

Buses for All (Europe)



A case study of
a Campaign for access by law to buses
by Disabled People in the
European Union, 1995 – 2001

Tony Baldwinson

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TBR Consulting, Manchester

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In memory of

Cathy Avison

Ian Stanton

Brenda Hilditch

Bas Treffers

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With thanks to Richard Armitage for sharing his extensive computer archive of campaign documents. Many a misty memory has been suitably corrected and brought back into sharp focus as a result.

Nevertheless there may still be some errors and omissions in the text, and I apologise now for any unintended slight and I'd be happy to made aware of suggested improvements for any further edition.

TB, August 2012

Glossary

ADA – Americans with Disabilities Act 1990

ADAPT – American Disabled for Accessible Public Transport

BfA(E) – Buses for All (Europe)

CAT – Campaign for Accessible Transport

Coreper – Committee of Permanent Representatives [within ECM]

DAN – [Disabled People's Non-Violent] Direct Action Network

DaRT – Dial-a-Ride and Taxicard Users

DDA – Disability Discrimination Act 1995

EC – European Commission

ECM – European Council of Ministers

EDF – European Disability Forum

EP – European Parliament

EPDI – European Parliament Disability [all-party] Intergroup

EU – European Union

MS – Member State of the EU

MEP – Member of the European Parliament

UN-ECE – United Nations Economic Commission for Europe

Preface

For most people, it is not often that you find yourself excited by a stand at a trade exhibition for public transport.

Yet I can still remember running to find Lorraine to show her a new bus I had just seen. This was not the usual 'special' minibus with a bright yellow lift at the back and 'ambulance' written down the side. Called the Omni, as shown in *Figure 2*, it was the first low floor bus I had seen. Such a novel idea - everyone using the same door, and no complications for wheelchair users.

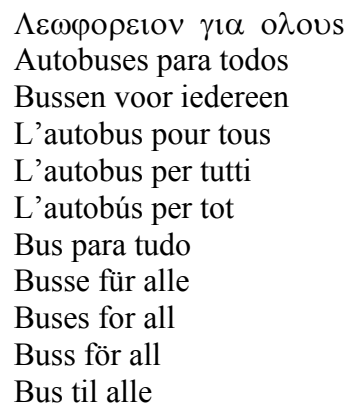
It was just a small bus built to carry around twenty passengers, and in the years to follow engineers would complain about its difficult front suspension and the many spare parts which had to be borrowed from old Land Rovers, but to me it was then and ever will be a perfect design!

1. Policy and Practice

Context to 1995

Introduction

In 2001 a new EU Single Market Directive with legal force was issued on the design of buses. This made it a legal requirement for all new urban buses sold after August 2003 to be fully accessible to disabled people. In part this change in law happened because of the Buses for All (Europe) campaign which started in 1995. This first chapter looks at the history of the various accessible transport campaigns by disabled people and their allies prior to 1995.



Λεωφορειον για ολους
 Autobuses para todos
 Bussen voor iedereen
 L'autobus pour tous
 L'autobus per tutti
 L'autobús per tot
 Bus para tudo
 Busse für alle
 Buses for all
 Buss för all
 Bus til alle

Figure 1: The logo of the Buses for All (Europe) campaign

The new type of low floor bus in the 1990s

In the USA by the early 1990s the main method of achieving access to buses for disabled people, and especially for wheelchair users, was to install a lift as an alternative to using the steps. In the UK, and more widely in the EU, there was a different trend at that time with the emergence of a new type of bus design: the low floor bus as

shown in Figure 2. However, the low floor buses were seen by some traditionalists as just novelty items. Prior to the new low floor designs being widely adopted, buses in the UK were usually built in two parts – the lower chassis and the upper coachwork. The lower chassis was sometimes a great bulky item of heavy engineering and made up from parts from lorries, often assembled up to a metre (over three feet) from the ground. The coachwork for the bus was literally bolted or welded on top, and finally some large steps were added as the only way for people to board the bus. Figure 2 shows one of the very first low floor buses.



Figure 2. Innovative CVE ‘Omni’ low-floor bus, c.1994.
(source: <http://www.irishbuses.com>, 2012, © Darren Hall)

Richard Armitage recalls that the Omni was built in a former steel works in Shilton, North East England, by the entrepreneur Barry Cotton, and that at the time the only other low floor buses in general use were the Canadian Orion and the German Telebus.

Campaigning in the 1980s

The need for disabled people to use a fully accessible mainstream public transport system was not a new idea: in the UK the Campaign

for Accessible Transport (CAT) was active in the 1980s especially in the London area and its history seems to be unfortunately largely lost at the moment. Later came the Disabled People's Direct Action Network (DAN), another peaceful civil disobedience group of radical disabled people which specialised in high-profile publicity events to draw attention to disabled people's campaigns. Access to buses (and trains) was a key campaigning objective of DAN through the 1980s and 1990s, and it was quite commonplace for roads in UK cities to be gridlocked by immobilised buses due to disabled people handcuffing themselves to the outer rails or even underneath these inaccessible buses. The photograph on the front cover of David Hevey's book, *The Creatures That Time Forgot* (1992) is an example from one of these demonstrations, which followed a BCODP (British Council of Organisations of Disabled People, as was) conference at the Owens Park halls of residence for students on the Wilmslow Road major bus route in Manchester. The conference had included a street demonstration as a practical workshop on how best to protest against inaccessible buses, run by some campaigners from Americans Disabled for Accessible Public Transit (ADAPT) visiting from the USA. DAN buses protests later included Nottingham, Birmingham and London.

Accessible transport is one of the *Seven Needs for Independent Living*, as originally developed by the Derbyshire Coalition of Disabled People in the UK in the early 1980s (details in Appendix J). These Seven Needs were identified as the necessary conditions in a society required in order for disabled people to start living as equals alongside their non-disabled peers.

For many years transport for disabled people was mainly achieved by a combination of adapted cars and the blue 'trikes' for disabled drivers, and specialised minibuses, known as door-to-door services, for disabled people who did not drive. Mainstream public transport was literally an after-thought, for example wheelchair users regularly had to travel in the guard's van at the back of a train, unheated,

draughty and with the luggage and freight. There are anecdotes of wheelchair users sitting on the open rear platform of a Routemaster bus, the traditional red London double-deck bus. Richard Armitage recalls writing his first of many articles on accessible buses for a community transport magazine around 1989.

The DAN protests against inaccessible buses were inspired by similar campaigns in the United States of America and especially by the ADAPT campaign group. The USA Civil Rights Movement had had a defining moment in 1955 when Rosa Parkes refused to sit at the back of the bus. This led to the buses boycott in Montgomery, Alabama, by African Americans and the start of racial de-segregation through civil rights in the USA, so protesting on buses had an extra resonance for disabled Americans.



Figure 3: Delegates organising the protest after the Buses for All (Europe) conference, Princess Street, Manchester, 15 June 1995.

With the UK having little other than the innovative Omni low floor bus in the early 1990s, more progress was being achieved in the USA. The Americans with Disabilities Act came into force in 1990 and was in place before EU legislation in terms of accessible mass transit or public transport. In practical terms for many years there were many US cities running accessible buses, mostly achieved with lifts, while London by comparison had a circular route from Heathrow Airport to the central train stations using a small fleet of double deck buses retrofitted with a lift for wheelchair users. In 1993 London Transport started to trial the use of 68 low floor buses, and by 1995 in the UK there were an estimated 282 low floor buses in use. In other European countries accessible buses into the 1990s mostly remained a novelty or pilot experiment. There were exceptions in Europe, for example Barcelona had a fleet of accessible airport and tourist buses.

Even the words in general usage at the time were compromised - there were references to 'accessible buses' but then also to 'fully accessible buses'. The difference was that an accessible bus was not accessible to everyone, but it would have some features mostly to assist some elderly passengers. The most common of these features was brightly coloured handrails. In Britain some of the bitterest debates were between the supporters of partial access, which matched the UK Government position in the 1980s and early 1990s, and those people pressing for full access who were at times portrayed as unrealistic extremists. One reason giving for only having partial access, from a member of the UK Government's Disabled People's Transport Advisory Committee (DiPTAC) on a BBC radio interview, was that, 'of course full access is possible, but only if you throw money at it'. Similarly, there was a transport magazine article which complained about 'the low floor zealots'.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) in the UK and its subsequent amendments led to significant improvements in the lives of disabled people. However, there are some laws which are decided

at the European Union level and not individually at the level of each EU Member State - including the United Kingdom. The design rules for buses that can be manufactured and sold within the EU is one example of a law which is decided at the EU level. This is because the EU is a *single market* so that any bus built in one EU country can legally be sold and used in any other EU country. Previously every Member State made its own laws and regulations on the construction and use of vehicles. It was within this policy and practice background that the Buses for All (Europe) campaign was launched at a conference in Manchester.

In 1993 the umbrella organisation for accessible transport in London - DART (Dial a Ride and Taxicard Users Association, now www.transportforall.org.uk) commissioned Richard Armitage to organise a network to be called *Buses for All*, and this in turn led to a European conference on accessible buses at the Manchester Central conference centre (then called GMex) with Tom Megahy MEP as a guest keynote speaker.

The conference was held on 15 June 1995 and called *Buses for All (Europe)*, from which the subsequent campaign took its name. Tom Megahy MEP had for many years been pressing the cause of accessible public transport within the European Parliament, and along with support from Barbara Schmidbauer MEP and others, many sound foundations were laid. The conference was chaired by Lorraine Gradwell, who after the conference impressed her visiting mother Inga Mahoney by stopping buses with other disabled people on Princess Street next to Manchester Town Hall as shown in Figures 3, 4 and 5.



Figure 4: Buses for All (Europe) delegates protest after conference, Princess Street, Manchester, 15 June 1995. Lorraine Gradwell (centre).

A few of the delegates met up after the conference, including Andy Holt from DART, Richard Armitage, Lorraine Gradwell and myself, and from there the email list and the campaign started in earnest.



Figure 5: Buses for All (Europe) delegates protest after conference with regional media coverage, Princess Street, Manchester, 15 June 1995. Brenda Hilditch (raised arm).

2. The campaign strategy, 1995 to 2001

Introduction

This chapter describes how the campaign was run from its launch at the Manchester conference through to the successful passing of the new law. In particular, this chapter looks at the strategic linkages that the campaign made with other organisations, and how it made full use of the then new technology of email as a campaign mechanism.

Knowledge sharing as the campaign strategy

The key instrument of the Buses for All (Europe) campaign was the relatively new technology of email, being used as a campaign tool in the evenings from a home computer. The size of the group of people receiving these emails grew over time to become around 160 key people and organisations of disabled people in the various EU Member States as well as many individual disabled people with an interest in accessible public transport. From various lines of research, recipients were deliberately found for all of the 15 of the EU member states, plus some other influential organisations in Eastern Europe, USA and Australia. The messages are almost always in English, with standard paragraphs in French, Spanish and Portuguese at the end of each message.

These emails provided a steady stream of news and comment on accessible buses. The strategy of this drip-drip of messages was to keep the issue alive and topical, especially with key decision makers and people who might influence them. Previous experience and research in EU law-making was that it would be (a) complex, (b) secretive, and (c) slow, taking many years to make a lasting change.

The campaign had a web page which allowed the campaign to produce a general introduction to the campaign, and included an archive of key messages and photographs of different accessible buses for people who might want to view or download these pictures. It was a setback when the web page could no longer be updated after 1999 due to the disabled person who was assisting the campaign being told their web work was compromising their personal assistance payments. Therefore the web page became essentially a passive tool to access pictures showing what can be done, and some archive material. The email messages were the active element of the campaign.

The email messages were sent as plain text because graphics would have added to the time it took to download a message, especially using the telephone modem connections that were standard at the time. There was no charge for receiving the messages, and only one person was removed from the list after making some intimidating remarks at a disability conference. At an early stage in the campaign, certain other European social justice organisations were added to the list to keep them informed. These included groups representing the interests of women, elderly people, environmental protection and family life. *Eurolink Age* were especially supportive, and Moya Denham within it was a strong advocate for the campaign.

It is hard to express the importance the new tool of email made to an international campaign such as this. It took some time each week to write the messages and administer the list, sometimes doing this daily when events start to move quickly, but the cost was minimal and its speed for international messages was crucial. It was also becoming one of the most accessible forms of communicating - being readily converted to large print, voice, and used by many Deaf people. It was also easier to handle, with less photocopying and fewer envelopes when the campaign needed information circulated quickly. At the time, the initial cost of receiving messages was a problem for poorer disabled people, particularly bearing in mind that

disabled people are disproportionately poorer than the general population, and therefore the majority of the campaign's email recipients were disabled people and allies who were in paid work.

Even though the medium for these messages was a new form, the need to have a good editor or co-ordinator remained the same: people developed a trust for a regular, reliable and accurate source of news and comment. One of the key campaign decisions was on how technical the messages should be, given that they often included items on EU law, decision making rules, as well as details on particular bus models and companies. It was important not to leave out the details which would be very useful to some recipients, but to take care to explain the jargon every time, and the wider usefulness of any messages that might seem to be too technical.



Figure 6. Low Floor Bus image 1, Central Brussels, May 2000

Commercial support

Through our work we had come into contact with a firm of EU policy consultants GJW Europe, and especially Patrick Brooks their transport consultant was particularly generous in responding to our letter with a meeting to freely share his local knowledge and advice. The letter was revised with many drafts before being sent to Patrick, along with a pencil and a sachet of coffee. The pencil was chosen as it was in their company's corporate shade of green, and the sachet was to ask them to have a coffee break while they pencilled in their comments on our strategy: thankfully they gave us much more, with wise advice in the early years of the campaign. It possibly added further credibility to our campaign that others knew that we had taken their advice.



Figure 7. Low Floor Bus image 2, Central Brussels, May 2000

European Disability Forum

The European Disability Forum was the most significant EU-level organisation to figure in this campaign. In addition to those already mentioned, the work and support of Sophie Beaumont, Nicola Bedlington, Stephan Trömel and Pirkko Mahlamaki was essential. The direct links it has to its member organisations at a European level and within each member state were crucial. The work of the European Disability Forum takes a much wider remit than just buses, but their support remained strong for the campaign. EDF provided the crucial background support to the European Parliament's Disability Intergroup, and the linkages between EDF and the Intergroup were key to this campaign's success.

Central Library Manchester

With its email and web pages, the campaign seemed quite novel at the time, however a lot of the background work for the campaign was done by traditional research methods. The European Information Unit within the 'Central Reference' Library in Manchester, run by Dorothy Connor, was an excellent source of journals and books on the political structures within the EU. In particular, reading the *European Public Affairs Directory* gave us key contact details for lobbying. The other key research tool was the telephone. This could sometimes be expensive on phone cards when calling another country, but it is surprising just how much officials were able to tell us without breaching a confidence - often they seemed quietly happy to help us with advice or comment. They also needed to know about the various campaigns that might have an impact on their work, so it was a genuine dialogue.

The campaign needed a logo that would work across the EU's then 15 Member States (now 27) in 11 languages. A box of plain text was chosen because it could be produced at no cost using a word processor. We needed to translate the campaign slogan - *Buses for*

All - into the 10 other languages. Again, the Central Library helped, this time their languages department with its many dictionaries allowed a first attempt at each translation. After circulating this, the recipients in each country made their corrections known to us before the final version was produced, as shown in Figure 1.

As discussed in more detail later, Fiona Hayes-Renshaw and Professor Helen Wallace, both then based at the Sussex European Institute, University of Sussex, produced a politically groundbreaking book in 1997 called *The Council of Ministers*, and it was a very timely for this campaign to find it that same year within the library. Helen Wallace also kindly gave some advice by email to the campaign at an important stage of the Buses Directive being considered within the European Council of Ministers.

3. Campaign lobbying and three European institutions

Introduction

This chapter sets out in detail the various hurdles that the Draft Buses Directive had to jump over in order to get to the finishing line. This includes a description of the times when the campaign had to give the Draft Buses Directive a very strong push. Table 1 here summarises the twelve years it took in all, with the timetable from 1991 to 2003.

In very general terms a new EU law such as the Buses Directive formally starts as a proposal by the European Commission (EC) which is sent to the European Parliament (EP). After one or more votes and committee meetings, it is then sent to the European Council of Ministers (ECM) for the Governments' representatives to agree or disagree. A draft law can go back and forth between these bodies many times, as well as going to various external consultative committees for their opinions.

1991 to 1997: The Commission Years

The Buses Directive started with the European Commission (EC), and at that stage access for disabled people was not going to be mandatory at all. The European Commission are the staff or civil servants at the heart of the EU and often do the preliminary work in proposing the details of a new law. They often rely on external experts and work internally across their directorates (departments) to look for compromises and consensus whenever possible. This way of working often takes a long time, allowing for extensive discussions and in not rushing to hold meetings until difficult agenda items have been substantially resolved beforehand. Clearly, there was no

consensus for mandatory access for disabled people to buses at this stage, despite years of discussions between the various teams within the European Commission lasting over six years.

For some years previously there were EU directives being agreed by all 15 Governments on the design of all types of cars, but deciding on the design rules for buses and coaches seemed to be a big problem. At least part of the issue was that another international organisation, UN-ECE (the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe) based in Geneva, had already held meetings of engineers from various countries to decide on their preferences for the design rules for buses and coaches. However, UN-ECE had not talked extensively to disabled people and access was not high on their agenda.

There was particular confusion during 1992. The Member State which holds the Presidency of the EU rotates every six months. At the end of the Dutch Presidency during the previous year, on 16 December 1991 the Dutch-led Council of Ministers called on the European Commission to write a 'Community Action Programme on the accessibility of transport to persons with reduced mobility'. However, eleven months later the European Commission acknowledged that it had delayed the publication of this Programme document because of the UK Presidency in 1992 and the Transport Minister John MacGregor's concern that the Action Programme would contravene the subsidiarity principle. The European Parliament expressed its frustration, and three different Directorates Generals (DGs, or departments) within the European Commission each proposed their own solution, as follows:

First, DG5 (social affairs department) had proposed a Directive in August 1990 'on minimum requirements to improve the mobility and safe transport to work of workers with reduced mobility' but this did not get discussed by the European Council of Ministers and was quietly dropped.

Secondly, DG7 (transport department) were asked in 1991 to draft the Community Action Programme mentioned above, which also failed to proceed.

Thirdly, DG3 (single market department) in October 1992 published a proposed Directive on ‘special provisions for buses and coaches’ (DG3 4076/90 EN Rev.2) with an expectation of it taking effect in January 1994. As Tom Megahy MEP noted in 1995 (Appendix B) this DG3 version of a Draft Directive produced intense lobbying from many political and commercial organisations. The initial response by the Buses for All (Europe) to this Draft Directive was placed on the internet (Appendix E).

On 18 June 1997 the European Commission published the long awaited updated draft of the DG3 1992 version of a Directive for Buses and Coaches. The difficulty with the European Commission’s proposed Draft Directive was that it was based on ‘old engineering’ with expensive powered ramps, and only as options, and crucially the definition of access was not good enough, for example it did not include people using powered wheelchairs.

Low floor buses are not necessarily accessible buses, but the two concepts were combined in the draft text. The European Commission’s proposal stated that, if the floor was 15 cm (six inches) from the road surface, then the bus did not need to have a ramp or a lift fitted, and this shortfall was not acceptable to the Buses for All (Europe) campaign. The European Commission’s text included the following:

‘Accessibility test

The vehicle and the boarding aids shall be such that a wheelchair user *being able to use normally his arms and hands and sitting on a platform 15cm above the ground* (representing a pavement) is able to board easily in the

vehicle through the service doors designed for this purpose, when the relevant access controls are operated.

The requirement shall also be assumed to be met if the vehicle passes the test *without any boarding aid in the case of certain low-floor buses.*' (European Commission, 1997, Draft Directive on Buses and Coaches, p137) (emphasis added)

For clarity, a boarding aid is something fitted to a bus to facilitate access for a mobility impaired person. The usual ones are ramps and lifts, and controversially here the draft text included bus kneeling systems but *without* a lift or ramp as a sufficient boarding aid.

This definition of access by the European Commission was disappointing, even though there were many officials within the European Commission who were very supportive of accessible transport issues. However, sometimes the European Commission produces a proposal which is a compromise between views held across its various directorates and even between the teams within each directorate, such as between the single market and the social inclusion teams.

1998: The Parliament

The Draft Directive then went to the European Parliament (EP) for its First Reading, where the directive was referred to its industry committee for detailed discussion before being voted on by the whole parliament. The Buses Directive had a bit of a rough ride through its First Reading in the European Parliament: the first time all the EP members received the report from their working committee they sent the report back to the committee saying it was too complicated, and asking the committee to come back with something simpler which focused on principles rather than technicalities. In particular, they did not like the large number of annexes at the back of the draft directive.

At this point the centre-right political group in the EP proposed various amendments which would have removed access as a mandatory feature for buses. Informally within the campaign these were known as the *wrecking amendments*. This phrase could not be used publicly by the campaign because using it would have made the influencing work of some centre-right MEPs even harder to do, and these MEPs were supportive of the campaign aims. These amendments represented a key early challenge in the campaign - they had to be defeated by a majority of MEPs in the European Parliament if the directive was going to be of any use to disabled people.

An example of one of the Buses for All (Europe) campaign messages sent around this time started with:

‘Briefing, 19 July 1998

The current proposal for the EU Buses and Coaches Directive within the European Parliament, is to hold a Hearing to gather evidence from experts on low floor buses, in front of the EMAC (Economic and Monetary Affairs and Industrial Policy Committee) of the European Parliament. The Hearing is scheduled to be in September or October 1998.’

This lobbying to MEPs seemed to work very well, the ‘wrecking amendments’ were defeated and a better definition of access was accepted. After lengthy negotiations and a lot of lobbying of the European Parliament by disabled people throughout the EU to MEPs, the plenary session did agree in October 1998 with the amended Draft Directive with mandatory access in place, but as yet without mandatory ramps and lifts specified as the boarding aids.

In contrast to the UK Government position in 1992, and perhaps because of the UK General Election in 1997, by November 1998 the UK Government view was much more in line with the Buses for All (Europe) campaign. For example, these still-weak amendments by

the European Parliament at that stage were said to be ‘completely unacceptable and unworkable’. (Appendix D)

1999: The Council of Ministers

So, having passed its First Reading in this weak form in our view, the Draft Directive was then sent from the European Parliament to the European Council of Ministers.

The lobbying of the European Council of Ministers (ECM) was crucial to the success of the campaign, but at the time it was quite a mysterious organisation. The European Council of Ministers (ECM) represented the 15 member Governments of the EU at the time, before further enlargements of the EU to 27 member states at the time of writing. Of all the EU bodies the ECM was said to be the most secretive, and usually the most influential. However, by researching key directories and a newly-published book (Hayes-Renshaw and Wallace, 1997) on the ECM, it was possible to find the three or so crucial officials who would have a detailed knowledge of the Buses Directive. These officials were written to personally, as well as a letter to each of the ‘ambassadors’ to the ECM from the 15 Governments, known as the *Permanent Representatives*. When the permanent representatives meet as a group they are known as *Coreper II*, and for the meetings of their deputies they are known as *Coreper I*.

A strong indication of the importance of this research can be summarised in the following quote:

‘If asked to identify the individual or body that ‘runs Europe’ ... EU insiders and informed observers would ... nominate the members of Coreper, a publicity-shy body’ (Hayes-Renshaw and Wallace, 2006, p72)

This first edition by Hayes-Renshaw and Wallace in 1997 of *The Council of Ministers* is widely regarded as being the landmark book

which widely explained the inner workings of the EU's decision making processes, including the crucial role of officials as well as the formal routes to ministers. When updating their book in 2006, the authors reflected on the impact of their first edition as follows:

‘In the first edition of this book, we expressed the view of Council insiders (now much-quoted) that some 85 per cent of all issues on Council agendas were essentially agreed in advance of ministerial sessions.’ (Hayes-Renshaw and Wallace, 2006, p77)

The European Council of Ministers is the EU institution which brings together all the Governments for discussions and votes. In the late 1990s it was the most secretive of the European institutions. Only its outcomes were published, and not the agendas nor minutes nor votes of the Council's various committees and working groups. There was a working group on this Draft Directive, and reports of its work were circulated where possible to disabled people and their organisations by various supportive agencies and campaigns.

A Council of Ministers Working Group had its first key meeting on the Draft Directive on 14 June 1999, and made some useful progress. They agreed that the service door must be wide enough for a wheelchair user - 90cm for a single door and 120cm for a double door. Some Governments had wanted to allow only for a width of 60cm for doorways. But at this stage they did not strengthen the EP's amendments at First Reading for mandatory access nor to include mandatory boarding aids.

The working group had also agreed to include Class I (urban buses), Class II (inter-urban buses) and Class A (mini-buses with standing room) as vehicles in the low-floor bus category.

Another relevant point of agreement was to include visual aids (mirrors and CCTV) to enable the driver to monitor who boards the vehicle from the rear doors. Agreement was reached to ensure these

visual aids were positioned in such a way that the driver can also see children and wheelchair users boarding the vehicle. This was a key safety and security feature.

Annex 7 of the Draft Directive on requirements for boarding aids was later considered by the ECM Working Group, and this discussion seems to have provided the essential foundation to the later agreements on access to buses of disabled people.

2000-2001: Debates between the Parliament and the Council

After the European Council of Ministers had finished discussing the Draft Directive, it then returned to the European Parliament for its Second Reading. There had to be some heavy lobbying of the European Parliament at this stage because there were still elements in the text of the Draft Directive which regarded boarding aids as ‘optional extras’. This would have excluded many wheelchair users’ access to buses because there would still be a gap between the bus and the pavement or sidewalk.

In response, the Buses for All (Europe) campaign had around 2,000 A6-size postcards printed, and sent them in bundles of 100 to various disability groups and sympathetic organisations in all the EU member states. The work of the EP’s all-party Disability Intergroup was of great help here. The postcards were mainly just blank lines for writing on, apart from the printed address for the Parliament building in Brussels and the campaign name, so that each person was prompted to write to their MEP with their own reasons for demanding accessible public transport, in their own words and language. The design is shown here in Appendix F.

At this stage we were fortunate in gaining the political endorsement of the *Eurocities* organisation, a membership organisation of non-capital city councils across Europe. The President of Eurocities at the time was Councillor Richard Leese, the Leader of Manchester City Council. The endorsement by Eurocities helped convince people in

the EU institutions that urban buses needed to become fully accessible and that local authorities were generally supportive of this change to their public transport arrangements.

There needed to be further lobbying of the European Council of Ministers after the Second Reading of the Draft Directive in the European Parliament. This lobbying was necessary because in the closing stages of producing the final text of the directive it would involve the European Parliament and the European Council of Ministers possibly meeting to reconcile their differences. If such a meeting happens, then either one or other side can win or they can reach a compromise. After this meeting the final text for the directive would be published and become law *with no further debate*.

European Council: votes swing from 5 to 12 in favour

Thankfully in this case all the lobbying of the ECM, which was supported by some favourable coverage in the EU technical newsletters and in the buses trade press, seemed to have been effective. The vote changed dramatically from 'ten against' to 'twelve for' out of the 15 voting countries. One of the seasoned participants from the European Commission called this switch over to a common agreement between the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers 'a miracle'.

4. Campaign Evaluation

Introduction

This chapter is a modest evaluation of the campaign after its completion, based on contributions from various people who were allies of and participants within Buses for All (Europe). As an evaluation method, it is based on participant evaluation within a framework of action research.

Doing an evaluation after a project or similar has ended is common practice. To academics it is known as *summative* evaluation, and to staff in the European institutions it is known as *ex post* evaluation.

According to disabled Londoner, Tracey Proudlock (nee Booth) who was a key member of the Campaign for Accessible Transport in the 1980s,

“Mayor Livingstone has been a significant player in the accessible transport field. The Mayor through his leadership of the Greater London Council had a long history and relationship with disability groups in the Capital and when he was elected as Mayor appointed disability advisors to his Board, Kirsten Hearn and Bryan Heiser.

Through Mayor Livingstone's inclusive transport policies London quickly achieved city wide accessible bus services. ‘Talking to Mayor Livingstone was truly knocking on an open door.’ London has been a model, test case for others to learn from. Travelling across the capital it is easy to see disabled people queuing at bus stops, 20 years ago transport researchers were saying that disabled people didn't want to queue and use buses just like everyone else.

It has not always been smooth or without problems, even today in 2012 with new technology and a brand new bus design disabled people still get excluded from London buses because drivers fail to stop when asked. So achieving the ultimate goal of an accessible bus still needs more work because we don't have inclusive services; there are still many ways in which disabled passengers are left out or left behind!”

I would add to Tracey’s reflections that, after twenty years of campaigning by this group and by others, 37 million disabled people at the time (2001), and now 80 million disabled people across Europe with EU enlargement, have gained the right to use their local buses. How this change came about is the story of this case study. I hope it has some interesting points for disability campaigns, and maybe for other social justice campaigns within the politics of the European Union. More needs to be done because coaches are still not required to be accessible. But the changes so far agreed did fundamentally alter much of the daily access to public transport for disabled people.

In reflecting on this campaign for fully accessible public transport, I cannot say there is a single ‘magic wand’ for others to find and adopt, but I believe there are some useful findings here that may be transferable to other campaigns. Perhaps the biggest lesson from this for any campaign is that campaign funds are not everything; this campaign cost almost nothing, except for people’s time, and yet it still achieved results.

Of course, there were resources around us. The role of DaRT and later EDF and EPDI were absolutely crucial in terms of their staff time, their membership organisations and their political contacts. But what Buses for All (Europe) as a campaign managed to do

effectively was to enlarge the range of political options. We could and did keep chipping away for years with arguments and international examples of full and mandatory access to buses for disabled people. We made it become possible.

In terms of influencing the ECM, when we had to lobby them we generally sent a short briefing letter in English to named people in:

1. the ECM Secretariat;
2. each Permanent Representative official in Brussels; and
3. each Ministry official in each Member State's capital city.

We tried to find out the named officials involved, or a close guess, rather than sending letters just to the person at the head of the office.

The letters all showed that copies were sent to people across the three 'groups' described above in the ECM decision making process, so that, for example, there were no surprises in store when a national ministry official was in contact with their counterpart in Brussels to agree a common line.

The format of the letters to the ECM tried to follow the apparently standard approach used by commercial firms, being two sides of paper which included:

1. reference numbers for the documents in question;
2. the exact changes in wording we were asking for; and
3. the reasons we had for asking for these changes, namely:
 - a. the business case – it was affordable and easy to do;
 - b. the economic case – including savings to public bodies;
 - c. the legal case – they had the power to agree with us;
 - d. the moral case – civil rights for disabled people.

I would add as a non-disabled person, there is an example here of how allies of disabled people can contribute to the issues raised by disabled people's organisations.

Being accountable

Transparency and clarity of purpose have been an important part of the Buses for All (Europe) campaign. The campaign did not pretend to be big or well-resourced, and was clear with others that it had no formal membership, no constitution, no meetings or money. We always made it clear we were a small and unfunded group, not least to make the point we were not a channel for another interest when political lobbying. In short, the campaign materially had nothing but knowledge, persistence, an email list and a book of stamps. The headed paper design was from a word processor. But there is the important issue of accountability. Without the membership, the meetings and the policy statements, how can the campaign be accountable to the disabled people's movement? The answer suggested here was partly in the open method of working.

Any campaign with a singularity of purpose can sometimes be criticised for being 'a single issue group', yet perhaps there are circumstances when having such a singularity of purpose is most effective. The need for accessible public transport had been identified many years ago by the disabled people's movement as a key objective, it is one of the Seven Needs for Independent Living as developed by the Derbyshire Coalition of Disabled People in the UK, and is a very practical example of the effectiveness of the social model of disability.

So, in terms of accountability, I had no qualms about the strong messages given out by the campaign. Equally, the inclusive and widely drawn range of organisations within the email list, which included many of the key progressive disability organisations in Europe and beyond, helped to ensure that the messages from the group remained faithful to the agenda of the disabled people's movement, and that an open dialogue was always followed.

The influence of allies

One lesson learnt while being part of this campaign is that you probably just get to know a half of what goes on in terms of lobbying. Many times we have written to key individuals without a reply, but sometimes with a change for the better a few weeks later. One managing director of a large bus company, who we suspected of being sympathetic to our campaign, replied to one of our letters to him asking him to influence others in the industry with just one sentence, 'I shall see what I can do.'

I suspect he, and many others, greatly and quietly helped us.

5. Outcomes and Conclusions

For a campaign which has been run with no office, staff or budget, it has been very rewarding to see that sometimes success is still possible without the huge resources of the big players. I have tried to draw out some useful points from the methods used, in the hope that they might be passed on to similar campaigns with lessons for the future.

There does now seem to be no going back – access to buses for disabled people is here to stay. In London when the Mayor had the articulated ‘bendy buses’ removed he could not replace them with the old Routemaster buses but instead he commissioned a new accessible version of these old-style buses. There has been a cultural change in the transport industry and in the politics that shape it.

Would this have happened anyway? Perhaps, but the changes would not have been implemented as fast.

But there is still much to do. Buses for All (Europe) was not the first campaign for accessible public transport and it will not be the last one either. Buses can still be inaccessible if the driver refuses to be co-operative. Coach design is still in the dark ages. Rush hour travelling for wheelchair users is often more miserable than for other passengers. But the default position has moved – 80 million disabled people living in the European Union are now part of the general population for travelling by bus – it is truly *public* transport.

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Appendix A - Buses for All 95, Exhibition and Conference

Friday 16 June 1995

G-Mex, Manchester, England

Conference Flyer [extracts]:

Speakers and Facilitators:

Richard Armitage,	Conference Co-organiser
Tony Baldwinson,	Conference Co-organiser
Geoff Ball,	Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
Elizabeth Barber,	Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive
Colin Barnes,	Disability Research Unit, Leeds University
Andrew Braddock,	Head of Disabled Passengers Unit, London Regional Transport
Shelley Burke,	MENCAP Parliamentary Officer
Kevin Carr,	Director & General Manager, Coastline
Chris Cheek,	Director, TAS Partnership
Cliff Dallenger,	Merseytravel (Merseyside Passenger Transport Executive)
Trevor Erskine,	Robert Wright & Son (Coachworks)
David Finnegan,	Merseytravel (Merseyside Passenger Transport Executive)
Karen Gibson,	Driver Training Services
Dr John Gill,	Chief Scientist, Royal National Institute for the Blind
Andrew Gipson,	Essex County Council

Lorraine Gradwell,	Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People (Conference Chair)
Stuart Jones,	Editorial Director, Bus and Coach Buyer
Stephen Joseph,	Director, Transport 2000
Steve Kearnes,	London Borough of Newham
Gary Kent,	Researcher for Harry Barnes MP
Paul Lynch,	Stagecoach East London
Tom Megahy,	Member of the European Parliament, & Transport Committee
Robert Missen,	European Commission
Cllr Martin Pagel,	Manchester City Council
Danae Penn,	Transport for Disabled People Officer, European Commission
Neil Scales,	Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive
Ian Stanton,	Greater Manchester Coalition of Disabled People
Stephen Styles,	Surrey County Council
Roger Tripp,	Greater Manchester Passenger Transport Executive
Geoff Warren,	Accessible Sustainable Transport Integration Project, Camden Council
Adrian Wickens,	Planning Manager, Volvo Bus

Buses for All 95 is part of DaRT's *All Aboard* campaign for equal access to public transport.

All Aboard c/o DaRT, 25 Leighton Road, London NW5 2QD, UK.

DaRT (Dial-a-Ride & Taxicard Users) launched a national campaign for equal access to public transport in early 1994 called *All Aboard*. Buses for All 95 is part of *All Aboard's* ongoing work to ensure that all public transport becomes fully accessible to people with disabilities and people with reduced mobility. DaRT is a registered

charity (no. 293946), with over 17,000 disabled members, and is an organisation controlled by disabled people. DaRT has also developed extensive European contacts both as a member of the HELIOS II Programme and co-ordinator of the Buses for All (Europe) network.

“I hope all of those involved in the provision and use of bus and coach services will consider attending Buses for All 95. Ensuring that such services become accessible to all members of the public is an important aim, and would represent a significant improvement for all people with reduced mobility. As a patron of All Aboard I am sure the event will play a significant part in our campaign for equal access to public transport.” **Evelyn Glennie OBE**, Patron of the All Aboard campaign.

“Volvo is ready to meet the challenge to produce the vehicles for a high quality and fully accessible public transport system. The Buses for All 95 event will be an important forum for debating the issues surrounding this challenge which faces bus manufacturers, operators and passengers alike.” **Volvo Bus**.

“The Government bowed to cross-party pressure over opening up access to public transport in a policy U-turn last night ... Minister for Disabled People, William Hague, announced in the report stage debate that, ‘in the light of the representations that have been made ... the Government is now prepared to introduce provisions at a later stage which will amend existing legislation or, where necessary, introduce new powers covering buses, trains, coaches, trams and underground systems.” **The Guardian**, 29 March 1995.

“The CBI strongly supports improved access to employment, shopping, leisure, transport and similar facilities for the mutual benefit of disabled people and our members. We hope that the Buses for All 95 conference and exhibition will provide an opportunity for those concerned with improving the accessibility of bus and coach

services in the UK to discuss ways of working towards this worthwhile goal.” **CBI Employment Affairs.**

“Comprehensive and enforceable legislation to remove the discrimination faced by disabled people in our society is coming - sooner rather than later I hope. It is in the interest of the business community in general, and the transport industry in particular, to respond positively to the opportunities such legislation will create. Ending discrimination will open up new markets for manufacturers, increase passenger numbers for operators, improve vehicle and infrastructure standards for all service users, and most importantly, offer all people with reduced mobility the same access to transport that the rest of society takes for granted. Buses for All 95 offers a great chance for all sides of the transport debate to come together and set out plans for improving the accessibility of bus and coach services, and I look forward to the conference recommendations for achieving this important goal.” **Roger Berry MP.**

“Age Concern calls for the implementation of mandatory access standards for all public transport vehicles. Furthermore, older and disabled people, and their representative organisations, should have a consultative role in the future design and planning of all aspects of transport provision. We hope Buses for All 95 will put the needs of all people with reduced mobility firmly on the agenda.” **Age Concern England.**

The conference and exhibition facilities are second to none, and Buses for All 95 will be one of the first events to make use of the new G-Mex Seminar Centre.

Appendix B - Buses for All 95, Seminar 1 Handout

Tom Megahy, Member of the European Parliament

European legislation is becoming increasingly important and is being felt more directly by citizens in all member states of the European Union. 'Directives' or 'regulations' are issued which must be incorporated into the laws of each individual member state, and, in addition, there are non-binding recommendations.

Over the years there have been a number of initiatives in the field of transport and its accessibility for those with mobility difficulties.

1991 Proposed directive on minimum requirements to improve the mobility and safe transport to work of workers with reduced mobility. Because of disagreements between member states this is still being held up by the Council of Ministers.

1992 'The Future Development of the Common Transport Policy'. This document laid out the aim of European Union transport policy emphasising 'sustainability'. A small section was reserved for 'Transport for People with Reduced Mobility'.

1993 European Parliament own initiative report by the Transport Committee on 'Social Aspects of the Transport Sector'. This included a lengthy addendum of 'The position of people with Reduced Mobility'.

1995 Draft Directive on Buses and Coaches. This document having been under discussion for several years is now expected to emerge from the Commission. It has already raised a number of issues and produced a great deal of lobbying. This is a technical Directive seeking to harmonise standards but there is unlikely to be a

mandatory requirement for all new buses and coaches to be fully accessible. The technical people who have devised the proposal have carried out the minimum of consultation and, following strong representations from myself and others the document has been given a serious overhaul. This Directive has also disturbed British bus companies who say it will lead to higher fares, reduced services and the end of double decker buses.

1995 We now have a new Transport Commissioner, Neil Kinnock, who has confirmed that he will be pushing the projects contained in the Action Plan and giving priority to accessibility. The Commission is about to bring out a Green Paper on 'Citizens Networks' which will highlight plans for 1996 and will cover accessibility.

The relevant departments (Directorate-General) of the European Commission are:

DG III Industry

DG V Employment, Industrial Relations & Social Affairs

DG VII Transport

Appendix C – European Commission Press Release

Ref. ip/97/531

Brussels, 18 June 1997

The Commission is proposing a Directive on the stability and safety of buses and coaches

The European Commission has adopted a proposal for a Directive on technical provisions for buses and coaches proposed by Martin Bangemann, the Commissioner for industrial affairs. The provisions concern the stability of the vehicle, the minimum size of seats and the spacing between seats, the number and arrangement of the doors and emergency exits and other requirements on vehicle stability and the improvement of safety. Until now, technical requirements for buses and coaches have been laid down in national legislation. Makers of buses have therefore not been able to obtain EC type-approval. The new Directive is intended to enable manufacturers of buses, coaches and bus bodies to apply for and obtain type approval in one single Member State which is then valid throughout the European Union.

Until now, only manufacturers of cars have been able to apply for type-approval which is valid throughout the Union. Under this system, a type of vehicle which has been tested and approved in one Member State may be sold and put on the road in all other Member States as well. For other vehicles, including buses and coaches, meaning passenger carrying vehicles with more than eight seats excluding the driver's seat, Directives are still needed in two important areas before EC type-approval becomes possible. The Directive on masses and dimensions is still going through the

legislative process. The Directive now proposed on vehicle stability and improved safety measures to protect against injuries caused by overturning is the last part of the series of regulations needed before buses and coaches can also get EC type-approval.

The proposed Directive covers the following points:

- the distribution of the overall weight of the passengers in order to avoid overloading individual axles;
- the number, type and arrangement of the service doors and emergency exits;
- the technical requirements for doors;
- the steps;
- access to the doors, emergency exits, gangways and seats;
- handrails and handholds for standing passengers;
- the minimum size of seats and spacing between seats;
- the stability of the vehicle and
- the strength of the body structure.

[...]

Access for people with limited mobility

The Directive also lays down that *vehicles used for urban services must be accessible to people with limited mobility, including those confined to wheelchairs*. As regards vehicles used for regular inter-urban lines, the Commission will carry out supplementary studies to find an optimal solution that will ensure accessibility to people with reduced mobility. In the light of these studies, the Commission will

present concrete proposals to modify the Directive before the end of 1997. [emphasis added]

Derogations for double decker and minibuses

The Commission discussed the proposal for a Directive in detail with experts and with representatives from the Member States, the European Parliament and industry before adopting it. While most of the representatives of the Member States and industry approved of the proposal, concerns were voiced especially by the United Kingdom and Ireland where double decker buses and particularly narrow minibuses and midibuses are widely used. Compliance with all the requirements of the Directive would create technical difficulties for these types of bus, e.g. a minimum seat width of 45 cm in minibuses. The Commission's proposal takes account of this by allowing Member States not to apply certain provisions of the Directive to double decker buses or to minibuses and midibuses. However, the other Member States do not have to allow these vehicles to be sold, registered or put into service in their territory.

Once the Directive has been adopted under Article 100a of the Treaty, manufacturers of buses and coaches or their bodies will have a choice of applying for EC type-approval or for national approvals which are valid only in the individual Member States.

Appendix D - Letter from UK Government

Dept of Environment, Transport and the Regions
London

26 November 1998

Dear ...

Bus and Coach Construction Directive

Thank you for your letter of 11 November to Glenda Jackson which has been passed to me for reply. I understand that the European Parliament have now voted in favour of the proposals by the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs and Industrial Policy. Our initial reaction to the amendments proposed by the Parliament is that they are completely unacceptable and unworkable.

The UN-ECE Regulations on bus construction, referred to in amendment 4, are not acceptable to a majority of Member States. Although the Directive is based on these requirements, they have been modified substantially during discussions in Commission MVWG [motor vehicle working group] meetings, and subsequently in Council meetings. For example there is no provision in these Regulations for wheelchair access and the step heights specified are unacceptable. Furthermore we believe that the provisions in UN-ECE Regulations would make some existing UK vehicle designs uneconomic to build and operate.

Amendment 7 means that Member States could not refuse the sale, entry into service or use of vehicles which meet national type approval. This means that until such time as the technical working party produces the detailed technical specifications, national

standards from any of the Member States would have to be accepted. Thus any accessibility regulations proposed by a Member State, including those currently being prepared by the UK under the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act, would be rendered completely ineffective until such time as the Annexes to the Directive were completed. It is worth noting that an ISO technical group has been looking specifically at the issue of harmonised standards for accessible vehicles for some 18 years, and has not yet reached a satisfactory conclusion.

The technical requirements contained in amendment 7 are in some cases worse than the UN-ECE requirements (interior step height) and are contradictory with other amendments proposed (wheelchair space).

As the information on the amendments suggested by the European Parliament has just emerged, and there have not been any Council meetings on this subject during the Austrian Presidency, I cannot provide any information on the views of other Member States.

Yours sincerely, ...

Appendix E - A basic guide to the EU bus and coach directive

In late October 1997 the European Commission published a long awaited and very important document for disabled people, not just throughout Europe but across the world, in terms of access to public transport. This document proposes new rules for the design of buses and coaches, which are used for around 80% of public transport journeys.

Perhaps sometime in 1998 this document will become a new Europe-wide law. The European single market is now bigger than the USA, and the same type of bus and coach built for use in Europe will also be exported and sold throughout the world.

But there is a lot of detail within the document, and the process of getting it agreed is complex. This article is to help set out the basic points. All jargon is highlighted, and explained the first time it is used. Some examples used are for readers in Britain. Please feel free to adapt the points to suit other countries.

Introduction

If you have a new car, you probably know that you do not need to start getting the MOT certificates for it until it is three years old.

What you might not also know is that, even as a new car, it already has to have a certificate from the Government before it can be sold to you. This certificate is called its *type approval*. It means what it says - this type of car is approved for sale, and every type of car must have one. This is how the Government makes sure that cars are safe to drive.

Buses and coaches also have *type approval* certificates. These are more complicated than for cars. For example, they also say how many emergency exits a bus or coach must have.

Fifteen different countries, fifteen different certificates

At the moment, each of the 15 different Governments in the European Union (EU) has its own rules on deciding whether a newly designed bus or coach can have *type approval*. So a company can build a bus sell it in some countries but not in others.

The whole purpose of the *single market* is that these barriers between countries should disappear to allow for free trade and movement of people. This is why the *European Commission* has published what it hopes will be a single set of design rules for all 15 Governments to use. The *European Commission (EC)* is similar to the civil service, and has paid staff who can suggest and monitor laws across the EU. Most of its staff are in Brussels in Belgium, with a few others in Luxembourg and elsewhere.

The proposed law will allow each of the 15 Governments to keep their own method of *type approval* if they wish, but they cannot stop bus and coach manufacturers applying for the *EU type approval*. The advantage to the manufacturer is that, if they have the EU certificate, then no Government can refuse permission for a company to sell or use their bus or coach in that Government's state. So it is cheaper and simpler for companies.

This does also mean that if Government X wants to continue to let its local companies sell or use 'dodgy buses' by having slack rules, then Government X can continue to operate its system, but these 'dodgy buses' can be refused permission for sale or use by all the other Governments if they want.

So, that is probably all you need to know about *type approval*, and probably all you would want to know! What about access for disabled people ?

Fundamental problems

So far there seem to be two fundamental problems with the proposal. The definition of access is not good enough, so for example it doesn't include people using powered wheelchairs. And the access arrangements that are proposed do not even apply to all types of buses, nor to coaches.

Low floor buses

It has been said a number of times recently, but it is still worth repeating, that “**low floor buses are not necessarily accessible buses**”. But the proposal states that, if the floor is 15 cm (six inches) from the road, then the bus does not need to have a ramp or a lift fitted.

You will see from the following definition in the EC proposal that their idea of access is very limited, and not acceptable.

“Accessibility test

The vehicle and the boarding aids shall be such that a wheelchair user being able to use normally his arms and hands and sitting on a platform 15 cm above the ground (representing a pavement) is able to board easily in the vehicle through the service doors designed for this purpose, when the relevant access controls are operated.

The requirement shall also be assumed to be met if the vehicle passes the test without any boarding aid in the case of certain low-floor buses.” (page 137)

A *boarding aid* is something fitted to a bus to facilitate access. The usual ones are - ramps, lifts, and kneeling systems where the bus

suspension system lets out some air and the bus falls as low as it can. It then has to rise again before it can move off.

The definition of access given above is very loose. It would not work for anyone using a powered wheelchair, as these often weigh 40 kg to 50 kg plus the weight of the person. Even if there is no step, just having a small gap between the vehicle and the pavement (say, 3 cm) is too much of a barrier. And, of course, very few if any pavements would be at the right height.

Further, when there is an accident or breakdown and the passengers need to leave the bus onto the road (*emergency egress*), any wheelchair users would have to be lifted down. If there is a lift fitted to the bus, the proposal says it must be capable of safely lifting a 300 kg load. The EC itself has issued guideline limits of 5 kg to 25 kg per person for manual lifting and lowering at work, depending on the circumstances. The smaller weight limits apply to loads near floor level. So, are we then to expect passers-by to safely lower a powered wheelchair user ?

Recommendation 1

There must be a ramp or a lift fitted to every bus. It is a safety issue and a human rights issue.

Only some buses might be accessible

The second fundamental problem is that the access rules do not apply to every bus, nor to any coach.

In the proposal are the following two key paragraphs:

“Article 4

1. Vehicles of Class I designed to provide scheduled urban and interurban services shall conform ... to the requirements for at least one of the boarding aids specified in Annex VII.

2. Where necessary, the Commission shall submit to the European Parliament and the Council, on the basis of a full study, a proposal to amend this Directive in order to lay down the technical requirements for Class II vehicles used for scheduled urban and interurban services.” (page 18)

Classes of vehicle

Buses and coaches with a capacity of more than 22 passengers are divided into three classes of vehicle, as follows.

Class I vehicles constructed with areas for standing passengers, to allow frequent passenger movement [some buses]

Class II vehicles constructed principally for the carriage of seated passengers, and designed to allow the carriage of standing passengers in the gangway and in a limited area [some buses]

Class III vehicles constructed exclusively for the carriage of seated passengers. [coaches]

When the EC issued a press release on 18 June 1997, they said that access arrangements would apply to buses (vehicle classes I and II) and that they needed more time to study how best to achieve full access to coaches (vehicle class III). A group of experts was told to produce a report by Christmas 1997.

The current proposal is very different, and unacceptable. What is to stop every bus manufacturer saying that their type of bus is Class II? And the possible amendment to the proposal which gets a mention in Article 4 (page 18) has no date set, and might never happen at all. It would not be the first time this has happened. To coin a phrase, you could drive a coach and horses through these access regulations!

Recommendation 2

The current proposals must apply to both Classes I and II buses. If Class III coaches are not included now, there must be a deadline specified now saying when the proposal must be published.

Political lobbying

In the preamble to the proposal, the EC says some fine words about disabled people's rights to accessible public transport. We have "it is essential that the Directive be forward-looking and progressive" (page 9), and "it is realistic to require that passenger carrying vehicles designed to provide scheduled urban and interurban services should be accessible" (page 10). As we have seen, these sentiments do not follow through into practical details.

But the final decision is not taken by the EC, they just write the proposal. It is now for the European Parliament (EP) and the Council of Ministers to decide the final version. The EP has a track record of being progressive on disability issues, and has an all-party Disability Intergroup which takes a very close interest in issues such as this. Details are at the end of the article.

The Council of Ministers is a different kettle of fish entirely. It is a meeting point for Ministers from the 15 Governments, and they often try to water down proposals, and to take money off budgets. Unlike the EP, their meetings are in private but recently they have started to publish the results of their votes. But they are powerful, and if they can be convinced then most loose ends will fall into place.

Copies of the directive

This is 158 pages long and you can get a free copy by writing to:

...
DG 3, European Commission
rue de la Loi 200
B - 1040 Brussels

Belgium

Fax: 00 32 2 296 9637

Its reference is: COM(97) 276 final. It is dated 18 June 1997 but it was only made public late in October 1997.

The European Parliament

You can write to your MEP, and to the Disability Intergroup, at the address below. Local libraries can also tell you the name and local address of your MEP. Letters posted to Brussels with a first class stamp can weigh up to 20 grammes.

...

Disability Intergroup

...

European Parliament

rue Belliard 97 - 113

B - 1047 Brussels

Belgium

Fax: 00 32 2 284 9529

The UK Parliament

You can write to your MP, at the address below. You can ask your MP to press the UK Government to adopt a progressive position when this proposal is discussed in the Council of Ministers.

The House of Commons

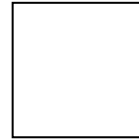
London SW1A 1AA.

Other lobbying

You can also raise this proposal within any disability and transport organisations you are a member of. You and others can probably think of other points to make. Even if you disagree with some of the above comments, please make your views known, and as soon as possible. The EP will start to discuss this proposal in December 1997.

Appendix F - Buses for All (Europe) Postcards for each Member of Parliament

16 / III / 2000



Λεωφορειον για ολους
Autobuses para todos
L'autobus pour tous
L'autobus per tutti
L'autobús per tot
Bus voor geheel
Bus para tudo
Busse für alle
Buses for all
Buss för all
Bus til alle

.....
European Parliament
rue Belliard 97 - 113
B - 1047 Brussels/Bruxelles

----- reverse side of postcard -----

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Appendix G - Letter to EU Council of Ministers Secretariat

Λεωφορειον για ολους
Autobuses para todos
Bussen voor iedereen
L'autobus pour tous
L'autobus per tutti
L'autobús per tot
Bus para tudo
Busse für alle
Buses for all
Buss för all
Bus til alle

10 October 2000

To:

... General Secretariat to the EU Council of Ministers
... European Parliament
... European Commission, Enterprise DG F5

Dear ...

EU draft Directive on Buses and Coaches, reference 1997/0176 (COD)

Firstly, I would like to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to everyone involved in adding Article 3 to the draft directive, giving disabled people including wheelchair users access to the Class I type of bus ("the urban bus"). This is a profound change which will improve the quality of life of many disabled people, and will act as

an incentive to many other organisations to work in a truly inclusive manner.

You may already be aware that we still have a concern on one part of Annex VII where we are asking for the following amendment to paragraph 3.6.2 be agreed, which deletes the reference there to paragraph 3.11.2:

Annex VII

3.6.2. There shall be at least one doorway through which wheelchair users can pass. In the case of vehicles of Class I at least one wheelchair access door shall be a service door. The wheelchair access door shall bear a boarding aid complying with the provisions of paragraph ~~3.11.2~~, 3.11.3 or 3.11.4 of this Annex.

Reasons

We recognise the benefits of a kneeling system, especially for many elderly and disabled people. However, for wheelchair users a kneeling bus *with no* ramp or lift is still a barrier, even when the pavement is raised. In summary, the reasons are:

1. the bus cannot always get close to the pavement, because of traffic conditions including bad parking;
2. where a bus can get close to the pavement, there is still a sideways gap of 150mm to 250mm to prevent damage to the bus from the pavement, and wheelchair users cannot cross this gap without the danger of tipping out;
3. if a bus has to evacuate its passengers into the road for safety reasons, any wheelchair users cannot leave the bus without a ramp. Relying on other people to lift a heavy electric wheelchair plus a disabled person is unsafe;
4. raised pavements can actually create more of a barrier at bus stops for wheelchair users, especially where there are no drop kerbs (kerb cuts) at the side to enter the roadway to approach a bus when it cannot reach the pavement.

We believe that kneeling buses need to have a ramp to deal with these circumstances.

Many kneeling buses are already fitted with a simple ramp which folds out from the door. We underline that we are not asking for anything that is not already widely available and easily capable of adoption as an EU standard. It is possible that some bus manufacturers will need time to phase in this change.

Buses for All (Europe) looks forward to working with representatives of the EU Council, the Parliament and others over the coming months to make this a reality.

Although the co-decision making process allows for discussions on the Common Position of a draft directive to last three months, which we understand in this case would be up to 28 December 2000, it would be helpful if agreement could be made by 3 December 2000, the International Day of Disabled People.

If it would be useful, we are happy to provide any further material or to meet to discuss these points.

We look forward to hearing from you,

Yours sincerely,

Buses for All (Europe)

Copies to ...

Appendix H - Key Extracts from the 2001 Directive:

‘passenger with reduced mobility’ means all people who have difficulty when using public transport, such as disabled people (including people with sensory and intellectual impairments, and wheelchair users), people with limb impairments, people of small stature, people with heavy luggage, elderly people, pregnant women, people with shopping trolleys, and people with children (including children seated in pushchairs);

‘wheelchair user’ means a person who due to infirmity or disability uses a wheelchair for mobility;

A minimum number of forward or rearward facing seats designated as priority seats for disabled passengers shall be situated in a position near to a service door(s) suitable for boarding and alighting. The minimum number of priority seats shall be four in Class I, two in Class II and Class III and one in Class A and B. A seat that folds out of the way when not in use shall not be designated as a priority seat.

‘Low-floor bus’ is a vehicle of Class I, II or A in which at least 35 % of the area available for standing passengers (or in its forward section in the case of articulated vehicles, or in its lower deck in the case of double-decker vehicles) forms an area without steps and includes access to at least one service door.

‘priority seat’ means a seat with additional space for a passenger with reduced mobility and marked accordingly;

‘boarding device’ means a device to facilitate wheelchair access to vehicles, such as lifts, ramps, etc.;

‘kneeling system’ means a system which lowers and lifts totally or partially the body of a vehicle relative to the normal position of travel;

‘lift’ means a device or system with a platform that can be raised and lowered to provide passenger access between the floor of a passenger compartment and the ground or kerb;

‘ramp’ means a device to bridge the gap between the floor of a passenger compartment and the ground or kerb;

‘portable ramp’ means a ramp that may be detached from the vehicle structure and capable of being deployed by a driver or crew member;

There shall be at least one doorway through which wheelchair users can pass. In the case of vehicles of Class I, at least one wheelchair access door shall be a service door. The wheelchair access door shall bear a boarding aid complying with the provisions of paragraph 3.11.2 (a kneeling system) of this Annex; this shall be in combination with the provisions of paragraph 3.11.3 (a lift) or 3.11.4 (a ramp) of this Annex. (p94)

With effect from 13 August 2003 Member States may not refuse EC type-approval or national type approval:

— of a vehicle,

— of a bodywork,

— of a vehicle the bodywork of which has already been type-approved as a separate technical unit,

or refuse or prohibit the sale, registration or entry into service of a vehicle or of a bodywork as a separate technical unit, on grounds

relating to the provisions for vehicles used for the carriage of passengers and comprising more than eight seats in addition to the driver's seat, if the requirements of this Directive and the Annexes thereto are satisfied.

Appendix I - Details of Related Organisations

USA: ADAPT's Long Climb Towards Equality

Wade Blank was a non-disabled Presbyterian minister who worked with Dr Martin Luther King on the civil rights struggle in the 1960s. ... [In the 1970s] he founded one of the first centres for independent living in Denver, the Atlantis Community On 5 July, 1978, Wade and 19 disabled people stepped off the sidewalk at Colfax and Broadway in the centre of Denver and trapped a bus for three days. ... [Following this, in] 1983, ADAPT (the American Disabled for Accessible Public Transport) was born and staged its first national action in Denver, demanding that all disabled people could ride public transit.

The *We Will Ride* campaign lasted until 1990, winning victories throughout the USA and inspiring disabled people all over the world to use the tactics of non-violent civil disobedience to “boldly go where everyone else has been before”. It inspired the birth in the UK of the *Campaign for Accessible Transport* and subsequently the *Disabled People's Direct Action Network* (DAN). ... In 1990, with the ADA [Americans with Disabilities Act] signed, ADAPT became the American Disabled for Attendant Programs Today, turning its energy to getting people out of nursing homes and supporting them in the community.

Source: Disability Now. (2008), *ADAPT's long climb towards equality*, <http://www.disabilitynow.org.uk/latest-news2/world-view/adapts-long-climb-towards-equality>, viewed 03/01/2012.

London: *Transport for All* has been championing the cause of accessible transport in the capital for two decades.

As an organisation of disabled and older people we have always been determined to ensure that the grass roots experiences and opinions of service users are always heard by those who commission and run the transport network. TfA [Transport for All] was formerly known as Dial-A-Ride and Taxicard users (DaRT) and was formed through the amalgamation of the user groups of these two services. Over the years, our remit has widened to reflect the fact that more and more of London's transport network is being 'unlocked' for disabled people to use. There is no doubt that the tireless work of decades of disabled transport campaigners has yielded many victories – but much more has yet to be done to get the affordable, reliable, and accessible transport network that those early campaigners dreamed about.

Source: Transport for All. (2010), *Transport for All has been championing the cause of accessible transport in the capital for two decades*, <http://www.transportforall.org.uk/>, viewed 03/01/2012.

Appendix J - Seven Needs for Independent Living

The “Seven Needs” were first developed by Derbyshire Coalition of Disabled People and identified those needs as follows:

Information: Disabled people require information on what is available to assist with independent living.

Peer Support: Disabled People need the support of other disabled people to discuss and draw strength from our shared experiences.

Housing: Disabled People need accessible housing. By this we mean accommodation that meets our access requirements and is close to family, friends and local facilities so we can live independently

Equipment: Many disabled people need information and resources to obtain practical equipment to assist them in living independently.

Personal Assistants: This is the one to one support that some disabled people need to live in their own home and be part of the community.

Transport: This may mean improved public transport in terms of physical access, information about the routes, more assistance for passengers who are unsure about using public transport.

Access: The most obvious examples are about physical access such as dropped kerbs, tactile paving, provision of induction loops etc. However access goes much further than this because there are barriers created by systems, practices and attitudes which prevent disabled people from participating.

Appendix K - European Parliament vote, 14 February 2001

DISABILITY INTERGROUP
INTERGROUPE HANDICAPES
INTERGRUPPE BEHINDERTE MENSCHEN

Chair

Richard Howitt MEP (PSE)

Vice Chairs

Bartho Pronk MEP (PPE), Rodi Kratsa MEP (PPE), Dieter Koch MEP (PPE), Jan Andersson MEP (PSE), Carmen Cerdeira MEP (PSE), Liz Lynne MEP (ELDR), Brian Crowley MEP (UEN) Alain Esclopé MEP (EDD), Ilda Figueiredo MEP (GUE), Patricia McKenna MEP (VERT)

Brussels, 16 February 2001

The 14 February 2001 marked a historic victory for disabled people in securing a winning vote at the European Parliament in Strasbourg on the 'Bus and Coach Directive'* which will mean all buses in the European Union will have to be fully accessible for disabled people. The Disability Intergroup of the European Parliament together with disabled people in Europe have been campaigning on this Directive for the last nine years; a Directive of great importance to all disabled people in Europe.

The successful outcome follows a dramatic, last ditch attempt by a large group of MEPs to vote against this very important Directive and vote down the Council common position. The Rapporteur of the

Parliament Report, Bill Miller MEP and the members of the Disability Intergroup of the European Parliament led by Chair Richard Howitt MEP together with the European disability movement launched an intensive campaign to save this Directive from defeat. The vote was won by 296 votes to 224.

Of particular importance is that the European Parliament voted in favour of a key amendment to the Directive to guarantee level access to all new buses in urban areas for persons with reduced mobility including wheelchair users negotiated by the Disability Intergroup Chair, Richard Howitt MEP and Rapporteur Bill Miller MEP. “to achieve level access requires a boarding aid - a lift or a ramp - because a low-floor bus on its own is not enough” said Richard Howitt MEP during the plenary debate.

This amendment requires that all urban buses must be fitted with a kneeling system in combination with a ramp or lift unless local infrastructure design already guarantees level access to secure boarding.

The Disability Intergroup and the European Disability Forum strongly calls on the Council to support the Parliament report and the amendment on boarding aids in the final approval stage in the next two weeks.

[*full title: “Special provisions for vehicles used for carriage of persons comprising more than eight seats in addition to the driver’s seat”]

President - Richard Howitt MEP

Appendix L - European Disability Forum press release, 26 June 2001

*Urban buses to be fitted with a ramp or a lift:
EU Conciliation Committee finally reaches a compromise
on Buses and Coach Directive*

Brussels, 26 June 2001

Four months after the favourable vote of the European Parliament on the 'Bus and Coach Directive' the Council of the European Union representatives have finally agreed, last night, a position with Parliament that all urban buses operating in the EU must be fitted with a ramp or a lift in addition to a kneeling system. This will mean all urban buses across the European Union will have to be fully accessible for all disabled people. The Council and the Parliament reached a compromise in Conciliation Committee after several weeks of discussions. Disabled people celebrate this decision coming up after nine years of active campaigning.

“This is a great victory for our movement, benefiting not only disabled people but also older people, women with children, people carrying heavy luggage. We will now continue working intensively through our National members so the Directive rapidly becomes a reality all across Europe”, said Mr Yannis Vardakastanis, EDF President.

“This is an historic breakthrough in the campaign for accessible public transport, which will change the lives of millions of disabled people and change the face of our cities for all” says Richard Howitt MEP

EDF is particularly grateful for the work and support of Bill Miller MEP (European Parliament Rapporteur) and Richard Howitt MEP (President of the Disability Intergroup) who were central to negotiating this successful decision for disabled people.

The European Disability Forum celebrates the Council decision of supporting the European Parliament's proposals regarding boarding aids and calls the Member States for a rapid implementation of the new Directive in all EU Member States.

The European Disability Forum (EDF) is a European umbrella organisation with 70 European NGOs and 17 National Councils from all of the EU and EEA as members. EDF represents the interests of 37 million disabled citizens in the EU and EEA. Our mission is to advance disabled people's human rights and promote equal opportunities in the EU Institutions and Member States in accordance with principles of non-discrimination.

Appendix M - Detailed Timeline of Events

Table 1: Detailed timeline of events in the campaign for fully accessible buses in Europe

Dates	Description	Fig 1
1980s	The Campaign for Accessible Transport (CAT) was active in London with disabled people's street protests.	
1990 onwards	The Direct Action Network (DAN) was active across England with disabled people's street protests for accessible buses.	
1990 to 16 December 1991	The European Commission (DG5, social affairs department) proposes a draft Directive on minimum requirements to improve the mobility and safe transport to work of workers with reduced mobility, but this fails to get enough support from Governments. (Appendix B)	a
1992	The UK Presidency of the EU considers the call for accessible public transport to be in breach of the subsidiarity principle.	b
1992	The European Commission (DG7, transport department) publishes 'The Future Development of the Common Transport Policy' which describes the aims of European Union transport policy emphasising sustainability, with a small section on transport	c

	for people with reduced mobility.	
1992	As with the DG5 report, the DG7 report does not gain political momentum and fails to proceed.	d
October 1992	The European Commission (DG3, single market department) publishes a proposed Directive on 'special provisions for buses and coaches' (DG3 4076/90 EN Rev.2) with an expectation of it taking effect in January 1994. This DG3 version of a Draft Directive produced intense lobbying from many political and commercial organisations.	e
1993	The European Parliament publishes an 'own initiative' report by the EP Transport Committee titled Social Aspects of the Transport Sector. This included a lengthy addendum of the position of people with reduced mobility.	f
1995	The Draft Directive on Buses and Coaches, having been under discussion for several years, was expected to emerge from the European Commission 'this year' from DG3 (single market department).	
15 June 1995	Buses for All (Europe) Conference by DART in Manchester. Tom Megahy MEP stated: The expected Draft Directive "has already raised a number of issues and produced a great deal of lobbying. This is a technical Directive seeking to harmonise standards but there is unlikely to be a mandatory requirement for all new buses and	g

	coaches to be fully accessible. The technical people who have devised the proposal have carried out the minimum of consultation and, following strong representations from myself and others the document has been given a serious overhaul. This Directive has also disturbed British bus companies who say it will lead to higher fares, reduced services and the end of double decker buses.”	
18 June 1997	EC issues the Draft Directive for Buses and Coaches: (COM (97) 0276), with modifications in October 1997. (Appendix C)	h
March 1998	EP amends the Draft Directive on First Reading	
19 July 1998	Buses for All (Europe) issues a briefing to members to lobby MEPs for mandatory access, because of centre-right amendments which would remove access provisions.	i
October 1998	EP centre-right parties now agrees to mandatory access in principle, but there are still issues on mandatory boarding aids	
18 November 1998	EP agrees the First Reading and sends the Draft Directive to the ECM	j
14 June 1999	ECM Working Group amends the Draft Directive, including wider doorways, allowing more types of low-floor bus, but there were still elements in the text of the Draft Directive which would have excluded disabled people’s	k

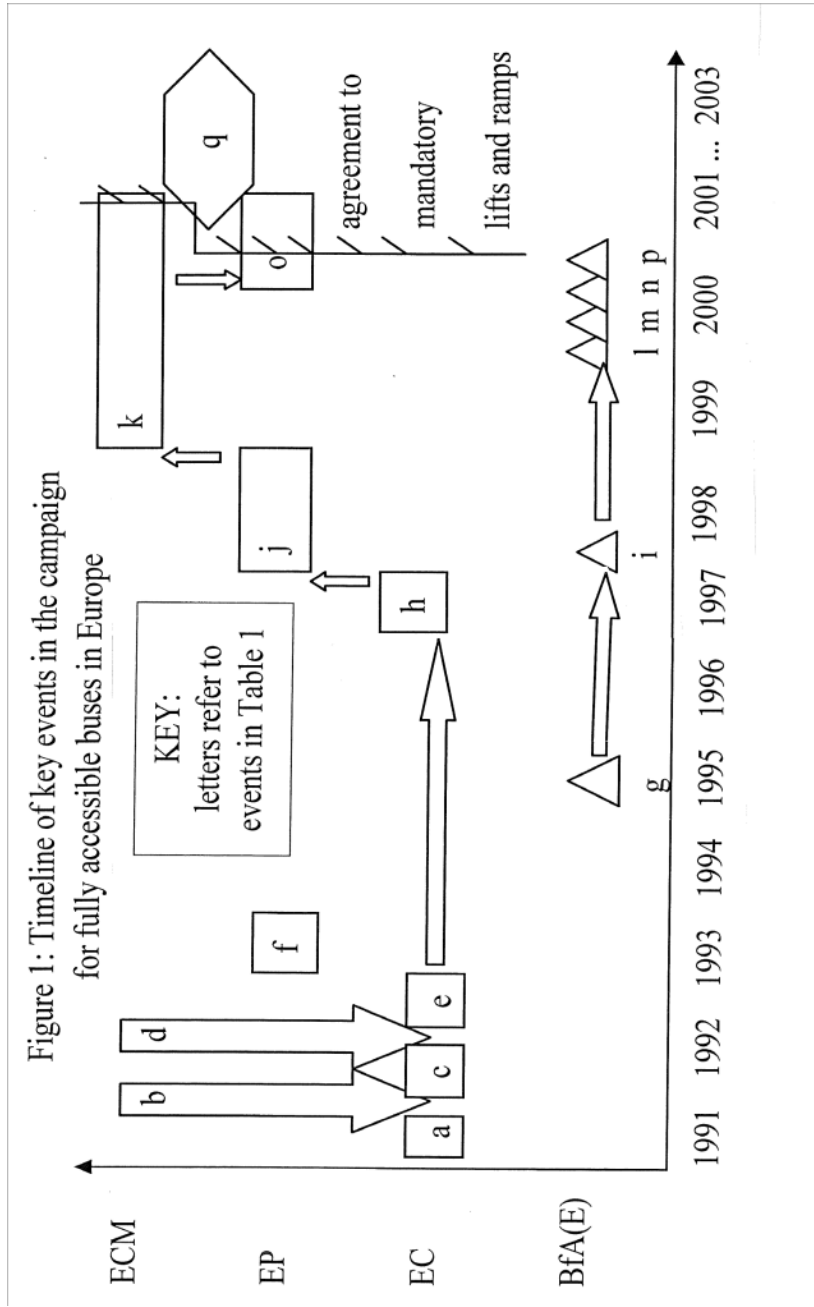
	access to buses. Draft Directive is sent back to EP.	
February 2000	Lobbying postcards to MEPs issued by BfA(E) (Appendix F)	1
14 February 2000	ECM Working Group takes an indicative vote in private from each of 15 Member States.	
18 February 2000	Report reaches BfA(E) that the support for full access to buses from two Member States is weakening, and that the ECM Working Group is 'fed up' of access, it is now 'a pain in the neck'. (confidential source)	
23 February 2000	The ECM Working Group met again, three Member States are still lukewarm, with a suggestion now to postpone the Draft Directive. However, most Member States are reported to 'very much want it sorted before the IMC' [Internal Market Council] meeting. Still looking at doors, height of floors, and wheelchair tie-downs. [One Member State] wants all classes of buses and coaches to be covered, not just Class 1 types. [One Member State] still wants raised kerbs but has agreed instead to ramps on buses. Lots of discussion on the <i>Cassis de Dijon</i> principle, such as allowing seat belts for carrying children under various national [non-EU] laws. Working Group votes.' (confidential source)	
28 February 2000	Report reaches BfA(E) that there are still some reservations by some Member States, but we are close to the 'end game' and it is reasonably encouraging. (confidential source)	

29 February 2000	Report reaches BfA(E) that matters are still delicate, with three Member States against the proposals, with debate on Articles 4 and 7 (boarding aids). (confidential source). EP appoints Bill Miller MEP as its rapporteur.	
1 March 2000	ECM votes on draft Directive in COREPER for 1 st time	
7 March 2000	COREPER meets again, with some further discussion. The text will be a Part B item at the IMC, proposed for the Commission by [two key people]. It rests on the moral case, the business case, the legal case, and the political case. (confidential source)	
16 March 2000	IMC votes to support the current draft text of the Buses Directive.	
8 September 2000	Buses for All (Europe) publishes an Explanatory Briefing letter to ECM.	m
12 September 2000	Coreper meeting discusses the Draft Directive.	
18 September 2000	General Affairs Council meeting of Ministers	
28 September 2000	Internal Market Council meeting of Ministers	
1-5 October 2000	ECM votes on draft Directive in Coreper for 2 nd time	
10 October 2000	Buses for All (Europe) writes to the Secretariat of the ECM, the EP and the EC, pressing all concerned for mandatory ramps and lifts to all	n

	buses, with copies to each Ministry. (Appendix G)	
26 October 2000	EP receives the proposed 'common position' from ECM and refers it to the Committee on Legal Affairs and the Internal Market	
8 January 2001	Draft Report presented by Arlene McCarthy MEP (Bill Miller MEP being unwell).	
8-30 January 2001	EP Committee on Legal Affairs and the Internal Market discusses and adopts the position. Still no mandatory access in the draft. EDF plans to suggest amendments to the EP.	
14 January 2001	EDF publishes a Briefing.	
30 January 2001	EP publishes the EU Buses and Coaches Directive for its 2 nd Reading. '[The European] Parliament's opinion at first reading was adopted on the basis of a report drawn up by Simon Murphy [MEP] for the Committee on Economic and Monetary Affairs and Industrial Policy ... The responsible committee's initial report, which proposed no less than 92 detailed and highly technical amendments which had been solicited by manufacturers and industry, trade unions, consumers and disability groups, was referred back to committee. The committee then adopted a second report, ultimately adopted by Parliament, which opted for the radical approach of proposing the deletion of all the technical annexes to the proposed directive and the setting up of a technical working party to	

	<p>draw up technical specifications in this field.</p> <p>The [European] Commission did not support Parliament's approach and therefore did not produce an amended proposal.</p> <p>The [European Council of Ministers] common position also rejects Parliament's proposed new approach and the Commission considers that the common position has not substantively amended its proposal, with the exception of the deletion of a number of derogations from the section concerning the internal market.'</p> <p>(source: European Parliament Recommendation for Second Reading, 30 January 2001, p11).</p>	
14 February 2001	<p>EP votes 296 to 224 for mandatory ramps and lifts on 2nd Reading.</p> <p>(Appendix K)</p>	o
30 May 2001	<p>Buses for All (Europe) circulates a lobby letter to private sector bus manufacturers and operators.</p>	p
25 June 2001	<p>Conciliation Committee between ECM and EP agrees on the common position for mandatory ramps and lifts.</p> <p>Negotiators for the EP are MEPs Friedrich, Harbour and Miller.</p> <p>(Appendix L)</p>	q
7 September 2001	<p>Agreed joint text of the Directive is published.</p>	
1-5 October	<p>EP passes the EU Buses and Coaches Directive</p>	

2001	on 3 rd Reading	
20 November 2001	EU Buses and Coaches Directive (2001/85/EC) published in the Official Journal of the European Union (OJEU)	
13 August 2003	EU Buses and Coaches Directive comes into force across all EU	



About the Author

Tony Baldwinson first became involved with the EU institutions through funding for the voluntary sector from the European Regional Development Fund in 1989. In the 1990s he represented English local authorities at the national European Social Fund programme governing committee. He has managed European Regional Development Fund projects and programmes for two local authorities and a university, promoted best practice in regeneration for a regional funder, and worked freelance to help public organisations develop their knowledge systems for neighbourhood improvement and for promoting green infrastructure themes in local authority planning.

He has an MPhil for his research into the political history of disabled people through their photography in England between 1920 and the 1970s, published as 'Unacknowledged Traces'.

His early interest in voluntary work was with homeless young people, then in mental health and currently with rights-based disabled people's organisations. He led the Buses for All European campaign from 1994 to 2001 which changed EU single market law so that all new urban buses are accessible to all disabled people.

He lives in Manchester and is married to Lorraine Gradwell with two adult step-children.

Front cover photo: Barcelona, 199xx

“On a long weekend in Barcelona we travelled everywhere with a power chair – by public transport. Not only were many buses accessible, but the attitude of drivers was “no problem” – moving the bus if necessary to line up the ramp. The experience was incredible. The biggest novelty of all was the feeling of not being apart. The lasting effect, though, is having the knowledge and experience that accessible transport can work.” Lorraine Gradwell.

With the change in European law in 2001 so that every new bus must have ‘at least one doorway through which wheelchair users can pass’ the decades of various campaigns for buses to be accessible to disabled people came to a successful end.

This change has impacted with a better quality of life for 80 million disabled people in the EU Member States.

This case study looks at one of these campaigns, called *Buses for All (Europe)*, which was run without staff or a budget, and the study aims to draw out some general points from the strategy and methods which may be useful to other similar under-resourced campaigns. Written by one of the participants with during- and post-campaign reflections, the key findings from this case study are that the essentials for success are: the persistence in generating consistent and timely campaign messages across six years; the depth of knowledge acquired of the workings of the European-level political institutions; and the partnership working with other public, private and civil society organisations.



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