Busworld 2015 the biggest ever

We simply cannot wait until others tell us which part buses and coaches should play in the mobility of the future. Let us act proactively, say what we are good at and which role we claim in the multimodal transport world which we are slowly but steadily evolving towards.

Platform

In this evolution Busworld offers a helping hand to an ever increasing amount of companies, researchers and policy makers from our sector, for example with the extensive input of Busworld Academy. “In the light of this multisectoral and global approach, we closed partnerships and started collaborations with the IRL, with POLIS – the European network for cities and regions, with ERTICO – the network of companies and institutes active in the development of intelligent transport systems, with CHIC – the network that promotes hydrogen applications, with EFPA – the international federation of producers of fire-retardant substances, with the university and the university college of the city of Ghent, with SP – the technological institute of Sweden that researches accident prevenion and with VCA – the Flemish network for product innovation in the coach sector” says Redgy Deschacht. He ended his speech by thanking the entire Busworld team led by Mieke Glorieux.

Brian Souter

A passionate entrepreneur with a heart for buses and with a vision of the future for coaches, based on the use of social media and a focus on the customer in particular. This was, in a nutshell, the speech of Brian Souter, former owner and CEO of Stagecoach, during the official opening of Busworld 2015. Changing the social behaviour, both of the customer as well as of the coach entrepreneur, is in his opinion the key to a healthy future of the coach sector. He started off with an anecdote: “there was a boy in the toilet of a Virgin train who saw that there was no toilet paper. He posted this on Twitter immediately. His tweet was read by Virgin, and the conductor was told to bring the boy a roll of toilet paper at once. This, to Souter, is the epitome of customer friendliness, something which he is currently missing in the sector. He also referred to the importance of the use of social media, something he investigated in his own company Stagecoach a while ago after having done this for some other companies. Normally, this always made me happy, but I got depressed when I saw how we dealt with the social media at Stagecoach. Ryanair for example has a site in Dublin, employing two-hundred young people who are working fulltime on developing and devising cool things for the social media. That is what I like to call changing behaviour”, Souter said for example, he had not thought the approval of long-distance public transport in France possible, but yet it happened. In England this was already customary in the eighties, and really stimulated people to take the train. An example of the fact that there are always chances where there are threats. “Wi-Fi could be a unique selling point for the coach business, but what is all comes down to now is to seize the opportunity…”

Free ride with the ExquiCity to Busworld

Will the first tram-busses in Belgium be driving around in Kortrijk soon, the hometown of Busworld? Could be … The Belgian public transport company De Lijn is currently looking into the financial feasibility. The construction of a tram track turned out to be way too expensive. During the fair the tram-bus ExquiCity of Van Hool, moving to Martinique after Busworld, will be put to the test between the train station of Kortrijk and Hoog Kortrijk, the district where the fair is taking place. The rides with the ExquiCity are for free thanks to some generous sponsors, including Busworld. In exchange for the free public transport the public transport company De Lijn just asks its users to fill out a short questionnaire. Those participating stand a chance of winning a trip to Martinique. For your information: the ExquiCity stops right by the halls in the Kennedylaan (bus stop Kinepolis-Xpo).

Grand Award Coach for Setra

The coach Setra TopClass S 516 HDH was the big star during the most recent edition of the ECW. This top product from the city of Ulm did not only deserve the Grand Award Coach 2015 according to the jury but also distinguished itself in the categories Styling & Design andEcology as laureate. The jury decided not to distribute the Grand Award Bus this year because in its opinion, no vehicle offers an added value on top of what the market has to offer today. The jury did not take its decisions regarding the labels and the Grand Award overnight. Past Saturday and Sunday they inspected, assessed and evaluated the vehicles before presenting their results to the Grand Jury, which set up the final ranking past Tuesday after a last inspection round of the vehicles and a long deliberation. It took a while, but as Busworld president/BAAV chairman Redgy Deschacht told us at the beginning of the deliberation: “1+1 is not always 2.” Next to Setra, Van Hool was also invited on stage for the label Ecology with its three-axle EX17 T. The jury appraised the many efforts that Van Hool did on an ecological level in this segment, as well as the enormous progress that the Belgian company made. The Safety label was awarded to the Volvo 9900, amongst others for the innovating Volvo Dynamic Steering (VDS) system. For many members of the jury this system is not really a Safety feature but rather an improvement of the driver’s comfort. VDS automatically compensates for every bump in the road, absorbs vibrations and removes kicks in the steering wheel. The system also facilitates steering at low and high speed Furthermore, the steering wheel automatically returns to the centre when the driver looses his or her grip. Altogether the driver is significantly less tired after a ride, which in itself of course has a positive influence on the safety on the road.

Buses

In the category buses the labels Design and Safety were not awarded. Granted, all the participating buses were fitted with advanced technology, but apart from that there was nothing that distinguished them from their competitors. With regard to comfort the Irisbus Clipport did impress the jury for the Ecology label, the jury could not decide between the two electric buses of BYD and Ebusco and therefore awarded the label to both of them.

“Sector has to take the lead, otherwise we will be subcontractors soon”

Redgy Deschacht, president of Busworld
Coach dominate ECW
Seven coaches and five buses participate in competition

The ECW, the European Coach Week, was once again organised a week prior to Busworld, on Saturday to be exact. One of the participants cancelled last minute – whether the rough weather and the ice-cold wind had to do with it is unclear. That is why only seven coaches and five city buses participated in the competition.

In the ECW the jury is divided into different groups. They each get assigned their own subject, ranging from the evaluation of the driving behaviour of a bus or coach to a questionnaire to be filled in about the safety of a vehicle. There are different catalogue models, which are then evaluated in, being: of course the handling, CO2 emissions, sustainability or ecology and maintenance, innovation, comfort and ergonomics for the driver, comfort for the passenger, safety and design.

The same categories apply to the participating city buses and coaches. The only difference is that there is one extra assessment: the work area of the tour guide. To that end two tour guide judges were invited as well. Their first remark about one of the participants was that the passengers all dispose of a neat television screen and usb connection, whereas the tour guide does not. This immediately set the tone for the tour guides. In general, they think that the work area of the tour guide in coaches is rather outdated and not satisfactory.

In total fifteen teams of jury members were on the road this Saturday and they all went very meticulously. Here and there distinctive parts were looked at and described in detail. The inspections in and around the vehicles were done very professionally as well. Of course the teams disposed of professional sound meters for measurements in and around the vehicles as well as two air emission measuring devices in order to chart the CO2 exhaust of the coaches and buses. The vehicles were also submitted to tests in which the manoeuvrability hill holder and tractive force backwards and uphill were probed.

Driving on a cobbled street was also part of the test, as well as taking left- and right-angled bends and passing by a roundabout at an average speed. The test drivers executed these exercises in a competent and composed way. The jury members filled out extensive evaluation forms, which were then uploaded into calculation models. On the basis of these models the ranking was determined and the winner was identified.

Number-one innovation for Van Hool
Just like in any other competition, the jury did not have an easy job. The coach participants included the brand-new Van Hool EX 17H, the Setra S 516 HDi, Volvo 9900 and the Yutong HT613 – the latter could unfortunately not be tested because it had not been registered yet. Nevertheless the Yutong looks really nice, both on the inside and the outside. It is a very fine coach, but it is clear that the designer has not fully taken into account the Western European sizes: there is not a lot of room between the seats inside.

The number-one innovation came from Van Hool EX 17H. A triple axle variant to the EX which was introduced last year. It is a new coach series, directly positioned under the famous TX series of the manufacturer from Kortrijk and targeting the new market for long distance transport. With this new product Van Hool stepped away from the familiar design and developed something completely different. ‘In-house’ Ian van Hool adds proudly. The EX 17H looks great, sleek and modern and has a luxurious exterior. The driver is offered a completely new cockpit. The EH 17H is produced in Macedonia, where Van Hool is now already supplying ten coaches per week. They are then transported to Kortrijk for further finishing construction. Two birds with one stone, as covering the distance between Macedonia and Kortrijk is also the perfect practical test.

Number-one innovation for Van Hool

Volvo 9900

A second innovation could be seen in the Volvo 9900. Not the coach itself is new – it was renewed two years ago with the arrival of Euro 6 – but Volvo has no equipped it with Dynamic Steering. An electronic aid that makes sure that the coach follows its on its tracks on straight roads and takes bends with the greatest of ease. With one finger on the wheel – well at least in a manner of speaking. Dynamic steering also improves the comfort when driving on bumpy roads. This Volvo is open for testing during Busworld. During ECW, the Swedish engineers promised us a great test drive with lots of rough roads and roundabouts.

Regulars

Setra sent its top model to this edition of the ECW: the S 516 HDi. A magnificent coach, which appeared in Car&Bus Magazine a couple of times already. What is particularly nice is the ‘front under- run production’, integrated in the valve behind which a spare wheel can be stored. You might say that the Setra is the best in the coach range at the moment.

Another familiar vehicle is the MAN Lion’s Coach C, this time in a special ‘MAN 100 years’ finish. MAN particularly focusses on safety and sustainability. This Lion’s Coach has a Cw value of 0.39 and is further equipped with a lance guard system, the newest brake assist- ant that helps in case of an emergency stop, as well as adaptive cruise control and MAN Efficient Cruise, the ‘practical cruise control’ saving on gas. Apart from the comments of the travel guides on the work area in the Visigo, the Turkish Anatolus buses – the partnership between the Turkish Anatolus and the Japanese Isuzu – presented it as a fine midibus in a luxurious design. The sales of the brand in the Beneluxes have now been picking up. There are already a number of Anatolus vehicles driving around.

Midi and Mini

There were two outsiders in the category ‘coaches’: a midibus and a minibus. The first is the Austrian K-Bus or Kutschenits Tourist 715 / 719, the other one the Karsan Star. Kutschenits is based on the Mercedes-Benz Sprinter, whereby the frame was integrated in the subsection. It can accommodate no less than 38 people. Of course this also means that the design is quite special, with an enormous rear overhang.

With its mid, the Star, Karsan from Turkey is clearly aiming at short-distance trans- port. In Turkey, the amount of people driv- ing between their home and workplace on a long distance is high. This Karsan looks good and is fitted with an FTP engine (Flat Power Train). A NEF4 of 137 kW (186 hp) and a torque of 680 Nm at 1250-1900 rpm.

Electric city buses

Nowadays, city buses are really focussing on electric. Two buses we already knew, the Elbusco 2.0 LFP and the BYD EBUS. The third one was the electrical Yutong ZK6128BEVG. The Elbusco is the famous bus from Finland which was already pre- sented during Busworld in the past. After the show it will be going back again, but a new Elbusco has been announced. The exact release date has not been deter- mined yet however. The BYD was one from the production batch for the Schiphol airport in the Netherlands. It is the second generation and clearly shows that BYD has taken into account the points of criticism. The front entry has been improved for exam- ple, by creating more space between the front wheel housing. Furthermore, thanks to a better battery capacity, the BYD now only uses two batteries instead of three, resulting into a significant space and weight advantage.

The third electric bus participating in this ECW was the Liong ZK6128BEVG, at first sight, this is a fine city bus, claiming to have, with a battery capacity of 295 kWh, an action radius of 250 kilometres at a consumption of 0.9 kW/km (CCBC) and 0.8 kW/km in case of SORL.

Every day

Busworld TV
Every day the camera team of Busworld TV gives an account of the events at Busworld. Each morning you get your fresh share of news, including impressive footage and interviews. Look carefully, fresh share of news, including impressive footage and interviews. Look carefully, fresh share of news, including impressive footage and interviews. Look carefully, fresh share of news, including impressive footage and interviews. Look carefully, fresh share of news, including impressive footage and interviews. Look carefully, fresh share of news, including impressive footage and interviews. Look carefully, fresh share of news, including impressive footage and interviews. Look carefully, fresh share of news, including impressive footage and interviews. Look carefully, fresh share of news, including impressive footage and interviews. Look carefully, fresh share of news, including impressive footage and interviews. Look carefully, fresh share of news, including impressive footage and interviews. 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