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## Why should cities foster coach tourism?

26 May 2015

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Nick Greenfield, ETOA - the European Tourism Association



Polis and EMTA are hosting a side event at the ITF Summit about cities and coach transport. Several European cities, such as Budapest and Amsterdam have developed strategies for coach tourism, access and routing in answer to the increasing challenges that coach tourism and travel brings. The IRU will present the views of coach operators. I was asked to chair the session.

Cities should foster coach tourism. As destinations rush to attract 'high-end' individual travellers, it is easy for them to neglect coach tourism. This is down to, as much as anything, how the sector is perceived. If you pick up a paper in say, Italy, your story about group tourism will involve usually how coaches are blocking the streets of the city.

Yet stop for a moment and consider the economic impact of those groups arriving in cities across Europe, in an efficient and manageable way, bringing in a variety of nationalities and sectors of society from school groups to senior citizens and you might start to see another story. And also consider what if all those people were to arrive in private cars instead or take public transport? One exclusive hotel in London decided not to reserve a spot for coaches because it wasn't their 'market', only to backpedal when they received complaints from corporate groups. So, by all means pursue different tourism strategies, but be careful not to forget coach tourism; you don't know what you might be missing out on.

An important challenge for cities that build a strategy for coach, is the fragmentation of the market, and the complexity of user needs and expectations. When it comes to cities and coach tourism being a success, it is all about three Cs: communication, consultation and collaboration. Smart cities consider coaches as an extension to their public transport system and accordingly integrate them into their overall strategy.

If you would like to know more about urban strategies for managing coach transport, and are interested to understand the operators needs and expectations, join me at the [Polis and EMTA Side Event "Planning access for coach transport in Europe"](#), on 29 May, 9.00-10.30.

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Pravin Krishna, Chung Ju Yung Distinguished Professor of International Economics and Business at Johns Hopkins University

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Ruud van der Ploeg, Secretary-General, European Metropolitan Transport Authorities (EMTA)

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Nicolette van der Jagt is Director General of CLECAT

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