International Civil Aviation Organization

INFORMATION PAPER

FACILITATION PANEL (FALP)

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Agenda Item 5: Implementation of Annex 9

**GUIDELINES ON WEBSITES' INFORMATION TO PASSENGERS
WITH REDUCED MOBILITY (PRMs)**

(Presented by the European Civil Aviation Conference)

SUMMARY
This paper presents ECAC guidelines on websites' information to passengers with reduced mobility (PRMs) for the information of the Facilitation Panel.

1.   **INTRODUCTION**

1.1   The importance of information provided to the passengers via internet is growing day by day, as new technologies (tablets, smart phones, Wi-Fi hotspots, etc.) allow an easy and direct access to the travelling public.

1.2   Within this growing trend, passengers are becoming used to performing online all the main steps required prior to a trip, from booking their flight to obtaining their boarding pass. In the case of persons with disabilities, the benefits of web-based services are even more important as they are able to pre-notify and detail which services they require. However, these processes can be very frustrating if websites are not adequately prepared for these types of passengers or the information is not directly accessible.

1.3   Surveys conducted in Europe (Eurostat) and the United States (US Census Bureau) estimate that approximately 15% of persons have disabilities among the working-age population, and this percentage grows spectacularly for older age groups. Therefore, in attending the travelling needs of the current society, the collective of the persons with disabilities should be considered as a priority and efforts should be done to provide a pleasant air travel experience from the very beginning.

1.4   In line with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which recognises access to information and communication technologies, including the internet, as a basic human right, several Member States have started to regulate the content of the information provided in webpages and how it should be presented. This work has been conducted observing the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) standards and the guidelines of the European Standard EN 301 549 on accessibility requirements.

1.5   ECAC Member States are aware of the importance and potential benefits of defining a harmonised approach on how the information is provided by airlines and airports, especially for passengers with reduced mobility (PRMs). In March 2016 they adopted a new Annex to ECAC Doc 30, Part I, on Facilitation, including guidelines on websites' information to PRMs.

1.6   Due to the potential usefulness of this work to other regions, ECAC Member States considered that those guidelines should be shared as a contribution to this Panel meeting.

2.   **DISCUSSION**

2.1   These guidelines are based on the following principles:

- Information for PRMs should be easy accessible from the main webpage, and the 'one-click' principle should be observed.

- The generic agreed 'title' for hyperlinks to this information should be "Special Assistance" as apparently is the international adopted expression.

- Information should be presented in easy language, considering in the layout the access of persons with visual impairments.

- Alternative means of communication should be provided (e.g. direct phone line, emails).

- Information, which should be contained in airlines' webpages, includes: safety restrictions, assistance booking, transport of mobility equipment and service animals, PRM helpline and complaints, etc.

- Information which should be contained in airports' webpages includes: assistance provided and how to require it, airport access and transport methods, layout of the airport, security measures, transport of mobility equipment and service animals, PRM helpline and complaints, etc.

2.2   ECAC guidelines on websites' information to PRMs are presented in the Appendix for the information of the Facilitation Panel.

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APPENDIX

GUIDELINES ON WEBSITES' INFORMATION FOR PRMs

General guidelines on accessibility of information

1. The information should be on a single webpage one click away from the home page of a website or on webpages directly accessible from a single 'landing' webpage one click away from the home page. One 'click' includes a mouse rollover, which then invites the user to select the "Special Assistance" link (see below) from a menu or list of other links.

2. The 'title' for hyperlinks to this information should be "Special Assistance" or similar and may include a relevant image (for example, a wheelchair). However, this must refer to assistance and arrangements necessary to enable disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility to use the airport facilities and to comply with the established procedures.

3. The information should be presented in a clear and easy to understand way and accessible for passengers with disabilities[1] and persons with reduced mobility. The design of websites should be in conformity with existing international guidelines on website accessibility such as the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0 (WCAG 2.0) of the W3C and fulfil at least the "AA" standard under these guidelines. It is very important that all the information is written down in easy language to address all passengers. Technical jargon and abbreviations should be avoided.

4. Alternative means of communication to transmit the information should be provided e.g. a direct phone line (local landline or free number, not at the charge of the passenger), web chat, e-mail, mail, etc. Staff should be available during airport opening hours at a minimum.

Specific guidelines for airlines

1. **Information on safety restrictions.** This should specify the safety rules of the airline which may prevent the airline from accepting a reservation from a person with disabilities or a person with reduced mobility (PRM).

2. **Information on space restriction.** This should include information on any restrictions on the reservation due to the size of the aircraft or its doors which makes the carriage of persons with disabilities or their mobility equipment (e.g. wheelchair) physically not possible. Other information can include movable armrests, accessible lavatories, existence of on-board wheelchairs, etc.

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[1] Accessible formats means that information should be provided using text, audio, video (equipped with subtitles and/or sign language interpretation) and/or electronic means so as to be accessible to all. Accessible formats include, but are not limited to, large print, Braille version, easy-to-read version, audio format such as tapes or CDs, video format like DVDs, and electronic format.

3. **Information on how to obtain assistance.** This information should include, as a minimum:

    a) instructions on how PRMs can book assistance and description of the assistance available (e.g. using ECAC codes available in Annex 5-A);

    b) the methods by which PRMs can book assistance (e.g. as part of the booking process, by email, phone, web form, etc, and any associated cost, for example calling a special assistance phone line);

    c) whether, once the PRM has pre-notified, you will confirm this in writing (e.g. by email, letter, etc) to the PRM. This confirmation should at minimum specify if assistance will be provided at the airport of departure and/or at the airport of arrival and/or in transit through an airport if relevant;

    d) the stipulated time before their flight that the PRM should arrive at the airport, taking into account that if the passenger needs assistance from a point outside the airport building, e.g. the car parking, the time should be appropriate (e.g. at least two hours according to ECAC Doc 30, Part I paragraph 5.8.4); and

    e) the relevant telephone and e-mail contacts for requesting assistance.

4. **Information about mobility equipment.** This should specify the rules on carriage of mobility equipment. This should include descriptions of what mobility equipment is, if possible with examples. Any restrictions on particular equipment, or parts of, must be listed (for example, battery types). It should set out a clear distinction between mobility equipment and medical equipment in general (such as oxygen).

5. **Information on seating on-board.** This information should include, as a minimum, what type of seating is generally available (for example, extra leg / space or movable armrests) as well as instructions for how a PRM can pre-book a suitable seat on board or, if this option is not available, how the airline ensures that suitable seats are allocated to PRMs. It should also cover the availability of, and instructions for, pre-booking specialist seating devices such as harnesses, MERU chairs etc. It should also mention any restrictions (e.g. seating in emergency exits, bulkhead rows) and information on additional costs (e.g. for bulkhead seats).

6. **Information on when an accompanying person will be required.** This information should include, as a minimum, the circumstances under which the airline will require that the PRM travels with an accompanying person and that this is restricted to safety reasons. This information should specify who can be designated as accompanying person (e.g. restrictions on age, etc.) and also include special arrangements in relation to the accompanying person (e.g. where they will be seated in relation to the PRM, whether there is a discount fare available, etc).

7. **Information on service animals**[2]**.** This information should include, as a minimum, whether the airline accepts service animals and, if so, for which routes. It should also make clear what it defines as a "service animal". It should also cover the arrangements for travelling with a service animal and

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[2] Service animal means recognised assistance dog in the ECAC/EU context, which is a narrower definition than the one which appears in ICAO Doc 9984.

any costs involved (for example, if the animal requires an proper seat). It should state any restrictions on travel and any conditions that must be met for the animal to be able to travel.

8. **Information on oxygen.** This should include, as a minimum, the airline's policy on the carriage of oxygen or any other breathing apparatus by passengers (e.g. documentation which should be carried by the passenger as signed medical declarations, etc.), and any restrictions (e.g. security, safety) to carriage on particular routes. It should also include whether the airline will itself provide oxygen, the volume of oxygen available in flight and the amount of any charge for this service.

9. **Information on how to get to and from the toilet on-board.** This should specify the arrangements generally available for assisting PRMs to and from the toilet, including whether a wheelchair is available on-board and, where relevant, the instructions for pre-booking the on-board wheelchair.

10. **Information on toilets on board.** This should include, as a minimum, whether any toilets are accessible to on board wheelchairs or have any other features to assist PRMs.

11. **Compensation for mobility equipment.** This should state the airline's policy on compensation for damage to or loss of mobility aids (i.e. whether the Montreal Convention limits apply) and the process which passengers should follow to make a claim. It should be clear how and when the complaint has to be made and give a point of contact, ideally in the baggage claim area on arrival.

12. **Information on how to complain.** This should include the arrangements in place for PRMs to complain to the airline about the assistance provided on their journey, including contact details.

13. **Information on PRM helpline.** This should provide the telephone number and opening hours of the airline's helpline for enquiries from PRMs**,** as well as alternative accessible means of contact (see above)

Specific guidelines for airports

1. **Information on the assistance provided at the airport.** This information should specify, as a minimum, the types of assistance provided at the airport to persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility (PRMs).

2. **Information on how to obtain this assistance.** This information should include, as a minimum, how in general terms PRMs can arrange for assistance at the airport, and should make reference specifically that the PRM should pre-notify with airline, tour operator or travel agent (e.g. at least 48 hours according to ECAC Doc 30, Part I Section 5). Additionally, information should be given about he location of the call points, information desks or check-in desks, where the passengers should announce their presence upon arrival.

3. **Information on getting to the airport.** This information should include, as a minimum, the available transport methods for getting to the airport or through the different terminals of an airport, the arrangements for disabled parking at the airport both at departure and arrival (within the terminal boundary), and any specific rules for, or charges applied to, PRM passengers for using a drop-off zone at the airport. This should also include links to any pages detailing the accessibility

arrangements for transport operated by other companies, and public transport, to and from the airport and car parking operated outside the terminal boundary.

4. **Information on the layout of the airport.** Airports should provide a map of the airport and list the key walking distances. As a minimum, the map should include both inside and outside the terminal building and include a scale to enable PRMs to assess likely walking distances between key points including call points, designated arrival and departure points, special assistance areas (both landside and airside), check-in areas, disabled toilets, security checkpoints, departure lounges, gates, border control and baggage reclaim. As recommendation the list of walking distances should include the furthest possible distance between key points including designated arrival and departure points, special assistance areas (both landside and airside), check-in areas, disabled toilets, security checkpoints, departure lounges, gates, border control and baggage reclaim.

5. **Information on designated arrival and departure points.** The map of the airport should include a list of designated meeting points where the assistance staff can be contacted and where they can meet and assist the passenger from. The location of each designated point should be shown on a map to make sure they are easy to find; this information should also be available in text. An alternative format (such as video) can further clarify the information.

6. **Information on performance standards.** This information should include, as a minimum, information on (and links to) the airport's Quality Standards and, if applicable, how the airport or its agent has performed against the Quality Standards. This information should be easy to find and to understand for the passenger. Airports with annual traffic less of 150,000 passengers can be excluded of this provision.

7. **Information on airport security.** This information should include, as a minimum, whether there are any special arrangements for PRMs in relation to security, in particular in relation to mobility and medical equipment, and whether private rooms are available for security searches. If the airport operator is not responsible for security, it should include links to any pages detailing the accessibility arrangements for security searches as well as the contact details of the contractor in order to clarify procedures.

8. **Information on mobility equipment.** This should include, as a minimum, the arrangements at the airport for allowing PRM passengers to remain in their own mobility equipment up to the gate, and the arrangements for repatriating mobility equipment to the PRM passenger on arrival. In addition, where relevant, it should include any information for owners on preparing mobility equipment for carriage. This information should also cover the arrangements for obtaining replacement mobility equipment in the event that the PRM's own equipment is damaged on arrival.

9. **Information on service animals**. This should include the arrangements in place at the airport for service animals (e.g. assistance dogs), including information about the location of relief areas for service animals.

10. **Information on how to complain.** This should include the arrangements in place for PRMs to complain to the airport about the assistance provided at the airport on their journey, including contact details.

11. **Information on PRM helpline.** The telephone number and opening hours of the airport's helpline for enquiries from PRMs, as well as alternative accessible means of contact (see above). This should be a phone number that is always manned during the airport's opening hours (e.g. airport telephone general information service).

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