



# HOUSE OF LORDS

International Agreements Committee

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The Rt Hon Louise Haigh MP  
Secretary of State for Transport  
Great Minster House  
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21 November 2024

Dear Secretary of State

At its meeting on 19 November the House of Lords International Agreements Committee issued a report on the Interbus Protocol concerning regular and special regular international passenger bus and coach services. The Committee welcomed the ratification of the Protocol which will put the operation of regular and special regular bus and coach services to European destinations on a longer-term footing.

During its consideration of the Protocol the Committee noted the information provided by your Department that the annexes to the Protocol contain standards based on EU law as it stood in 2009 which are lower than the standards currently applicable in the UK. We understand that the effect is that vehicles used by operators based in the UK or EU will be subject to higher standards, but buses or coaches used by operators based in one of the other non-EU parties could be deployed on services to and from the UK while complying only with the lower technical standards in the Protocol. Members of the Committee were particularly concerned about environmental and disability access standards. We would therefore welcome a brief assessment of the practical impact in the UK of lower standards applying in these areas. It would also be helpful to understand the reasons for the reluctance of the other non-EU parties to the Agreement update the standards in 2018 and whether there is likely to be any further effort to bring the standards in line with those which are currently applicable in the EU and the UK.

Yours sincerely,

**The Rt Hon. the Lord Goldsmith KC**

Chair of the House of Lords International Agreements Committee