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Revision of Regulation 1300/2014 Accessibility for PRM in rail travel Report from ERA PRM revision WP last meeting 12 Sep 2019, final results

EPF has been one of three user NGOs participating in the Working Party. The revision work has been going on since 2011. All the meetings were held in Lille, which is the normal meeting place for ERA, with headquarters in Valenciennes. Now the last WP meeting has occurred, after almost eight years of work in several stages.

Participant in the working party (WP) are representatives for every member state (MS) plus Switzerland and Norway. Those representatives are from the National Safety Authority (NSA) in every country. In addition, there are railway industry representatives, UNIFE, CER EIM etc., altogether about 30 persons around the table. The three user NGOs are important.

The work with PRM started actually with the COST 335 in the mid-90s, elaborating best practice for PRM in railway travel. The final COST meeting was held in London in 1999. Kurt Hultgren (at the period president of the Swedish railway Handicap Committee) worked as chairman of the COST station subgroup. COST 335 was the starting point for the first PRM Regulation, that was introduced in 2005. Shortly it was apparent that the EU PRM policy and the UN Convention meant that the Regulation had to be improved. That work started in 2011 and resulted in the new Regulation 1300/2014. However, it soon became clear, when the WP ended its first stage, that a more functional-oriented Regulation was necessary, and the WP got a renewed task to continue its development work, the same delegates as previously got a new mandate. The result should also include better information about the accessibility for the users in different countries. The Europeans should benefit from the progress.

The work from then on has concentrated on two parts. The first one is creating a register about the situation in different stations with information about accessibility functions presented, all in a register that should be internationally open for public information. The second part consists in some more advanced steps in defining minimum measures for wheelchair accessibility, level entrances, door and aisle width, information written in signs, information spoken in loudspeakers etc.

The first part of the extended work can be summarized in the Inventory of Assets (IoA). That is the task for every country to assess the situation in the different stations and present their functions in a national register. It was clear that different countries had different organizations and responsibilities for its stations, especially the Netherlands and Sweden, where there is no real responsible for stations as a whole, in contrast to the 'station perceived by the customer'. Actually in one MS there are five local "station managers" at every station. The conclusion in the WP is that every MS has to decide who is the institution that has to collect the information (and thus has some common responsibility). Every MS also should present a first list of best level stations and make that information available. Every MS also has the task to present a National Implementation Plan (NIP), for the development in different steps for the rest of the stations. However, none of those (IoA and NIP) are time prescribed with year decided. Every MS has the task to present a plan that can be compared with the other MS. That is supposed to be a strong enough pressure. The first part of the work, the IoA and the NIP, has already been fulfilled, and a new Regulation has been decided by the Commission, with a new Regulation

number. It was decided on 16. June 2019, and there are nine months for the MS to implement requirements.

The second part of the WP work is the revision of measures, sound characteristics, readability requirements etc. This procedure has now been worked through, including things as door closing sound signals important for persons with seeing disabilities.

The procedure to finish the last practicalities are the following. The ERA administration will adjust some minor topics after the last meeting. ERA will in January present the text for a new Regulation to the RISC Committee that will decide on it in April. Then the Commission probably will take a decision in June 2020.

In the work the policy from EPF “What is necessary to some is favorable to all others” has been most efficient. And EPF has been a fairly strong force in the development. EPF also took the initiative to write a letter to the Commission about improving speed of the work. The users’ NGOs have noticed an active interest from the Commission to support the work. In DG MOVE a special PRM Advisory Body has been formed, in order to reassure the development of work. The WP representatives have all been included in that PRM Advisory Body. As a matter of fact, the cooperation between EPF and PRM organizations is most efficient, since the claims from the handicapped are very difficult to deny, and that leads to improved conditions and better quality for all passengers.

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