

JACQUES BARROT

*Vice-président de la Commission européenne*

Brussels, 13 FEB. 2008  
FLM/ad D(2008) 346

Dear Ms Lucas,

Thank you for your letter dated from 18 December 2007 by which you express your concerns about the "unintended consequence" of Regulation (No) EC 561/2006<sup>1</sup> on the situation of bus companies providing carriage of passengers on regular services where the route covered exceeds 50 km.

In fact, this is not a new legal situation. The provision that excludes routes of 50km and less from the driving time rules of vehicles used for carriage of passengers on regular services is long established. This rule was introduced back in 1969 by the Regulation (EEC) No 543/69<sup>2</sup>, maintained in its successor Regulation (EEC) No 3820/85<sup>3</sup> and it has not changed during the passage through the legislative process of what has become Regulation (EC) No 561/2006.

Hence there has been no substantial change in this field introduced by Regulation (EC) No 561/2006, which would oblige bus companies to restructure their operations.

Regulation (EC) No 561/2006 provides for fair competition, an improved level of road safety and protection of the rights of professional drivers in the road transport sector. It is important legislation and naturally, we will continue to monitor its implementation. Indeed a study is underway to examine the effects of the rules on driving and rest times on the industry. This study will be complete at the end of the year and should allow us to have a detailed picture. At that point we will be in a better position to assess the situation.

Yours sincerely

  
Jacques BARROT

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 102, 11.4.2006, p.1

<sup>2</sup> OJ L 077, 29.03.1969, p. 49

<sup>3</sup> OJ L 370, 31.12.1985, p/1