
Belgian coach sector down 90%

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The European passenger transport sector has been hit particularly hard by the pandemic. IRU analysis points to turnover losses of almost 60% in 2020, with many coach tourism firms losing up to 100% of their business.

Coach transport is an essential component of both the tourism sector and broader collective passenger mobility networks. It is an inclusive transport option that is safe, green and affordable.

We have been looking at the difficulties experienced by road transport operators on the ground to see first-hand the impact of the pandemic on their business and where governments can help. This week we hear from IRU member [FBAA](#), the Belgian Federation of Bus, Coach and Tour Operators, and the situation for their 200 member companies.

How has the pandemic affected Belgian passenger transport operators? Which companies are suffering the most?

The situation for bus and coach companies in Belgium is desperate. Coach companies are feeling the greatest impact, with revenue down, on average, by 90%. Public transport and school bus operators have managed to maintain more services since the outbreak of the pandemic, but they are also suffering.

What is the impact of the current situation on the workforce? How many people are losing their jobs?

The current situation affects all workers in Belgian bus and coach companies. We estimate that at least 10% of businesses in the sector will not survive this crisis, putting hundreds of jobs at risk.

Some 45% of drivers, technicians and office-based workers have been furloughed since March. Luckily, these workers receive social security payments amounting to 70% of their daily salary, which will continue for the foreseeable future.

What are the key top three measures you need from the Belgian government to support the industry?

1) Financial support to cover investments made by the coach companies for their vehicles.

- 2) A guarantee that the social security payments for employees will be maintained until the crisis has ended.
- 3) Positive communication to encourage the public to start travelling again by coach transport.

(IRU)