

WRITTEN QUESTION E-2755/09
by Ashley Mote (NI)
to the Commission

Subject: Passenger rights Directive will destroy jobs

Is the Commission aware of the consequences on rural bus and coach companies of the proposed EU Passenger Rights Directive?

The introduction of the concept of strict liability will encourage costly, spurious and inflated claims. Is this what the Commission intends? If not, how - lawfully - could they be prevented, and the costs and disruption to small businesses be avoided?

Does the Commission understand the cost and practical consequences of giving the right to every disabled person to be taken on every route?

The notion that an alternative means of transport *must* be provided by the bus or coach company if the present service cannot accommodate disabled people is potentially ruinous.

Have any of the theoreticians advising the Commission ever visited the country bus routes in rural Britain? Have they the faintest idea of what they are demanding, and the actual costs involved?

Is it not the fact that such companies will effectively have to convert themselves to private hire taxi firms, complete with special vehicles solely equipped for the transport of disabled people using wheelchairs? And where is the money to come from to provide such an expensive service that will hardly ever be used?

Does the Commission think that these unwanted impositions on small transport companies in rural Britain are wise, or necessary, especially when all small businesses are already struggling to survive commercially? Does it care that companies will close and jobs be lost?

Or is this merely yet more evidence that the EU is utterly out of touch with the real world?