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Answer given by Mr Hoekstra
on behalf of the European Commission
(26.11.2024)

The Commission recognises the importance of promoting the mobility and independence of senior citizens in the EU and acknowledges that many Member States already offer discounted fares for seniors at regional and national levels.

In line with the subsidiarity principle, the Commission respects the autonomy of Member States to design and implement social policies, including travel discounts, according to their specific circumstances and needs. Since issues related to public transport and social welfare are primarily within the competence of Member States, it is for them to decide on the scope and implementation of such schemes. However, Member States are subject to compliance with the principle of non-discrimination and access to transport services and discounted transport fares, must be granted without discrimination on grounds of nationality.

The Commission has introduced and supports cross-border mobility initiatives aimed at improving accessibility for certain groups, including the European Disability Card and the European Parking Card for persons with disabilities. These initiatives are based on specific needs related to disability.

In addition, the Social Climate Fund¹ supports vulnerable households and transport users in the green transition, including by fostering the availability and affordability of adequate transport services to reach essential services.

The Commission remains open to dialogue with Member States and stakeholders to assess the feasibility and added value as well as financial, administrative and legal implications of further actions in this area, particularly if such initiatives would complement national efforts and provide substantial benefits that cannot be achieved by Member States.

¹ https://climate.ec.europa.eu/eu-action/eu-emissions-trading-system-eu-ets/social-climate-fund_en#about-the-social-climate-fund-scf