

# **AIRPORT VOLUNTARY COMMITMENT ON AIR PASSENGER SERVICE**

## **PREAMBLE**

European airports have developed an Airport Voluntary Commitment on Air Passenger Service following extensive consultation with representatives of consumers, European governments, the European Commission and the air transport industry.

Air passengers' expectations have grown considerably in recent years especially in regard to quality of service. Furthermore, as airports are working more and more in a competitive environment, quality criteria have been widely adopted by European airports as a means of competitive definition.

The Airport Voluntary Commitment on Air Passenger Service contains commitments to deliver a defined quality of service to air travellers. Although the commitments are not legally-binding, the signatories to the Airport Voluntary Commitment on Air Passenger Service will continue to strive to meet the needs of customers and achieve the quality set out in this Commitment on a consistent basis.

Signatory airports will each develop their own individual service plans incorporating the Airport Voluntary Commitment on Air Passenger Service.

## **Clearing the confusion between airport, airline and others**

**Clarification:** When a passenger buys an air ticket their contract is with the airline. In fact no contractual relationship exists between passengers and airports. However, airport operators recognise that they have a duty of care towards the passengers.

**Clarification:** Many “airport services” are not performed by the airport operator at all and, although airports strive to work closely with all business partners and government agencies, often airports have little or no choice over the selection of these suppliers. This can include critical services such as ground handling, which is organised by airlines and covers matters such as check-in and baggage delivery, as well as security checks, border controls, airport access etc. Unfortunately, the airport operator cannot be held responsible should the level of these services fall below a desired level.

### **1. PERSONS WITH REDUCED MOBILITY**

Each airport will prominently publicise the services it offers for assisting passengers with reduced mobility (PRMs). Most crucially each airport commits itself to the new special protocol on "Meeting the needs of people with reduced mobility" (attached).

### **2. PASSENGER INFORMATION ON LEGAL RIGHTS**

Each airport will prominently display in key strategic locations:

- The European Commission’s "Charter on Air Passenger Rights"
- Future material prepared by the European Commission which aims to inform passengers of their rights under European Union and other international law.

### **3. ASSISTANCE DURING PERIODS OF SIGNIFICANT DELAYS OR DISRUPTION**

Each airport will make available the information given by airlines about expected delays and update passengers as frequently as possible.

Each airport will have contingency plans for assisting involuntarily stranded passengers suffering significant delay. This plan will address the most important needs of passengers, including appropriate seating arrangements, medical support and support for those with particular needs such as families with young children.

Each airport will make every effort to ensure catering concessionaires remain open during such periods.

Each airport will set up appropriate working arrangements with other organisations to provide effective care for passengers in this situation.

#### **4. AIRPORT ACCESS AND GROUND TRANSPORTATION**

Each airport will work closely with partners to develop and improve public transport. Wherever possible airports will encourage public transport timetables to be co-ordinated with airline schedules.

#### **5. PROVISION OF INFRASTRUCTURE FOR CHECK-IN, BAGGAGE AND SECURITY**

Each airport will provide appropriate infrastructure for business partners (airlines, ground handling companies etc) for serving passengers at check-in, baggage delivery, security and border control.

#### **6. MAINTENANCE**

Each airport will ensure that all equipment used to serve passengers is subject to regular and systematic maintenance in compliance with the manufacturers' recommended guidelines. This is particularly important for equipment critical for core airport operations – baggage handling systems, escalators, moving walkways, air conditioning, lifts, car park equipment etc.

## **7. TROLLEY MANAGEMENT**

Each airport will ensure that sufficient trolleys for passengers with hold baggage are available and in good working order at all times at appropriate locations.

## **8. WAY-FINDING AND INFORMATION DESKS**

Each airport will ensure user-friendly and comprehensive signage, taking account of local culture and language without compromising the benefits of consistency. All signs, brochures and other materials and any modern technology (such as Internet pages) will be used in the simplest and clearest way possible.

Each airport will have staffed information desks, wherever feasible, which will be open in line with the airport or terminal's operating hours.

## **9. CLEANLINESS**

Each airport will ensure that all public areas are kept clean at all times. Particular care will be taken over the cleanliness of toilets and washrooms.

## **10. CUSTOMER COMMENT MANAGEMENT**

Each airport will ensure that there are clearly promoted and understandable comment and complaint procedures. Customer comments will be stored for easy access and management.

Each airport will establish a reliable method of monitoring, investigating and evaluating customer compliments, comments and complaints. Under normal circumstances, each airport will provide a response to a complaint within 28 days of receipt. When this does not permit sufficient time for a complaint to be investigated, an interim response will be provided giving the reason for the delay.

## **11. REGULAR REPORTING**

Each airport will produce regular consumer reports (at least once a year) based on passenger satisfaction results. These reports will be made available to the relevant national or international bodies.

The performance indicators will usually take the form of passenger satisfaction levels measured through regular monitoring in all those areas which are totally under the airports' control. Examples of exceptions to this are:

- During times where contingency plans are in operation to deal with severe disruption.
- When check-in, baggage handling and security is provided by a third party.
- On issues of airport access when services are provided by transport partners.

There will also be a performance indicator measuring the number of days taken to respond to passenger comment as defined in paragraph 10 "Customer comment management" above.

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## **ATTACHMENT**

### **SPECIAL PROTOCOL TO MEET THE NEEDS OF PEOPLE WITH REDUCED MOBILITY**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this document is to improve the accessibility of air travel to people with reduced mobility by ensuring that their needs are understood and provided for, and that their safety and dignity are respected. It forms the basis on which a voluntary Code (or Codes) of Practice may be prepared by airports. When preparing Codes, the appropriate provisions of the European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) Document 30 (Section 5), and the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO Annex 9) will be incorporated.

#### **Definition of a person with reduced mobility (PRM)**

A person with reduced mobility (PRM) is understood to mean any person whose mobility is reduced due to any physical disability (sensory or locomotory), an intellectual impairment, age, or any other cause of disability when using transport, and whose situation needs special attention or adaptation of services ordinarily made available to all passengers.

#### **Basic assumptions**

- PRMs have the same rights as other citizens to freedom of movement and freedom of choice. This applies to air travel as to all other areas in life.
- Airports and related service providers have a responsibility to meet the needs of PRMs. PRMs also have a responsibility to identify their needs to the proper channels at the proper time.
- Information, using accessible formats, must be made available to enable PRMs to plan and make their journey.
- Disability should not be equated with illness and therefore PRMs must not be required to make medical declarations about their disability as a condition of travel.

- Organisations representing PRMs will be consulted on all issues relevant to PRMs.
- Staff will be given appropriate training in understanding and meeting the needs of PRMs.
- Control and security checks will be undertaken in a manner which respects the dignity of PRMs.
- PRMs must be enabled to remain independent to the greatest possible extent.
- The cost of providing for the needs of PRMs must not be passed directly to PRMs.

## **PROVISION OF INFRASTRUCTURE**

Each airport will ensure that its infrastructure is compatible with the needs of people with reduced mobility and that this part of the service is provided in an efficient manner.

This will include:

- Access to landside and airside ground transport;
- Parking, pick-up, drop-off and transfer arrangements;
- Information provided both audibly and visually.

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