Agreement on the international occasional carriage of passengers by coach and bus (Interbus Agreement): accession of Morocco

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PURPOSE: to conclude the protocol amending the agreement on the international occasional carriage of passengers by coach and bus (Interbus Agreement) with a view to extending the possibility of accession to Morocco.

PROPOSED ACT: Council Decision.

ROLE OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: Council may adopt the act only if Parliament has given its consent to the act.

BACKGROUND: the geographical scope of the Interbus Agreement is limited to the member countries of the European Conference of Ministers of Transport (ECMT) and to the countries mentioned in Article 30 (2) of the Interbus Agreement.

Apart from the EU, the following are currently Contracting Parties to the Agreement: the Republic of Albania, the Principality of Andorra, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Republic of Northern Macedonia, the Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, the Republic of Turkey and Ukraine.

Morocco, which has observer status in the ECMT, should therefore be given the opportunity to join the Interbus agreement.

The possible accession of Morocco to the Interbus Agreement would:

- contribute to further developing international passenger transport relations, tourism and cultural exchange beyond those countries that are currently Parties to the Interbus Agreement and facilitate their organisation;

- offer Morocco the possibility of market access based on the provisions of the Interbus Agreement subject to implementation of the EU acquis in the field of road passenger transport, including road safety, technical

provisions, driver qualifications, social rules, passenger rights, environment and admission to the occupation.

CONTENT: the Commission submitted to the Council this proposal for a Council Decision on the conclusion, on behalf of the EU, of the Protocol amending the Agreement on the international occasional carriage of passengers by coach and bus (Interbus Agreement) by extending the possibility of accession to Morocco.

The specific provisions of the Protocol:

- provide for an amendment to the Interbus Agreement on the international occasional carriage of passengers by coach and bus by giving the Kingdom of Morocco the option to accede to the Agreement;

- cover the administrative procedures for the Protocol to enter into force, provide that all Contracting Parties have to sign and accede to or ratify the Protocol before it enters into force and, hence, Morocco can join the Agreement, and include provisions on the language regime;

- provides that this Protocol replaces the Protocol on the Kingdom of Morocco which was open for signature between 16 July 2018 and 16 April 2019.