal requiring member states to provide independent complaint bodies in case of conflict between companies and passengers, and compensation for damaged wheelchairs. However, the final legislation sets out far inferior rights for bus passengers than is the case for passengers on rail services. This creates unfair competition between these two transport modes and creates legal uncertainty that could lead to the European Court of Justice becoming the ultimate arbiter for these passengers' rights."

(1) Conciliation agreement on a new EU regulation on 'Passenger Rights in Bus Services'.
(2) The requirements on comprehensive information are fundamentally diluted by the inclusion of the words "if possible".

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Responsible MEPs



Michael Cramer

Member

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