

# **EVALUATION OF REGULATION 1107/2006**

**Final report**

**Main report and Appendices A-B**

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**C CASE STUDIES (Provided as separate document)**





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### Background

1. Regulation 1107/2006, which took full effect in July 2008, introduced new protections for people with reduced mobility when travelling by air. Key provisions included:
  - The right, subject to certain derogations, not to be refused embarkation or reservation.
  - The right to be provided with assistance at airports, at no additional cost, in order to allow access to the flight.
  - Responsibility for provision of assistance to PRMs at airports is placed with the airport management company; previously, these services were usually contracted by airlines.
  - The costs of providing assistance at airports can be recovered from airlines through transparent and cost-reflective charges levied for all passengers.
2. The Regulation also required Member States to introduce sanctions into national law for non-compliance with the Regulation, and create National Enforcement Bodies (NEBs) responsible for enforcement of the Regulation. The Regulation applies to all flights from and within the European Union (EU), as well as to flights to the EU operated by EU-registered carriers.
3. The Regulation requires the Commission to report to the Council and the Parliament on its operation and results, and if appropriate to bring forward new legislative proposals. In order to inform this report, the Commission has asked Steer Davies Gleave to undertake an independent review of the Regulation.

### Factual conclusions

4. Our review has gathered evidence on the implementation of the Regulation through in-depth discussions and consultation with stakeholders, supplemented by desk research. Stakeholders included airports, airlines, NEBs and PRM organisations. The evidence gathered shows that most of the airports and airlines examined for the study have implemented the requirements of the Regulation. However, there is significant variation in the quality of service provided by airports, and in the policies of airlines on carriage of PRMs. We also identified relatively little activity by NEBs to monitor the Regulation's implementation, or to promote awareness of the rights it grants.
5. Conclusions regarding each of the groups of stakeholders are set out below.

#### *Airlines*

6. The key issue we identified in the study is the lack of consistency in policies on carriage, and the significant variation between carriers. For example, Ryanair permits a maximum of 4 PRMs who require assistance on any flight, and Brussels Airlines permits at most 2 on most aircraft; in contrast, British Airways does not impose any restrictions. There is similar variation in policies on whether PRMs have to be accompanied. Approval of policies is the responsibility of national safety regulators, however typically airlines propose policies which are then approved with little or no challenge by the licensing authority (often the same organisation as the NEB).

Although the rationale for these restrictions is safety, there is limited evidence to justify them. Limitations on carriage of PRMs are specifically prohibited by the equivalent US regulation on carriage of PRMs<sup>1</sup>.

7. All airlines in the study sample had published some information on carriage of PRMs, however 13 of the 21 did not publish on their websites all of the restrictions on carriage of PRMs that they imposed. Most stated in their Conditions of Carriage that PRMs would not be refused, but this was usually conditional on pre-notification; this may be an infringement of the Regulation.
8. The Regulation encourages PRMs to pre-notify their requirements for assistance to airlines, which are then required to pass on this information to the relevant airports. In theory this should both ensure that PRMs promptly receive the services they need, and allow airports to minimise resourcing costs through efficient rostering. However, our research found that levels of pre-notification too low to allow this: at 11 of 16 airports for which we were provided with information, pre-notification rates were lower than 60%.
9. PRM representative organisations informed us that loss or damage to mobility equipment could still be a significant issue. The Regulation requires airports to handle mobility equipment but does not introduce any new provisions which reduce the risk of loss or damage, or increase the amount of compensation payable, which is restricted by the limits defined in the Montreal Convention.

#### *Airports*

10. All airports in the study sample had implemented the Regulation, although we were informed that the Regulation had not been implemented at all at regional airports in Greece. Most had subcontracted the service through a competitive tender; several informed us that they were considering or were in the process of retendering the service, generally because service quality in the initial period had not been sufficient.
11. The frequency with which the PRM services are used varies considerably between airports: among the airports for which we have been able to obtain data use of services varies by a factor of 15, although in most cases between 0.2% and 0.7% of passengers requested assistance.
12. Most airports in the case study States had published quality standards, typically following the format of the minimum recommended standards in ECAC Document 30. Most undertook some form of internal monitoring of performance, however few used external checks of service such as 'mystery shoppers'. Most stakeholders informed us that airports were providing an adequate level of service quality.
13. Variability in airport service quality (including safety) was reported by PRM organisations and some airlines, but this is subjective and hard to quantify. Airports reported variation in equipment and facilities provided, and we observed significant

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<sup>1</sup> US Department of Transport 14 CFR part 382.

variation in the level of training given to personnel providing services to PRMs. In the sample examined, training varied between 3 and 14 days, ostensibly to provide the same services.

14. Charges levied by airports varied considerably (between €0.16 and €0.90 per departing passenger), and we were unable to identify any apparent link to frequency of service use, price differentials between States or service quality. Airports in Spain and mainland Portugal levied uniform charges across all airports managed by the national airport company; this may be an infringement of the Regulation. Many airlines believed consultation by airports regarding charges was poor; Cyprus, Spain and Portugal were identified as particular issues.

#### *NEBs*

15. All States except Slovenia have designated NEBs; in most cases the NEB is the CAA, and is the same organisation as the NEB for Regulation 261/2004. All States except Poland and Sweden have introduced penalties into national law for infringements of the Regulation, although several have not introduced sanctions for all possible infringements. The maximum sanction which can be imposed varies significantly, and in some States may not be at a high enough level to be dissuasive; for example, in Estonia, Lithuania and Romania the maximum sanction is lower than €1,000.
16. Most States have received very few complaints to date; in total 1,110 received to date, compared to a total of 3.2m passengers assisted in 2009 across 21 case study airports. 80% of all complaints regarding infringements of the Regulation had been submitted to the UK NEBs; this may be the result of national law in the UK which permits financial compensation to be claimed under the Regulation. No sanctions have yet been imposed, although the NEBs for France, Portugal and Spain have opened proceedings to impose fines. In a number of States we identified significant practical difficulties in imposing and collecting sanctions, typically in relation to imposing fines on carriers registered in other States. These issues are in most cases equivalent to those that apply in relation to Regulation 261/2004<sup>2</sup>.
17. Although most case study NEBs had taken some action to monitor the services provided under the Regulation beyond the monitoring of complaints (14 out of 16 had undertaken at least one inspection of airports), in most cases this was limited. Most inspections focussed on checks of systems and procedures, and did not assess the experience of passengers using the services. Monitoring of PRM charges was also poor: NEBs in 9 of the 16 States had undertaken no direct monitoring of airport charges.
18. Few NEBs had made significant efforts to promote awareness of the Regulation by passengers, as required by the Regulation; only two informed us of national public awareness campaigns they had undertaken. This lack of promotion undermines the claims of some NEBs that reviewing complaints is sufficient to monitor the

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<sup>2</sup> See Evaluation of Regulation 261/2004, February 2010:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/transport/passengers/studies/doc/2010\\_02\\_evaluation\\_of\\_regulation\\_2612004.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/transport/passengers/studies/doc/2010_02_evaluation_of_regulation_2612004.pdf).

implementation of the Regulation. Awareness of the NEBs' performance appeared in general to be poor: most stakeholders contacted for the study held no opinion on the effectiveness of enforcement by NEBs, and many informed us that this was because they had had no interaction with them.

*Other issues*

19. A particular issue raised by stakeholders was the conflict between the Regulation and the equivalent US legislation (14 CFR Part 382), which applies to European carriers operating flights to/from the US, and other flights where these are operated as codeshares with US carriers. The most significant conflict is the allocation of responsibilities for assistance: the Regulation requires airports to arrange the provision of services to PRMs, while under the US legislation it is the airlines that have this responsibility. The US legislation also prohibits airlines from imposing numerical limits on PRMs, and from requiring pre-notification from PRMs. This has caused issues for carriers who are required to comply with pieces of legislation that conflict, although the US legislation does allow carriers to apply for a waiver where there is a conflict of laws.
20. A number of other issues regarding specific Articles are discussed in the section below on recommended changes to the Regulation.

**Recommendations**

21. We have made a number of recommendations, addressing:
  - improvements to the implementation of the Regulation which would not require any legislative changes; and
  - further recommendations which could only be implemented through amendment to the text of the Regulation.

*Measures to improve the operation of the Regulation*

22. Several airlines argued in their submissions to the study that they should be permitted to provide or contract their own PRM assistance services, as they could provide this more cost-efficiently than airports. We believe that this could create an incentive to minimise the service provided and hence would risk a reduction in service quality. Whilst there were initially significant issues with the quality of PRM service provision at certain airports, most stakeholders believed that these issues had now been addressed, and our most important recommendation is therefore that allocation of responsibility for PRM services to airports should not be amended.
23. Many of the concerns raised regarding airports relate to inconsistency of application of the Regulation. To address this, we suggest that the Commission should:
  - improve provision of information regarding accessibility of airports, through a centralised website listing factors such as maximum likely walking distance within an airport, means used for access to aircraft, and any facilities available for PRMs;
  - develop and share best practice on contracting of PRM service providers, both to improve the content and structure of the contracts used and therefore reduce

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- the likelihood of unnecessary retendering, and to recommend methods of cooperation; and
  - develop and share best practice advice on training of staff providing PRM services, so that a more consistent standard of service is provided.
24. Similarly, many of the concerns raised regarding airlines also relate to inconsistency of application of the Regulation, in particular to inconsistent policies on carriage of PRMs. We therefore suggest that the Commission should:
- work with EASA to determine safe policies on carriage of PRMs, in particular to address the wide and unjustifiable variation in airline policies on carriage of PRMs (in particular on numerical limits and circumstances under which PRMs are required to be accompanied); and
  - ensure that the airlines we have identified as not publishing clear policies on carriage of PRMs do so, through actions by the relevant NEBs (which could also review airlines outside the study sample for the same reason).
25. Given the current low rates of rates pre-notification, we suggest that the Commission monitor this issue, through encouraging NEBs to collect rates of pre-notification. In future, the Commission should assess the situation and consider either eliminating the requirement for pre-notification or alternatively retaining it and providing passengers and carriers with more incentive to pre-notify.
26. An additional problem reported with pre-notification is where PRMs had pre-notified their requirements for assistance, but then found that this information had not been passed on to airport or airline staff. To address this, and to provide PRMs with evidence that they can use when making a complaint, we recommend that the Commission encourage airlines to provide PRMs with a receipt for pre-notification.
27. The greatest problem identified by the study regarding NEBs was the lack of proactive measures taken to monitor or enforce the Regulation. In most cases this has not had significant detrimental effect, as most airports and airlines have implemented the provisions of the Regulation, but could become an issue if the situation changes in the future. We suggest that the Commission should encourage all Member States to:
- designate NEBs and introduce penalties for all infringements of the Regulation;
  - take measures to inform PRMs of their rights under the Regulation and of the possibility of complaint to the relevant NEB, for example through national promotional campaigns; and
  - pro-actively monitor the application of the Regulation (rather than relying on complaints), for example through increased interaction with PRM organisations, and through direct monitoring of quality of service provided.
28. We also recommend that the Commission should, in consultation with stakeholders, develop a detailed good practice guide regarding implementation of the Regulation. This could include sections regarding recommendations on safety limits, the format and content of policies on carriage, and consultation. It could also specify recommended minimum quality standards covering qualitative aspects of the services provided. Publishing voluntary policies such as these would allow potential future amendments to the Regulation to be tested in practice before adoption.
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*Changes to the Regulation*

29. There are some areas where improvements can only be effected through changes to the text of the Regulation. These include minor amendments which we recommend should be implemented as soon as possible, and more significant amendments to be considered in the longer term.
30. The minor amendments we would suggest are:
- Extend Article 11 to require airlines to ensure that the personnel of their ground handling companies are trained to handle mobility equipment.
  - Amend Article 8 to make specific PRM charges obligatory for airports wishing to recover costs from users, and therefore ensure costs are transparent, reasonable and cost-related.
  - Amend Article 8 to make clear that that PRM charges are airport-specific and cannot be set at a network level.
  - Amend Article 14 to require that NEBs must be independent of any bodies responsible for providing services under the Regulation (at present this is not the case in Greece).
  - Amend Article 14 to clarify that NEBs are responsible for flights departing from (rather than both departing from and arriving at) airports in their territory, in addition to flights by Community carriers arriving at airports within the State's territory but departing from a third country.
  - Amend Recital 17 to be consistent with Article 14, so that both state that complaints regarding the Regulation should be addressed to the NEB of the State where the flight departed, rather than that of the State which issued the operating license to the carrier.
31. These changes would improve the functioning of the Regulation in its current form, without making significant changes to its overall approach.
32. A key issue with the Regulation is its lack of detail when compared to equivalent legislation (in particular, the equivalent US regulations on carriage of PRMs); in our view, as a result of this, it leaves too much scope for interpretation and variation in service provision. We suggest that, to ensure greater consistency, and that PRMs' rights are adequately respected, the Commission should consider making the text more detailed and specific about the requirements for airlines and airports. Some key areas in which we suggest that changes could be made are as follows:
- Specify the circumstances under which carriage of PRMs may be restricted (including any numerical limits) or where PRMs may be required to be accompanied<sup>3</sup>.
  - Clarify the definitions of 'PRM', 'mobility equipment' and 'cooperation'.

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<sup>3</sup> This could be implemented either through amendment to this Regulation or through amendment to Commission Regulation (EC) 859/2008

- Clarify whether airlines may levy additional charges for supply of medical oxygen and for multiple seats where one seat is insufficient for the passenger (for example, in the case of obese or injured passengers).
  - Extend the Regulation to include a provision requiring airports to publish information on the rights of PRMs (including the right to complain) at accessible points within the airport.
33. It would be necessary to consult with stakeholders about these changes and to undertake an impact assessment, and therefore these changes could not be introduced immediately.
34. We also suggest that the Commission and the Member States should work with other contracting States to amend the Montreal Convention so as to exclude mobility equipment from the definition of baggage. This would address the problem faced by users of technologically advanced wheelchairs, the values of which often substantially exceed the maximum compensation allowable under the Montreal Convention (1,131 SDRs, or €1,370). Although most airlines we contacted for the study informed us that they waived the Montreal limits in this type of situation, several PRM organisations informed us of cases where they did not, and even in the case that an airline voluntarily waives the limit the PRM is in a position of uncertainty.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### Background

- 1.1 Approximately 10% of the EU population has some type of disability<sup>4</sup>. Equal access to air transport services is necessary to enable full and equal participation in modern society. In order to ensure equal treatment as far as possible, Regulation 1107/2006 introduced new protections for people with reduced mobility when travelling by air, including the right, subject to certain derogations, not to be refused embarkation or reservation, and the right to be provided with assistance at airports, at no additional cost, in order to allow access to the flight. Before the introduction of the Regulation, there had been some well-publicised examples of carriers charging passengers for the provision of assistance that was essential in order to travel<sup>5</sup>.
- 1.2 The Regulation creates obligations towards disabled persons and persons of reduced mobility (PRMs) for air carriers and their agents, tour operators, airport management companies, and Member States:
- Airlines are prohibited from refusing carriage (except where necessary to comply with safety regulations or where it is physically impossible) and have to provide certain types of assistance on board the aircraft.
  - Airlines, their agents and tour operators have to ensure that they can accept notification of the need for assistance at all points of sale, and transmit this information to the airport and the operating air carrier.
  - Airport management companies have to provide assistance at the airport, and develop and publish quality standards for this assistance. The costs of providing this assistance can be recovered through transparent and cost-reflective charges levied for all passengers.
  - Member States are required to introduce sanctions into national law for non-compliance with the Regulation, create bodies responsible for enforcement of the Regulation, and promote awareness of the rights created by the Regulation and how to complain about infringements.

### The need for this study

- 1.3 Article 17 of the Regulation requires the Commission, by 2010, to report to the Parliament and the Council on the operation and results of the Regulation. In order to inform this report, the Commission requires an independent evaluation of the operation of the Regulation.

### This report

- 1.4 This report is the Final Report for the study. It sets out the work undertaken over the five month duration of the study, and draws conclusions on the current functioning of the Regulation. The recommendations set out in this report were discussed at the final

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<sup>4</sup> ECAC document 30, section 5, annex N

<sup>5</sup> For example, on January 2004 a UK court ruled that Ryanair had acted unlawfully by charging a passenger Bob Ross £18 in each direction for wheelchair hire at London Stansted airport



meeting with the Commission.

### **Structure of this document**

- 1.5 The rest of this report is structured as follows:
- Section 2 summarises the methodology used for this study;
  - Section 3 sets out how the Regulation is being applied by airports;
  - Section 4 sets out how the Regulation is being applied by airlines;
  - Section 5 describes enforcement and complaint handling by NEBs;
  - Section 6 summarises stakeholder views on other policy issues relating to the Regulation;
  - Section 7 summarises the factual conclusions; and
  - Section 8 summarises the recommendations.
- 1.6 Further detailed information on the policies of airlines regarding carriage of PRMs is provided in Appendices A and B.
- 1.7 Case studies have been undertaken of complaint handling and enforcement in 16 Member States. These are provided in Appendix C, which, due to its size, is provided as a separate document.

## 2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Introduction

2.1 This section provides a summary of the research methodology used. It describes:

- the overall approach used;
- the selection of case studies;
- the scope of the desk research that has been undertaken; and
- the stakeholders that have participated in the study, and how they have provided inputs.

### Overview of our approach

2.2 The Commission requested us to collect evidence to address a number of questions, most of which can be categorised as either relating to:

- enforcement and complaint handling undertaken by National Enforcement Bodies (NEBs); and
- application of the Regulation by air carriers, their agents, tour operators and airports.

2.3 In order to address these questions, we developed a research methodology divided into two parts:

- case study research; and
- cross-EU interviews and analysis.

2.4 The rationale for this division is that enforcement and complaint procedures are specific to Member States and are therefore best evaluated through a case study approach. It was agreed to undertake case studies of complaint handling and enforcement in 16 Member States as part of this study. The case studies also describe state-specific aspects of airline and airport implementation of the Regulation.

2.5 Key airlines cover the whole of the EU rather than restricting operations primarily to one State (for example, the Irish-registered carrier Ryanair operates domestic flights in the UK, France, Spain and Italy). In addition, the issues faced by airports in implementing the Regulation are, in most cases, not State-specific. Questions relating to the application of the Regulation by airlines and airports have therefore been addressed through a cross-EU approach. Information from both elements of the research has been used for the conclusions, and will be used in the development of recommendations.

2.6 Both the case study and the cross-EU research use a mixture of stakeholder interviews and desk research. The desk research has been useful to supplement the information provided by stakeholders, particularly regarding the charges levied by airports for services to PRMs.

### **Selection of case study States**

2.7 The 16 case study states were selected in agreement with the Commission, with reference to the following criteria:

- The Member States with the largest aviation markets (measured by passenger numbers these are UK, Spain, Germany, Italy, France, Greece, Netherlands and Ireland);
- At least some of the Member States that, at the time the study commenced, had not introduced sanctions into national law;
- Member States in which the structure of the NEB is unusual (for example, in the UK, the Equality and Human Rights Commission is responsible for complaint handling);
- Member States in which airlines are based with which we identified significant issues of non-compliance with Regulation 1107/2006 in our 2008 review of Conditions of Carriage (carriers with some particularly non-compliant terms were based in Denmark and Italy); and
- States covering a wide geographical scope and variation in sizes.

2.8 The case study states are:

- Belgium;
- Denmark;
- France;
- Germany;
- Greece;
- Hungary;
- Ireland;
- Italy;
- Latvia;
- Netherlands;
- Poland;
- Portugal;
- Romania;
- Spain;
- Sweden; and
- United Kingdom.

2.9 In order to present a thorough analysis of the operation of the Regulation across the EU we conducted a more limited programme of data collection and stakeholder interviews in the remaining 11 Member States.

## Stakeholder selection and inputs

2.10 The stakeholders important for the study were:

- NEBs;
- Airlines;
- Airport managing bodies; and
- Organisations representing disabled people, and people with reduced mobility (PRM organisations).

2.11 In addition to these, we spoke to cross-EU bodies which represented these organisations at a European level.

### *National Enforcement Bodies*

2.12 We interviewed (face-to-face or by telephone) the NEB(s) notified to the Commission in every case study State, and obtained written responses from the NEBs of all other States.

2.13 We obtained the following information from each NEB:

- The legal basis for complaint handling and enforcement in the Member State;
- The degree of compliance by airlines;
- The degree of compliance by airports;
- Statistics on the number of complaints and the process for handling them;
- Issues relating to enforcement; and
- Any other issues.

2.14 Non-case study states were provided with a shorter question list which, while addressing the areas listed above, does so at a less detailed level.

2.15 Engagement of the NEBs was obtained through a combination of written responses, meetings and telephone interviews, depending on whether the State concerned is one of the 16 case study states. The approach adopted for case study NEB is listed in Table 2.1, together with the final status of contact as we drafted this Report.

**TABLE 2.1 STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS: CASE STUDY NEBS**

Member State	Organisation	Form of input
Belgium	SPF Mobilité et Transport	Written response and face-to-face interview
Denmark	CAA-Denmark (Statens Luftfartsvesen)	Face-to-face interview
France	DGAC Sous-direction du tourisme	Face-to-face interview
Germany	Luftfahrt-Bundesamt (LBA) BM für Verkehr, Bau und Stadtentw	Face-to-face interview
Greece	CAA, Air Transport Economics Section CAA, Airports Division	Written response and telephone interview

Member State	Organisation	Form of input
Hungary	Nemzeti Közlekedési Hatóság (Directorate for Aviation)	Face-to-face interview
	Egyenlő Bánásmód Hatóság (Equal Treatment Authority)	
Ireland	Commission for Aviation Regulation	Face-to-face interview
Italy	ENAC - Direzione Centrale Operazioni	Face-to-face interview
Latvia	Civil Aviation Agency	Written response and telephone interview
Netherlands	Inspectie Verkeer en Waterstaat	Written response and face-to-face interview
Poland	Civil Aviation Office	Face-to-face interview
Portugal	Instituto Nacional de Aviação Civil	Face-to-face interview
Romania	Autoritatea Nationala Pentru Persoanele cu Handicap	Face-to-face interview
	Romanian Civil Aeronautical Authority	
Spain	Servicio de inspección y relaciones con usuarios	Written response and face-to-face interview
Sweden	Swedish Civil Aviation Authority	Written response and telephone interview
United Kingdom	Equality and Human Rights Commission (England)	Face-to-face interview
	Civil Aviation Authority	

2.16 We obtained responses from all NEBs in the non-case study States, as shown in Table 2.2. We requested written responses from all non-case study NEBs and these were followed up with telephone interviews where necessary for clarification.

**TABLE 2.2 STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS: NON-CASE STUDY NEBS**

Member State	Organisation
Austria	Civil Aviation Authority
Bulgaria	Civil Aviation Administration Ministry of Transport, Information Technologies and Communications
Cyprus	Department of Civil Aviation
Czech Republic	Civil Aviation Authority
Estonia	Consumer Protection Body
Finland	Civil Aviation Authority
Lithuania	Civil Aviation Administration
Luxembourg	Direction de l'Aviation Civile
Malta	Department of Civil Aviation
Slovakia	Slovak Trade Inspection
	Ministry of Transport, Posts and Telecommunications, Directorate General of Civil Aviation and Water Transport, Air Transport Department
Slovenia	Ministry of Transport, Directorate of Civil Aviation

## Airlines

2.17 20 airlines have been selected to include a sample with variation across several criteria. These are:

- One key airline with major operations in each case study State;
- At a minimum to include the top 10 European airlines measured in terms of passenger numbers;
- Also to include a mix of different airline types (legacy, low cost and charter), States of registration, and sizes; and
- At least 2 non-EU airlines.

2.18 The airlines selected, and their relevance to each of the criteria, is shown in Table 2.3. We were originally planning to consider Air France-KLM as one airline, but various differences (for example, in its Conditions of Carriage) have meant that it is more logical to consider it as two airlines, meaning there are 11 airlines under the ‘Top 10 passenger numbers’ criterion. We have consequently excluded the 11<sup>th</sup> (Austrian) from the interview sample, although the airline still forms part of the desk research.

**TABLE 2.3 AIRLINE SELECTION CRITERIA**

Airline	Case study State coverage		Airline type				Top 10 passenger numbers
	Selected for case study state coverage	Case study states	Non-EU	Legacy	Low cost	Charter	
Aegean Airlines	✓	Greece			✓		
Air Berlin					✓		✓
Air France	✓	France / Netherlands		✓			✓
AirBaltic	✓	Latvia			✓		
Alitalia	✓	Italy		✓			✓
British Airways	✓	UK		✓			✓
Brussels Airlines	✓	Belgium		✓			
Delta			✓	✓			
EasyJet					✓		✓
Emirates			✓	✓			
Iberia	✓	Spain		✓			✓
KLM	✓	Netherlands		✓			✓
Lufthansa	✓	Germany		✓			✓
Ryanair	✓	Ireland			✓		✓
SAS	✓	Denmark / Sweden		✓			✓
TAP Portugal	✓	Portugal		✓			
TAROM	✓	Romania		✓			
Thomas Cook						✓	
TUI (Thomsonfly)						✓	

Wizzair	✓	Hungary / Poland	✓
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- 2.19 We approached all 21 case study airlines requesting either a face-to-face or telephone interview. The methods they chose to respond are shown in Table 2.4 below.

**TABLE 2.4 STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS: AIRLINES**

Airline	Form of input
Aegean Airlines	Written response and telephone interview
Air Berlin	Input through IACA only
Air France	Telephone interview
AirBaltic	Did not respond
Alitalia	Written response
British Airways	Declined to participate
Brussels Airlines	Did not respond
Delta	Written response
easyJet	Face-to-face interview
Emirates	Did not respond
Iberia	Telephone interview
KLM	Face-to-face interview
Lufthansa	Declined to participate
Ryanair	Face-to-face interview
SAS	Written response
TAP Portugal	Face-to-face interview
TAROM	Face-to-face interview
Thomas Cook	Face-to-face interview
TUI (Thomsonfly)	Input through IACA only
Wizzair	Did not respond

- 2.20 We also consulted the five main associations representing airlines operating airlines within the EU, listed in Table 2.5 below.

**TABLE 2.5 STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS: AIRLINE ASSOCIATIONS**

Organisation	Full Name	Type of airline represented	Form of input
IATA	International Air Transport Association	Legacy	Written response and telephone interview
ELFAA	European Low Fares Airline Association	European low cost	Face-to-face interview
AEA	Association of European Airlines	European legacy	Face-to-face interview
ERA	European Regions Airlines Association	European regional	Face-to-face interview
IACA	International Air Carrier Association	Leisure / charter	Face-to-face interview

### Airports

2.21 The 21 case study airports were selected according to the following criteria:

- All of the top 10 European airports in terms of passenger numbers;
- The main airport in each of the 16 case study Member States; and
- A sample of smaller airports.

2.22 The airports selected under each criterion, and the methods they chose to respond, are shown in Table 2.6. Note that three of the top 10 airports were excluded from the case study consultation as they were operated by the same organisations as others in the top 10. These comprise Paris Orly, London Gatwick, Zaragoza and Barcelona airports which, at the time the study was planned, were managed by the same companies as Paris CDG, Heathrow and Madrid Barajas respectively<sup>6</sup>. These airports do still form part of the desk research, however.

**TABLE 2.6 AIRPORT SELECTION CRITERIA**

Airport	State	Main airport in case study State	Top 10 passenger numbers	Smaller airport	Form of input
Amsterdam	Netherlands	✓	✓		Face-to-face interview
Athens	Greece	✓			Written response and telephone interview
Bologna	Italy			✓	Face-to-face interview
Brussels	Belgium	✓			Face-to-face interview
Bucharest Otopeni	Romania	✓			Face-to-face interview
Budapest	Hungary	✓			Face-to-face interview
Brussels Charleroi	Belgium			✓	Face-to-face interview
Copenhagen	Denmark	✓			Written response and telephone interview
Dublin	Ireland	✓			Face-to-face interview
Frankfurt Main	Germany	✓	✓		Face-to-face interview
Lisbon	Portugal	✓			Face-to-face interview
London Heathrow	United Kingdom	✓	✓		Face-to-face interview
London Luton	United Kingdom			✓	Face-to-face interview
Madrid Barajas	Spain	✓	✓		Face-to-face interview*
Munich	Germany		✓		Not able to obtain a response
Paris Charles De Gaulle	France	✓	✓		Face-to-face interview
Riga	Latvia	✓			Written response and telephone interview
Roma Fiumicino	Italy	✓	✓		Written response and telephone interview

<sup>6</sup> Gatwick ceased to be managed by BAA, the operator of Heathrow, on 2 December 2009



Stockholm	Sweden	✓		Written response and telephone interview
Warsaw	Poland	✓		Face-to-face interview
Zaragoza	Spain		✓	Face-to-face interview*

\* Interview with AENA covered all State airports in Spain

### *Selection of PRM organisations and other passenger groups*

2.23 In each case study State we selected a PRM organisation representing all disabilities and impairments at a national level. We initially approached the national council organisations that are members of the European Disability Forum (EDF); however in a small number of cases we were unable to obtain a response from this organisation and had to contact an alternative organisation in their place. The table also includes four cross-EU PRM organisations.

**TABLE 2.7 PRM AND PASSENGER ORGANISATIONS BY CASE STUDY STATE**

State	Organisation	Form of input
Belgium	Belgium Disability Forum	Telephone interview
Denmark	Danske Handicaporganisationer (DH; Disabled Peoples Organisations Denmark)	Face-to-face interview
France	Conseil Français des personnes Handicapées pour les questions Européennes (CFHE ; French Council of Disabled People for European Affairs)	Telephone interview
Germany	Deutscher Behinderten Rat (DBR; German Disability Council)	Unable to obtain a response
Greece	National Confederation of Disabled People (ESAEA)	Written response and telephone interview
Hungary	National Council of Federations of People with Disabilities (FESZT)	Written response and telephone interview
Ireland	People with Disabilities in Ireland (PWDI)	Face-to-face interview
Italy	Forum Italiano sulla Disabilità (FID; Italian Disability Forum)	Face-to-face interview
Latvia	Latvian Umbrella Body for Disability Organisations (SUSTENTO)	Written response and telephone interview
Netherlands	CG-Raad*	Face-to-face interview
Poland	Polskie Forum Osob Niepełnosprawnych (PFON; Polish Disability Forum)	Face-to-face interview
Portugal	Confederação Nacional dos Organismos de Deficientes (CNOD; National Confederation of Organisations of Disabled People)	Unable to obtain a response
Romania	National Disability Council (CNDR)	Face-to-face interview
Spain	Fundación ONCE*, on request of Comité Español de Representantes de Personas con Discapacidad (CERMI)	Face-to-face interview
Sweden	Swedish Disability Federation (HSO)	Written response and telephone interview
United Kingdom	UK Coalition for Disability Rights in Europe (UKCDRE)	Telephone interview

EU	European Disability Forum	Face-to-face interview
EU	European Blind Union	Face-to-face interview
EU	European Union of the Deaf	Written response and telephone interview
EU	Inclusion Europe	Declined to respond

\* Not a national council organisation member of EDF

#### *Selection of other organisations*

2.24 In addition to the stakeholders listed above, we contacted a number of cross-EU organisations. These comprised:

- **Passenger organisations:** the European Passenger Federation;
- **Travel agent associations:** ECTAA;
- **Airport association:** ACI Europe; and
- **Advisory bodies:** EASA, ECAC.

2.25 At the level of Member States, there were stakeholders which did not correspond to the categories described so far, but which we believed would provide useful information. These organisations were as follows:

- **Wings on Wheels (UK):** This organisation provides package holidays tailored to the needs of disabled people.
- **Thomas Cook, TUI:** Elements of the Regulation apply to travel agents as well as to airlines.
- **Air Transport Users Council (UK):** Prior to the introduction of the Regulation, this organisation had handled complaints from disabled passengers regarding travel by air, and as a result continued to receive some complaints after the Regulation came into force. In addition, the AUC is the only government-funded body in the EU specifically to represent the interests of air passengers

2.26 The form of input adopted by each stakeholder is shown in Table 2.8.

**TABLE 2.8 STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS: OTHER ORGANISATIONS**

State	Association name	Form of input
EU	ECTAA	Written response
EU	EPF	Did not respond
EU	ACI Europe	Face-to-face interview
EU	EASA	Written information provided
EU	ECAC	Face-to-face interview
United Kingdom	Wings on Wheels	Unable to obtain a response
Germany	Thomas Cook	Face-to-face interview
United Kingdom	TUI	Through IACA only
United Kingdom	Air Transport Users Council	Face-to-face interview

## Desk research

- 2.27 The main objectives of the desk research were:
- To evaluate the extent to which air carriers demonstrate compliance with the Regulation through published information, such as Conditions of Carriage and policies on carriage of PRMs; and
  - The extent to which airports have complied with the requirement to develop and publish PRM quality standards, as specified in Article 9 of the Regulation, and the content of these standards.
- 2.28 Conclusions emerging from the desk research were supplemented by the information collected through stakeholder interviews.

### *Airlines*

- 2.29 The research methodology employed for this part of the study was based on a review of the websites of the 21 case study airlines listed above. Although the focus was on the English language version of the websites, versions in other languages were checked to check whether additional information was provided.
- 2.30 Three key sources of information were surveyed from each website:
- Conditions of Carriage, with particular regard to the conditions set out for the carriage of PRMs;
  - Other policies on the carriage of PRMs: a more detailed search across the airline's website for any policies and relevant information on PRM travel; and
  - Options to notify carriers of assistance requirements.

### *Airports*

- 2.31 Again, the research conducted for this part of the study was internet-based. The websites of each of the case study airports was surveyed against the following criteria:
- whether the airport publishes quality standards;
  - how easy these are to find;
  - the content of the standards; and
  - whether the airport publishes details of its performance against the standards.

### *Review of relevant legislation and other documentation*

- 2.32 We also reviewed airline and airport policies with reference to other applicable legislation and guidance. The only other EU-wide legislation which relates to the carriage of PRMs by air is EU-OPS 1 (Commission Regulation 859/2008). In addition, many EU carriers which operate flights to the US are also covered by the corresponding US regulation (14 CFR Part 382, Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Disability in Air Travel); this is significantly different from Regulation 1107/2006 and this has an impact on the operating procedures of some carriers.

2.33 Other current guidance includes:

- ECAC Document 30;
- JAR-OPS 1 Section 1;
- JAA Temporary Guidance Leaflet (TGL) No. 44; and
- UK Department for Transport (DfT), *Access to Air Travel for Disabled Persons and Persons with Reduced Mobility – Code of Practice*.

### 3. APPLICATION OF THE REGULATION BY AIRPORTS

#### Introduction

- 3.1 One of the most fundamental changes introduced by the Regulation was the change in responsibility for provision of assistance to PRMs: where previously these services were provided by airlines, the Regulation requires airports to provide them, and permits them to pass on the associated costs to users, provided this is done in a fair and transparent manner. The Regulation also requires airports handling over 150,000 passenger movements per year to develop and publish quality standards for assistance. The detailed requirements are set out in the following section.
- 3.2 In order to assess how airports are implementing these requirements, we met or sought responses from a sample of airports selected under the criteria set out above (see 2.21). The information gathered was supplemented by tours of the services provided at certain airports, by interviews with other stakeholders who gave their views on service provision, and by desk research. The desk research included analysis of the charges and quality standards set out by the airports in the sample.

#### Requirements of the Regulation

- 3.3 As noted above, the Regulation places responsibility for provision of assistance with the airport, whereas previously assistance had been provided by ground handling companies on the basis of contracts with individual airlines. The Regulation requires each airport to provide a uniform service quality for all airlines that it handles (except where an airline requests a higher level of service). The key requirements for the PRM assistance service are summarised below:
- **Designated points:** Airports are required to designate points inside and outside the terminal building at which PRMs can announce their arrival at the airport and request assistance. These must be developed in cooperation with airport users and relevant PRM organisations, must be clearly signed and must offer basic information about the airport in accessible formats.
  - **Assistance:** Airports must provide assistance to PRMs so that they are able to take the flight for which they hold a reservation, providing that they have pre-notified their requirements and arrive with sufficient time before the departure of their flight. If they have not pre-notified, the airport must make all reasonable efforts to enable them to take their flight. For PRMs on arriving flights, the airport must provide assistance to enable them to leave the airport or reach a connecting flight. The assistance provided should be appropriate to the individual passenger. An airport may contract for these services to be provided by another company, in compliance with quality standards (discussed below).
  - **Charges:** An airport cannot charge a PRM for this service, but may levy a specific charge on airport users for it. The charge must be reasonable, cost-related and transparent, and the accounts for these services must be separated from its other accounts. The charge must be shared between airport users in proportion to the total number of passengers carried to and from the airport by each. If an airport wishes to contract for services or levy a charge, both must be done in cooperation with airport users through the Airport Users Committee (AUC).

- **Quality standards:** Airports with over 150,000 annual passenger movements must set and publish quality standards for these services, and decide resource requirements to meet them, in cooperation with airport users and PRM organisations. The standards must take account of relevant policies and codes, such as the ECAC Code of Good Conduct in Ground Handling for Persons with Reduced Mobility (ECAC Document 30). An airline can agree with an airport to receive a higher standard of service, for an additional charge.
- **Training:** All employees (including those employed by sub-contractors) providing direct assistance to PRMs should be trained in how to meet their needs. Disability-equality and disability-awareness training should be provided to all airport personnel dealing directly with the travelling public, and all new employees should attend disability-related training.

### Categories of PRM defined by carriers and airports

3.4 The Regulation covers passengers with a wide range of impairments for which the needs for assistance are different. Although each individual is different, airlines and airports find it helpful to apply some categorisation when referring to the needs of different passengers. The most commonly used categorisation is the list of Special Service Request (SSR) codes defined by IATA. These categories are:

- **WCHR:** Wheelchair (R for Ramp). Passengers who are able to ascend and descend steps and move about inside the aircraft cabin, but who require a wheelchair or other assistance for longer distances (e.g. between the terminal and the aircraft).
- **WCHS:** Wheelchair (S for Steps). Passengers who cannot ascend or descend steps, but can move about inside the aircraft cabin. They require a wheelchair for the distances to and from aircraft and must be assisted up and down any steps.
- **WCHP:** Wheelchair (P for Paraplegic). Passengers with a disability of the lower limbs who have sufficient personal autonomy to take care of themselves, but who require assistance to embark and disembark and can move about inside the aircraft cabin only with the assistance of an onboard wheelchair.<sup>7</sup>
- **WCHC:** Wheelchair (C for Cabin Seat). Passengers who are completely immobile, and who can move about only with the assistance of a wheelchair or other means, and require this assistance at all points from arrival at the airport to seating (which may be fitted to their specific needs) on board the aircraft, and the reverse process on arrival.
- **BLND:** Blind or visually impaired passengers.
- **DEAF:** Deaf or hearing impaired passengers, and passengers who are deaf without speech.
- **BLND/DEAF:** Passengers who are both visually and hearing impaired, and who can only move about with the assistance of an accompanying person.
- **DPNA:** Disabled passengers with intellectual or developmental disabilities who need assistance.
- **MEDA:** Passengers whose mobility is impaired due to illness or other clinical reasons, and who are authorised to travel by medical authorities.

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<sup>7</sup> This code is not widely used or universally recognised at present

- **STCR:** Passengers who can only be transported on a stretcher.
  - **MAAS:** Meet and Assist. All other passengers requiring special assistance.
- 3.5 Some airlines use different categorisations. For example, Ryanair uses a more detailed classification system with 16 categories that also identify, for example, whether the passenger is travelling with their own wheelchair.
- 3.6 In addition to the codes above which describe the needs of the passenger, when referring to wheelchair users airlines may also add a description of the type of wheelchair which will be carried. The codes used are WCMP for manual power, WCBD for dry cell battery and WCBW for wet cell battery. These codes are useful for planning the type of assistance which will be necessary to transport them, for example if they require preparation or disassembly.

### Services actually provided by airports

- 3.7 All of the case study airports had implemented the Regulation, and were providing the required services in some form. We were given tours of the services provided at several of the airports we visited. From these, and descriptions of services given in interviews, we have drawn together a description of a typical process by which the services required by the Regulation are provided.

### Departures

<i>Pre-notification</i>	Almost all airports and airlines have contracted SITA (a company providing aviation information technology) to provide a telex or email service for the purpose of passing notification of the needs of PRMs (see 4.64). For each series of flights for a given aircraft, any assistance required is communicated via a telex which includes a four letter code describing the category of disability of each PRM on each flight (see 3.4). This message is known as the passenger assistance list (PAL); if requirements change prior to the flight this is updated by a change assistance list, or CAL. Where a request for assistance is made by a PRM at least 48 hours before the published departure time for the flight, the airline is obliged to transmit this information to the relevant airports at least 36 hours before the published departure time.
<i>Recording of notification</i>	This information arrives at a telex server in the dispatch office of the airport PRM service provider. The telex describes: the time of the flight, the flight number, the names of passengers on board requiring assistance, and the category of disability of these passengers. The information from this telex is used to update the service provider's task management system, either via an automatic link, or via manual input. The task management system can be purposely developed task management software, or in some airports a piece of paper containing notes on expected assistance. Information regarding requests for assistance may also arrive via email. Airlines and airports may use email for several reasons: some airlines (such as non-EU charter carriers) may not have a SITA terminal; larger groups (such as operators of cruises) may send an off-line message in addition to PAL/CAL messages.
<i>PRM arrives and is assigned an assistant</i>	Each new request for assistance creates a new task; if a passenger arrives without notification, the task is created on their arrival. The task management software lists PRMs requiring assistance as tasks, and sets out expected arrival times and real-time information about their flights. When the passenger announces their arrival (either via a designated point or a check-in desk), the type of assistance they require is confirmed, and the task is assigned to one or more available assistants. At some airports, assistants carry personal digital assistants (PDAs) which record progress on a particular task; if this is the case, information regarding the passenger to be met will be forwarded to the PDA of the selected assistant. At other airports (for example in Spain) the management of tasks is a manual process. More than one assistant may be assigned if the passenger requires more involved assistance, such as carrying into their seat or is in a stretcher.

<i>PRM is met and needs are confirmed</i>	<p>The assistant meets the passenger at the point at which they announced their presence; when they meet the PRM, they update the dispatch office with their action. This update may be via PDA linking through to the software in the dispatch office, or via calling in. Assistants should be trained in how to approach passengers with different requirements. If the PRM has difficulty with long distances, the airport may use electric carts, or may push the passenger in a wheelchair provided by the airport. The electric carts may be capable of carrying a passenger in an airport wheelchair. The extent of the use of electric carts may be dependent on airport design.</p> <p>PRMs who are blind or visually impaired may require someone whose arm they can hold guide them through the airport. A PRM with an intellectual disability may require information about the airport to be presented to them in a simplified manner, or may require check-in and other procedures to be conducted in a particular manner. The assistant will help PRMs with a reasonable amount of baggage, but only as much as any other passenger would take.</p>
<i>PRM is assisted through check-in and security</i>	<p>The passenger is taken through check-in and security. At check-in, there may be lowered desks for passengers in wheelchairs. At security, there may be a track where the security staff are trained in searching PRMs, including searching wheelchairs, and a screen to provide privacy for the search. Usually it is not possible for wheelchairs to be taken through metal detector arches, and therefore wheelchair users are searched manually. The security track is not typically exclusively for PRMs, but they may receive priority. There may be a dedicated PRM lounge; if there is time before their flight leaves, they will have the option of resting there or if there is time may wish to use the facilities in the departure lounge until called for their flight. Some airports are willing to take PRMs to these facilities (such as restaurants and shops), while others require PRMs to remain in the waiting area allocated. Where the airport is willing to provide this, the assistant arranges a time at which to collect the passenger. Some airports allow PRMs to use the business lounge regardless of class of travel.</p>
<i>PRM is assisted through customs and to gate</i>	<p>Once the flight is ready for boarding, the assistant takes the passenger to the gate. Different methods of assisting a PRM into the aircraft will be used depending on the passenger's needs and on the manner in which the aircraft is embarked (e.g. via airbridge or from the apron). Some PRMs will be able to use either stairs or an airbridge and will not require specific assistance at this point.</p>
<i>PRM is assisted on board aircraft with airbridge</i>	<p>Where passengers board via an airbridge, category WCHC and WCHS PRMs are transferred to the onboard wheelchair at the door of the aircraft. If they have remained in their own chair up to this point, their wheelchair is transferred to the hold; otherwise the airport's wheelchair is returned with the assistant. The onboard wheelchair is narrower to allow it to pass down the aisle, and has straps to hold the passenger safely in the chair. Other categories of PRM board the aircraft on foot, without particular assistance. Depending on the policy of the carrier concerned, PRMs may have to board either first or last.</p>
<i>PRM is assisted on board aircraft without airbridge</i>	<p>Where passengers board via steps, category WCHC and WCHS PRMs are transferred to the onboard wheelchair on the apron before entering the aircraft. They are then lifted up to the aircraft either by an Ambulift<sup>8</sup>, by a motorised stair-climbing chair or at some airports by manual lifting. Other categories of PRM board the aircraft on foot, and may require assistance to ascend the stairs. If the aircraft is boarded away from the terminal building and passengers are brought to the aircraft by bus, a dedicated PRM vehicle may be used to bring the PRM to the aircraft.</p>
<i>PRM is assisted to seat on board aircraft</i>	<p>On board, the assistant provides the assistance necessary for the passenger to get to their seat. This may include lifting the passenger from the on-board wheelchair into the seat and if, as required by certain carriers, the PRM has to be seated in a window seat, transferring across other seats. The assistant may also help the passenger with storing any baggage in the overhead lockers. Once the passenger is installed in their seat, the airport ceases to have responsibility for providing assistance, and it transfers to the airline.</p>

<sup>8</sup> An Ambulift is a vehicle with a hydraulic platform which can be raised to the level of the flight deck to allow wheelchairs to be pushed on board.



### Arrivals

<i>Notification arrives</i>	In addition to arriving via PAL or CAL, notification for arriving passengers may arrive by passenger service message (PSM). This is a list of passengers on board the aircraft requiring particular treatment on arrival, dispatched when an aircraft departs. The message states the points of embarkation and disembarkation, the flight number and date, and lists the names of the passengers requiring particular assistance with a description of the assistance. In addition to PRMs, the PSM lists children travelling alone (unaccompanied minors, or UMs), deportees and returned inadmissible passengers. In some circumstances, no PAL or CAL is received for arriving passengers, and the only notification is via PSM; this reduces the period of notification from 36 hours to the duration of the flight. In some cases no notification is received at all.
<i>PRM is met and assisted to disembark</i>	The information from the PSM is input into the task management system in the same manner as the PAL or CAL. When a flight lands, available assistants are assigned to each of the PRMs on board the flight, and dispatched to meet them at the gate. On landing, if a PRM requires assistance to disembark they will typically disembark once all other passengers have disembarked. The PRM is met at the door of the aircraft or within the aircraft by their assigned assistant. Depending on the code included in the PSM the assistant may have equipment such as wheelchairs, or may be accompanied by another member of staff. If the passenger has their own wheelchair, this is removed from the hold, and the passenger may then be assisted to transfer from the aircraft wheelchair into their own. At some airports the passenger's wheelchair is not returned to them until baggage reclaim, for security reasons.
<i>PRM is assisted from aircraft to point of arrival</i>	The passenger is then assisted through passport control (where there may be a dedicated PRM-accessible track) to the baggage hall, where they are assisted to retrieve their bags. They are then assisted through customs, and the assistant accompanies them as far as is required, up to the designated point of arrival outside the terminal. If it is situated close to the arrival point, they may also assist the PRM to their car if requested.

### Connections

<i>Connecting flights</i>	Where a PRM requires assistance to make a connecting flight, the assistance offered varies depending on the length of time between arrival and departure. If there is limited time, assistance is offered as described above to disembark, transfer, and embark the passenger onto their next flight. If there is a significant wait between arrival and departure, the passenger may be taken to a PRM lounge or waiting area, until their departing flight is ready for boarding.
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## Policies on service provision

### Provision for non pre-notified passengers

- 3.8 The Regulation sets out the assistance which must be provided to PRMs where they have notified the air carrier or tour operator at least 48 hours before the published time of departure of their flight. It also requires that where no such notification is made, the airport should make all reasonable efforts to provide this assistance.
- 3.9 Of the airports we contacted, most stated that there was little or no difference in the service received by passengers who had not pre-notified, and differences in service quality only occurred when the services were busy. Even in the cases where a choice did have to be made between assisting a pre-notified and non-pre-notified passenger, some airports informed us that they would make decisions on the basis of ensuring all passengers could make their flights, rather than on the basis of notification. Some airports informed us that the level of notification was so low that it was not useful to make any distinction on this basis. Only a small minority of the case study airports stated that a slower service was provided to passengers who did not pre-notify (Table 3.1 below).

**TABLE 3.1 AIRPORT SERVICE PROVIDED TO NON-PRE-NOTIFIED PRMS**

<b>Airport</b>	<b>Service provided to non-pre-notified PRMs</b>
Amsterdam Schiphol	Equivalent service, priority based on ensuring passengers can make their flights
Athens	Slower service than pre-notified for departures, equal service for arrivals
Bologna	Equivalent service is provided
Brussels	Equivalent service as pre-notified, lower priority when busy
Bucharest Otopeni	Equivalent service is provided (some equipment may not be available)
Budapest	Equivalent service is provided (possible delay of a few minutes)
Brussels Charleroi	Equivalent service, priority based on ensuring passengers can make their flights
Copenhagen	Equivalent service as pre-notified, lower priority when busy
Dublin	Slower service
Frankfurt Main	Equivalent service as pre-notified, lower priority when busy
Lisbon	Standards not defined
London Heathrow	N/A
London Luton	Equivalent service is provided
Madrid Barajas	Equivalent service is provided (possible delay on arrival)
Munich	Equivalent service as pre-notified, lower priority when busy
Paris Charles De Gaulle	Equivalent service as pre-notified, lower priority when busy
Riga	Equivalent service is provided
Roma Fiumicino	Slower service
Stockholm	Slower service
Warsaw	Equivalent service as pre-notified, lower priority when busy
Zaragoza	Equivalent service is provided (possible delay on arrival)

- 3.10 Airports' estimates of the impact of pre-notification rates on staffing and equipment levels varied considerably. Several airports informed us that while an increase in the rate of pre-notification would improve the quality of the service provided, they would not expect it to significantly affect the number of staff they employed. In contrast, Aéroports de Paris believed that improving rates of pre-notification could allow them to reduce the costs of PRM service provision by 30%-40%. In January 2010, London Heathrow introduced a banded charge which varies the amount paid depending on the level of pre-notification of the airline (see 3.34).

#### *Restrictions on service*

- 3.11 Unlike for airlines, the Regulation does not explicitly state any grounds for airports to restrict the services provided. However, there may be national laws which have bearing on the functions which airport staff are permitted to undertake; for example, we were informed that in Denmark national laws on health and safety did not permit people of above a certain weight limit to be carried up stairs and into an aircraft.

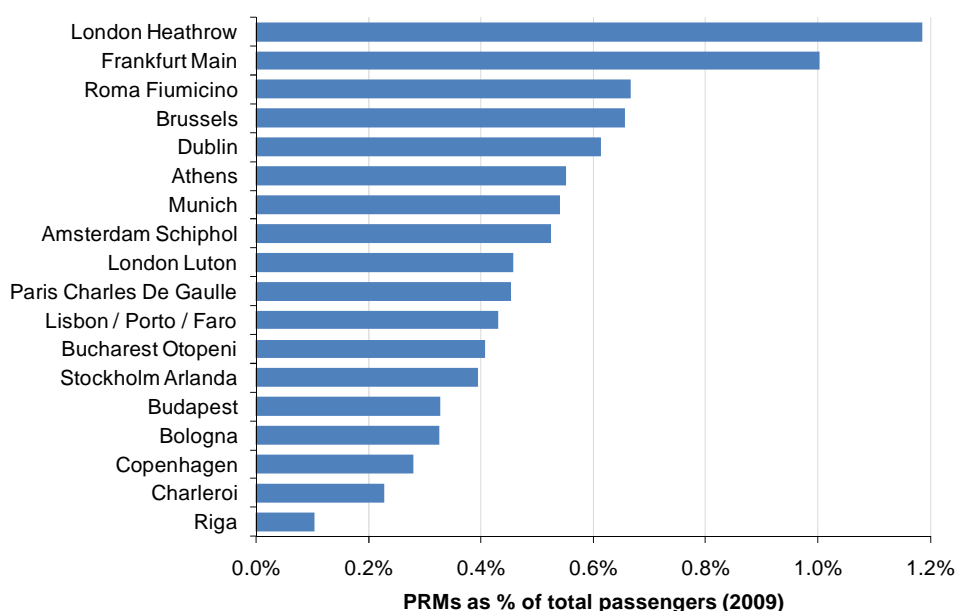
*Other issues noted*

- 3.12 All of the case study airports provide the services required under the Regulation. The manner and quality of provision varies among the sample, and there have been a number of incidents of significant service failure, but we identified no fundamental problems with service provision at major airports. However, we were informed that the Regulation had not been implemented at Greek airports other than Athens: at these airports, services are provided to PRMs, but the change of responsibility from airline to airport has not yet been effected; provision of and payment for services is agreed between airlines and ground handling companies, as it was prior to the introduction of the Regulation.
- 3.13 The views of stakeholders on the provision of services are discussed at the end of this chapter (see 3.76).

**Statistical evidence for carriage of PRMs***The proportion of passengers requiring assistance*

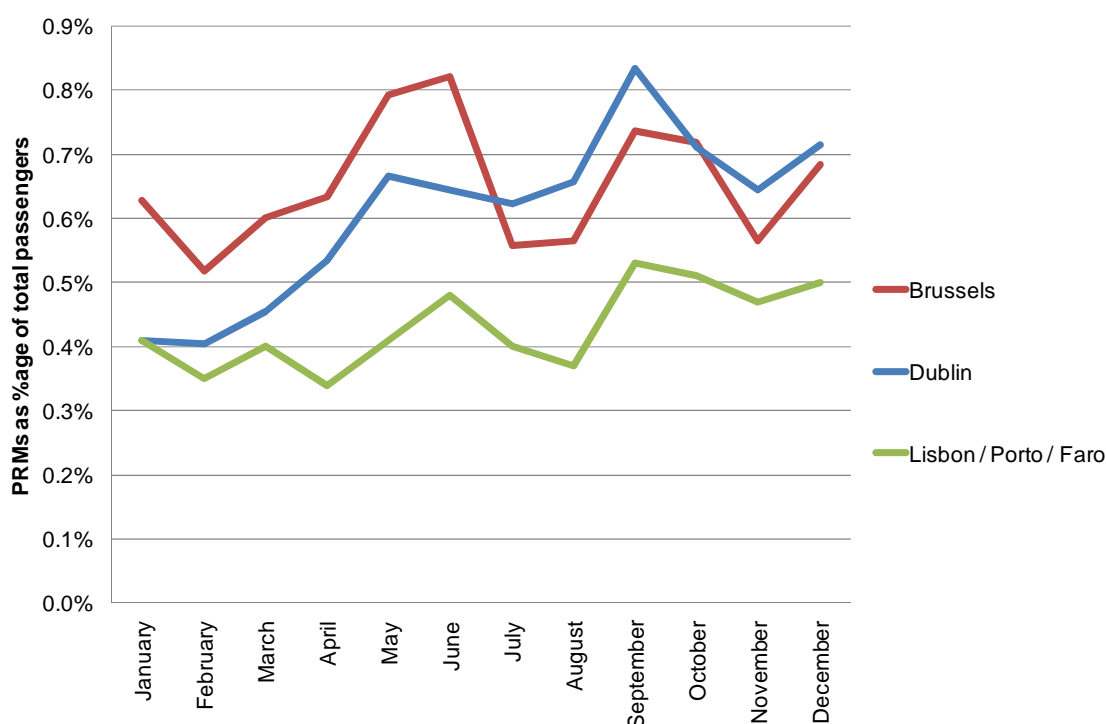
- 3.14 The frequency with which PRM assistance services are used varies considerably between airports. Figure 3.1 shows the rate of use at the airports in our sample for which we were provided with data. At London Heathrow 1.2% of passengers are PRMs requiring assistance, while at Riga only 0.1% of passengers require assistance. However, for most airports in the sample, the proportion requiring assistance is between 0.2% and 0.7%. ACI informed us that the higher rates at some airports were the result of the demographics of the passengers flying to these destinations.

**FIGURE 3.1 FREQUENCY OF PRMS REQUESTING ASSISTANCE AT AIRPORTS (2009)**



- 3.15 Some other airports have higher proportions of PRMs requiring assistance, resulting from the demographic profile of passengers using the airports. These include holiday destinations popular with elderly people, such as Alicante, Malaga and Tenerife Sur; and pilgrimage destinations such as Lourdes.
- 3.16 Based on the information we have received from airports, the profile of PRM travel differs markedly from that of other passengers (see Figure 3.2). Most data indicates that the number of PRMs travelling tends to be lower in relative terms, and at some airports also in absolute terms, during July and August when total air travel is at a peak. At some airports, there appears to be a peak in December and January, however this is not consistent across all the airports for which we have data. Airports informed us that provision of services between April and September can be particularly affected by passengers travelling to cruise ships: these often carry high numbers of PRMs, and since a cruise ship usually disembarks passengers at the same time as it embarks the next load, there is a twofold increase in the number of PRMs travelling through the airport. The winter peak in PRMs is partly due to high rates of injury amongst passengers returning from winter sports holidays.

**FIGURE 3.2 FREQUENCY OF PRMS OVER THE YEAR (2009)**

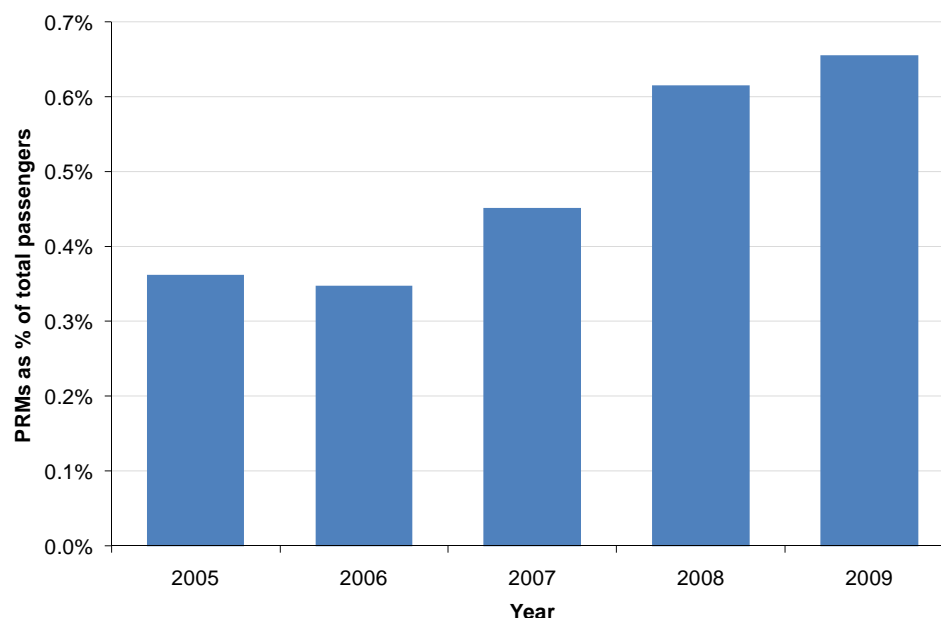


*Trend in PRM travel*

- 3.17 Several airports and airlines informed us that the number of PRMs requiring assistance has increased significantly since the introduction of the Regulation. It is difficult to verify this, as airports generally did not provide PRM services before July 2008, and therefore did not have a time series of data available. However, Brussels Zaventum airport introduced a PRM service similar to that required by the Regulation earlier, and as a result was able to provide figures for PRM's travelling between 2005 and 2010. This shows an increasing trend (Figure 3.3): the proportion of passengers

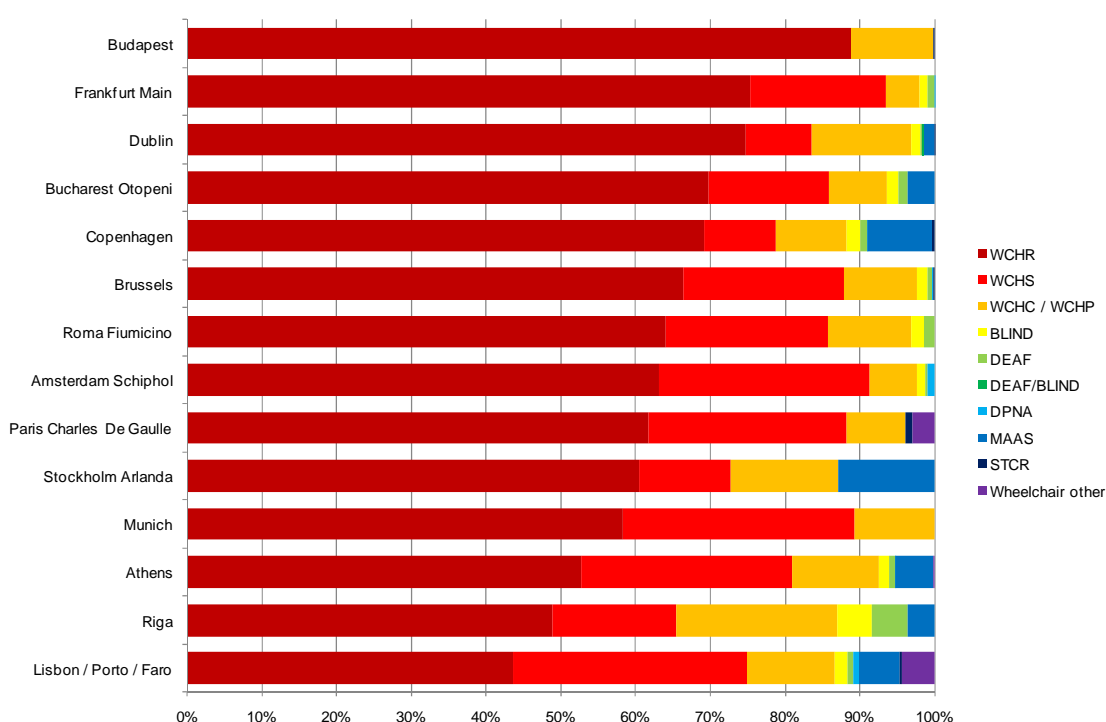
requiring assistance appears stable at approximately 0.35% over 2005 and 2006, and then climbs to 0.66% in 2009. It believed that this was a result of significant abuse of the services.

**FIGURE 3.3 RATE OF PRMS OBSERVED AT BRUSSELS ZAVENTUM AIRPORT**



#### *Types of assistance provided*

- 3.18 Assistance is often divided by airports into WCHC/WCHS (see 3.4), which requires significant time and resources, and others. We requested data on the types of passengers assisted from each of the case study airports and a summary of the data is shown in Figure 3.4. At all airports which provided data, the most frequent category of assistance was WCHR, although the proportion ranged from 44% to 89% (median 64%). The category “Wheelchair other” comprises wheelchair codes which do not fit into the other wheelchair categories: WCMP, manually powered wheelchair; WCBBD, dry cell operated wheelchair; and WCBW, wet cell operated wheelchair. We have excluded the codes for medical cases and unaccompanied minors (MEDA and UM respectively) from this analysis, as they are not within the scope of the Regulation.

**FIGURE 3.4 VARIATION IN TYPES OF PRMS ASSISTED (2009)**

### *Abuse of services*

3.19 Many airports – particularly larger and busier airports – reported that the services they provided for PRMs were sometimes used by passengers who did not appear to have the right to do so under the Regulation. A typical observation was of a passenger who was assisted in a wheelchair from a designated point of arrival through security and customs, and who then walked to the gate unassisted. Several types of passenger who might be motivated to do this were suggested:

- Passengers who feel confused by a large and complex airport, and do not feel that they would be able to navigate it successfully;
- Passengers who do not speak the language used for the airport signs and announcements;
- Passengers who have no mobility impairment which prevented them from walking long distances within the airport, but who did not wish to; and
- Passengers (particularly those who arrive at the airport with limited time before the departure of their flight) who wish to avoid lengthy queues at immigration, customs and security.

3.20 In addition, some airports reported cases where airlines had requested PRM assistance for passengers such as unaccompanied minors, passengers with excessive cabin baggage, and VIPs. These passengers might previously have been classified ‘meet and assist’ (MAAS) and any assistance required would have been paid for by the airline.

- 3.21 By its nature, it is hard to establish the true level of this abuse. PRM organisations noted that a passenger's disability may not always be visible. They also noted the perceived stigma attached to travelling in a wheelchair, and believed that many passengers would prefer to avoid this in preference to receiving the services offered under the Regulation.
- 3.22 The level of abuse reported varied between airports. Copenhagen Airport reported a rate of approximately one passenger per day whom they suspected was not entitled to services under the Regulation, while Brussels reported 20-30 passengers per day. Brussels Airport perceived abuse as a bigger problem than other airports within the sample.
- 3.23 However, Charleroi Airport informed us that abuse of services had decreased since the introduction of the Regulation, as a result of changes made to procedures. The two changes it identified as having had an impact were:
- requiring passengers who had not pre-notified requirements for assistance to wait; and
  - boarding passengers requiring assistance after, rather than before, other passengers, and hence users of the PRM service no longer get first choice of seats on low cost carriers that do not allocate seats in advance.
- 3.24 These changes had the effect of reducing the number passengers without mobility needs who wished to use the services to avoid queues, and to obtain first choice of seating. However, these policies create some disadvantages for passengers who are entitled to the services.

#### **Organisation of service delivery**

- 3.25 Airport managing bodies may provide the services required under the Regulation themselves, or may contract with other parties to provide the assistance. Any arrangements for assistance to be provided through other parties must be compliant with published quality standards, and must be determined with the cooperation of airport users.

#### *Overview*

- 3.26 15 of the sample of 21 airports provided PRM services through a subcontractor (Table 3.2 below) and, of these, 12 were procured through open tenders. The advantage of procuring this service through an open tender include:
- a specialised provider might more easily be able to provide services of the cost or quality required;
  - providing services through subcontractors facilitates the separation of costs of PRM services in an airport's accounts; and
  - open tenders allow the airport to demonstrate that the costs are reasonable, as required by the Regulation.
- 3.27 Some of the largest airports split the tendering of provision into more than one contract, usually through grouping terminals together on a geographical basis.

- 3.28 In contrast, some of the airports provide the services required under the Regulation through specially trained airport staff. This may be through the creation of new department with this remit, or through extending the remit of a pre-existing department (for example the firefighting department). Airports may also subcontract some services (such as assisting passengers from the gate to the aircraft) to ground handling staff whilst providing other elements of the service themselves.
- 3.29 We also identified variation in the type of organisation providing services, where this was sub-contracted:
- **Subsidiary company of airport:** This approach is very similar to providing the services in-house, although an advantage is that it is easier for the airport to separate the accounts relating to the provision of PRM services.
  - **Ground handling companies:** Airports may be able to realise economies of scope through provision of PRM services by ground handling companies.
  - **Specialist PRM contractor:** Among the airports examined for this study, the most frequent type of organisation providing PRM services was a company that specialised in this kind of assistance service. Some such companies provided PRM services only, while a number provide it as part of a range of services. These other services might include cleaning services, facilities management, emergency assistance, and ambulance services.

**TABLE 3.2 METHODS OF PROCURING PRM SERVICES AT AIRPORTS**

Airport	Approach to procurement	Type of organisation providing PRM services
Amsterdam Schiphol	Open tender	Specialist PRM contractor
Athens	Open tender	3 ground handling companies
Bologna	In-house / non-competitive tender	Airport staff, 2 ground handling companies
Brussels	Open tender	Specialist PRM contractor
Bucharest Otopeni	In-house	Airport staff
Budapest	Open tender	Ground handling company
Brussels Charleroi	In-house	Airport staff
Copenhagen	Open tender	Specialist PRM contractor
Dublin	Open tender	Specialist PRM contractor
Frankfurt Main	Non-competitive tender	Subsidiary of airport
Lisbon	In-house	Airport staff, subcontracted ground handling staff
London Heathrow	Open tender	2 specialist PRM contractors
London Luton	Open tender	Specialist PRM contractor
Madrid Barajas	Open tender	Information not provided at interview
Munich	Open tender	Specialist PRM contractor
Paris Charles De Gaulle	Open tender	2 specialist PRM contractors
Riga	In-house	Airport staff
Roma Fiumicino	Non-competitive tender	Subsidiary of airport



Stockholm Arlanda	In-house	Airport staff
Warsaw	Non-competitive tender	Ground handling company
Zaragoza	Open tender	Information not provided at interview

3.30 Although the PRM service had only been provided by airports for around 18 months at the time of our research, we were informed by a number of airports that they were considering or were in the process of retendering the service. The primary reason given for retendering was that service quality had not been sufficiently high, although some airports cited a higher than expected increase in use of services after the introduction of the Regulation.

3.31 The Regulation also allows<sup>9</sup> for airlines to request a higher level of service than those set out in the quality standards for the airport, and to levy a supplementary charge for this service. However, none of the sample airports or airlines were requesting or providing such a service.

#### *Consultation*

3.32 The Regulation requires contracts for the supply of services under the Regulation to be entered into in cooperation with airport users and with organisations representing PRMs. Cooperation with airport users is usually through the airport users committee (AUC). Although this is intended to improve consultation, airlines informed us that in some circumstances it did not do so, citing examples where:

- the proceedings of the AUC were conducted only in the native language of the airport;
- only ground handlers were represented on the committee; and
- one stakeholder has a voting majority on the committee, allowing it to disregard the views of other carriers.

3.33 We were also informed of circumstances where the consultation provided by airports was extensive. London Luton retendered for PRM services in March 2010, and involved airport users (airlines and ground handling companies) at all stages of the tendering process, including the development of the specification, and the evaluation and scoring of bids.

#### **Airport charges**

3.34 The Regulation permits airports to fund the provision of assistance through a specific charge on airport users. This charge must be reasonable, cost-related, transparent and established in co-operation with airport users. It must be shared among airport users in proportion to the total number of passengers that each carries to and from the airport (this is typically calculated on the basis of departing passengers). The accounts of the airport relating to provision of PRM services must be separate from its accounts relating to other services, and it must make available to airport users and NEBs an audited annual overview of charges received and costs incurred relating to the provision.

<sup>9</sup> Articles 9 (4) and (5).

3.35 The majority of the case study airports recover costs for PRM assistance through a PRM charge levied on all departing passengers which is specific to the airport and set to fully recover the costs of the PRM service. However, we identified the following key variations in this approach:

- **Uniform charge:** The PRM charges in Spain and Portugal are uniform across the airports operated by AENA and ANA respectively. This approach appears to infringe the Regulation, which requires a specific charge “established by the managing body of the airport”, although there is some uncertainty about this due to differences between the English and Spanish language versions of the Regulation. Both AENA and ANA believed that, since the service was provided across a network of airports, it was appropriate that there should be a uniform network charge.
- **Economic regulation:** Many airports are subject to economic regulation of the charges they may levy on airlines. At most of the airports in our sample, the PRM charge is excluded from the regulated price cap, but at Dublin and Brussels Zaventem the PRM charge is included within this. As a result, their flexibility to amend charges (for example to reflect a higher than expected use of PRM services) is constrained: for example, they may require regulatory approval for any changes, or have the level of any increases limited by a charging cap. Charges may also be fixed over the course of a given regulatory period.
- **Pre-existing provision:** Stockholm Arlanda and all other State-owned airports in Sweden provided some elements of the services required under the Regulation prior to its introduction. In Sweden, charges for services for WCHC and WCHS passengers were introduced in 2001 at a rate of 1 SEK (€0.10<sup>10</sup>) per departing passenger; charges have not yet been increased since the Regulation came into force to reflect the wider range of passengers requiring assistance, but we were informed that this is likely to happen in the next year.
- **Non-implementation of the Regulation:** With the exception of Athens, none of the airports in Greece provide assistance for PRMs. Assistance is provided by ground handling companies, and charges are negotiated directly between airlines and ground handling companies, and consequently not made public.

3.36 We were informed by ACI that the proportion of airports which identify this fee separately was 52% across the airports it surveyed, as opposed to 48% which include it in the passenger fee.

3.37 The types of costs which may be recovered using the PRM charge are:

- **Direct assistance costs:** The direct costs of the day-to-day running of the service.
- **Other incidental operating costs:** These may include maintenance, purchase of operating materials, other services, etc.
- **Capital expenditure:** Expenditure to invest in facilities required to provide services, such as mobility equipment and the fitting out of a dispatch office.
- **Administrative expenses:** These may include time spent by airport personnel in running the contract, and project costs such as airport management time in developing the tender.

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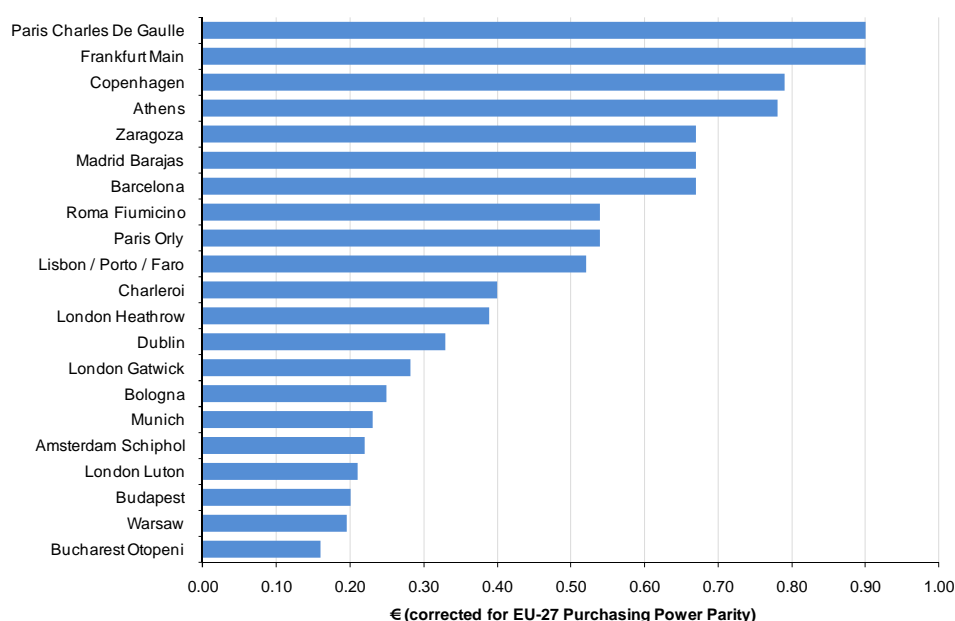
<sup>10</sup> Calculated on the basis of €1 = 9.7 SEK.

- **Other airport fees:** The PRM contractor may have to, for example, rent space from the airport and to pay a fee for doing so. This would also be recovered through the PRM charge.

#### *Level of charges*

3.38 Figure 3.5 shows the charges at the case study airports in euros, converted using current (January 2010) exchange rates where required. There is significant variation in the level of the PRM charge between airports, from a minimum of €0.16 in Bucharest to €0.90 at Frankfurt Main and Paris CDG.

**FIGURE 3.5 AIRPORT CHARGES PER DEPARTING PASSENGER  
(€ AT CURRENT EXCHANGE RATES)**



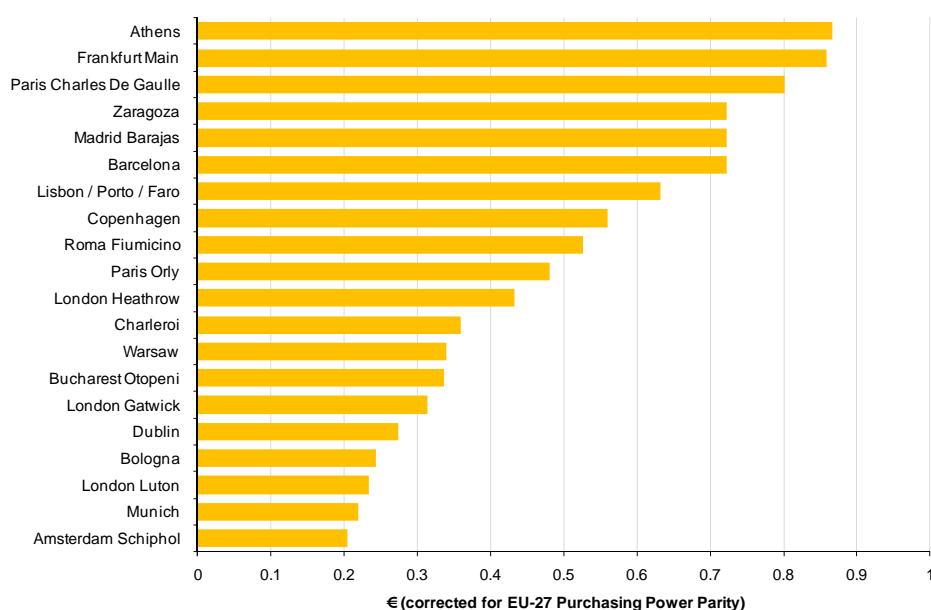
3.39 The variation in charges between airports may result from several factors, including:

- staff cost variation;
- quality standards in place;
- the frequency with which the PRM services are used;
- the proportion of connecting flights; and
- the design of the terminal or airport.

3.40 We discuss each of these possible reasons for variation in turn.

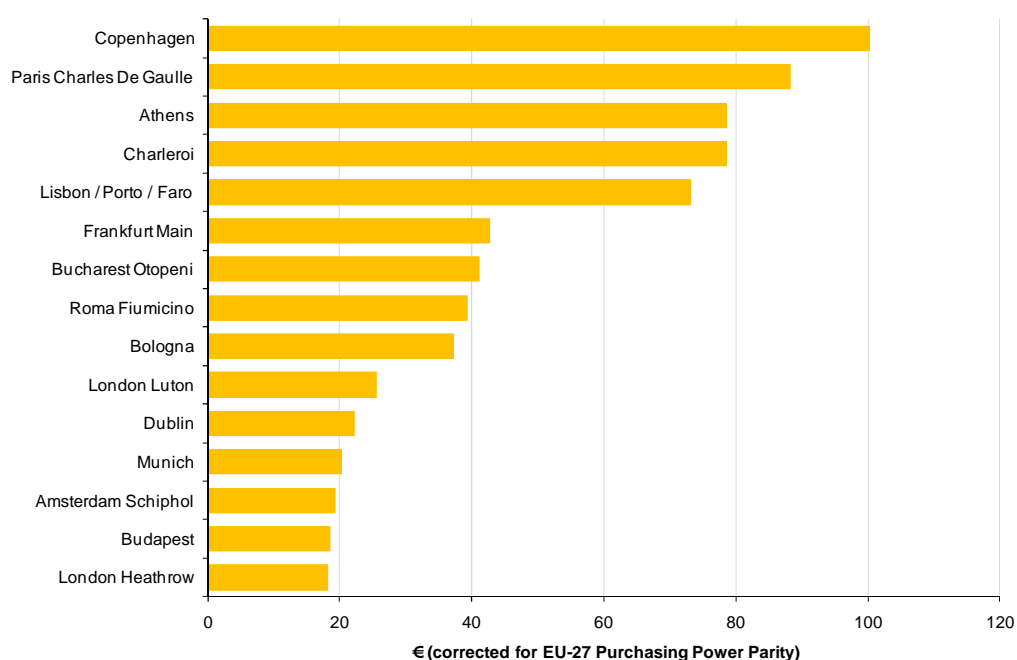
3.41 **Purchasing power parities (PPPs)** can be used to compensate for differences in price levels between States. Figure 3.6 uses Eurostat PPPs for 2008 to convert PRM charges in national currency to euros at average price levels for the EU-27. The harmonisation only very slightly reduces the variation in the charges (measured in terms of standard deviation).

**FIGURE 3.6 AIRPORT CHARGES PER DEPARTING PASSENGER, 2009  
(€ AT 2008 EU-27 PPP)**



- 3.42 Although it was not possible to find published data showing the actual **level of service** offered to PRMs at any of the case study airports, the level of service set out in the PRM quality standards might help explain the variation in charges. To test this, we have calculated a weighted average PRM wait time and compared this with the PRM charge at each airport. This analysis suggests little or no correlation: for example, although the London airports state the highest service standards in terms of waiting times, the charges levied are lower than those at many other airports. Similarly, low charges at Bucharest are not reflected in longer proposed waiting times for PRMs requesting assistance.
- 3.43 It might also be expected that airports with **higher proportions of PRMs** would have higher charges. To examine this we calculated a proxy for the cost of assisting each PRM, for the airports for which we had data. This was obtained by dividing the PRM charge by the proportion of PRMs at each airport, to obtain the revenue gained by the airport for each PRM assisted.
- 3.44 It should be noted that there are some limitations to this analysis. It calculates revenue per PRM, and for this to be a valid proxy for costs, it must be assumed that charges are accurately cost-reflective, which is not the case in some airports: in Spain and Portugal the charge is uniform across all mainland State-owned airports, and does not therefore reflect local variation in costs; at State-owned airports in Sweden, the charge reflects only the costs of providing services for WCHC and WCHS passengers. For the costs to be cost-reflective it is also necessary that the frequency of use of the service is as forecast when the charges were calculated.
- 3.45 Figure 3.7 shows the results of the analysis. There is still significant variation between airports; the maximum cost per PRM assisted (€100 at Copenhagen, PPP adjusted) is 5 times the minimum cost (€18 at Bucharest, PPP adjusted). This shows that the variation in the number of PRMs does not fully explain the variation in the charge.

**FIGURE 3.7 AIRPORT COSTS PER PRM ASSISTED, 2009  
(€ AT 2008 EU-27 PPP)**



- 3.46 The level of variation also does not appear to be accounted for by the **size of the airport**: the charge at London Heathrow is relatively low, while Paris CDG is relatively high.
- 3.47 Several airports cited **high proportions of connecting passengers** as a factor which increased costs. However, we do not believe that high proportions of connecting passengers would increase the costs of provision: transfer passengers are counted as two passengers in airport statistics and any PRM charge is levied twice, so if the service is less than twice the cost of that for an arriving or departing passenger, such passengers would in fact result in a cost saving relative to other PRMs. This view is supported by the data, where the charge at London Heathrow is relatively low.
- 3.48 **Terminal design** may impact on the amount of time required to provide assistance, or the efficiency with which it can be provided. For example, Amsterdam Schiphol airport, which has one integrated terminal building and the concourse is generally at the same level, can make extensive use of electric carts to transport multiple passengers together; this is not practical at airports such as CDG.

#### *Changes to charges in 2010*

- 3.49 The charges and costs in this section are based on those current in 2009, as this is the only complete year for which data was available. Where updated charges have been published for 2010<sup>11</sup>, we have compared these with those for 2009. Most airports had not made any changes, but Munich and Rome Fiumicino increased charges by 48% and 28% respectively.

<sup>11</sup> IATA Airport, ATC and Fuel Charges Monitor, February revision, published March 2010.

- 3.50 London Heathrow changed the structure of its PRM charges in 2010. Whereas previously it levied a charge of £0.35 (€0.38) per passenger for all airlines, from 1 January 2010 the charges vary depending on the level of pre-notification. Airlines which pre-notify 85% or more of PRMs are charged £0.42 (€0.46) per departing passenger, while those which pre-notify 45% or less of their passengers are charged £0.83 (€0.91).

#### *Consultation*

- 3.51 Airports are required to determine charges in cooperation with users through airport user committees. The Regulation does not define cooperation further, however, and as a result the form this consultation has taken varies considerably. London Luton informed us that their tender process involved airlines, ground handlers and PRM organisations at all points of the tender process, from developing the specification to evaluating the bids and awarding the contract. In contrast, several airlines informed us that the consultation in Portugal and Spain was limited to the publication of a letter stating the amount the charge per person. We were also informed that consultations on PRM charges were often included in wider general charge negotiations.
- 3.52 A number of issues were raised regarding this cooperation.
- We were informed by several airports that certain carriers have contested the procedural steps taken by airport managing bodies to establish the charge. This has in at least one case been supported by an NEB taking a strict interpretation of the meaning of ‘in cooperation with airport users’, as requiring agreement between the airport and the airline both on the tender and the level of the charge. This has led to delays, particularly due to challenges by low-cost airlines, including requests to see cost information, which the airports regarded as unnecessary, after the tender processes were completed.
  - Some airlines have blocked the process of approving charges by refusing to participate in the consultation.
  - Some airports believed that direct involvement of users in the tender process can be problematic: without signing personal non-disclosure agreements, it may not be possible to share the commercially sensitive information included in tenders; there may also be conflicts of interests between some of the handlers and the tendering parties. However, the example of London Luton discussed above demonstrates that these barriers are not impossible to overcome.

#### **Quality standards**

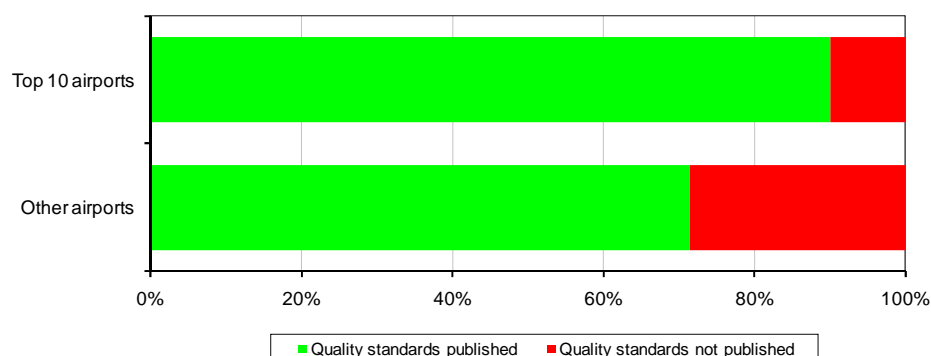
##### *Standards published*

- 3.53 The Regulation requires all airports serving over 150,000 passenger movements per year to set and publish quality standards. Figure 3.8 indicates the proportions of airports publishing quality standards. The following airports had not yet done so:
- Amsterdam Schiphol: quality standards are in the process of being re-developed with airlines, and have not been published yet;
  - Bologna: standards not yet published;
  - Budapest: standards published to airlines and handling companies by letter; and
  - Stockholm Arlanda: standards published to airlines but not yet published on its

website; it informed us that the standards would be published soon.

- 3.54 Three of these airports provided the quality standards to us at interview, but Amsterdam Schiphol and Bologna did not provide any details of their quality standards.
- 3.55 We found that the largest ten European airports in terms of passenger numbers were more likely to publish quality standards than those outside the top 10.

**FIGURE 3.8 PROPORTION OF AIRPORTS PUBLISHING QUALITY STANDARDS**



#### *Ease of finding quality standards*

- 3.56 The ease with which the quality standards could be located on airport websites varied considerably. For the airports which published quality standards, some of the main issues encountered were:
- Having to click through an excessive number of links before finding the standards, e.g. the website of Charleroi Airport requires the user to click on five links before the standards can be viewed;
  - Locating the standards on the site of the management company rather than within the section or website dedicated to the airport – this was the case for the Spanish airports for which the information is on the main AENA website;
  - Using terminology which may not be obvious, avoiding the actual term ‘quality standards’, e.g. BAA use the term ‘Service Level Agreement’; and
  - Restrictions on language – Bucharest Otopeni, Brussels Charleroi and the Paris airports only publish quality standards on the local language versions of their websites.

#### *Standards for waiting time*

- 3.57 The standards defined by the case study airports are shown in Table 3.3 and Table 3.4 below. At all of the case study airports for which we were able to obtain standards, these are defined in terms of the percentage of PRMs who should wait for up to a given number of minutes. For example, at Barcelona, 80% of departing passengers who have pre-notified requirements for assistance should wait for 10 minutes or less from the point at which notice is given that they have arrived at the airport. This

approach is consistent with the example standards in Annex 5-C of ECAC Document 30<sup>12</sup>, and eight of the airports in the sample (including Copenhagen, Munich and the AENA Spanish airports) follow these exactly.

- 3.58 There are however variations in both how the standards are structured and the level of the standards. Paris Charles de Gaulle is unusual in that, with the exception of the top 99% bracket, an additional ten minutes is added to the wait time for departing passengers located ‘further away’. The published standards do not define how far away this is. Aéroports de Paris also define an additional category, of pre-notification of between 8 and 36 hours, for whom the standards are part-way between those applying to PRMs for which notification was received 36 hours or more before travel (‘pre-booked’), and those for which notification was received less than 8 hours beforehand (‘non-pre booked’). This is not shown in the table as it is not comparable with the standards offered by the other airports.
- 3.59 There are also some differences in how the wait time for arriving passengers is measured. At most airports, it is measured from when the aircraft reaches the parking position, but there are the following exceptions:
- From descent of last passenger: Rome Fiumicino;
  - From boarding bridge lock: Brussels; and
  - Not defined: Athens, Budapest, Lisbon, Stockholm Arlanda.
- 3.60 The standards proposed for pre-booked departing passengers are generally consistent, at least in terms of the waiting times which percentages are applied to: 10, 20 and 30 minutes are the most commonly used intervals, at 80%, 90% and 100% respectively. For non pre-booked passengers 80%, 90% and 100% apply to 25, 35 and 45 minutes. Better standards are offered by the UK and French airports that we reviewed. This is also reflected in the standards for arriving passengers, with the London and Paris airports targeting zero waiting time for 90-100% of passengers. There is also a clear pattern for arriving passengers, with 80% of pre-notified PRMs waiting no more than 5 minutes, 90% no more than 10 and 100% no more than 20 minutes. Standards are not as high as this for non pre-booked passengers, however.
- 3.61 Several airports informed us that the standards suggested by ECAC Document 30 for arriving passengers were not short enough to meet airline requirements on turnaround times: if the airports adhered only to these standards, there would be significant operational issues. Some of these airports published standards in line with Document 30, but stated that they actually provided services in much shorter times.

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<sup>12</sup> ECAC Policy Statement in the field of Civil Aviation Facilitation, 11th Edition/December 2009.



*Other elements of published quality standards*

- 3.62 Some airports define additional standards other than the waiting time targets, generally reflective of the assistance set out in Annex 1 of the Regulation. For example, Charleroi provides detailed information regarding the level of assistance which will be provided for PRMs, for example support for embarking and disembarking the aircraft, or for dealing with customs formalities. Brussels Airport also defines how many assistants will accompany a PRM, depending on their type of disability.
- 3.63 Some airports also include more general, qualitative targets, less directly related to the assistance offered to an individual PRM. For example, Luton Airport's published standards include responding to 'disabled customer enquiries to offer guidance and advice', and auditing to ensure compliance with all disability legislation. Athens Airport also provides extensive details of the measures it has taken to accommodate PRMs, including disabled-access internet points and a special walkway for partially sighted PRMs.

TABLE 3.3 SCOPE OF QUALITY STANDARDS: DEPARTING PASSENGERS

	Pre-booked / airport informed										Non-pre-booked / airport not informed									
	% of PRMs who should wait no longer than (minutes)										% of PRMs who should wait no longer than (minutes)									
	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	60	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	60
Athens		80%		90%		100%							80%		90%		100%			
Barcelona		80%		90%		100%									80%		90%		100%	
Brussels		80%		90%		100%									80%		90%		100%	
Bucharest Otopeni		80%		90%		100%									80%		90%		100%	
Budapest		100%										100%								
Charleroi		80%		90%		100%									80%		90%		100%	
Copenhagen		80%		90%		100%									80%		90%		100%	
Dublin		80%		90%		100%									80%		90%		100%	
Frankfurt Main		80%		90%		100%									Not defined					
Lisbon		80%		90%		100%									Not defined					
London Gatwick	80%	90%	100%								80%	90%	100%							
London Heathrow	80%	90%	100%								80%	90%	100%							
London Luton		90%	95%	100%								90%	95%	100%						
Madrid Barajas		80%		90%		100%									80%		90%		100%	
Munich		80%		90%		100%									80%		90%		100%	
Paris CDG		90%			99%										80%		90%		99%	
Paris Orly		90%			99%			100%			40%				80%				90%	100%
Riga		80%		90%		100%									80%		90%		100%	
Roma Fiumicino		80%				100%									80%			100%		
Stockholm Arlanda		80%		90%		100%									80%		90%		100%	
Warsaw		100%													100%					
Zaragoza		80%		90%		100%									80%		90%		100%	

TABLE 3.4 SCOPE OF QUALITY STANDARDS: ARRIVING PASSENGERS

	Pre-booked / airport informed										Non-pre-booked / airport not informed									
	% of PRMs who should wait no longer than (minutes)										% of PRMs who should wait no longer than (minutes)									
	0	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	0	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45
Athens		80%	90%		100%									80%		90%		100%		
Barcelona		80%	90%		100%											80%		90%		100%
Brussels		80%	90%		100%									80%		90%		100%		
Bucharest Otopeni		80%	90%		100%										80%		90%			100%
Budapest		100%									100%									
Charleroi		80%	90%		100%											80%		90%		100%
Copenhagen		80%	90%		100%											80%		90%		100%
Dublin		80%	90%		100%									80%		90%		100%		
Frankfurt Main			80%		100%											Not defined				
Lisbon		80%	90%		100%											Not defined				
London Gatwick	100%												80%	90%		100%				
London Heathrow	100%												80%	90%		100%				
London Luton	99%	100%											90%	100%						
Madrid Barajas		80%	90%		100%											80%		90%		100%
Munich		80%	90%		100%											80%		90%		100%
Paris CDG	90%		99%												80%		90%			100%
Paris Orly	90%		99%						100%						80%		90%			100%
Riga			80%	90%	100%											80%		90%		100%
Roma Fiumicino					90%	100%										Not defined				
Stockholm Arlanda		80%	90%		100%											80%		90%		100%
Warsaw		100%														100%				
Zaragoza		80%	90%		100%											80%		90%		100%



### Monitoring

- 3.64 While the Regulation requires larger airports to develop and publish quality standards, it does not require them publish whether they are actually met, and none of the case study airports do so. Nonetheless most airports do undertake some form of monitoring and several provided us with performance statistics. There were a number of approaches to monitoring:
- **Time spent waiting to receive assistance:** This is the most common measure used by airports, as set out above. These times are often measured by time stamps inputted into the personal digital assistants (PDAs) or equivalent devices carried by staff providing assistance to PRMs (discussed earlier). The data recorded can often give wider outputs than solely the time taken to receive assistance, such as time from gate to boarding, or time waiting once disembarked from an aircraft. This approach should give accurate information on the time spent waiting by passengers, but does not address other aspects of quality of service.
  - **Spot checks:** Many airports reported that the PRM service manager will undertake frequent unannounced tours of the services and infrastructure provided within the airport. They may check, for example, that the designated points of arrival and departure are functioning correctly. This approach is useful to identify wide-ranging problems but may not be sufficiently systematic to identify all problems.
  - **Surveys:** A number of airports reported using surveys to obtain feedback from passengers. Typically, a postcard with survey questions to be completed was given to PRMs at some point during their use of the airport's services, which could be submitted at information desks or at various comment boxes placed throughout the airport. These covered questions on the services received, and in some cases assessed the passenger's knowledge of the Regulation. A potential problem with this approach is the lack of accessibility for all passengers.
  - **Mystery shoppers:** 'Mystery shoppers' are people (typically PRMs) paid to anonymously receive the service provided by the airport and afterwards give detailed reports or feedback about their experiences. This approach gives a thorough appraisal of the service provided at a particular time.
- 3.65 Table 3.5 sets out the actions airports have taken to monitor their quality standards. Most airports do not include any external auditing in their monitoring processes; Athens, Bucharest Otopeni, Luton, Madrid Barajas, Zaragoza include some external checks.

**TABLE 3.5 AIRPORT ACTIONS TO MONITOR QUALITY STANDARDS**

Airport	Measures monitored
Amsterdam Schiphol	Manual checks of numbers of PRMs and service quality
Athens	Audits, including 'mystery PRM' audit; PRM surveys
Bologna	PRM survey; time taken for assistance
Brussels	Time taken for assistance (in real time); passenger complaints
Bucharest Otopeni	Passenger surveys; complaints; external audits by NEB, PRM organisations, Commission, and airlines
Budapest	Monthly reports of time taken for assistance and passenger complaints; daily contact with service provider; 'walk-throughs' of service provided; airline audits

Brussels Charleroi	Passenger complaints received
Copenhagen	Time taken for assistance (in real time)
Dublin	Weekly audits of time taken; annual training audit
Frankfurt Main	Monthly reports of time taken for assistance
Lisbon	Time taken for assistance
London Heathrow	Time taken for assistance; missed flights; flight delays; internal audits; regular meetings with service providers; complaints from passengers and airlines; some of these measures monitored through a 'dashboard'; monthly 'scorecard' review
London Luton	Passenger feedback forms; 'walk-throughs' of service provided; internal and external audit teams of provider; airline and PRM organisation audits
Madrid Barajas	Monthly meetings with service providers and PRM organisation; surveys by service providers; independent surveys; PRM feedback forms
Munich	Monthly reports of time taken for assistance; spot checks; quality service manager as 'mystery shopper'; yearly passenger survey
Paris Charles De Gaulle	Flight delays for which PRM services are responsible; passenger complaints
Riga	Questionnaires to airlines, passengers and others; daily service monitoring by duty managers; internal audits
Rome Fiumicino	Time taken for assistance (in real time); other unspecified monitoring
Stockholm Arlanda	Time taken for assistance; passenger complaints; AOC meetings
Warsaw	Infrequent spot checks of time taken
Zaragoza	Monthly meetings with service providers and PRM organisation; surveys by service providers; independent surveys; PRM feedback forms

3.66 In addition, we found that most NEBs had not undertaken any direct, systematic monitoring of whether airports were meeting quality standards. Table 3.6 sets out the actions NEBs have taken to monitor airport quality standards.

**TABLE 3.6 NEB ACTIONS TO MONITOR QUALITY STANDARDS**

Member State	Monitoring
Belgium	Inspections of infrastructure and procedures
Denmark	No monitoring, biannual meetings
France	No monitoring
Germany	No monitoring
Greece	Inspections of infrastructure and procedures at Athens, not of regional airports
Hungary	Inspections of infrastructure and procedures, questionnaire on training
Ireland	No monitoring
Italy	Inspections of quality standards including infrastructure, procedures, information, training
Latvia	Inspection of infrastructure, procedures, waiting times, documentation
Netherlands	Inspection of infrastructure and procedures
Poland	No monitoring
Portugal	No monitoring

Member State	Monitoring
Romania	Request annual reports
Spain	Checks of staff training and procedures
Sweden	No monitoring
United Kingdom	Inspections of infrastructure and procedures, attend monthly PRM groups at major airports, less frequently at smaller airports

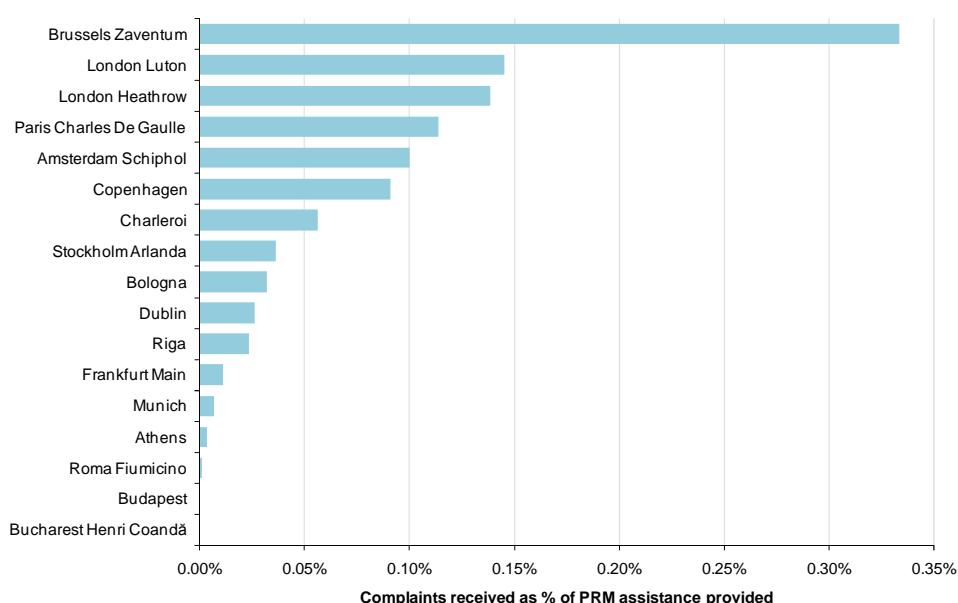
## Complaints to airports

### *Airport processes for handling complaints*

- 3.67 Most case study airports accepted complaints relating to PRM services in the same way as other complaints. Often airports will accept complaints via email, via information desks at the airport, or via forms which can be filled in and deposited in comment boxes located at various points within the terminals.
- 3.68 Typically, complaints are registered in a database which is reviewed by a member of staff on the service quality team. The staff member allocated to the complaint reviews documents relating to the service referred to in the complaint, and talks to the member of staff who provided the service (this member of staff may be employed by either the airport or a contractor). After investigating the complaint, the staff member writes a report including the findings and any response which is sent to the passenger. The service quality manager may review monthly reports on complaints, which will include complaints regarding the PRM service.
- 3.69 The level of detail to which the complaint handling process is specified varies depending on the volume of complaints received: an airport which handles many complaints may follow clearly defined procedures for handling complaints, while an airport which receives only few complaints may address them on a more ad hoc basis.

### *Number of complaints received*

- 3.70 For each airport in the case study sample we requested the number of complaints received relating to provision of services to PRMs. We compared the data received with the assistance provided to give a rate of complaints, shown in Figure 3.9. This shows a high level of variation in the number of complaints received. Most of the larger airports have a similar rate of complaints. The highest rate of complaints is at Brussels Zaventem (0.33%, over double the next highest).

**FIGURE 3.9 RATE OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED BY AIRPORTS, 2009**

- 3.71 Some airports note that they have received no complaints regarding the Regulation since its introduction, while during the same period they have received several thousand complaints regarding aspects of their service not covered by the Regulation. This is evidence that their system for receiving complaints is functioning well, but it is not necessarily evidence that there are no problems regarding the implementation of the Regulation. We were informed by several PRM organisations that a mobility-impaired passenger who receives poor service may be reluctant to complain, as they may wish to forget the incident, and since these passengers may face many obstacles during a journey, they may take the view that reporting the more frequent minor incidents is not worthwhile. In addition, the lack of compensation in most Member States means there is little direct incentive to complain.

### Training

- 3.72 The Regulation requires that airports provide training relating to PRMs for their personnel:

- All personnel who provide direct assistance to PRMs, including those employed by subcontractors, must have knowledge of how to meet the needs of various different types of PRMs.
- All airport personnel who have direct contact with the travelling public must have disability-equality and disability-awareness training.
- All new employees must attend disability-related training and personnel must have appropriate refresher training.

- 3.73 We requested information on the training provided at each of the airports in the sample for the study. As many considered this material confidential, we were not able to obtain many copies of training documents. From the information we have received, the content of the three types of training may typically include the following:



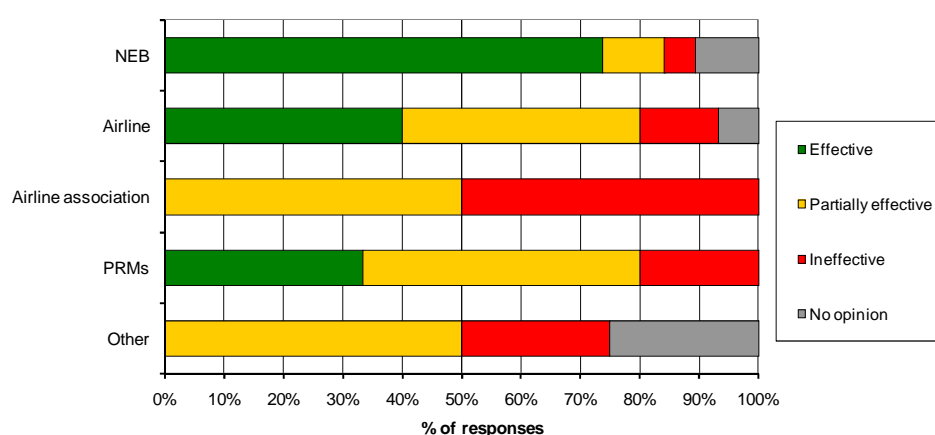
- **Staff assisting PRMs directly:** Most courses described included: theoretical training on rights and obligations under the Regulation, training in awareness of disabilities, and physical training in lifting and other handling of PRMs. Some elements of training may be given to all staff; these could include Ambulift licenses and sign language. It may also include training not directly related to PRMs, such as training in first aid. Not all of the training courses we were given information for included provision for ‘soft’ elements of interacting with PRMs, such as ensuring that the person providing assistance is at the same height as a wheelchair user when talking to them, or being aware of the type of circumstances which could cause a person with autism to become distressed.
- **Passenger-facing staff:** This training is typically the disability-equality and disability-awareness sections of the training for staff providing direct assistance to PRMs. Several airports ensured that this training was undertaken by all staff working in the airport (including external staff) by making this training a requirement for obtaining the security clearance pass needed to work in the airport. It may include specific training for security staff who perform searches on PRMs, relating for example to how to search a passenger in their own wheelchair, and awareness of the importance to blind passengers of having belongs replaced in exactly the same place within their baggage.
- **Other employees:** The form of this training was often a short video on disability awareness. Some airports did not provide this training, or did not make it compulsory, which appears to be an infringement of the Regulation.

3.74 Training was delivered either internally, by external contractors specialising in training, or by PRM organisations. Several airports informed us that they used a “train the trainer” approach, where employees who have received the training then go on to train other employees. Several airports informed us that their training programmes were compliant with the guidance given in Annex 5-G of ECAC Document 30. A number of airports had involved PRM organisations in their training in some way, including in the development of the training, in its delivery, or through audit and approval. Several airports informed us that they had sought assistance from local PRM organisations but had found this problematic.

3.75 The lengths of the training programmes about which we were given information varied widely. We were given information relating to 6 training programmes for those providing direct assistance to PRMs: of these, 4 lasted 3-6 days, while two lasted 12 days or more. The length of training for passenger-facing staff also varied, with some airports requiring a full day of training whilst others only required the staff member to watch a 20 minute video. Refresher courses also varied considerably in length (between 1 and 4.5 days) and frequency: one airport informed us that it had monthly refresher training, while another required refresher training every 2 years.

### **Stakeholder views on effectiveness of implementation**

3.76 We asked each of the stakeholders we contacted about how effectively they believed airports had implemented the Regulation; views vary considerably between different groups of stakeholders (Figure 3.10 below). Airlines and PRM organisations both believe that there are significant improvements to be made, but over 70% of NEBs believe that the actions of airports are largely sufficient. The rest of this section summarises the views expressed by stakeholders.

**FIGURE 3.10 VIEWS OF STAKEHOLDERS ON AIRPORT EFFECTIVENESS**

### *Airports*

3.77 Most airports viewed their own actions as effective implementations of the Regulation. The most common problem reported by airports was misuse of the PRM service, however the level of impact of this reported misuse varied considerably between airports. The following other issues were identified by airports:

- Connecting flights: Minimum connection times, while sufficient for other passengers, can be insufficient for a PRM.
- Initial implementation of the Regulation: Several airports informed us that they had had problems with subcontracted service providers; a number had since retendered the service because of unsatisfactory service quality.
- Several airports informed us that they had had difficulty obtaining the cooperation of PRM organisations when developing quality standards.

### *Airlines and airline associations*

3.78 Many airlines reported that quality of service and level of charges varied considerably between airports. This did not necessarily relate to size of airport: some airlines informed us that larger airports tended to provide better assistance, while other airlines informed us that their provision tended to be worse. Few airlines reported significant delays due to PRM services.

3.79 The most common problems with airport implementation of the Regulation reported by airlines related to airport charges. These issues were raised, in particular, by low cost and charter carriers:

- many airlines believed that the method of determining charges was not transparent and that the charges determined by airports were not reasonable or cost reflective;
- many airlines reported that the costs of the PRM service had increased (in some cases significantly) since the introduction of the Regulation, relative to the previous situation when the PRM service was contracted directly by the carrier, generally from its ground handler;

- this increase was believed by several airlines to be a result of overstaffing, or by some as a result of the inclusion of a margin, which they believed to be a contravention of the Regulation;
  - at the same time as this perceived increase in cost, many airlines believed the quality of service had decreased, or at best not improved, since the introduction of the Regulation, and that the charges therefore represented poor value for money; and
  - some States (in particular Spain and Portugal) have introduced uniform charges for services at State-operated airports, which airlines do not believe are cost-reflective or give value for money.
- 3.80 Some airlines informed us that they had serious concerns regarding the safety of uses of the PRM assistance services provided by airports, and noted that the airlines have no right to audit or directly influence the service provider.
- 3.81 Airline associations raised many of the same issues. ELFAA had particularly negative views regarding the assistance provided by airports: it believed that assistance was provided by unskilled staff and that the quality had decreased as a result, and that the cost of provision had tripled at some airports. It also believed that services were poorly synchronised with airline schedules. All of the airline associations from whom we obtained a response raised at least some concerns on all points regarding charges, including whether the costs were reasonable, cost-related and transparent, and whether the cooperation with airlines was sufficient.

#### *NEBs*

- 3.82 Most NEBs believed that airports had implemented the Regulation effectively. Several informed us that they believed there had initially been problems with implementation, but that these were now resolved. Those that believed there were areas which should be improved identified problems with designated points, infrastructure, delays on arrival and provision of information. It is not clear whether the level of supervision by most NEBs would be sufficient to allow an in-depth analysis of airport effectiveness (see 5.42).

#### *PRM organisations*

- 3.83 Most organisations representing disabled people believed there were some issues with the implementation of the Regulation by airports, and identified issues at all points of the process. Most organisations also noted that there was wide variation in the quality of service provided at different airports; several believed that this was a result of variation in the training given. Frequently identified problems included:
- **Mobility equipment is frequently damaged:** Many PRM organisations informed us that understanding of mobility equipment was poor and that training regarding it was insufficient. They believed that this poor understanding amongst airport and ground handling staff contributed to frequent damage. There was an expectation amongst most of the PRMs using wheelchairs that we spoke to that, if they travel by air, there is a high likelihood their chair will be damaged. For disabled people with extremely limited mobility who rely heavily on their wheelchair and may have adaptations particular to their needs, damage to their chair can be extremely distressing.

- **Lengthy waits for disembarkation:** Although the initial disembarking from the plane may be completed within the time set out in the quality standards, the passenger may then have to wait a long period of time in a holding area before the rest of the arrivals procedure is finished.
- **Information provision is poor:** This includes information on the layout of the airport, accessible real-time information on flights, and information on the rights of PRMs.
- **Websites are inaccessible:** We were informed by many organisations that airport websites are frequently inaccessible to visually impaired people.
- **Poor training of staff:** Several organisations reported that the interaction of airport assistance staff with PRMs could be poor. Examples of this included the assumption that all PRMs require a wheelchair, and where the assistance staff talk to a companion of a PRM rather than directly to the PRM.
- **Inability to use own wheelchair:** As discussed above, some wheelchair users with particularly limited mobility may wish to use their own wheelchair for as long as possible. We were informed that many airports do not permit the use of a passengers own chair up to the gate, and that some have a policy of transferring the passenger to an airport chair at check-in.
- **Inadequate provision where connection times are long:** Where there is a wait of several hours between the arrival of one flight and the scheduled departure of the connecting flight, at some airports this may result in a PRM being left unattended for a long period in an area without facilities or assistance.
- **Insufficient time allowed for connections:** The minimum connection time given by airports may not be sufficient to unload, transfer and board a PRM. This is a particular problem at larger, more complex airports with multiple terminals.
- **Parking provision:** A number of issues were raised with the parking spaces made available to PRMs. These included comments on inconvenient location, insufficient capacity, or inappropriate requirements for payment.
- **“Holding areas”:** Some airports do not enable PRMs to access departure lounge facilities such as shops or restaurants, and require them to remain in a “holding area” for PRMs. Although such access to facilities is not required by the Regulation, it can significantly improve the experience of air travel of PRMs, and is provided by many airports.
- **Communication of arrival:** Communication of arrival at the airport can be difficult, for example through poor signage for points of communication, or points of communication failing to respond to calls for assistance.
- **Poor provision for the visually impaired:** Many airports do not provide adaptations to allow visually impaired passengers to access the airport independently. These can include tactile surfaces or Braille maps. We were also informed that training on how security staff should search the bags of these passengers was often lacking; it is important that all items are returned to their original location, as otherwise the passenger may have difficulty finding them.

#### *Other organisations*

3.84 The other organisations we interviewed raised issues which have been raised by the stakeholder groups already discussed. These included:

- “Teething problems” when the Regulation was first introduced;
- Poor provision of information;

- Variability of training; and
- Falling service levels, in particular falling standards of safety.

### Conclusions

- 3.85 All airports in the sample for this study had implemented the provisions of the Regulation. We were informed that the regional airports in Greece had yet to effect the change from provision by ground handlers to provision by airports, but we were not told of any other airports at which the Regulation has not been implemented. Most of the sample airports had contracted the provision of PRM assistance services to an external company, and several had changed their service provider within 18 months of the Regulation coming into force; this was interpreted by some as a sign that initial procurement and specification had not met actual needs.
- 3.86 The service provided at the sample airports varies in terms of a number of factors including the resources available to provide the services; the level of training of the assistance staff; the type of equipment used to provide services; the facilities provided to accommodate PRMs (such as PRM lounges). According to the information provided by PRM organisations, there is resulting variability in service quality, although this is difficult to quantify.
- 3.87 There is also significant variation between airports in the frequency with which PRM services are requested: the level of use of the service varies by a factor of 15 between the airports for which we have been able to obtain data. The type of PRM service requested also varies considerably between airports. Both the frequency of use and the type of service required are likely to be affected by the varying demographics of the passengers using different airports.
- 3.88 The Regulation requires airports to publish quality standards. Most sample airports had done so, although some had published them only to airlines and other service users. Almost all quality standards followed the example format set out in ECAC Document 30, which defines the percentage of PRMs who should wait for up to given numbers of minutes. Some airports published qualitative measures in addition to these time standards, such as descriptions of the treatment the passenger should expect at all points of the service. However, none of the sample airports had published the results of any monitoring of these quality standards, and whilst most did undertake monitoring in some form, only four had commissioned external checks of the service.
- 3.89 The Regulation allows airports to levy a specific charge to cover the costs of assistance. All but one of the sample airports had done so. The level of charges varied considerably. We analysed this charge to examine whether variation could be explained by higher frequency of use of the service, differences in price levels between States, or differences in service quality, but there was no evidence that this was the case. The design of the airport may be a further factor influencing the cost of service provision and hence the level of charges.
- 3.90 Some stakeholders believe that the requirements to select contractors and establish charges in cooperation with users and PRM organisations were not followed thoroughly. Many airlines did not believe that consultation on either element had been sufficient, and this view was shared by some PRM organisations. There were a

number of barriers to effective consultation, including linguistic restrictions and airport user committees which failed to include all interested stakeholders. Consultation with airlines was reported as particularly poor in Spain, Portugal and Cyprus. In contrast to this, we note that several airports stated that they had sought the participation of PRM organisations but had found this difficult to obtain.

- 3.91 The Regulation requires airports to provide specialised disability training for staff directly assisting PRMs, and whilst all sample airports had done so, there were significant variations in the length and format of this training. The shortest training course among those for which we have data was 3 days long, while the longest lasted 14 days. There was similar variation in the length of training provided for passenger-facing staff who did not provide direct assistance. A number of airports informed us that they did not provide disability-awareness training for staff not in public-facing roles, or only provided it on a voluntary basis.

## 4. APPLICATION OF THE REGULATION BY AIRLINES

### Introduction

4.1 Regulation 1107/2006 also sets out requirements for air carriers relating to their treatment of passengers with reduced mobility (PRMs). This section assesses how airlines are implementing these requirements. Information is drawn from two key sources:

- a detailed review of information published by the case study airline on their websites, against a range of criteria; and
- interviews with representatives of the carriers and other stakeholders.

4.2 This section begins by outlining the obligations imposed on airlines by the Regulation, and evaluates how airlines are implementing these requirements.

### Requirements of the Regulation for air carriers

4.3 The Regulation imposes a range of requirements on airlines, which can be summarised as follows:

- **Prevention of refusal of carriage:** The Regulation prohibits airlines from refusing carriage or accepting reservations from PRMs, unless this is necessary to comply with safety requirements, or necessitated by the physical constraints of the aircraft. Where boarding is refused, the provisions of Regulation 261/2004 should apply with regard to refunds or rerouting. Airlines are permitted to require that a PRM be accompanied by a person who is able to provide any assistance that is required (again subject to this being necessary to meet safety requirements), and are required to publish any safety rules which they attach to the carriage of PRMs.
- **Transmission of information:** Airlines are required to take all necessary measures to enable the receipt of PRM assistance requests at all points of sale. Where such requests are received up to 48 hours prior to departure, the airline should transmit the information to the relevant airport(s) at least 36 hours before departure, or as soon as possible if notification is received from the passenger less than 48 hours before departure. Following departure of a flight the airline is also required to provide the destination airport with details of the PRMs requiring assistance on the arriving flight.
- **Assistance:** Annex II specifies the level of assistance which air carriers should provide to PRMs. This comprises carriage of assistance dogs, transport of up to two items of mobility equipment, communication of flight information in accessible formats, making efforts to accommodate seating requests (and seating accompanying persons next to the PRM where possible) and assistance in moving to toilet facilities.
- **Training:** All employees (including those employed by sub-contractors) handling PRMs should have knowledge of how to meet their needs. Disability-equality and disability-awareness training should be provided to all airport personnel dealing directly with the travelling public, and all new employees should attend disability-related training.

- **Compensation for lost or damaged mobility equipment:** Airlines are required to compensate passengers for lost or damaged mobility equipment or assistive devices, in accordance with national and international law.

#### **Published safety rules**

- 4.4 Article 4(3) requires airlines to publish the safety rules relating to carriage of PRMs. The Regulation does not state in any more detail what these safety rules should cover, but we would expect from the context that this is intended to mean rules relating to where carriers would exercise a derogation under Article 4(1) to allow refusal or limitation of carriage, or for where passengers would have to be accompanied. This would include any rules necessitating limitations on the number of PRMs which can be carried, restrictions on the types of PRM posing specific safety risks, or limitations on their carriage or on that of mobility equipment due to the size of aircraft.
- 4.5 In some cases the information published by airlines is in the form of a document defined as ‘safety rules’ or ‘information pursuant to Regulation 1107/2006’, but more commonly information is provided on a web page (or pages) without these descriptions. The limited use of the ‘safety rules’ term by airlines may indicate that carriers do not understand what is meant by the term, or that the requirement is open to interpretation. It is also possible that airlines do not have specific PRM safety rules – both KLM and SAS informed us that the same safety rules apply to PRMs as to all other passengers.
- 4.6 The airlines’ Conditions of Carriage may also provide a useful source of information on policy on the carriage of PRMs, and in some cases may provide more detail than dedicated PRM web pages.
- 4.7 Seven carriers’ Conditions of Carriage also refer to other requirements (often described as ‘Our regulations’ or ‘Other regulations’) which apply to carriage of PRMs. In the sample we have reviewed, the reference to such regulations does not always specify exactly what the scope of these is or where they are to be found. This may infringe the requirement in Article 4(3) to publish any safety rules affecting PRMs, and may also raise issues of consistency with the Unfair Contract Terms Directive, as the conditions on which bookings are made should be transparent at the time. Whilst some airlines’ Conditions state that these regulations are published on their websites, the following case study carriers’ Conditions include such references without saying where the information can be found:
- Air Baltic;
  - Emirates;
  - SAS; and
  - TAP Portugal.
- 4.8 The carriers which provided the most detailed information set out the information listed below, and we would therefore expect a comprehensive PRM web page to provide at least some information on these topics:
- Any limitations on the carriage of PRMs, for example a limit on the number that can be conveyed on a given flight;



- Advance booking requirements for any PRM requiring assistance;
- Conditions under which an accompanying passenger will be required;
- Guidance on the carriage of assistance animals;
- Policies on the carriage of equipment, e.g. wheelchairs, stretchers and oxygen; and
- Any assistance which will be offered on board.

*Information actually published by carriers*

- 4.9 Three of the sample airlines (Air Berlin, easyJet and Ryanair) provide either ‘safety rules’, or a notice specifically stated to be pursuant to Regulation 1107/2006. In a further six cases Regulation 1107/2006 is mentioned in a first sentence of the web page / PRM document, or elsewhere in the text.
- 4.10 We found that eight of the sample airlines include on their website all the information likely to be required. This was normally in the form of a web page, sometimes with sub-sections, however AirBaltic and KLM provide downloadable documents containing all PRM guidance. Delta also provides a PRM brochure, but this does not contain all the information provided on the PRM web page. In the remainder of cases airlines provide fairly comprehensive web pages, but omit certain items which may appear on other sections of the website (for example in the Conditions of Carriage).
- 4.11 In some cases we found inconsistencies between the PRM web page and that the information provided in the Conditions of Carriage. For example, Delta’s Conditions of Carriage state that 48 hours’ advance notice is required for any PRMs who wish to receive special assistance, but the PRM information section states that 48 hours’ advance notice is only required if the passenger needs to use oxygen during the flight, requires the packaging of a wheelchair battery for shipment as checked luggage, or is travelling with a group of 10 or more people with disabilities. Austrian Airlines’ PRM information emphasises the importance of booking in advance, but does not reflect the stronger wording in the Conditions of Carriage, which state that carriage of PRMs ‘is subject to express prior arrangement’. Similarly, the Conditions of Carriage of Alitalia, Brussels Airlines, Delta, Ryanair and Wizzair state that carriage may be refused to PRMs if not arranged in advance; however although the PRM webpage states that assistance should be requested at the time of booking, it is not indicated that failure to do this may result in denial of boarding.
- 4.12 Some of the rules set out in airlines’ Conditions of Carriage do not appear in the PRM information section of the website. For example, Thomsonfly imposes a limit on the number of PRMs or wheelchairs which will be accepted per flight in their Conditions of Carriage, which does not appear on the airline’s PRM web page.

Table 4.1 outlines the coverage of the PRM web pages against the criteria set out in paragraph 4.9 above.

**TABLE 4.1 INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON CARRIER WEBSITES**

Airline	Information provided	Key issues and omissions
Aegean Airlines	'Travel Guide' section of website provides some information on carriage of assistance animals, wheelchairs and oxygen.	No information on advance booking, accompanying passengers or animals  Information on wheelchairs is incomplete – conditions of carriage state that spillable batteries cannot be carried. No information on stretchers.
Air Berlin	Information is provided within a section entitled 'Flying barrier-free', and in a safety rules section entitled 'airberlin's safety regulations for the carriage of passengers with restricted mobility (PRMs) in accordance with EC regulation no. 1107/2206' downloadable from the same page. The safety rules discuss the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• PRM limit</li> <li>• Accompanying persons</li> <li>• Seat allocation</li> <li>• Guide dogs</li> <li>• Information in the event of refusal of carriage</li> </ul>	The safety rules do not include advance booking or policies on carriage of equipment. However, with the exception of stretchers this information is provided on the PRM webpage which contains the safety rules.
Air France	Information is provided within a section entitled 'Passengers with reduced mobility'	None
AirBaltic	Detailed information is provided within a document entitled 'Air travel for physically challenged passengers'	None
Alitalia	Limited information across all categories is provided in a section entitled 'No barriers travelling'.	More detailed information on some topics can be accessed only by searching the site for specific terms, e.g. 'stretcher'.
Austrian	Information on most categories is provided in a section entitled 'Barrier-free travel'.	No reference is made to the carriage of stretchers.
British Airways	Information on all categories is provided within a section entitled 'Disability assistance'	None
Brussels Airlines	Reasonably detailed information across all categories is provided in a section entitled 'Special Assistance'.	Information on accompanying passengers, wheelchairs and stretchers is incomplete.
Delta	Detailed information on all categories is provided within a section entitled 'Services for Travelers with Disabilities'. A brochure providing a summary of this information can also be downloaded from the site.	None
easyJet	Detailed information on almost all categories is provided within a notice entitled 'For passengers who are disabled or have reduced mobility (PRM) due to a physical, cognitive (learning) disability or any physical impairment, as defined by current European law, Regulation EC1107/2006 Article 2(a).' In addition detailed information is provided in the 'Carrier's Regulations'.	The information notice on the website is detailed and generally appears complete. There is no reference to provision of oxygen or carriage of stretchers although both are addressed in the Carrier's Regulations.
Emirates	Some information across all categories is provided within the sections 'Health & Travel', 'Special Needs' and 'FAQs'.	The information provided appears to be complete but it is fragmented between these

Airline	Information provided	Key issues and omissions
		three sections, which could be confusing.
Iberia	The website has a general information section entitled 'Passengers with reduced mobility or special needs'. This provides a link to a more detailed information leaflet, downloadable by clicking on a 'No barriers to travel' icon.	<p>The location of the information leaflet is not obvious as it is not listed under 'Information of interest'.</p> <p>Information in the leaflet on accompanying passengers and carriage of mobility equipment appears to be incomplete.</p> <p>There is a document entitled 'Attending to the needs of people with reduced mobility' but this appears to be a general summary of ECAC/ICAO guidance and it is not clear what applies to Iberia.</p>
KLM	Information is provided within a section entitled 'Physically challenged passengers' and in a 'Carefree travel' brochure.	None
Lufthansa	Information on most categories is provided in a section entitled 'Travellers with special needs'.	No information on accompanying passengers or stretchers, although some info is provided in a section on flights to and from the USA.
Ryanair	Detailed information on almost all categories is provided within a notice entitled 'NOTICE PURSUANT TO EC REGULATION 1107/2006 CARRIAGE OF DISABLED PERSONS AND PERSONS WITH REDUCED MOBILITY'.	None
SAS	Information on almost all categories is provided within a section entitled 'Special needs'.	No information on accompanying passengers or stretchers
TAP Portugal	Detailed information on all categories is provided within a section entitled 'Special Assistance'.	None
TAROM	Limited information across all categories is provided in a section entitled 'Persons with disabilities'.	Because the information is not detailed it is not clear whether it is complete, e.g. whether all circumstances where passengers need to be accompanied are listed.
Thomas Cook	Information on all categories is provided within a section entitled 'Medical - passengers with Reduced Mobility'.	None
TUI (Thomsonfly)	Some information on most categories is provided within a section entitled 'Passengers with special needs'.	No information on stretchers or oxygen
Wizzair	Limited information is provided within a section entitled 'Passengers with Special Needs'.	No information on assistance animals or stretchers, although both are referred to in the Conditions of Carriage.

## Carrier requirements on carriage of PRMs

### *Safety requirements defined in law or by licensing authorities*

- 4.13 Article 4(1) allows derogations from Article 3 in order to meet safety requirements defined by national or international law, or to meet safety requirements established by the authority that issued the air operator's certificate to the air carrier concerned. The only EU-wide legislation which applies is EU-OPS1 (Commission Regulation 859/2008), which is aligned with JAR-OPS 1 Section 1 guidance previously produced by the Joint Aviation Authorities.
- 4.14 National health and safety legislation may also provide safety-related grounds for imposing restrictions on the carriage of PRMs – for example cabin crew may not be permitted to lift passengers between their seat and an on-board wheelchair, which would then necessitate an accompanying passenger if it is expected that they will need to leave their seat at any point during the flight.
- 4.15 All other restrictions are governed by safety requirements established by licensing authorities, which are often (although not always) the same organisation that has been designated as the NEB for the Regulation. The main guidance material relating to carriage of PRMs that licensing authorities should take into account is that originally defined in Section 2 of JAR-OPS 1. Section 2 was not included in EU-OPS1, but ECAC Document 30 states that, pending the adoption of implementing rules related to operations based on the EASA Regulation (216/2008), Member States are allowed to use the Section 2 guidance material, provided that there is not conflict with EU-OPS. To accompany EU-OPS 1, the JAA published an updated version of Section 2 in the form of Temporary Guidance Leaflet (TGL) 44. The section relating to the carriage of PRMs, ACJ OPS 1.260, remains unchanged from the original JAR-OPS 1 Section 2. It states that:

- 1 *A person with reduced mobility (PRM) is understood to mean a person whose mobility is reduced due to physical incapacity (sensory or locomotory), an intellectual deficiency, age, illness or any other cause of disability when using transport and when the situation needs special attention and the adaptation to a person's need of the service made available to all passengers.*
- 2 *In normal circumstances PRMs should not be seated adjacent to an emergency exit.*
- 3 *In circumstances in which the number of PRMs forms a significant proportion of the total number of passengers carried on board:*
  - a. *The number of PRMs should not exceed the number of able-bodied persons capable of assisting with an emergency evacuation; and*
  - b. *The guidance given in paragraph 2 above should be followed to the maximum extent possible.*

- 4.16 Licensing authorities may require their carriers to impose more stringent restrictions on carriage of PRMs than the 50% limit defined by TGL 44. However, this is rare: the only example identified amongst the case study States is the Belgian Civil Aviation Authority (BCAA), which has set restrictions on the numbers of certain types of PRM, and minimum numbers of accompanying passengers. The numerical limits, which are outlined in more detail in the case study for Belgium in appendix C, are reflected in the conditions imposed by Brussels Airlines. In contrast, some licensing authorities

(for example the UK CAA) have stated that they will not generally approve limits on carriage of PRMs below the 50% defined in TGL 44.

- 4.17 In the remainder of cases, licensing authorities do not have any defined policy and will consider any restrictions on carriage of PRMs on a case by case basis. Therefore, more stringent restrictions on carriage of PRMs may be proposed by the airlines themselves, included in their Operations Manuals and submitted for approval by the licensing authority. As a result, there are significant variations between airlines, even where operational models and types of aircraft are similar. For example, whilst Wizzair, easyJet and Ryanair have similar operational models and aircraft types, Ryanair has a limit of 4 PRMs who require assistance per aircraft whilst Wizzair has a limit of 28 PRMs and easyJet 50%. Although the limits imposed by the three airlines are all based on safety, it is difficult to imagine that all three could be ‘safe’ limits. There does not seem to be an evidence base for these limits and a stakeholder suggested to us that, in the event of an emergency, it is impossible to predict whether even ‘able bodied’ passengers will be in a physical or psychological state consistent with evacuating the aircraft in the expected time; therefore, it was discriminatory to have a PRM limit.
- 4.18 The policy adopted by many of the legacy carriers is influenced by the United States Department of Transport Regulation, 14 CFR Part 382 (hereafter described as rule 382). The United States Air Carrier Access Act of 1999 made rule 382 apply to non-US carriers on flights to/from the US, and to all flights which are codeshares with US carriers (even flights not to/from the US), except where there is a specific conflict with non-US law. Despite sharing the same aspiration of ensuring equal access to air travel for all, there are significant differences between the US and EU regulations. Rule 382 specifically prohibits airlines from imposing numerical limits on PRMs, on the basis that this practice is discriminatory. Lufthansa and TAP Portugal are the only case study airlines operating to and from the US to publish PRM limits.
- 4.19 PRM limits have also been challenged on the basis of national law. In 2009, the Madrid Provincial Court ruled that Iberia must change its Flight Operation Manual because it was indirectly discriminatory against disabled people. The case was brought by three deaf people who were refused boarding because they were unaccompanied.
- 4.20 The Regulation allows airlines to **request that a passenger be accompanied**, but only on the basis of safety. Three carriers cited the UK Department for Transport’s *Access to Air Travel for Disabled Persons and Persons with Reduced Mobility – Code of Practice* as the basis for the criteria they use to determine whether a PRM should be accompanied. The document also supports the Regulation in providing guidance to airlines and airports on best practice approaches to the handling and transit of PRMs. The guidance states that an accompanying passenger should only be required “when it is evident that the person is not self-reliant and this could pose a risk to safety”. The document defines this as being as passenger who cannot:
- Unfasten their seat belt;
  - Leave their seat and reach an emergency exit unaided;
  - Retrieve and fit a lifejacket;
  - Don an oxygen mask without assistance; or
  - Is unable to understand the safety briefing and any advice and instructions given

by the crew in an emergency situation (including information communicated in accessible formats).

- 4.21 The document also states that passengers who require a level of personal care which cabin crew cannot provide should be told that they should be accompanied. This includes assistance with the following:
- Breathing (reliance on supplementary oxygen);
  - Feeding;
  - Toileting; and
  - Medicating.
- 4.22 The guidance implies that a passenger should only be required to be accompanied if they are likely to require such assistance during the course of the flight. This is consistent with rule 382, which states that "concern that a passenger with a disability may need personal care services...is not a basis for requiring the passenger to travel with a safety assistant".
- 4.23 The most significant difference between US and EU law relates to the **48 hour advance notification** requirement in the Regulation for passengers requiring assistance. Rule 382 states that requiring pre-notification from PRMs is discriminatory, given that the same requirement is not imposed on other passengers. It does however allow airlines to require 48 hours pre-notification in circumstances where a passenger:
- Requires oxygen on a domestic flight (72 hours notice can be requested on international flights);
  - Is travelling in an incubator;
  - Requires a respirator or oxygen concentrator to be connected to the aircraft power supply;
  - Is travelling in a stretcher;
  - Is travelling in an electric wheelchair on an aircraft with 60 seats or less;
  - Requires hazardous material packaging, e.g. for an electric wheelchair;
  - Is travelling in a group of 10 or more PRMs;
  - Requires an on-board wheelchair on an aircraft with more than 60 seats that does not have an accessible toilet;
  - Intends to travel in the cabin with an emotional support animal;
  - Intends to travel in the cabin with a service animal on a flight of 8 hours or more; or
  - Has both severe vision and hearing impairments.
- 4.24 The Regulation does not define the circumstances under which **medical clearance** can be reflected from a passenger, but rule 382 prohibits airlines from requesting medical certification unless the passenger's condition poses a 'direct threat', which 'means a significant risk to the health or safety of others that cannot be eliminated by a modification of policies, practices, or procedures, or by the provision of auxiliary aids or services'.

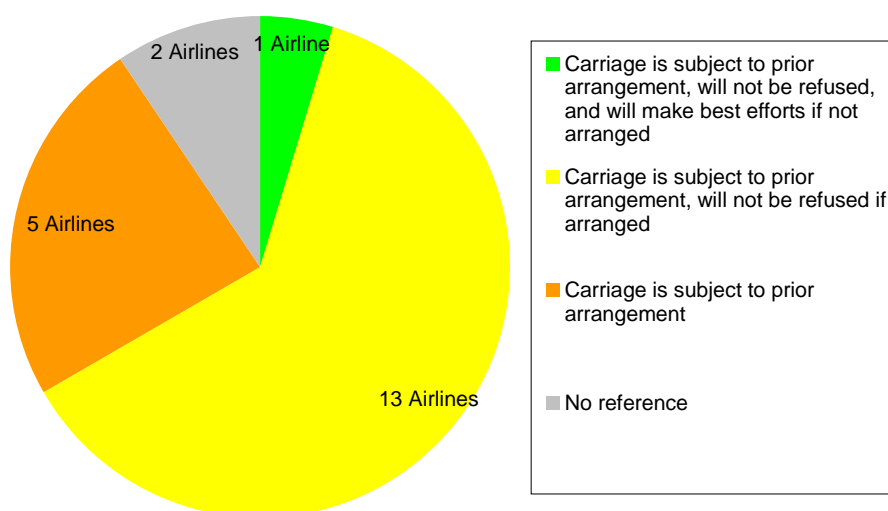
*Policy on carriage of PRMs defined in Conditions of Carriage*

4.25 The element of carriers' Conditions of Carriage relating to PRMs can be classified into the following six categories:

- **Will not refuse carriage on disability grounds** – all PRMs carried without restriction or requirement for pre-booking;
- **Carriage subject to prior arrangement, but will not be refused if not arranged** – the airline would prefer that advance arrangements are made, but PRMs may nevertheless be carried without this;
- **Carriage subject to prior arrangement and will not be refused if arranged** – PRMs are required to make advance arrangements, and will not be refused carriage on the basis of their disability if advance arrangements have been made;
- **Carriage is subject to prior arrangement** – as above, but without the additional clause on non-refusal of carriage to PRMs who have made arrangements;
- **Non-compliant term** – e.g. airline refuses to carry certain PRMs;
- **No reference** – PRMs not discussed in Conditions of Carriage.

4.26 Figure 4.1 shows the general approach adopted in the Conditions of Carriage of the case study airlines. None of the case study Conditions of Carriage were at the extreme ends of the scale, i.e. explicitly non-compliant terms or carriage of all PRMs without any restriction.

**FIGURE 4.1 CONDITIONS ON CARRIAGE OF PRMS**



4.27 Most (13) of the Conditions of Carriage of the sample airlines surveyed state a policy of not refusing carriage to PRMs on the grounds of their special requirements subject to arrangements being made in advance, although boarding may still be denied for other reasons. Alitalia adds an additional disclaimer, which states that the PRMs who have made advance arrangements will be carried, unless this is "...impossible due to objective causes of force majeure".



- 4.28 The advance booking requirement does not necessarily apply to all PRMs. Air Berlin states that the carriage of medical devices and mobility aids can only be guaranteed with up to 48 hours' notice, and visually impaired passengers with guide dogs are also required to make advance arrangements. No reference is made to PRMs not falling within these categories, however.
- 4.29 Table 4.2 shows the approaches adopted by each of the case study airlines in their Conditions of Carriage. Air Berlin is unusual in that the advance booking requirement appears only to apply to PRMs reliant on mobility aids, medical devices or assistance animals, and it appears that no such requirement exists for other PRMs.

**TABLE 4.2 CONDITIONS OF CARRIAGE OF PRMS**

Airline	State	General approach
Aegean Airlines	Greece	No reference
Air Berlin	Germany	Carriage of mobility aids, medical devices and assistance animals is subject to prior arrangement
Air France	France	Carriage is subject to prior arrangement, will not be refused if arranged
AirBaltic	Latvia	Carriage is subject to prior arrangement, will not be refused if arranged
Alitalia	Italy	Carriage is subject to prior arrangement, will not be refused if arranged
Austrian	Austria	Carriage is subject to prior arrangement
British Airways	UK	Carriage is subject to prior arrangement, will not be refused, and will make best efforts if not arranged
Brussels Airlines	Belgium	Carriage is subject to prior arrangement, will not be refused if arranged Also state that they will make reasonable efforts even if not arranged.
Delta	Non-EU	Carriage is subject to prior arrangement
EasyJet	UK	Carriage is subject to prior arrangement
Emirates	Non-EU	Carriage is subject to prior arrangement
Iberia	Spain	No reference
KLM	Netherlands	Carriage is subject to prior arrangement, will not be refused if arranged
Lufthansa	Germany	Carriage is subject to prior arrangement, will not be refused if arranged
Ryanair	Ireland	Carriage is subject to prior arrangement, will not be refused if arranged
SAS	Sweden	Carriage is subject to prior arrangement, will not be refused if arranged
TAP Portugal	Portugal	Carriage is subject to prior arrangement, will not be refused if arranged
TAROM	Romania	Carriage is subject to prior arrangement, will not be refused if arranged
Thomas Cook	Germany / UK	Carriage is subject to prior arrangement, will not be

Airline	State	General approach
		refused if arranged
TUI (Thomsonfly)	Germany / UK / Netherlands	Carriage is subject to prior arrangement, will not be refused if arranged
Wizzair	Hungary	Carriage is subject to prior arrangement

*Circumstances under which carriage may be refused*

4.30 Although all of the case study airlines impose a range of conditions on PRM bookings, only a proportion state explicitly that carriage may be refused if certain conditions are not met. In some cases, an individual PRM travelling cannot control whether the conditions are met, but some conditions can be satisfied if the PRM follows a defined course of action:

- Conditions which individual PRMs cannot control whether they meet include limits on the number of PRMs which can be carried on a given flight, and restrictions posed by the physical size and configuration of specific aircraft
- Conditions which PRMs can take actions to comply with include advance booking (discussed in the preceding section), travelling with an accompanying passenger or obtaining medical clearance.

4.31 The remaining categories are discussed in turn below.

4.32 Under Article 4 of the Regulation carriage can only be refused on safety grounds, or if boarding is physically impossible due to space constraints, a requirement with which most of the case study airlines are compliant. The only condition we have identified which is potentially non-compliant is the requirement for advance booking cited by Alitalia, Brussels Airlines, Delta, Ryanair and Wizz Air.

*PRM limits and physical constraints*

4.33 Ryanair is the only case study airline to set out numerical limits on carriage of PRMs in its Conditions of Carriage. In addition, Delta's Conditions of Carriage include the vague statement that carriage may be refused to any PRM on the basis of safety.

4.34 Airline PRM web pages provide more information on PRM limits, with several airlines setting out limits:

- Air Berlin;
- AirBaltic;
- Brussels Airlines;
- Lufthansa;
- TAROM (only for PRMs in wheelchairs); and
- Wizz Air.

4.35 Aegean Airlines and TAP Portugal also informed us that they have PRM limits in place, although these are not published. Full details of the PRM limits adopted by each airline are given in Table 4.3. Several of the other case study airlines informed us that they are required to adhere to the limit set out in TGL 44 that the number of PRMs

should not exceed the number of able bodied passengers; this restriction is not included in the table below, although it is possible that some of the unspecified restrictions actually relate to this. Note that other carriers may have unpublished limits which we have not been informed about.

**TABLE 4.3 AIRLINE PRM LIMITS**

Airline	Published limits	Unpublished limits	Applies to
Aegean Airlines	-	Unspecified restriction	All unaccompanied PRMs
AirBaltic	If number of PRMs exceeds number of cabin crew per flight (typically 3-4 on short haul aircraft)	-	All PRMs, only where PRMs form a large proportion of passengers on flight
Air Berlin	Unspecified limit for safety reasons	-	All PRMs
Brussels Airlines	2 when travelling individually, except on A330-300, where limit of 4. When travelling in group limit ranges from 9 (on BAe 146) to 27 (on A330-300), including escorts.	-	WCHS + WCHC + STCR + BLND + DEAF/BLND, in any combination
Lufthansa	Limit on unaccompanied passengers in wheelchairs: 3 on regional flights (>70 seats); 5 on other flights Limit on no. of wheelchairs per flight: 3 on most intercontinental flights, 2 on continental flights and 1 on regional flights. Also unspecified general limit on limited mobility passengers for care and safety reasons.	-	All unaccompanied PRMs
Ryanair	Limit of 4 per aircraft for safety reasons	-	Passengers with reduced mobility, blind/visually impaired or requiring special assistance.
TAP Portugal	-	Stretcher: 2, except Fokker 100 and Embraer 145; WCHC: 4-10 depending on aircraft; WCHS, blind and deaf: 9, except Fokker 100 and Embraer 145; Incubator: 1, except Fokker 100 and Embraer 145.	See left
TAROM	Limit on passengers requiring wheelchair in		

	cabin: 0 on AT42, 2 on B737 and 6 on A318. No limits on other PRMs	
Wizz Air	Limit of 28 disabled or incapacitated or passengers with reduced mobility, including a maximum of 10 who require a wheelchair from check-in to the cabin seat	See left

- 4.36 Fewer airlines refer to other physical constraints in their Conditions of Carriage, with only AirBaltic and Brussels Airlines indicating that carriage may be refused if the PRM is unable to physically board via the aircraft's doors.

*Accompanying passengers*

- 4.37 Article 4(2) of the Regulation allows airlines to require PRMs to be accompanied in order to meet the applicable safety requirements referred to in Article 4(1). As with any numerical PRM limits, requirements for PRMs to be accompanied should be set out in the carriers' Operations Manuals, which again would require the approval of the licensing authority in the relevant Member State.

- 4.38 Most airlines publish criteria under which a PRM would have to be accompanied. These are again generally safety related, or relate to the level of assistance cabin crew are able to give. Three common themes emerge:

- The PRM has certain specified conditions, e.g. difficulty walking;
- The PRM requires care which the cabin crew are unable to provide (typically this means that the passenger is not self-reliant); or
- The PRM is unable to evacuate the aircraft without assistance.

- 4.39 Although many airlines make reference to self-reliance criteria there is a difference between those requiring **all** passengers who are not self-reliant to be accompanied; and those which state that passengers who, for example, require help with eating, should be accompanied. In the latter case a passenger could argue that they will not be eating on the flight, and that this criterion is therefore irrelevant. Six of the sample airlines state that all passengers who are not self-reliant must be accompanied, and this is not limited to cases where there is a safety implication. In our view, these airlines may be infringing the Regulation as well as (if they fly to the US) rule 382.

*Medical clearance*

- 4.40 The majority of the case study airlines required medical clearance for certain types of PRM, either confirming fitness to travel, or stating a need to carry medical equipment such as syringes or oxygen, although again it is generally not explicitly stated that boarding will be refused if clearance is not obtained. In most cases, the PRM is required to ask their doctor to fill in a medical clearance form, which is then forwarded to the airline's medical department for approval.

- 4.41 Given the importance of not confusing disability with illness, it might be expected that

the proportion of passengers required to seek clearance before travelling would be minimised. This is the case for most of the case study airlines. Although the types of PRM required to obtain clearance varies, this normally includes those requiring oxygen or stretchers and is not overly restrictive. However, six airlines adopt slightly different policies:

- Lufthansa states that ‘In the case of a physical or psychological limitation, you must obtain an assessment of your fitness for air travel from a Lufthansa doctor in advance’, although it is stated elsewhere that this does not apply to blind people. Nevertheless, this requirement could potentially encompass many types of PRM, and the requirement to see a Lufthansa doctor is likely to be particularly onerous.
- The policy adopted by Wizz Air, although vague, also has the potential to be quite onerous. The airline reserves the right to require medical clearance in all cases, and will refuse the reservation if this is not obtained.
- Austrian, Iberia (both on the PRM web pages) and Wizzair (in the airline’s Conditions of Carriage) all state explicitly that boarding may be refused to passengers on medical grounds if clearance has not been arranged in advance.
- Thomas Cook takes an unusually vague approach in stating that ‘Some medical conditions require a fitness to fly certificate’. Passengers who consider themselves to have a condition that will require the authorisation of their doctor are advised to obtain their approval before flying. A telephone number is however provided, where presumably clarification of the conditions requiring medical authorisation can be obtained.

- 4.42 Policies on denial of boarding, accompanying passengers and medical clearance are summarised in Appendix A. This information is mostly derived from the PRM web pages provided by the airlines, unless explicit reference is made to the conditions of carriage. Any unpublished information provided to us directly by the airline is shown in italics.

*Actions to be taken when carriage refused*

- 4.43 Article 4(1) requires that, where a PRM is refused boarding, the airline is required to offer reimbursement or rerouting in line with Regulation 261/2004. Although none of the case study airlines make any references to this in either their PRM web pages or Conditions of Carriage, almost all of the airlines we interviewed confirmed that passengers who have been refused boarding would be offered a refund, rerouting or cost-free cancellation, depending on the circumstances. However, some carriers indicated that this situation would be rare, as refusal would most commonly occur at the booking stage.
- 4.44 Where boarding is refused, airlines are required under Article 4(4) of the Regulation to immediately inform the PRM of the reasons for the refusal and, on request, should communicate the reasons to the PRM in writing within five working days. Alitalia and Ryanair are the only airlines to refer to this in their Conditions or policies, Alitalia stating in its Conditions of Carriage that in the event of refusal of carriage the passenger may request additional information, and Ryanair stating on its PRM webpage that ‘If we are unable to carry a disabled/reduced mobility passenger, we will inform the person concerned of the reasons for refusal of carriage’.
- 4.45 However, although only two of the case study airlines provide details of the actions

they will take when carriage is refused, again most indicated in their interviews with us that they will provide either written or verbal explanations to passengers who have been refused boarding.

### **Services provided to PRMs**

#### *Requirements defined in law or other guidance*

4.46 Annex II of the Regulation requires that airlines provide the following assistance to pre-notified PRMs without additional charge:

- Carriage of recognised assistance dogs in the cabin, subject to national regulations.
- In addition to medical equipment, transport of up to two pieces of mobility equipment per disabled person or person with reduced mobility, including electric wheelchairs (subject to advance warning of 48 hours and to possible limitations of space on board the aircraft, and subject to the application of relevant legislation concerning dangerous goods.
- Communication of essential information concerning a flight in accessible formats.
- The making of all reasonable efforts to arrange seating to meet the needs of individuals with disability or reduced mobility on request and subject to safety requirements and availability.
- Assistance in moving to toilet facilities if required.
- Where a disabled person or person with reduced mobility is assisted by an accompanying person, the air carrier will make all reasonable efforts to give such person a seat next to the disabled person or person with reduced mobility.

4.47 This guidance is reflected in ECAC Document 30 and the UK DfT Code of Practice. The Code of Practice also suggests the following:

- Cabin crew should provide reasonable assistance with the stowage and retrieval of any hand baggage and/or mobility aid whilst in flight.
- Cabin crew should familiarise disabled passengers with any facilities on board designed particularly for disabled passengers. In the case of visually impaired people they should additionally offer more general familiarisation information and such other explanations as may be requested, such as about on-board shopping.
- Other printed material, such as dinner menus, should, where reasonably practicable, be accessible to blind and partially sighted people. Alternatively, cabin crew should explain the material.
- Where video, or similar systems, are used to communicate safety or emergency information, sub-titles should be included to supplement any audio commentary.
- Where possible, films and other programmes should be subtitled for deaf and hard of hearing passengers.
- In selecting catering supplies, air carriers should consider how “user-friendly” the packaging is for disabled people.
- Cabin crew should describe the food, including its location on the tray, to blind and partially sighted passengers.
- During the flight, cabin crew should check periodically to see if PRMs need any

assistance. In the case of those requiring the use of the on-board wheelchair (where one is installed), the staff must be trained in how to assist the passenger to and from the toilet by pushing the on-board wheelchair.

- Passengers' own portable oxygen concentrators should normally be allowed if battery powered, though air carriers will need to check the type of device to ensure it does not pose any technical problems.

4.48 The assistance provided by the case study airlines generally reflects this guidance, although not all provide comprehensive information on the service they provide to PRMs, particularly in terms of general assistance on-board the aircraft.

4.49 Again, there are some conflicts between Regulation 1107/2006 and the US guidance defined in rule 382, which would apply to some flights operated by EU carriers including all flights to/from the US. In particular, the US regulations do not define an upper limit on the number of items of mobility equipment that should be carried. Some additional requirements established by rule 382 include:

- Assistance in moving to and from seats;
- Assistance in preparation for eating;
- All new videos, DVDs, and other audiovisual displays played on aircraft for safety purposes should be high-contrast captioned;
- Passengers should be able to use moveable armrests seats where their condition requires it;
- Seats with additional legroom should be provided for passengers with fused or immobilised legs;
- PRMs should be permitted to use ventilator, respirator, continuous positive airway pressure machine, or portable oxygen concentrator (POC) of a kind equivalent to an FAA-approved POC on all aircraft originally designed to have a maximum passenger capacity of more than 19 seats, unless the equipment does not meet safety requirements or cannot be used or stowed safely in the cabin.

#### *Assistance animals*

4.50 Of all the case study airlines which refer to guide dogs, almost all accept them in the cabin free of charge, as required by Annex II of the Regulation, although carriage is also limited by national regulations regarding the transport of animals. However, we identified the following issues with the carriers' published policies:

- Alitalia – assistance dogs are only allowed in the cabin if space is available;
- Emirates – assistance animals can only be carried in the hold;
- TAP Portugal / Thomas Cook / Wizz Air – insufficient information regarding charging and carriage in cabin;
- TUI – assistance dogs carried for a nominal charge. It is not stated whether animals can be carried in the cabin; and
- Air France / EasyJet – not stated whether carriage is free of charge.

4.51 There is some variation in terms of the conditions applied to the carriage of guide dogs; some airlines require a carrying case, muzzle or harness, for example; Austrian,

EasyJet and TAP Portugal require certification of service animal status; and carriage in exit rows is often prohibited. Several airlines state limits on the number of guide dogs that can be carried on a given flight – AirBaltic, British Airways and Ryanair. Other airlines may enforce similar unpublished limits. Full details of airline policies are provided in Appendix B.

- 4.52 In most cases, the information provided by carriers on which routes service dogs can be carried on is quite vague. Two exceptions are British Airways and Iberia, which include detailed information and links to external websites; in the case of British Airways this is the UK DEFRA (Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs) guidance on the Pet Travel Scheme which governs the carriage of assistance animals on flights within and to/from the UK. This includes detailed guidance on travel preparation and a full list of approved routes. The guidance provided by Brussels Airlines is also reasonably detailed, and both Austrian and Thomas Cook provide links to EU and UK regulations respectively, but without detailed supporting explanations.

#### *Mobility equipment*

- 4.53 All the airlines reviewed accept wheelchairs, and in most cases airlines state that there is no charge for this. Three airlines allow at least certain types of personal wheelchair in the cabin, with carriage restricted to the hold or not stated in the remainder of cases. Spillable wet-cell batteries are not accepted by some airlines and where they are accepted this is usually subject to preparation. Where specified, most airlines policies on the carriage of wheelchairs are consistent with the upper limit of two items of mobility equipment per passenger specified in Annex II of the Regulation. Air Berlin is the only one of the case study airlines to define a limit below this.
- 4.54 Dangerous goods legislation is cited by many airlines as posing a limitation on the range of battery operated wheelchairs which may be carried. However, few airlines provide specific details of the laws and regulations which apply. Austrian does provide references to both Regulation (EC) No 820/2008 and the IATA Dangerous Goods Regulations, the latter accessible via an external link; and Delta provides a link to the US Department of Transportation's Safe Travel information, which provides information to passengers on the carriage of batteries. The Thomas Cook and TUI websites include a reference to the IATA Dangerous Goods Regulations, but without external links. It is worth noting that, although only a fraction of the case study airlines provide this level of detail on their PRM web pages, many may provide such information in their luggage regulations or elsewhere in the Conditions of Carriage.
- 4.55 Under Article 12 airlines are required to compensate for losses or damage to mobility equipment, up to the limits specified by national and international law, which effectively means the limits defined in the Montreal Convention. This limits any compensation to 1131 SDR (approximately €1260), which would be inadequate for technologically advanced wheelchairs which can cost up to €20,000. However, several airlines have indicated that these limits would be waived in practice, partly to avoid bad publicity associated with provision of insufficient compensation, and also because it is generally agreed that such events are rare. Air France, Iberia, KLM, TAROM, Thomas Cook and TUI informed us that they compensate passengers for the full value of the equipment; with TUI also indicating that all UK airlines have agreed to waive



the Montreal limits. In contrast, one PRM organisation informed us that it was aware of cases where airlines had not waived the limits.

- 4.56 Almost all stakeholders stated that the Regulation had made no impact on loss or damage to mobility equipment, both in terms of the number of incidents and levels of compensation for loss or damage; although some felt that the training requirements imposed by the Regulation has resulted in improved handling procedures.

#### *Medical equipment*

- 4.57 Oxygen is available on most of the case study airlines, and can either be provided by the airline or the passenger. Where stated, charges range from €100 (Ryanair / Thomas Cook) to €335 (SAS intercontinental flights). Wizzair is the only exception: the airline accepts passengers who need oxygen with medical certification, but does not provide additional oxygen or allow passengers to bring their own onboard. Such restrictions appear to equate to a complete ban on PRMs requiring oxygen.
- 4.58 Policies on the carriage of stretchers (where stated) tend to be based on aeroplane size, with several operators not accepting stretchers on the smaller planes in their fleet. Most low cost carriers including easyJet, Ryanair, Thomas Cook and Wizzair prohibit carriage of stretchers entirely.

#### *Accessible information*

- 4.59 Only 6 airlines specify the types of accessible information provided for PRMs. This tends to be safety-related, although may also include Braille seat numbers and verbally describing food-related information.

#### *Seating*

- 4.60 Austrian, British Airways, Delta and KLM are the only case study airlines to state on their web pages that PRMs can be allocated any seat most appropriate to their needs, subject to safety regulations restricting access to exit row seats. Where most other airlines discuss their PRM seating policy this is usually in terms of restrictions, again the most frequent being not allowing PRMs to be seated in exit rows. Many airlines provide seats with retractable armrests, although normally only a proportion of the seats on an aircraft are provided with this feature (KLM is the only airline to state that all seats have moveable armrests). British Airways state that passengers will be allocated a bulkhead seat when requested, provided that this is not already allocated to another PRM. Similarly, Delta and Lufthansa also state that customers with service animals (or immobilised legs in the case of Delta) are entitled to bulkhead seats. Again, only a proportion of the airlines (14 out of 21) provide any of this kind of information, so it is unclear what the other case study airlines offer. The results of our analysis are shown in Appendix Table A.2.
- 4.61 Ryanair requires PRMs to sit in window seats, so that they do not impede the evacuation of other passengers, although this could result in a difficult or uncomfortable transfer to and from the seat for some passengers. Other airlines may adopt similar policies which we were not informed about. Iberia informed us that, although they recommend that PRMs are accommodated in window seats, through

their online booking systems PRMs are able to choose any seat, with the exception of emergency exit rows.

- 4.62 Several airlines prohibit PRMs from being seated in exit rows ‘for safety reasons’, but generally do not make a specific reference to the legal basis for this, which in most cases would be EU-OPS1. Air Berlin, Delta and Ryanair are the only airlines to provide details of the regulations on which this prohibition is based – in the case of Delta this is the Exit Seat Regulation, 14 CFR 121.585; and for Air Berlin and Ryanair EU/JAR-OPS 1.260. Thomas Cook and TUI make more vague references to UK CAA regulations as a justification for their seating restrictions.

*Restrictions on service*

- 4.63 12 of the case study airlines provide an indication of the level of assistance in-flight provided to PRMs, although mostly in terms of the assistance staff are unable to provide. This generally includes feeding, lifting passengers, administering medication and assisting in personal hygiene or toilet functions. The level of assistance which is provided is generally limited to preparation for eating, assistance in moving around the aircraft and stowing and retrieving luggage.

**Pre-notification of requirements**

*Requirements defined in law or other guidance*

- 4.64 Article 6(1) of the Regulation requires that airlines take all measures necessary to ensure that they are able to receive PRM assistance requests via all normal points of sale. Articles 6(2) and 6(3) state that, where this information is received more than 48 hours before departure it should be transmitted to the relevant airports no later than 36 hours before the flight departs. Requests received after 48 hours should be communicated at the earliest opportunity. Article 6(4) requires that, after departure of a flight, airlines inform the destination airport (if within the EU) of the number of disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility on that flight requiring assistance, and the nature of the assistance required.

*Methods by which passengers can pre-notify*

- 4.65 In addition to the requirements of Article 6(1), the Recitals of the Regulation state that all essential information provided to air passengers should be provided “in at least the same languages as the information made available to other passengers”. Several airlines do not meet this standard, although the Recitals are in themselves not binding.
- 4.66 Many of the major airlines provide offices and contact telephone numbers in a number of countries where the official language may not be one of the languages in which the airline website is offered. In most cases it is not possible to assess the languages offered by staff in these offices, and if the website is not offered in this language passengers may in any case have difficulty finding the contact for their country. For these reasons the language category is based on the website languages offered rather than the geographical spread of airline offices.
- 4.67 Some NEBs highlighted the use of premium rate special assistance telephone numbers as being an issue. Our research indicates that many carriers use phone numbers that do

charge, although rates are usually moderate, with the following exceptions:

- Some carriers, for example AirBaltic, provide international numbers only.
- Ryanair provides national phone numbers in most Member States but the rates in some States are high – for example, €0.50 per minute in Belgium
- Brussels Airlines provides (for calls from the UK) either a Belgian telephone number, or the UK reservations centre which charges £0.40 (€0.44) per minute, although this number centre deals with all reservations, and not just PRM assistance requests.
- SAS provides (for calls from the UK) a UK reservations number, which charges £0.25 (€0.28) per minute, although again this is not PRM-specific.

4.68 Each of these airlines accept notifications online, so passengers could theoretically avoid payment of these charges. However, we are not able to comment on the accessibility of these systems or whether they enable collection of all of the information that would be required in each case – some passengers may still need to use the telephone numbers for these reasons.

4.69 The notification options available to PRMs for the 21 case study airlines are shown in Table 4.4. It should be noted that options presented during the booking process could only be examined up to the point of payment for tickets. Some airlines may provide a notification option after payment has been made, which we would not have identified.

**TABLE 4.4 OPTIONS TO NOTIFY CARRIERS OF REQUIREMENTS**

<b>Airline</b>	<b>Options provided</b>	<b>Differences between languages of PRM info and main website</b>	<b>Languages for phone calls</b>
Aegean Airlines	Telephone	None	Not stated
Air Berlin	Telephone	None	Not stated
Air France	During online booking process Email / website Telephone	Main site in 15 languages PRM info in 10 languages	Not stated
AirBaltic	Telephone	None	Not stated
Alitalia	Telephone	Main site in 8 languages PRM info in 6 languages	Not stated
Austrian	Email / website Fax	Main site in 22 languages PRM info in 2 languages	Not applicable
British Airways	During online booking process Email / website Telephone	None	Not stated
Brussels Airlines	Email / website Telephone	None	Not stated
Delta	Telephone	None	Not stated
EasyJet	During online booking process Email / website Telephone	None	Telephone numbers only accessible after logging into personal account
Emirates	Email / website Telephone	None	Not stated
Iberia	During online booking process	None	Not applicable
KLM	Email / website Telephone	Main site in 15 languages PRM info in 9 languages	Not stated
Lufthansa	Email / website Telephone	None	Not stated
Ryanair	During online booking process Telephone	None	English French Italian Spanish
SAS	During online booking process Email / website Telephone	Main site in 15 languages PRM info in 12 languages	Not stated
TAP Portugal	Telephone	Main site in 9 languages PRM info in 7 languages	Not stated

Airline	Options provided	Differences between languages of PRM info and main website	Languages for phone calls
TAROM	During online booking process	None	Not applicable
Thomas Cook	During online booking process Telephone	None	Not stated
TUI (Thomsonfly)	Telephone	None	Not stated
Wizzair	During online booking process Telephone	None	Bulgarian Czech English French German Hungarian Italian Polish Romanian Ukrainian

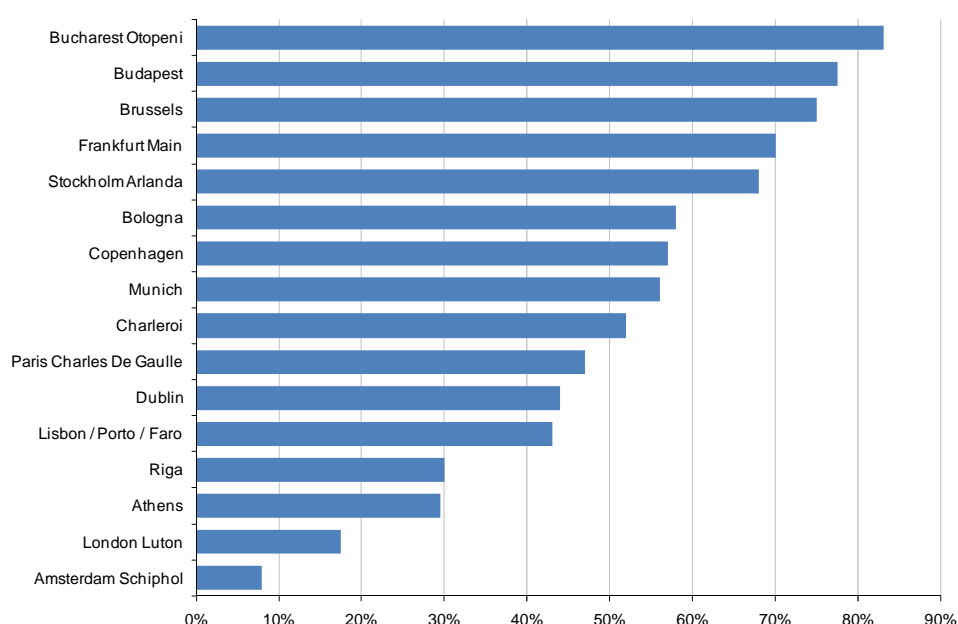
*Process for collection and transmission of requests*

- 4.70 Although many case study airlines enable PRMs to make special assistance requests online, this often has to be supplemented by a telephone call to the airline to establish the PRM's exact requirements. Air France informed us that, when notifying online, a 'pop up' window will appear which informs the passenger that they will be contacted by the airline to clarify the assistance required. Similarly, KLM stated that, although they do provide an online notification option, the passenger would still need to call the airline to establish their exact requirements.
- 4.71 The standard procedure for transmitting assistance requests to the relevant airports is the PAL (Passenger Assistance List), which under Article 6(2) should be sent 36 hours before departure. Additional requests received after this time can be included in the CAL (Change Assistance List) in line with the requirements of Article 6(3). Most requests are transmitted using the standard special assistance codes IATA codes, although some airlines their own codes.
- 4.72 This information is supported by Passenger Service Messages (PSM) which are automatically generated by all special assistance requests recorded on the Passenger Name List of a given flight (thus complying with Article 6(4) of the Regulation). PSM messages are generated automatically on departure from the origin airport, so can be particularly useful for airports in relation to long haul flights, where there is sufficient time to mobilise staff and equipment before the aircraft arrives. Conversely, PRM messages are of less use in relation to short haul flights, as staffing arrangements cannot be so easily amended at short notice.

### Effectiveness of process

- 4.73 All of the case study airlines interviewed use the standard PAL / CAL / PSM system, although Ryanair informed us that they also have their own system of codes and notifications (discussed in section 3 above).
- 4.74 Rates of pre-notification vary substantially, as shown in Figure 4.2. It should be noted that the definition of pre-booked assistance may vary between airports – for example Brussels Charleroi airport informed us that its figures for pre-notification includes notification by PSM message, which would not be received prior to the 36 hours specified by the Regulation. A number of other airports did not clarify their definition of pre-notification, including Bucharest and Budapest, which may explain why the percentages here are particularly high.

**FIGURE 4.2 PRE-NOTIFICATION RATES BY AIRPORT**



- 4.75 There a number of possible explanations for both the wide divergence of pre-notification rates, and the particularly low values observed at some airports. These include:
- **Passenger factors**, e.g. not being aware of the pre-notification requirement, abuse of the system or not realising that they would need assistance until arriving at the airport;
  - **Airline factors**, e.g. not providing sufficient or appropriate means for passengers to pre-notify of their requirements, or failing to transmit assistance requests to airports within the time limits specified in the Regulation;
  - **Other factors** – primarily communication and other technological failures.
- 4.76 Stakeholder views on the possible explanations for pre-notification issues are explored in the relevant section below.

## Complaints to airlines

### *Airline processes for handling complaints*

- 4.77 Most of the case study airlines have dedicated complaint forms and departments for the handling of complaints. Complaints regarding the Regulation do not necessarily require specialised procedures – both easyJet and Ryanair stated that their process for handling complaints was the same as for Regulation 261/2004, and KLM reported that PRM complaints were handled in the same way as all others. The only differences cited by the airlines were that, in the case of easyJet, complaints regarding refusal of boarding were escalated to head office; and KLM informed us that the airline’s medical department may need to be involved in more complex cases. Ryanair also informed us that they will amend standard procedures for receipt of complaints where required, for example if a customer needs to complain by phone rather than in writing. KLM stated that to date they have only received complaints by phone, email or letter; and none in Braille / audio tape or other accessible formats.
- 4.78 Delta reported a more complex procedure, shaped primarily by the requirements of rule 382. The airline is required to designate Complaints Resolution Officials, responsible for providing a ‘dispositive response’ to customer complaints of an alleged violation, summarising the facts and explaining the airline’s determination of the issue. If the complaint relates to the airline’s policy and not a specific infringement the airline is still responsible for providing a full and final response and the reasons for its determination.
- 4.79 The stated time taken by airlines to respond to complaints is variable, and is not related to the airline type or business model.
- 4.80 Air France, SAS, TAP Portugal reported that they would (at least in theory) be able to accept complaints in any of the languages of the countries which they serve and/or have offices. Aegean Airlines, Ryanair and TAROM reported a more restricted range – despite its destinations including Albania, Egypt, Israel, Serbia, Spain and Turkey, Aegean Airlines stated that it can only accept complaints in Greek, English, German, French and Italian. Likewise, despite both Ryanair and TAROM operating services to 25 countries, the range of languages in which they will accept complaints is limited. Ryanair is only able to accept complaints in English, German, French, Spanish and Italian; and TAROM will only process complaints in Romanian, English, French, German, Spanish and Italian. Thomas Cook stated that, to date, they have only received complaints in English, although they do have a retainer with a language translation service which can be used if required.

### *Number of complaints received*

- 4.81 Only TAROM and Thomas Cook were able to provide us with PRM complaint statistics. TAROM reported so far receiving no complaints from PRMs; Thomas Cook received 51 complaints in each of 2008 and 2009.

## Cost of complying with the Regulation

- 4.82 The main compliance cost identified by airlines was the airport PRM charge. As discussed in section 3 above, several airlines (mostly low cost and charter carriers)

expressed dissatisfaction with the level of these charges; in contrast, Air France stated that it did not consider the PRM charge to be a real cost, as it was passed directly to passengers. Another legacy carrier stated that the Regulation did not generate any additional costs for it, as it was already compliant with the (generally more onerous) requirements of rule 382.

- 4.83 An issue raised by Air Berlin and TUI related to the additional costs likely to be associated with providing a cost-neutral special assistance telephone number. The German NEB considers that the special assistance helpline should be free, and the UK DfT Code of Practice also suggests that cost-neutral telephone numbers should be provided for PRMs, which TUI accommodates by requesting that the special assistance helpline calls the passenger back. However, the costs associated with telephone assistance calls are likely to be relatively small, particularly in relation to the staffing costs associated with providing a call centre.
- 4.84 TUI also highlighted the initial training costs incurred by the Regulation, which have now diminished as the focus shifts to more limited refresher training where required.

### **Training**

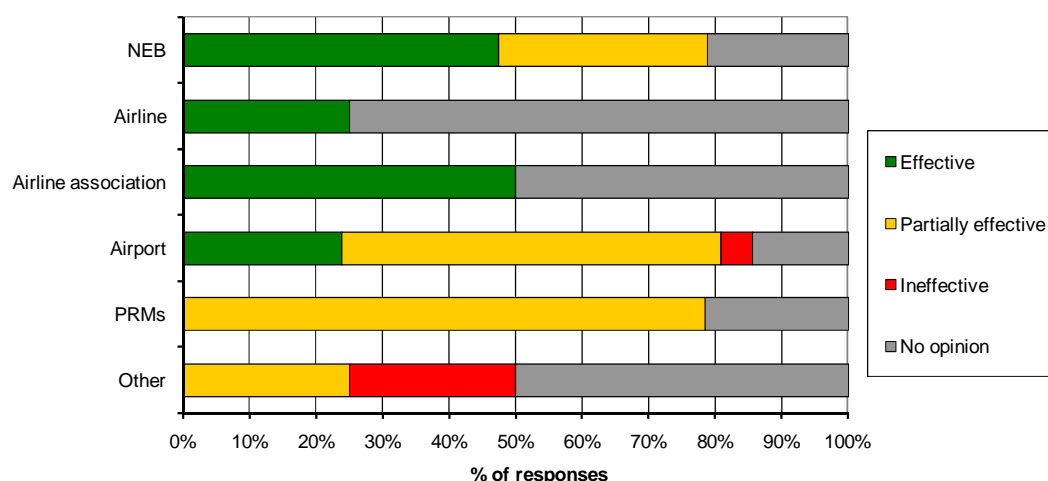
- 4.85 Under Article 11 airlines are required to:
- Ensure that all staff (including those employed by sub-contractors) providing direct assistance to PRMs, have knowledge of how to meet the needs of these persons;
  - Provide disability-equality and disability-awareness training to all staff working at airports dealing directly with the travelling public;
  - Ensure that, upon recruitment, all new employees attend disability-related training and that personnel receive refresher training courses when appropriate.
- 4.86 Most of the case study airlines were able to demonstrate compliance with the training criteria set out in Article 11, although the carriers informed us that training was restricted to passenger-facing staff only. Some examples of the training provided to airline staff are given below.
- Major European network carrier: 2.5 hours theory (e.g. responsibilities under the Regulation, how to approach PRMs) and practical (e.g. guiding blind PRMs, lifting to and from wheelchairs) training for crew; 1.5 hours theory for all other passenger-facing personnel.
  - US network carrier: annual recurrent training is provided to all Complaint Resolution Officers (CROs); required under 14 CFR Part 382 to ensure effective implementation and to resolve passengers' problems as quickly as possible).
  - European low cost carrier: initial and refresher cabin crew training includes PRM training, and the airline has requested that this training should be a requirement in contracts with ground handling staff.
  - European low cost carrier: basic training in sign language is included.
- 4.87 Airlines operating to the US and therefore already compliant with rule 382 stated that few if any changes to their existing training programmes were required to comply with the Regulation.



### Stakeholder views on effectiveness of implementation by airlines

- 4.88 Figure 4.3 summarises stakeholder views on the effectiveness of the implementation of the Regulation by airlines. Although many stakeholders did not express an opinion on this, relatively few stakeholders were dissatisfied. A summary of views of each stakeholder group is given below.

**FIGURE 4.3 STAKEHOLDER VIEWS: AIRLINES**



#### Airlines and airline associations

- 4.89 Unsurprisingly, the majority of airlines did not express an opinion on their own effectiveness in implementing the Regulation, and none felt that implementation was ineffective. Similarly, airline associations either expressed no opinion, or stated that implementation by their members was effective. ELFAA felt that all its members were complying and not refusing carriage. AEA was also generally satisfied that its members were not discriminating against PRMs in any way, but did suggest that there may be issues around the interpretation of the safety rules governing embarkation by PRMs, leading to inconsistencies between its members.

#### Airports

- 4.90 Pre-notification was the most frequently cited issue raised by the airports, an issue discussed separately below. The second most common theme emerging across several airports was the alleged non-payment of PRM charges by airlines.
- 4.91 Alongside the non-payment issue ACI highlighted several other issues relating to agreement of the PRM charges at airports. These included trying to avoid or reduce the charge, for example by requiring excessive levels of detail on the costs of PRM assistance at airports after the tender process had been completed, and refusing to cooperate with consultation meetings. Two airports with high proportions of low cost carrier traffic informed us that some carriers sought to specify the lowest possible levels of service in order to minimise PRM charges.

#### NEBs

- 4.92 The majority of NEBs informed us that compliance by airlines was satisfactory.

Although some issues were raised no common themes emerged, suggesting that any issues may be somewhat isolated. The NEBs which stated that implementation by airlines was partially effective were:

- France (DGAC): lack of information, and limited consistency in policies between airlines.
- Germany (BMBVS): use of premium rate telephone numbers by airlines.
- Portugal (INAC): some issues with the explanations provided for refusal of carriage.
- Spain (AESA): notification can incur additional costs for the passenger, airline safety rules are sometimes insufficient, and some airlines claim that passengers with mobility equipment are taking two seats, and charge for this.
- Sweden (CAA): issues around pre-notification (see section below).
- UK (CAA / EHRC / CCNI): lack of consistency in criteria for refusal of carriage. Some airlines charge for reserving specific seats.

#### *PRM organisations*

- 4.93 Satisfaction with implementation by airlines was generally lower among the PRM organisations, although none of the stakeholders informed us that airlines were significantly non-compliant with the Regulation. Inconsistencies in airline policies, accessibility of websites and the level of information provided by airlines emerged as the most frequently cited issues – *Danske Handicaporganisationer* (DH) suggested that less than 5% of airlines' websites were accessible. Two organisations also indicated that they had not seen any PRM safety rules published online.
- 4.94 Two organisations highlighted issues with medical clearance – this was felt to be requested too frequently, and that an unnecessary level of information was being requested by some airlines. Other issues raised included insufficient training, issues with handling of mobility equipment, seating, and inaccessibility of airport check-in systems. Guide Dogs reported instances where flight crew had not reported allergies which then prevented a passengers with guide dogs from flying, or had not checked that the dog was secure prior to take-off or landing. It was felt that policies of refusing boarding to unaccompanied blind passengers on the basis that they could not evacuate was misguided, given that they were accustomed to not being able to see and could therefore cope more easily in smoky conditions.

- 4.95 These views were echoed by the European Blind Union (EBU) and the European Disability Forum (EDF). In addition, EBU emphasised continuing difference in the handling of PRM travel between carriers, and felt that booking processes were discriminatory against those without access to a computer (we were informed that requesting assistance by phone can take several hours). The UK PRM organisation informed us that only 30% of the disabled population are online, which would increase this discrimination. EDF also noted that some airlines still only paid up to the Montreal Convention limits in cases of damage or loss of mobility equipment; that insurance for mobility equipment was extremely difficult to obtain; and that establishing liability for damage can be very complex. EDF also believe that the enforcement of numerical limits on PRMs is inappropriate and discriminatory, and that it is unacceptable for carriers to require passengers to be accompanied on self-reliance criteria.
- 4.96 EDF provided us with some examples of discrimination which had been reported to them. Some examples relating to treatment on-board the aircraft include:
- A blind passenger was not given any safety information in an accessible way, and the cabin crew were unaware of how to assist the passenger when serving a meal, or to communicate with the passenger more generally.
  - A passenger was not allowed to check-in online, due to him using a wheelchair. Once on the aircraft he was forced to sit in a window seat at the back of the plane, which he found both discriminatory and difficult, as being tetraplegic meant that it was not easy to access the seat, or to receive assistance in an emergency.
  - A passenger was informed that he had to pay extra to bring his prosthetic legs when going on holiday.
  - A wheelchair user tried to book a ticket with an airline but noticed on their website that it was clearly indicated that they do not accept passengers using wheelchairs.
  - A blind couple travelling with their baby were told that in order to be allowed to travel, they needed to bring an accompanying person, as it was not considered safe that the couple were responsible for their baby on board.
  - A blind passenger was asked by a member of cabin crew in a rude manner whether she really was entirely blind.

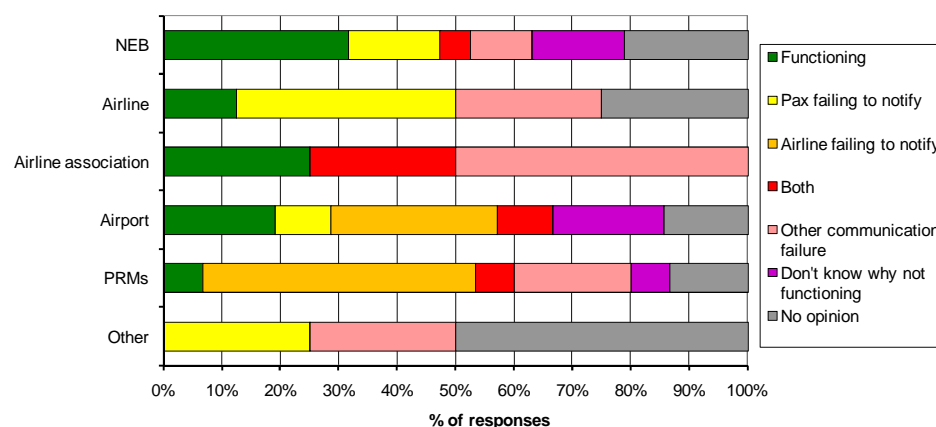
#### *Other organisations*

- 4.97 Key issues raised by other organisations were the application by some carriers of limits on the numbers of PRMs that could be carried, and that these limits could be further reduced based solely on arbitrary decisions by pilots. In addition, ECAC felt that information should be simplified for passengers with learning disabilities. However, ECTAA highlighted the improvements which airlines, tour operators and travel agents had made to their websites and booking procedures to enhance PRM travel.

## Stakeholder views on effectiveness of pre-notification systems

4.98 Figure 4.4 shows stakeholder views on the effectiveness of the pre-notification system and reasons cited for low rates of notification. Most stakeholders believed that this system was not functioning well, although the explanations cited by each stakeholder group vary.

**FIGURE 4.4 STAKEHOLDER VIEWS: PRE-NOTIFICATION**



4.99 The NEBs were generally the most optimistic about how the pre-notification system was working, with fewer than half identifying problems. Where they did express a view on the cause of pre-notification issues it was most commonly that the passenger was the cause. The Irish NEB suggested that awareness of the Regulation and the need to pre-notify to receive assistance was low amongst PRMs who were not members of representative groups. Most of the PRM groups felt that the airlines were the primary cause of problems with the pre-notification system, for a variety of reasons:

- Poor design and accessibility of airline websites makes it difficult for passengers to pre-notify;
- Airlines have been unwilling to make the significant investments required to ensure an effective system; and
- Airlines have been ineffective at transmitting special requests (e.g. dietary needs) between staff and departments.

4.100 The majority of airlines believed that the main issue in terms of pre-notification was that passengers were themselves failing to notify of their assistance needs. Several airlines and airports suggested a possible explanation as being that, although they may not normally consider themselves as being in need of special assistance, some travellers (especially infrequent flyers and the elderly) may find they need this once in the airport and having to walk long distances to reach their flight. Low rates of pre-notification were also attributed partly to abuse of the system, as it was believed that 'genuine' PRMs would usually pre-notify.

4.101 However, the majority of airports stated that the most significant problem was failure by airlines to pass on notifications, or erroneous notifications. Several highlighted the large differences in pre-notification rates between airlines: some airlines are able to achieve high rates of pre-notification (60-80%) whereas others have very low rates

(10% or less). Non-EU airlines were often stated to be worse, with flights from North Africa and India often cited as being particularly problematic, both in terms of the low levels of pre-notification and the high numbers of PRMs on these flights. Aéroports de Paris stated that passengers travelling from some north African airports would be charged for assistance if pre-notifying, even though the European airport provided assistance free of charge. US flights also pose difficulties for airports as US carriers are generally not allowed, under rule 382, to request details of assistance requirements in advance; however, the relative length of these flights means that PSM messages are usually received 7-10 hours in advance of arrival.

- 4.102 Several airports also indicated that charter carriers had particularly low rates of pre-notification. This was attributed by some carriers to low rates of notification by travel agents – in many cases agents may have an incomplete knowledge of the full range of wheelchair codes, often simply observing that the passenger is using a wheelchair and then allocating the WCHR special assistance code.
- 4.103 Communication failures were also cited by a number of stakeholders, sometimes a result of the confusion generated by the IATA special assistance codes themselves, particularly unnecessary requests for wheelchairs. Although technological failures may have been a problem when the Regulation was first implemented, these did not emerge as a significant current issue.

### Conclusions

- 4.104 The main obligation that the Regulation places on carriers is that it prohibits refusal of carriage of PRMs, unless this is necessary to meet national or international safety rules or requirements imposed by the carrier's licensing authority, or is physically impossible due to the size of the aircraft or its doors. We found that most carriers comply with this, although some make carriage of PRMs conditional on advance notification, which does not appear to be consistent with the Regulation. In addition, a small number of carriers impose requirements for medical clearance which appear to be excessively onerous.
- 4.105 There are significant differences in policies relating to carriage of PRMs between carriers – even between carriers with similar aircraft types and operational models. The most significant difference is that some carriers impose a numerical limit on the number of PRMs that can be carried on a given aircraft. These can be quite low: some carriers have limits of 2-4 PRMs on a standard single-aisle aircraft such as an Airbus 319. In most cases, these requirements are defined in carriers' Flight Operations Manuals, which have to be approved by the relevant licensing authority; often, although not always, this is the same organisation that has been designated as the NEB. In some cases the PRM limits are required by the licensing authority, but in most cases, they are proposed by the carrier and approved by the authority. Whilst the rationale for these limits is safety, there does not seem to be an evidence base for them, and they are specifically prohibited by the equivalent US regulation on carriage of PRMs (14 CFR part 382).

- 4.106 The Regulation also allows carriers to require that PRMs be accompanied, subject to the same safety-based criteria. We found that a number of carriers require PRMs to be accompanied where they are not ‘self-reliant’, which can mean that the PRM cannot (for example) eat unaided. In our view this may be an infringement of the Regulation because there is no direct link to safety; for those carriers that fly to the US, it is also an explicit breach of the US PRM rules. Other carriers require PRMs to be accompanied where they are not self-reliant **and** this has a safety impact (for example, if the PRM could not exit the aircraft unaided in an emergency); this is consistent with the Regulation.
- 4.107 The Regulation also requires carriers to publish safety rules relating to the carriage of PRMs, although it does not specifically state what issues these safety rules should cover. We found that carriers all published some PRM-related information but in some cases there appeared to be significant omissions from this information.
- 4.108 Annex II of the Regulation sets out various requirements for services which have to be provided to PRMs by carriers. Evidence for the extent to which this is provided is limited, and restricts a fair assessment of compliance with these requirements. There is however sufficient evidence to conclude that the vast majority of case study airlines are complying with the requirement to carry up to two items of mobility equipment free of charge. Some PRM representative groups were critical of the effectiveness of airlines in implementing the Regulation, and we were informed of some particularly bad passenger experiences, but it is difficult to assess how common such occurrences are.

## 5. ENFORCEMENT AND COMPLAINT HANDLING BY NEBS

### Introduction

5.1 This section summarises the complaint handling and enforcement process undertaken by National Enforcement Bodies (NEBs). We set out the following information:

- an overview of the NEBs, describing the types of organisations they are and the resources they have available;
- the legal basis for complaint handling and enforcement in each State;
- statistics for the number of complaints received, the nature of the complaints, and the outcomes, and for sanctions that have been issued;
- the typical process for complaint handling and enforcement in each State, and outline a number of common issues and difficulties;
- a summary of the activities of NEBs to monitor the implementation of the Regulation; and
- an overview of other activities undertaken by NEBs in relation to the Regulation, such as interactions with other stakeholders and promotional activity.

5.2 Most of the information within this section is provided for the NEBs in all Member States. The detailed information relating to the complaint handling and enforcement process, and to monitoring and other activities undertaken by the NEB, has been collected for the case study States only. Further detail on complaint handling and enforcement in the 16 case study States is provided in the case studies, in Appendix C.

### Requirements of the Regulation relating to States and NEBs

5.3 The Regulation requires each Member State to designate a National Enforcement Body (NEB) responsible for the enforcement of the Regulation regarding flights departing from or arriving at airports within its territory, and to inform the Commission of this designation. This body is required to ensure that the rights of PRMs are respected, and in particular that the quality standards defined by Article 9(1) (see 3.53) are respected. It must also ensure that the provisions of Article 8 are respected. More than one body may be designated. To allow NEBs to enforce the Regulation, Member States must set out penalties for infringements of the Regulation, which must be effective, proportionate and dissuasive.

5.4 These bodies must also accept complaints from PRMs where they are dissatisfied with the service they have received under the Regulation and have been unable to obtain satisfaction by complaining directly to the service provider. If a body receives a complaint for which a body in another State is competent, it must forward the complaint to the other NEB. Other bodies may be designated specifically for the purpose of receiving complaints.

5.5 Member States should also inform PRMs about their rights under the Regulation, and the possibility of complaint to the bodies above.

## Overview of the NEBs

- 5.6 Most of the NEBs (68%) are Civil Aviation Authorities. The other NEBs are government departments, independent statutory bodies or consumer protection authorities. Some Member States have designated more than one NEB. In these States, the responsibilities of the NEBs are divided in two ways:
- according to which type of organisation the enforcement relates to: in France, there are separate bodies for complaints handling and enforcement relating to airlines and airports, and to tour operators; and
  - according to task: in the UK, there are separate NEBs for complaints handling and for enforcement.
- 5.7 In Belgium, there are three NEBs and an additional body responsible for handling complaints; the case of Belgium is unique, as the Flemish- and French-speaking regions are administered separately. For some of the States, there is a body which acts as the NEB but which has not yet been explicitly designated (see 5.13).
- 5.8 No States have designated a separate body for the enforcement of Article 8.
- 5.9 Table 5.1 lists the NEBs, the nature of the organisation, and where there is more than one NEB in a State, the role of each organisation. The table is divided into case study and non-case study States.

**TABLE 5.1 ENFORCEMENT BODIES**

State	Enforcement Body	Nature of organisation	Role
Belgium	Belgian CAA	CAA	Enforcement and sanctions
	Departement Mobiliteit en Openbare Werken	Regional government department	Enforcement and sanctions
	Service public de Wallonie, direction générale opérationnelle de la mobilité et des voies hydrauliques	Regional government department	Enforcement and sanctions
	Passenger Rights Department of Federal Public Service of Mobility and Transport	Federal government department	Complaints handling
Denmark	Statens Luftfartsvæsen (SLV)	CAA	-
France	Direction Générale de l'Aviation Civile (DGAC)	CAA	Airlines and airports
	Ministry of Economy, Industry and Labour, Division on Competition, Industry and Services	Government department	Tour operators
Germany	Luftfahrts-Bundesamt (LBA)	CAA	-
Greece	Hellenic Civil Aviation Authority (HCAA): Airports Division	CAA	Airports
	Hellenic Civil Aviation Authority (HCAA): Air Transport Economics	CAA	Airlines and tour operators



Hungary	Equal Treatment Authority (ETA)	Independent statutory body	Complaint handling, enforcement relating to PRM complaints
	National Transport Authority Directorate for Aviation (NTA)	CAA	Other enforcement
Ireland	Commission for Aviation Regulation	Independent economic regulator	-
Italy	Ente Nazionale Aviazione Civile (ENAC)	CAA	-
Latvia	CAA, Aircraft Operations Division	CAA	-
Netherlands	Transport and Water Management Inspectorate (IVW)	CAA	-
Poland	Civil Aviation Office (CAO) Commission on Passengers' Rights	CAA	-
Portugal	National Institute for Civil Aviation (INAC)	CAA	-
Romania	Autoritatea Națională pentru Persoanele cu Handicap (ANPH)	Independent statutory body	All Articles except 8
	Autoritatea Aeronautică Civilă Română (AACR)	CAA	Article 8
Spain	Agencia Estatal de Seguridad Aérea (AESA)	CAA	-
Sweden	Swedish Transport Agency, Civil Aviation Department	CAA	-
UK	CAA	CAA	Enforcement
	EHRC	Independent statutory body	Complaints handling in UK except Northern Ireland
	CCNI	Consumer protection authority	Complaints handling in Northern Ireland
Austria	Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology	CAA	-
Bulgaria	CAA	CAA	-
Cyprus	Department of Civil Aviation	CAA	-
Czech Republic	Civil Aviation Authority	CAA	-
Estonia	Consumer Protection Board	Consumer protection authority	-
Finland	Finnish Transport Safety Agency	CAA	-
Lithuania	Civil Aviation Administration	CAA	-
Luxembourg	Direction de l'Aviation Civile	CAA	-
Malta	Civil Aviation Directorate	CAA	-
Slovak Republic	Slovak Trade Inspectorate	Consumer protection authority	Consumer protection
	Civil Aviation Authority	CAA	Safety aspects
	Ministry of Transport, Post and	Government	Implementation, including airline

	Telecommunications	department	conditions of carriage and aspects of airport operations
Slovenia	Civil Aviation Directorate	CAA	-

- 5.10 Most of the bodies designated as NEBs under Regulation 1107/2006 are also designated as NEBs under Regulation 261/2004. The States which have different NEBs are shown in Table 5.2.

**TABLE 5.2 STATES WHERE NEBS ARE DIFFERENT UNDER REGULATIONS 1107/2006 AND 261/2004**

State	NEB(s) under Regulation 1107/2006	NEB(s) under Regulation 261/2004
Finland	Finnish Transport Safety Agency	Consumer Ombudsman & Agency
		Consumer Disputes Board
		Finnish Civil Aviation Authority
Hungary	Equal Treatment Authority (ETA)	Hungarian Authority for Consumer Protection
	National Transport Authority Directorate for Aviation (NTA)	National Transport Authority Directorate for Aviation
Latvia	CAA, Aircraft Operations Division	Consumer Rights Protection Centre
Romania	Autoritatea Națională pentru Persoanele cu Handicap (ANPH)	National Authority for Consumer Protection
	Autoritatea Aeronautică Civilă Română (AACR)	
Slovak Republic	Slovak Trade Inspectorate	Slovak Trade Inspectorate
	Civil Aviation Authority	
	Ministry of Transport, Post and Telecommunications	
Sweden	Swedish Transport Agency, Civil Aviation Department	Konsumentverket
		Allmänna reklamationsnämndens
UK	CAA	CAA
	EHRC	Air Transport Users Council
	CCNI	

- 5.11 Only BCAA is shown as a notified NEB for Belgium in the list published by the Commission. As a result, we were not made aware of the existence of the other Belgian NEBs until our interview with BCAA, and therefore did not seek responses from them; in addition, at the time of our research for this project, BCAA had not held meetings with the other regional departments. For these reasons, we therefore have only limited information on their operations, and the data relating to Belgian NEBs in this report refers only to BCAA.

*Separation of regulation from service provision*

- 5.12 There is no requirement in the Regulation that the NEB be independent from service providers. However, in our view, it is inappropriate for the NEB also to be a service provider, as it would be difficult for it to act independently in undertaking

enforcement in relation to an infringement that it was itself committing. The only case we have identified where an NEB is also a service provider is the Greek NEB, HCAA, which is also the operator of the regional airports in Greece. This is a significant issue because, as identified in section 4 above, the most significant failure to implement the Regulation that we have identified is that it has not been implemented at the HCAA airports.

### Legal basis for complaint handling and enforcement

5.13 Most Member States have complied with the obligations set out in Articles 14 and 16 to designate an NEB and introduce sanctions into national law, with the exception of:

- **Poland:** No sanctions have yet been introduced; a proposed amendment which includes fines is before the Polish parliament, but has not yet been passed.
- **Slovenia:** As yet no body has been designated, and no sanctions have been introduced.
- **Spain:** Enforcement relies on a law which predates the Regulation and hence does not refer explicitly to it. As a result, sanctions for infringements of Regulation 261/2004 (which have an equivalent legal basis) have been challenged by airlines. In most cases, the courts have upheld the right of the NEB to impose sanctions, but cases have not as yet reached the Supreme Court, and in one case a court has ruled that the NEB was not competent to impose sanctions. This is discussed in detail in the case study for Spain (appendix C).
- **Sweden:** No sanctions have yet been introduced; a proposed amendment which includes fines is before the Swedish parliament, but has not yet been passed. The proposed amendment does not define the levels of fines.

5.14 There are a number of States where sanctions have not been introduced for all potential infringements of the Regulation:

- Bulgaria, which does not define penalties for Article 8;
- Estonia, where sanctions have only been introduced for carriers;
- Luxembourg, which only defines explicit fines for Article 4; and
- Romania, where the law defining responsibilities makes the CAA responsible for enforcing compliance with Article 8, but does not endow it with the powers to do so.

5.15 In several Member States, enforcement is dependent on more than one law; for example, the law defining how the NEB must operate and the procedure for imposing sanctions may differ from the law introducing sanctions. There may also be other laws – typically defining rights to equal treatment – which may apply at the same time as the Regulation. Table 5.3 below summarises the relevant legislation in the case study States. More detailed information is provided in the case studies in Appendix C.

**TABLE 5.3 RELEVANT NATIONAL LEGISLATION**

State	Summary of relevant legislation
Belgium	• Articles 32 and 45-52 of Law of 27 June 1937
Denmark	• Air Navigation Act, Articles 149(11) and 149a define sanctions

France	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Article 330-20 of the Civil Aviation Code, as amended by Decree 2008-1445 of 22 December 2008: gives the Minister of Civil Aviation the power to impose sanctions</li> </ul>
Germany	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Air Traffic Licensing Regulation (Luftverkehrszulassungsordnung): defines LBA as the NEB and that breaches of the Regulation are considered an offence.</li> <li>Air Traffic Law (Luftverkehrsgesetz): defines that breach of EU Regulations relating to air traffic is an offence, and defines the fines applying.</li> <li>Law on Administrative Offences (Gesetz über Ordnungswidrigkeiten): defines the administrative process that must be followed in order to impose sanctions.</li> </ul>
Greece	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Letter of 1 December 2006 (reference 6310/A/10909) from Permanent Representation of Greece to Commission designates NEB; National Aviation Law 1815/1988 sets out fines</li> </ul>
Hungary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Act CXXV of 2003 defines role and sanctions of ETA</li> <li>Act CXXX of 2003, and Article 4 (2) of Government Decree No 362/2004 define complaints handling procedure</li> <li>Act XCIV of 1995 on Air Traffic, implemented by Government Decree No. 141/1995 defines role and sanctions of NTA</li> <li>Ministerial Order 97/2005 makes NTA responsible for approving airport charges</li> <li>Act CXL of 2004 defines procedure for imposing fines and sets out administrative penalties</li> </ul>
Ireland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Section 45(a) of the Aviation Regulation Act 2001 as inserted by the Aviation Act 2006: defines basis for enforcement and sanctions</li> <li>Statutory Instrument SI 299/2008: transposes the Regulation into law</li> </ul>
Italy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Legislative Decree 24/2009 of 24 February 2009: defines process to be followed by ENAC and fines that can be imposed</li> </ul>
Latvia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Air Navigation Order (2007): designates NEB</li> <li>Administrative Violations Code: defines fines</li> </ul>
Netherlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Resolution to set up the Transport and Water Management Inspectorate (Instellingsbesluit Inspectie Verkeer en Waterstaat), Article 2, paragraph 1, item d: sets up the NEB</li> <li>Civil Aviation Act (Wet luchtvaart), revised December 2009, Article 11.15, section b, item 1 and Article 11.16, paragraph 1.e.3: defines circumstance under which sanctions may be imposed</li> <li>General Administrative Law Act (Algemene wet bestuursrecht), chapter 4 (process to impose sanctions) and chapter 5 (level of fines).</li> </ul>
Poland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aviation Act ( Article 21.2(3) ): designates NEB</li> <li>Administrative Procedure Code: defines procedures to be followed</li> <li>No sanctions yet defined - draft amendment to Aviation Act (Articles 205a, 205b, 209a, 209b) will set out fines</li> </ul>
Portugal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decree Law 241/2008: designates NEB and defines level of fines which can be imposed for each infringement</li> <li>Decree Law 10/2004: defines standard scale of fines</li> </ul>
Romania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Decree 27/2002: requires all government bodies to be able to receive complaints</li> <li>Decision 787/2007: defines penalties (except for Article 8)</li> <li>Decree 2/2001 (approved and modified by Law 180/2002): defines framework for imposing penalties</li> </ul>
Spain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Royal Decree 184/2008: designates NEB</li> <li>Aviation Security Law (Law 21/2003): basis for enforcement and sanctions</li> <li>Royal Decree 28/2009: defines inspection regime</li> <li>Law on Public Administrations and Administrative Procedures (Law 30/1992): defines operational procedures for the NEB</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Regulation on Procedures for the Imposition of Sanctions (Royal Decree 1398/1993): defines process for imposing sanctions</li> </ul>
Sweden	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Förordning (1994:1808) om behöriga myndigheter på den civila luftfartens område (ordinance on competent authorities in civil aviation): designates the NEB</li> <li>• No sanctions yet defined, but some are set out in a proposed amendment Regeringens proposition 2009/10:95- Luftfartens lagar</li> <li>• Prohibition of Discrimination Act may also apply in some circumstances (e.g. infringements of Articles 3 and 4)</li> </ul>
UK	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statutory Instrument 2007/1895: designates NEBs, defines penalties and introduces a right to compensation for injury to feelings resulting from an infringement</li> <li>• Enterprise Act 2002: defines civil powers for NEB, including power to apply for an injunction ('stop now order') and power to seek binding undertakings</li> </ul>
Austria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Austrian Civil Aviation Law</li> </ul>
Bulgaria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civil Aviation Act, Art. 81a</li> </ul>
Cyprus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civil Aviation Act N 213(I)/2002</li> </ul>
Czech Republic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civil Aviation Act (No 49/1997), § 93 Articles 7 (a) - (l) and 8</li> <li>• Administrative Code (No 500/2004)</li> </ul>
Estonia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consumer Protection Act</li> <li>• Aviation Act §58 and §60</li> </ul>
Finland	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finnish Aviation Act (1194/2009) - Section 157 (Conditional fines and conditional orders of execution)</li> <li>• Conditional Fine Act (1113/1990)</li> </ul>
Lithuania	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Paragraph 2 of Article 70 of the Act of Aviation No. VIII-2066 (O.J. 2000, No. 94-2918; 2007, No. 59-2279): designates CAA as NEB</li> <li>• Code of Administrative Violations, Article 115: defines penalties</li> </ul>
Luxembourg	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Law of 31st January 1948, art 43, modified by the law of June 5, 2009, Article 1 (19)</li> </ul>
Malta	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Civil Aviation (rights of Disabled Persons and Persons with Reduced Mobility) Regulations (LN234/07) as amended by (LN 411/07)</li> </ul>
Slovak Republic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Act No 128/2002 (State Inspections Act): defines powers of NEB to conduct inspections, impose preventative measures, and impose sanctions</li> <li>• Act No 250/2007 on Consumer Protection: provides legal framework for NEB's consumer protection activities</li> </ul>
Slovenia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not yet implemented</li> </ul>

#### *Sanctions allowed in national law*

- 5.16 There are significant differences between the States in the maximum sanctions for infringements of the Regulation that can be imposed under national law (Table 5.4). The highest defined maximum sanctions are in Spain (€4.5 million) but in Denmark, Finland, Netherlands and the UK unlimited fines can be imposed, and in Cyprus the maximum fine is 10% of the turnover of the carrier. In Austria, Belgium and Denmark sanctions may also include a prison sentence.
- 5.17 However, in many States, sanctions are low, and in some States maximum sanctions are close to or below the costs that a service provider may in some circumstances avoid through non-compliance with the Regulation. In these States, it is possible that the sanctions regime may not comply with the requirement in Article 16 for dissuasive

sanctions to be introduced by Member States; however, without data on the costs of compliance we are unable to assess this. Maximum sanctions are particularly low (less than €1,000) in Estonia, Lithuania and Romania.

5.18 In most States, fines are determined by the NEB, taking into account various factors relating to the case, including the circumstances and conditions of the case, any reasons given for non-compliance, its impact on the passenger and the size of the company. In some States, fines may be imposed which relate directly to the financial impact of the alleged infringement:

- in Germany, additional fines may be imposed to recover any financial gains to the service provider which resulted from its non-compliance; and
- in the Netherlands, reparatory fines can be imposed, which require the service provider to make good any financial loss incurred by the passenger.

**TABLE 5.4 MAXIMUM FINES**

State	Maximum sanction (€)	Explanation/notes
Belgium	€4,000,000 (criminal and administrative)	In addition up to 1 year's imprisonment if a criminal prosecution
Denmark	Unlimited fine	In addition up to 4 months' imprisonment
France	€7,500	Maximum sanction 'per failing', which is not defined. Can be imposed on a per-passenger basis to give a higher total sanction. Can be doubled if repeated within a year.
Germany	€25,000	Additional fines can be imposed to recover the economic advantage that the carrier has obtained from infringement
Greece	€250,000	Minimum sanction is €500. Fines are generic, and do not refer specifically to the Regulation
Hungary	€22,600 (ETA) €11,300 (NTA)	Minimum sanction €189 for ETA. In addition penalty of up to €3,774 for failure to cooperate with an investigation.
Ireland	€150,000	Maximum €5,000 if the case is heard in a District Court. Fines only applicable on failure to comply with a Direction.
Italy	€120,000	Maximum depends on Article infringed and reduced by two thirds if paid within 60 days. Minimum fines of €2,500-€30,000.
Latvia	€2,800	Fine can be applied per passenger that complains. Law makes no direct reference to the Regulation, and it is possible that penalties could be open to legal challenge.
Netherlands	Reparatory fines: unlimited Punitive fines: €74,000	Reparatory fines should be in proportion to the amount of loss and to the severity of the violation. Punitive fines are per infringement and are not multiplied by number of passengers affected. IVW are conducting a study which will define policy on punitive fines.
Poland	Not yet defined, but proposed to be €1,875	Fines vary depending on Article infringed. Fines are variable for infringements of some Articles, but otherwise are fixed. Fines are cumulative per Article and per passenger that complains, so maximum could be a multiple of this. Minimum fines €47-€1,875.
Portugal	€250,000	The maximum and minimum fines depend on the infringement ('light', 'serious' or 'very serious'), the size of the

		company, and whether the infringement was intentional or negligent. Minimum fine €350-4,500.
Romania	€608	Maximum depends on Article infringed. Per Article breached and per passenger. No penalties available for Article 8. Minimum fines €195-€243.
Spain	€4,500,000	For most infringements maximum would be €4,500
Sweden	Not yet defined	Proposed amendment does not define levels of fines
UK	Unlimited fine	Maximum fines depend on Article breached; for many Articles the maximum fine is €5,600. Unlimited fines must be imposed by Crown Court, for serious cases.
Austria	€22,000	In addition up to 6 weeks' imprisonment
Bulgaria	€5,100	No penalties available for Article 8. Minimum fines €1,020.
Cyprus	€8,000 or 10% of operators turnover	-
Czech Republic	€192,000	-
Estonia	€640	Only applies to carriers
Finland	Unlimited fine	Fines are conditional on the period of time during which a condition is unfulfilled, and should be in proportion to company's size, amongst other factors
Lithuania	€870	Minimum sanction €290. Per case, not per passenger.
Luxembourg	€10,000	Fine of €10,000 for violation of Article 4, of €5,000 for failure to provide information, but no other sanctions given.
Malta	€2,300	Criminal procedure
Slovak Republic	€66,000	Depending on number of passengers affected and whether it is repeated
Slovenia	Not yet defined	-

### Statistics for complaint handling and enforcement

- 5.19 Most NEBs had received very few complaints in relation to the Regulation. Of the 27 NEBs, 8 had received no complaints, and 26 had received less than 50. 80% of all complaints to NEBs had been received by the UK NEBs. Although, the UK has the largest aviation market in Europe, and therefore would be expected to receive a higher number of complaints, in 2009 it received over ten times as many complaints as Germany or Spain, the next largest markets. This may be a result of the right in the UK to claim compensation for infringements of the Regulation, discussed below.

5.20 Of those NEBs that had received complaints, most were not able to give a breakdown. Table 5.5 therefore gives a brief description of the types of complaints received.

**TABLE 5.5 COMPLAINTS RECEIVED**

State	2009	Total	Description/notes
Belgium	1	1	Poor quality of assistance
Denmark	0	0	-
France	5	24	Transport of insulin and other liquids; denied boarding and requirements to be accompanied; damage to mobility equipment
Germany	22	34	Assistance by the carrier (55%), at the airport (18%), refusal of reservation (14%), denial of boarding (14%)
Greece	3	4	Denial of boarding; carriage of oxygen; handling of passengers
Hungary	0	1	Denial of boarding
Ireland	14	18	Conditions imposed on travel e.g. seating or carriage of oxygen.
Italy	36	40	48% refusal to embark PRMs; most of remainder lack of assistance at airports
Latvia	0	0	-
Netherlands	5	6	IVW was only competent for 1 complaint
Poland	2	2	Both related to airports outside Poland
Portugal	16	34	Not provided
Romania	0	0	-
Spain	35	46	Not provided
Sweden	3	5	Denied boarding, assistance dog policy
UK	356	883	Allocation of appropriate seating; timely provision of assistance on landing; and communicating requests for assistance on arrival at the airport.
Austria	1	2	Treatment of injured passengers
Bulgaria	0	0	Denied boarding
Cyprus	1	3	Not provided
Czech Republic	0	0	-
Estonia	0	0	-
Finland	3	4	Seating, oxygen, movement within cabin
Lithuania	0	0	-
Luxembourg	0	1	Boarding denied to deaf passengers
Malta	1	1	Carriage of guide dogs
Slovak Republic	0	0	-
Slovenia	0	1	Denied boarding
<b>Total</b>	<b>499</b>	<b>1110</b>	



- 5.21 In addition, NEBs in several States had received questions which were not complaints, regarding, for example, airline seating policy.

*Sanctions applied*

- 5.22 At the time the interviews for this study were conducted, no sanctions had yet been applied for infringements of the Regulation. At the time of drafting this report, three States were in the process of applying sanctions:

- France had opened proceedings to impose fines in one case;
- Portugal had opened proceedings to impose fines in two cases; and
- Spain had opened proceedings to impose fines in five cases.

- 5.23 Two other States had taken other actions to encourage compliance:

- Hungary wrote to an airline requiring it to correct its policy, and published this letter; and
- the UK has threatened several organisations with sanctions, and has taken other actions to encourage compliance, including writing to airlines, and setting out its requirements for compliance.

**The complaint handling and enforcement process**

*Overview of the process*

- 5.24 The complaint handling process is broadly similar in each NEB, however, since most NEBs receive very few complaints, the process for handling them is often not defined in detail. A typical process is as follows:

- complaints are recorded (since the number of complaints is frequently very low, this may be in a spreadsheet or a filing system rather than in a database);
- most undertake an initial filter of the complaints, to remove those that are not related to the Regulation, where the passenger has not first sought redress from the service provider, or where there is no *prima facie* case of an infringement;
- complaints relating to flights departing from other States are forwarded to the NEB of the State which is competent to handle the complaint;
- the complaint is investigated through contacting service providers to request information and/or justification for their actions; and
- a decision is made on the complaint.

- 5.25 The complaint handling process is different for complaints submitted to one of the UK NEBs (see box below). Otherwise, the main differences between the processes in different Member States are in the following areas, which are discussed in more detail below:

- the nature of the ruling or decision issued to the passenger, in particular whether the ruling is binding;
- under what circumstances the investigation of the complaint may lead to sanctions; and
- the process by which sanctions may be imposed and collected.

**Complaint handling in the UK (excluding Northern Ireland) by EHRC**

The legislation implementing penalties for infringements of the Regulation in the UK also grants a right to compensation for injury to feelings resulting from an infringement. This is in line with UK disability rights legislation in other sectors. As a result of this, the process for complaint handling is structured around conciliation, with a possible civil claim for compensation if conciliation fails. In other States there is no right to compensation and therefore no reason to offer conciliation proceedings.

The EHRC handles complaints relating to incidents which occurred in the UK excluding Northern Ireland. When a complaint is submitted to the EHRC and an initial evaluation shows it to be potentially valid, a letter is sent to the service provider which summarises the complaint and requests comments. This letter also explains the conciliation process, and asks if the service provider would be willing to participate. The responses are evaluated to see whether they appear to justify the actions of the service provider, but there is no technical or operational investigation, for example, to establish whether any claims made by a service provider are true.

If the complaint remains unresolved, the EHRC will consider referring the case for conciliation. If both parties agree, conciliation is provided independently, and may result in a voluntarily binding agreement on both parties. This agreement may include financial compensation, or may include non-financial reparations such as an apology.

If a service provider does not wish to participate in conciliation, the EHRC may suggest to the passenger that they initiate legal proceedings, which may result in payment of compensation. The EHRC may also consider offering litigation support for cases where it believes that the outcome could help clarify the application of the Regulation.

Complaints related to incidents occurring in Northern Ireland are handled by CCNI. This follows a procedure similar to most other NEBs, including an investigation of the facts of the case, but if this procedure fails to resolve the complaint to the passenger's satisfaction, the passenger can seek financial compensation under UK national law.

*Languages in which complaints can be handled*

- 5.26 Most NEBs are able to handle and reply to complaints written in the national language and English, but in many cases NEBs were not able to handle complaints in other Community languages. The languages in which NEBs can receive complaints, and respond to passengers, are shown below.

**TABLE 5.6 LANGUAGES IN WHICH COMPLAINTS ARE HANDLED**

State	Languages in which complaints may be written	Languages in which the NEB will reply to the passenger
Belgium	Flemish, French, English	Flemish, French, English
Denmark	Danish, English, German	Danish, English
France	French, English, Spanish	French only
Germany	German, English	German, English
Greece	Greek, English, French, German, Spanish, Italian	Greek, English
Hungary	Hungarian, English, German, Italian, other languages where possible	Hungarian, English, German, Italian
Ireland	English, French, German, Spanish, Italian	English, Spanish
Italy	Italian, English, French, Spanish, German	Italian, English, French, Spanish

Latvia	Information not provided at interview	Information not provided at interview
Netherlands	Dutch, English; sometimes also French and German	Dutch, English; sometimes also French and German
Poland	Polish, English, German, French	Polish, informal translation to English provided
Portugal	Portuguese, Spanish, English and French	Portuguese, Spanish, English and French
Romania	Romanian, English	Romanian, English
Spain	Spanish, English	Spanish, English
Sweden	Swedish, English	Swedish, English
UK	English, but would make arrangements to handle any other languages	English, but would make arrangements to handle any other languages

### Time taken

- 5.27 Many NEBs informed us that they had received too few complaints to be able to draw conclusions on the average time taken to handle them (see Table 5.7 below). Several other States had received very few complaints, but had a legal limit on time to respond set by national law. Of those that were able to estimate the actual time taken to resolve complaints, most reported wide variation: for example, Italy reported variation between 1 and 6 months. The longest time taken to resolve complaints was reported in the UK, where complaints may take up to 6 months, and there are instances where complaints have taken longer than this to resolve; as a result the passenger has no longer been able to claim for compensation under UK national law (see 5.25).

**TABLE 5.7 TIME TAKEN TO RESOLVE COMPLAINTS**

State	Average time taken	Explanation/Notes
Belgium	Too few complaints to estimate time	
Denmark	Too few complaints to estimate time	No complaints yet received, but in principle 2-3 months
France	Varies significantly	If the case goes to CAAC, it will take longer. Overall, durations are similar to under Regulation 261/2004
Germany	Too few complaints to estimate time	Complaints are handled faster than for Regulation 261/2004, which take 3-4 months
Greece	30 days	Response time is set by law and is generic across all complaints to HCAA
Hungary	75 days	Response time is set by law and is generic across all complaints to ETA
Ireland	3-4 months	Awaiting responses (from service providers or Commission) lengthens the average time taken, so many cases handled quicker than this
Italy	30 days to 6 months	Depends on investigation required and response of service provider
Latvia	Too few complaints to estimate time	
Netherlands	Too few complaints to estimate time	Same procedure as for Regulation 261/2004: in principle 3-6 months
Poland	Too few complaints to estimate time	Likely to be quicker than for Regulation 261/2004
Portugal	Too few complaints to estimate time	May be faster than for Regulation 261/2004

Romania	30 days	Time limit set by law
Spain	Too few complaints to estimate time	Always less than six months, and delay is due to service providers. Shorter than equivalent complaints under Regulation 261/2004.
Sweden	At most 6 weeks	This is a non-binding target for the CAA; little information at present on how well this has been met.
UK	EHRC: Up to 6 months, can take longer CCNI: Up to 6 weeks	EHRC: Wide variation in time taken. Process is driven by 6 month time limit for court cases for compensation under SI. CCNI: Wide variation in time taken.

### *Responses issued to passengers*

- 5.28 All of the NEBs in the case study States provide PRMs who complain with an individual response. As there is no right to compensation, the extent to which an NEB can offer assistance to obtain redress is limited; most responses state a decision on whether the NEB considers the Regulation to have been infringed, but do not state whether any payment should be made to the PRM, for example for loss due to denied boarding. The UK is an exception, for the reasons given in above. Most responses from NEBs do not have specific legal status, however in Hungary the response is legally binding, and in the Netherlands non-compliance with a decision may lead to a fine.
- 5.29 Almost all States would undertake some form of investigation of a complaint. The exception to this is the UK (excluding Northern Ireland), where the body responsible for handling complaints does not take an investigative role, although the CAA does investigate the facts of a proportion of cases. As discussed above, the UK process is structured around claims for compensation and the NEB sees its role as to facilitate conciliation, where the service provider is incentivised to voluntarily provide some form of compensation, or risk having a court award compensation against it.
- 5.30 Table 5.8 summarises the responses issued to the passenger.

**TABLE 5.8 RESPONSES ISSUED TO PASSENGERS**

State	Nature of response issued
Belgium	Individual non-binding evaluation sent to both service provider and passenger
Denmark	Non-binding individual evaluation provided to PRM and service provider
France	Individual response provided by DGAC summarising the conclusions of the investigation and its opinion on the case
Germany	Individual response giving the result of the investigation and their conclusions
Greece	Individual response giving the result of the investigation and their conclusions
Hungary	ETA issues legally binding decision to both passenger and service provider
Ireland	CAR writes to each passenger to summarise conclusions and whether incident was an infringement of the Regulation
Italy	ENAC writes to each complainant to inform them of its conclusions
Latvia	No specific procedures established, but passengers would be issued with an official letter communicating the final decision

Netherlands	Formal decision issued to both passenger and carrier. Not legally binding, but non-compliance may lead to a fine.
Poland	Formal decision issued to both passenger and carrier
Portugal	Individual response summarising correspondence with service provider and reasons for decision.
Romania	Individual response is sent to the passenger, setting out any infringements of the Regulation and any corrective measures taken by ANPH
Spain	Individual response, including response from carrier and AESA's view on it, and information on how passenger can obtain redress
Sweden	Individual non-binding response summarising correspondence with service provider and reasons for decision.
UK	EHRC: Does not investigate complaints, and therefore does not have standard format for output. Conciliation process may result in form agreeing actions to be taken. CCNI: Individual opinion letter sent to passengers.

*Circumstances in which sanctions may be imposed*

- 5.31 There are also significant differences between the States as to whether and when sanctions are imposed.
- 5.32 Some NEBs, including one of the Hungarian NEBs, Italy, Portugal, and Romania, always impose sanctions in the case that an infringement is found, even if it is a minor or technical infringement which does not significantly inconvenience passengers. If the amendments to the Aviation Act are passed in their current form, the Polish NEB will in future apply fines for every infringement. The German NEB must also take some action whenever an infringement is identified, although it has discretion to choose between a warning letter and a fine. If it chooses a fine, this has to be proven to the same standard of evidence required for criminal cases, and the NEB is therefore unlikely to impose sanctions if the infringement is 'not significant'.
- 5.33 In other States, the policy is to impose sanctions far less frequently:
- In two States (Belgium and Greece), a sanction would only be imposed where a service provider fails to take corrective action when required to do so by the NEB. In Ireland, this is the case for infringements of some Articles. In Spain, this is the general policy of the NEB but it could in theory impose sanctions without first warning the service provider.
  - Several States have a policy of imposing sanctions where there is evidence of serious or systematic infringements, including Denmark, and the Netherlands.
  - The UK will consider prosecution of a service provider where it fails to comply with CAA requests for corrective action, or for wilful non-compliance. Any case to be taken to prosecution must be proven to a criminal standard of evidence, despite the due diligence defence available in UK law. The UK NEB believed that this would be less difficult than under Regulation 261/2004, as Regulation 1107/2006 is more prescriptive.
- 5.34 The policies of the case study States on imposition of sanctions are shown in Table 5.9 below.

**TABLE 5.9 POLICY ON IMPOSITION OF SANCTIONS**

State	Policy on imposition of sanctions	Explanation/Notes
Belgium	Applied for serious or systematic violations (allows opportunity for corrective action first). Public prosecutor decides whether to bring criminal case; if not, BCAA may then decide whether to impose administrative sanctions.	If prosecutor brings criminal case, BCAA may not impose administrative sanctions
Denmark	Applied for serious or systematic offenses; minor offences would receive a caution, which would not be made public	
France	In consultation with CAAC. Ultimate decision made by the Minister responsible for Civil Aviation on the advice of CAAC.	Cases would only be considered by CAAC if referred by DGAC
Germany	If a complaint is upheld, imposes warning letter or sanction; LBA has flexibility to decide which	Procedure is a mix between administrative and criminal procedures: level of proof required is equivalent to a criminal case but case is decided by LBA
Greece	First send a letter of caution; if service provider infringes again, then impose penalty.	
Hungary	Choice of actions (including fines and non-pecuniary measures) which may be applied by ETA, depending on nature of case. NTA has same choice of actions but must take some form of action. Fines also imposed for non-cooperation with cases.	Fines for non co-operation can be imposed even where there was no infringement found
Ireland	CAR would consider prosecuting if a service provider did not comply with a Direction, or if it identified a breach of Articles 3 or 6 (2)	CAR can consider issuing a Direction if issue identified during an inspection, or if a service provider does not rectify a case when required to do so
Italy	Applied in every case of an infringement, identified either by investigation of complaint or inspection	Amount of fine considers facts of the case. Appeals and collection process can be lengthy, up to 7 years
Latvia	At discretion of NEB	More specific policies to be developed when Administrative Violations Code amended.
Netherlands	In principle sanctions could be applied for every violation, but IVW policy is to apply them only for severe or repeated infringements	Appeals process includes several stages, and may take in principle up to 2 years
Poland	When in force, will be applied in every case of an infringement	No sanctions yet in place
Portugal	Applied for every confirmed infringement, identified either through complaint or inspection	
Romania	Applied for every confirmed infringement	Amount of fine considers facts of the case. Any sanctions must be imposed through the Social Inspectorate; specific methodology is in development. AACR cannot impose fines for violations of Article 8.
Spain	Whenever an infringement is identified, the service provider receives warning, with a period in which to rectify the issue; if it fails to	

do so, AESA can impose a sanction.		
Sweden	Sanctions not yet defined	
UK	Applied when service provider fails to comply with CAA requests for corrective action, or for wilful non-compliance	In addition, standard of evidence required for criminal prosecution, and 'due diligence defence' means that it must be proved that senior management of carrier had intended not to comply

#### *Process to impose sanctions*

5.35 In most Member States, the process to impose sanctions is an administrative procedure undertaken by the NEB, and the decision to impose sanctions is made by the NEB alone. Service providers, and in some cases also passengers, can appeal to the courts.

5.36 The exceptions to this are the following States:

- In Germany, the procedure is similar to the administrative procedures applying in other States, but the standard of evidence required is equivalent to that in criminal cases.
- In Slovakia, the procedure is also similar to the administrative procedures in other States, but with the key difference that (as for Regulation 261/2004) an on-site inspection is required before a sanction can be issued. A consequence of this is that sanctions cannot be imposed on carriers that are not based in Slovakia.
- In Denmark, Ireland, Malta and the UK<sup>13</sup>, sanctions are imposed under criminal law and therefore a criminal prosecution is required.
- In France, cases are referred by the NEB (DGAC) to an administrative commission (the CAAC) that meets twice per year. This makes a recommendation to the Minister of Civil Aviation, who takes the ultimate decision about whether a sanction should be imposed, and the level of any sanction.
- In Belgium, sanctions can be imposed under criminal law but administrative fines to an equivalent level are also available.
- In Austria, administrative fines can be imposed, but in aggravated cases a prison sentence of up to 6 weeks may also be imposed, under criminal law.

5.37 Some States have administrative fines to encourage compliance, which can be applied when a service provider fails to respond within a certain time; these include Hungary and Latvia.

#### *Application of sanctions to carriers based in other Member States*

5.38 A number of NEBs face difficulties in applying sanctions to carriers that are not based in their State. This arises because national law either:

- does not permit application of sanctions to carriers not based in the State; or
- requires administrative steps to be taken in order to impose a sanction, which are

<sup>13</sup> Issues regarding the imposition and collection of fines in the UK are discussed in further detail in the Evaluation of Regulation 261/2004, SDG for European Commission, February 2010.

either difficult or impossible to take if the carrier is not based in, or does not have an office in, the State concerned.

- 5.39 The problem is particularly significant in relation to carriers based in other EU Member States, as opposed to non-EU carriers. In many Member States where sanctions are imposed through an administrative process, national law requires a notification of a sanction, or the process to start imposition of a sanction, to be served at a registered office of the carrier, or on a specific office-holder within the carrier. Non-EU (long haul) carriers will usually have an office in each of the States to which they operate, and this can be a condition of the bilateral Air Services Agreements which permit their operation; however there are no such requirements on EU carriers, which are free to operate any services within the Union.
- 5.40 We discussed this issue in detail in our recent report on Regulation 261/2004, and in most cases the issues are equivalent, because the process to impose the sanction is the same. However, since the research for that report was conducted, there have been changes affecting the imposition of fines on non-national carriers in two States:
- **Greece:** Until 2008, the legal process for serving a fine required that a writ was accepted by a representative in Greece of the company being fined. As a result, HCAA faced difficulties in imposing fines on non-national carriers that had not established an office in Greece. To resolve this problem, in May 2008 HCAA adopted a regulation on airline representation, requiring all non-national airlines to have representation agreements with their local representatives. This was withdrawn shortly after it came into force, as the restrictions it imposed violated Regulation 1008/2008 on common rules for the operation of air services in the Community. The difficulties in imposing sanctions on non-national carriers therefore remain.
  - **Germany:** German national law requires LBA to prove that the notification of any sanction had been issued to a named person within the carrier; as these carriers often do not have offices or legal representation in Germany, at the time of the research for the study on Regulation 261/2004 it was often not possible to meet this requirement. LBA now believes that this problem has been resolved and expects to test this application within six months.
- 5.41 The problems with application of sanctions to carriers not based in the Member State are summarised in Table 5.10. Since no fines have yet been imposed for infringements of the Regulation, many of the procedures and issues described below have not been tested in practice. However, often the procedures for imposing fines are equivalent to those for Regulation 261/2004 and therefore where possible we have drawn conclusions on this basis.



**TABLE 5.10 ISSUES WITH APPLICATION OF SANCTIONS TO CARRIERS NOT BASED IN THE STATE**

State	Whether it is possible to impose sanctions	Explanation/Notes
Belgium	Yes in principle	In principle there are no problems although this has not been tested as yet as no sanctions have been imposed. BCAA believed the best approach would be through cooperation with other NEBs, but the scope of the Regulation could limit this.
Denmark	Yes, although only if the incident occurred on Danish territory	No sanctions have been imposed and therefore this has not been tested. Restriction to Danish territory means that a small proportion of incidents would not be covered, i.e. incidents occurring mid-flight on board a non-Danish carrier which had departed from or was landing at a Danish airport.
France	Yes	Sanctions have been imposed on foreign carriers without any difficulties for other Regulations, so in principle should not be a problem. Notification can be sent by registered mail, and by fax if it is not possible to obtain a receipt from the registered mail.
Germany	Yes in principle	Sanctions must be served on a named person within the airline, which caused problems when issuing fines for Regulation 261/2004. LBA believe this is now resolved, and that it should be sufficient to obtain a signed receipt either by registered mail or by a courier, or issue the sanction through the German embassy in the State concerned
Greece	Uncertain	In summer 2009 national legislation came into force on airline representation, requiring a representation agreement for all non-national airlines. This allowed HCAA to impose financial penalties on all carriers but has now been repealed. The same difficulties in imposing fines on non-national carriers are now present: the legal process of serving a fine requires that a representative of the airline in Greece accept the writ, and there are therefore difficulties in imposing fines on non-national carriers that have not established an office in Greece.
Hungary	No	ETA is only able to handle discrimination cases regarding companies based in the territory of the Republic of Hungary.
Ireland	Yes in principle	Notification of a Direction can be served at the carrier's registered office, which does not have to be within the State. Any proceedings would require proof of incorporation of an airline which could be accepted by the Irish courts.
Italy	Yes but slower / more complex	ENAC would use the process set out in Regulation 1393/2007 to serve notifications on carriers which do not have offices in Italy, but this is likely to be slow/complex. For fines imposed under Regulation 261/2004, this has been short-cut in some cases by the Italian embassy/consulate in the State serving the notification directly.
Latvia	No	The Latvian Administrative Violations Code only allows for sanctions to be imposed on 'legal persons'. This is defined as including foreign individuals but not foreign companies.
Netherlands	Yes	IVW must prove that the company being fined has been notified, for example by proving receipt of the letter setting out the fine. The law states that if IVW can prove it has sent the fine, it is up to the other party to prove it has not received it.
Poland	Yes	Notifications are sent by registered mail or courier to the head office of the carrier – there is no limitation provided a receipt is obtained. A receipt from a courier company is considered sufficient.

Portugal	Yes	No specific constraints on imposing sanctions. Procedure equivalent to that for national carriers.
Romania	No	Notification of any penalty must be made by mail with a receipt, or by physically presenting it in the presence of a witness. If an airline does not have a legal representation in Romania, this cannot be done.
Spain	Yes	Notifications are sent by registered mail – there is no limitation provided a receipt is obtained. In theory collection of sanctions is problematic if carrier does not have an office in Spain, but this has not yet proved a problem.
Sweden	Sanctions not yet defined	Proposed amendment to Civil Aviation Act is unlikely to allow this, as no other Swedish legislation does so.
UK	Yes in principle	In principle there are no problems although this has not been tested as yet as no sanctions have been imposed. As sanctions could only be imposed through a criminal process, this would be undertaken by the criminal courts system not the NEB.

### Monitoring undertaken by NEBs

- 5.42 While the Regulation does not explicitly require NEBs to undertake monitoring of compliance with the Regulation, it does require them to take measures to ensure that the rights of PRMs are respected, including compliance with the quality standards required by Article 9 (1).

#### *Monitoring of airport quality of service*

- 5.43 Two NEBs, Denmark and Germany, had undertaken no actions to directly monitor airport service quality. Denmark holds biannual meetings with stakeholders including PRM organisations, airport managing bodies and airlines, but does not undertake any first-hand monitoring of service quality at airports.
- 5.44 NEBs in all but two of the case study States had undertaken some inspections of airports. Many undertook yearly inspections of the major airports, although some inspected airports more frequently: the Hungarian NEB inspects Budapest airport three times per year, and Spain had conducted 152 inspections since the introduction of the Regulation. Some had only undertaken one inspection, when the Regulation came into force; these included France, the Netherlands, Romania and Sweden.
- 5.45 Most inspections focus on checks of the systems and procedures in place to provide service. These checks included confirming the signage and functioning of the designated points of arrival, training records, and the written procedures followed by staff providing the service. Most did not assess the passenger experience; those that did were Latvia, Sweden and the UK. These checks included site visits accompanied by representatives of PRM organisations to check actual waiting times and infrastructure such as designated points.
- 5.46 In addition to inspections, there were a number of other approaches to monitoring quality of service, including:
- attending the PRM steering committees of larger airports on a monthly basis (UK);
  - holding biannual meetings with stakeholders including PRM organisations (Denmark); and

- sending annual surveys on implementation of the Regulation to airports (Romania).

5.47 Table 5.11 summarises the actions NEBs have taken to monitor airport service quality.

**TABLE 5.11 NEB ACTIONS TO MONITOR AIRPORT QUALITY OF SERVICE (EXCLUDING INDIRECT MONITORING)**

State	Direct monitoring of airport quality of service
Belgium	Inspection and audit of subcontractors at Brussels Airport, covering part of Regulation
Denmark	Biannual meetings with stakeholders including PRM organisations, airport managing bodies and airlines
France	One inspection of Paris Charles De Gaulle
Germany	None
Greece	Inspections of all airports (including 3 at Athens) for compliance with quality standards (although no quality standards set at any airport other than Athens)
Hungary	Regular inspections (Budapest 3 per year, smaller airports once) covering systems and equipment; questionnaire requesting number of complaints received and training given; approves safety license of PRM service provider, including check of quality standards
Ireland	2 inspections at each airport under jurisdiction
Italy	Regular inspections by staff based at airports, reviewing equipment and procedures, application of quality standards, and provision of training
Latvia	Inspections for compliance with quality standards: checking 'time stamps', site visits to measure actual waiting times. Meetings two times a year to discuss standards.
Netherlands	Audit of systems at major Dutch airports in 2007/2008. Further investigations will be driven by complaints.
Poland	Surveys of all airports, covering: quality standards, training records and programmes, documentation of cooperation with PRM organisations and airport users. Documentation checked by inspections.
Portugal	Yearly inspections of major Portuguese airports, covering designated points and information, but excluding staff training and assistance provided.
Romania	Inspection of Bucharest Otopeni, in cooperation with Social Inspectorate. Annual surveys of airports on several topics, including training, accessible information and procurement.
Spain	152 inspections relating to the Regulation
Sweden	Inspection of Stockholm Arlanda with PRM organisation, including checks of designated points and signage. No such checks of smaller airports.
UK	CCNI: Annual PRM site visits at airports; quarterly meetings with airports. CAA: Physical inspections of airports combined with discussions with service providers. Attends airport-PRM consultative committees monthly for London Heathrow, Gatwick, Luton and Stansted, and for Manchester less frequently.

5.48 For most of the NEBs we spoke to, resource constraints were not an issue: most NEBs received few complaints, and did not undertake significant additional activity which would require additional resources. Where inspections of airports for compliance with the Regulation were undertaken, they were frequently combined with other inspections and did not therefore require significant additional resourcing. The case study States which informed us that they would undertake more inspections if they

had more resources were France and Ireland.

*Monitoring of airline quality of service and policy regarding carriage of PRMs*

5.49 Most NEBs did not inform us of any monitoring of airline service quality they had undertaken, and stated that they had not investigated or challenged any airline policies on carriage of PRMs.

5.50 The most pro-active approach to airline service quality was that of the Spanish NEB, which in 2009 undertook 409 inspections on passenger rights. The other NEBs which informed us of reviews of airline quality of service took a number of approaches:

- approval of ground handler training (Greece);
- reviewing operating manuals (Latvia, Poland);
- reviewing websites for accessibility (Latvia, Netherlands); and
- annual surveys on airline implementation of the Regulation (Romania).

5.51 Table 5.11 summarises the actions NEBs have taken to monitor airline service quality and policies on carriage of PRMs.

**TABLE 5.12 NEB ACTIONS TO MONITOR AIRLINE QUALITY OF SERVICE AND POLICY**

State	Monitoring of airline quality of service and policy on carriage of PRMs
Belgium	Developed advisory document which sets limits on PRM carriage by Belgian carriers
Denmark	No review of service quality. Discussion of hypothetical reasons for refusal of embarkation discussed at stakeholder meetings
France	None
Germany	No review of service quality.
Greece	Training of ground handlers is approved by HCAA
Hungary	Reviews requirements and Conditions of Carriage for compliance with Regulation
Ireland	Reviewed airline policies on carriage of PRMs
Italy	None
Latvia	Inspections of both main Latvian airlines: reviewed operating manuals, websites and records. Would use unannounced inspections if infringements identified.
Netherlands	Consultations with EDF to check accessibility of airline websites
Poland	NEB reviewed airline's operating manual as a result of one case
Portugal	None
Romania	Annual surveys of airlines on several topics, including refusal of carriage, training and accessible information
Spain	409 inspections in 2009 on passenger rights, including checks on information provided to passengers and compliance with conditions of carriage
Sweden	Reviewed policies on carriage in cooperation with Swedish Work Environment Authority; awaiting EASA report before defining policy on PRM limits
UK	Requested and reviewed information from airlines on the rationales for their policies

- 5.52 In addition, many NEBs are also the licensing authority for carriers registered in the State, and therefore have to approve carriers Operating Manuals. Where this is the case, these NEBs have to approve, and therefore could determine, carriers' policies on carriage of PRMs and requirements to be accompanied.
- 5.53 We have identified that in some cases the licensing authority does have specific policies on carriage of PRMs which must be reflected in carriers Operating Manuals. The stated rationale for these policies is safety, but these policies vary significantly between States, and have not been demonstrated to be evidence-based. In most cases, the licensing authorities do not have specific policies and will approve those proposed by the carriers, subject to these being reasonably based on safety. Most NEBs and licensing authorities have not done anything to challenge policies on carriage of PRMs proposed by carriers, and this has resulted in significant differences in policies between carriers. This issue is discussed in more detail in section 4 above.

#### *Monitoring of airport charges*

- 5.54 As noted previously (see 5.6), no Member State has designated a separate body for enforcement of Article 8 of the Regulation, and several have not yet passed legislation to allow penalties to be imposed for infringements of this Article.
- 5.55 7 out of 16 case study NEBs had undertaken no direct monitoring of the charges levied by airports for providing services under the Regulation, or of the consultation which airports are also obliged to undertake when setting such charges.
- 5.56 The NEBs for Hungary and Italy had undertaken audits of the charges levied, while a number of NEBs had undertaken high level reviews of expenses and charges (including Greece, Latvia, Poland and Romania). The Netherlands and Portugal had undertaken benchmarking exercises against other airports.
- 5.57 Table 5.11 summarises the actions NEBs have taken to monitor airport charges under the Regulation.

**TABLE 5.13 NEB ACTIONS TO MONITOR AIRPORT CHARGES (EXCLUDING INDIRECT MONITORING)**

State	Direct monitoring of airport service charges
Belgium	None
Denmark	None
France	None
Germany	None
Greece	Annual review of expenses and charges
Hungary	Approves airport charges; in-depth audit of costs and charge for Budapest
Ireland	Charges included within regulated price cap. CAR has investigated level of consultation on charges.
Italy	Charges set by ENAC in cooperation with airports and airlines
Latvia	High-level check of charge
Netherlands	Reviews against other airports with advice of Netherlands Competition Authority.

Poland	Review of charges (by other CAO department)
Portugal	Benchmarking exercise across European countries, but no auditing or analysis of whether charges are cost-reflective
Romania	Checks for: existence of charges; separation of accounts; annual report on expenses and revenues. No checks on whether reasonable or cost-reflective (but in the process of recruiting staff with economic skills).
Spain	None
Sweden	None, but review is planned.
UK	None

### Other activities undertaken by NEBs

#### *Interaction between NEBs and with other organisations*

- 5.58 Given the low number of complaints received by NEBs, interaction with other stakeholders is important to maintain an awareness of any issues arising. Table 5.14 summarises the interactions between NEBs and other organisations.

**TABLE 5.14 NEB INTERACTION WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS**

State	Form of any interaction between NEB and other organisations
Belgium	None
Denmark	Biannual meetings with stakeholders, including airports, airlines and PRM organisations
France	No information provided at interview
Germany	No information provided at interview
Greece	Meetings with PRM organisations to help define quality standards, joint accessibility reviews of regional airports
Hungary	Biannual meetings with PRM organisations
Ireland	No information provided at interview
Italy	Round table discussions to develop advisory guidance, good relationship with PRM organisation
Latvia	CAA attends quarterly PRM steering committee at Riga Airport with PRM organisations
Netherlands	Consultations with EDF to check accessibility of airline websites
Poland	Worked with PRM organisation to improve CAO understanding of problems faced by PRMs
Portugal	One day seminar for aviation industry stakeholders on Regulations 261/2004 and 1107/2006. Did not include representatives of PRM organisations.
Romania	NEB and PRM organisation cooperated with Bucharest Otopeni to develop quality standards
Spain	No information provided at interview
Sweden	Approximately monthly contact with PRM organisations, including biannual aviation focus group
UK	CCNI: Worked with Equality Commission of Northern Ireland to support introduction. CAA: Attends monthly PRM steering committees at major UK airports with PRM organisations, receives guidance from government advisory committee on disabled travel.

*Promotional activity undertaken by NEBs*

- 5.59 The Regulation requires Member States to inform PRMs of their rights and the possibility of complaints to NEBs. Relatively few NEBs have made significant efforts towards this: of the case study NEBs, only Romania and UK had undertaken nationwide campaigns to promote awareness of passengers' rights under the Regulation, and even in the UK, the PRM organisation we spoke to was not aware of the campaign the UK NEB had conducted.
- 5.60 Other NEBs had undertaken less direct promotional activity, including the following:
- publishing of leaflets to be distributed at airports (Belgium, Germany);
  - holding a conference (Germany); and
  - actions to promote awareness of the Regulation to PRM organisations and other stakeholders, but which did not directly inform passengers (Denmark, Italy, Netherlands, Poland).
- 5.61 A number of NEBs had published information on their websites. While such information can be useful, if a passenger is unaware that they have rights, or is aware they have rights but unaware of the role the NEB plays in enforcing them, they are unlikely to find and read NEB websites. Table 5.15 lists the activities undertaken by NEBs.

**TABLE 5.15 NEB ACTIVITY TO PROMOTE AWARENESS OF THE REGULATION**

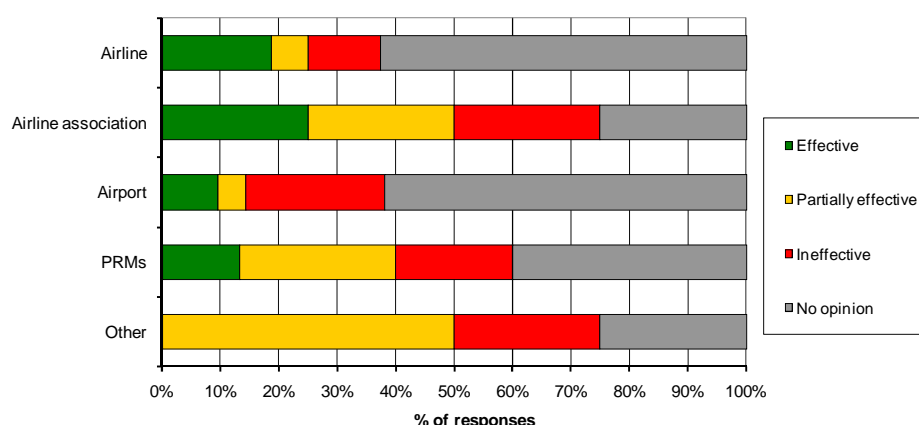
State	Actions taken by NEBs to promote awareness of the Regulation
Belgium	Leaflets sent to Brussels Airport; also available on the BCAA website.
Denmark	Letters to stakeholders on obligations under Regulation sent out when it was passed.
France	No information provided at interview. Section on website with information on Regulation.
Germany	BMBVS published a leaflet on Regulation in 2008 and held a conference with PRM organisations and the association of German air carriers; published information on website.
Greece	Information on the Regulation (including videos) placed on website.
Hungary	Information on the Regulation (including videos) placed on website.
Ireland	No information provided at interview. Section on website with in-depth information on Regulation.
Italy	Guidance on implementing the Regulation developed with and circulated to airports, airlines and PRM organisations. No direct promotional activity to passengers.
Latvia	Published PRM complaint form on website.
Netherlands	Contact with Dutch Association of Travel Agents to improve awareness and ensure correct allocation of IATA codes.
Poland	Provided information regarding the Regulation to PRM organisations.
Portugal	No information provided at interview. Section on website with information on Regulation.
Romania	Public awareness campaign with main PRM organisations, including dedicated website, posters and leaflets distributed throughout the country, through airports, carriers, travel agents and municipal bodies.
Spain	No information provided at interview. Section on website with information on Regulation.

Sweden	No information provided at interview. Section on website with information on Regulation. PRM org states well-publicised initially but not since.
UK	EHRC: distribution of guides on rights under Regulation; advertised in national media CCNI: distribution of guides on rights under Regulation, covered in regional media; advertorial piece in newspapers; exhibitions at relevant events.

### Stakeholders views on complaint handling and enforcement

- 5.62 We asked each of the stakeholders we contacted about how effectively they believed NEBs had enforced the Regulation; there is some variation between different groups of stakeholders (Figure 3.10 below). A high proportion of stakeholders (over 60% of airports and airlines) have no opinion on how well NEBs have been enforcing the Regulation; often, the reason given for this response was that the stakeholder had had no interaction with the NEB in question. The proportion which believes that NEBs have not been enforcing the Regulation effectively is broadly consistent across stakeholder groups, at 20%-25%.

**FIGURE 5.1 VIEWS OF STAKEHOLDERS ON NEB EFFECTIVENESS**



- 5.63 In this section, we discuss the particular issues raised by each group of stakeholders.

#### *Airlines and airline associations*

- 5.64 Most airlines did not express strong views on whether NEBs had enforced the Regulation effectively, and did not give specific examples of areas where NEBs were performing well or poorly. One airline expressed frustration with the lack of action taken against airports, in particular relating to excessive charges and to lack of focus on safety.
- 5.65 Of the airline associations we spoke to, AEA believed that effectiveness of enforcement varied by State. IACA believed that in general NEBs were unfairly targeting airlines and not airports. Regarding specific NEBs, it believed that the UK complaint-handling NEB was bringing cases which were factually inaccurate, and that there was insufficient distinction between NEBs and service providers in Spain and Portugal.



*Airports*

- 5.66 A higher proportion of airports than airlines believed that NEBs were ineffective. Two airports believed actions needed to be taken by NEBs to raise the proportion of pre-notifications for assistance. One airport believed that the NEB should take more action to inform passengers of their rights and obligations. Three airports informed us that they had had no interaction with their NEBs, and two stated that their interactions with NEBs had been unsatisfactory: one informed us that the NEB was slow and unresponsive, and the other stated that it was not clear which organisation was their NEB. Only one airport informed us that it had good and close cooperation with its NEB.

*NEBs*

- 5.67 As there have been very few complaints received under the Regulation, there have also been very few complaints which have required forwarding to other NEBs. Therefore, the NEBs have no information on the effectiveness of other NEBs via their responses to forwarded complaints.

*PRM organisations*

- 5.68 13% of PRM organisations believed that NEBs were enforcing the Regulation effectively. Those that believed that NEBs were functioning ineffectively or only partially effectively believed that too little action was being taken, either through active monitoring of the services provided or through taking actions to remedy poor service. Four of the PRM organisations we spoke to had had little or no interaction with their NEB.

*Other organisations*

- 5.69 The other organisations we spoke to noted the following issues with regard to enforcement:
- lack of consistency of approach between NEBs, particularly in terms of whether they believe it is their role to handle complaints;
  - unwieldy complaints systems; and
  - unreasonable requests made by NEBs.
- 5.70 One organisation also believed that some NEBs were taking a sensible line between the demands of PRMs and of service providers.

**Conclusions**

- 5.71 Member States are required to designate a body responsible for enforcing the Regulation regarding flights from or arriving at its territory. They may also designate separate bodies responsible for handling complaints, and for enforcing Article 8. All Member States except Slovenia have designated an NEB, which in most cases is the Civil Aviation Authority and is the same organisation that is responsible for enforcement of Regulation 261/2004. In a number of States, the Regulation is not explicitly referred to in the law designating the NEB, and in Spain, the imposition of sanctions has been challenged, in one case successfully, on the basis that the NEB was not competent to impose the sanction.

- 5.72 There is no requirement in the Regulation that the NEB be independent from service providers and we have identified one case where it is not: the Greek NEB, HCAA, is also the operator of the airports other than Athens.
- 5.73 Member States are also required to introduce penalties in national law for infringements of the Regulation, which must be effective, proportionate and dissuasive. All States except Poland and Sweden have introduced sanctions into national law, although there are a number of States where sanctions have not been introduced for infringements of all Articles. In the UK, national law grants rights additional to those given in the Regulation: passengers who suffer injury to feelings as a result of an infringement of the Regulation may seek financial compensation from the service provider.
- 5.74 There is significant variation in the level of the maximum sanctions which can be imposed for infringements, and in some States the fines may not be at a high enough level to be dissuasive. While some States allow unlimited fines to be imposed and may also impose a prison sentence, maximum sanctions in Estonia, Lithuania and Romania are lower than €1,000.
- 5.75 The Regulation allows any passenger who believes that the Regulation has been infringed, and is dissatisfied with the response they have received from the service provider, to make a complaint to the appropriate body (usually an NEB). However, very few complaints have been received under the Regulation: to date, since the introduction of the Regulation, 1,110 complaints have been received, compared to a total of 3.2 million passenger assisted in 2009 across a sample of 21 EU airports. 80% of all complaints were received by the UK NEBs; none of the NEBs in the other 26 Member States has received more than 50 complaints.
- 5.76 Where an NEB identifies an infringement (through a complaint or other means) it may choose to enforce the Regulation by imposing sanctions. No sanctions have yet been imposed, but France, Portugal and Spain have opened proceedings to impose fines. However, in a number of States, there are likely to be significant practical difficulties in imposing and collecting sanctions, in particular in relation to airlines registered in different States.
- 5.77 Many NEBs had taken at least some action, other than the monitoring of complaints, to assess whether service providers were complying with the Regulation. NEBs in 14 of the 16 case study States had undertaken at least one inspection of airports for compliance with the Regulation, however most inspections have focused on checks of systems and procedures, and did not assess the actual experience of PRMs using the service provided by the airport. NEBs for 9 of the 16 States had undertaken no direct monitoring of the charges levied by airports for providing PRM services, although Hungary and Italy informed us that they had undertaken in-depth audits of the charges levied at airports.
- 5.78 Member States are required to take measures to inform PRMs of their rights under the Regulation, and the possibility of complaining to appropriate bodies. Of those that provided information, relatively few NEBs had made significant efforts to promote awareness of the Regulation by passengers; only two informed us of national public awareness campaigns they had undertaken.

- 5.79 Awareness of the NEBs performance appeared in general to be poor: most stakeholders contacted for the study held no opinion on the effectiveness of enforcement by NEBs, and many informed us that this was because they had had no interaction with them.

## 6. STAKEHOLDER VIEWS ON POLICY ISSUES

### Introduction

- 6.1 This section summarises views expressed by stakeholders in the course of our consultation exercise on key policy issues, including whether any changes should be made to the scope or content of the Regulation, and what any changes should be.
- 6.2 Stakeholders also expressed views on the application of the Regulation by airports, carriers, and the complaint handling and enforcement process; these views are summarised in the relevant chapters above.

### Whether changes should be made to the Regulation

- 6.3 We asked all of the stakeholders that we interviewed whether they considered that any changes should be made to the Regulation.
- 6.4 Half of the airports we interviewed believed that the Regulation should be changed. Several suggested that the definition of PRM was too broad, and that this was contributing to abuse of services. It was also suggested that the Regulation be amended to require proof of disability, and that the Regulation should also be amended to improve the functioning of pre-notification (for example by making it mandatory). ACI supported these positions. The airports which did not believe the Regulation should be amended, or had a neutral opinion, thought that any lack of clarity in the Regulation could be addressed through information from the Commission.
- 6.5 In addition, around half of the airlines we interviewed also believed that the Regulation should be changed, however this was for different reasons to those given by airports. A number of airlines believed that it should be possible for them to choose to provide the service themselves or that responsibility should lie with airlines, arguing that as customer-focussed organisations they are better able to do this. Of the airline associations, only ELFAA argued for this amendment. One airport strongly agreed with this position, however most believed that the allocation of responsibility should not be revised, as if airlines were to provide their own service, the incentive to reduce costs would result in unacceptable reductions in service quality. Airlines also supported amendments to clarify the definitions of PRM and mobility equipment, and to improve pre-notification.
- 6.6 Most of the NEBs we interviewed did not have a clear opinion on whether the Regulation should be amended. Seven NEBs believed that the definitions of terms such as PRM and mobility equipment should be clarified, and two of the NEBs in the case study sample supported changes which would allow airlines to opt out of the Regulation and provide the services themselves.
- 6.7 Slightly over half of the PRM representative organisations we interviewed believed that the Regulation should be amended. Amendments were suggested to address the following issues:
- limits on number of PRMs which can safely be carried;

- allocation of seating;
- requirements on compensation payable for damaged mobility equipment, and improvements to its handling; and
- provision of information.

6.8 EDF suggested that compensation should be introduced, as this would incentivise more complaints and therefore improve service. Those that did not believe the Regulation should be amended either believed that the Regulation had not been in force for long enough to assess its efficacy, or that poor implementation was the cause of any problems identified.

### **The content and drafting of the Regulation**

6.9 We outline below some of the main detailed issues that have been raised by stakeholders. Few stakeholders believed that there were significant issues with the drafting of the Regulation that made it difficult to implement, however many stakeholders outlined issues relating to insufficient definition.

#### *Definition of terms*

6.10 The issue most commonly raised, particularly by airports and NEBs, is the definition of PRM set down in the Regulation. Many stakeholders believe this is too broad and opens the service to abuse, both by passengers and by airlines. A number of airports believed that airlines were using the wide definition to allow them to avoid costs: passengers who were previously classified as MAAS (including unaccompanied minors, VIPs and passengers with language issues), and therefore paid for by the airline, are now classified as WCHR and the cost is borne by all airlines. Some airports believed this could be resolved by setting out a clear definition of MAAS.

6.11 The definition in the Regulation could include a wide range of passengers who some stakeholders do not believe were the intended beneficiaries of the Regulation, including:

- obese passengers;
- stretchers;
- medical cases; and
- passengers who had sustained injuries (whose travel is often paid for by their travel insurance).

6.12 Some stakeholders believed that the definition of PRM was so broad that it could be considered to include passengers which the Regulation was clearly not intended to cover, such as passengers whose intellectual and sensory capacities were temporarily impaired by excessive consumption of alcohol.

6.13 Several stakeholders believed this issue could be resolved by requiring some proof of need for assistance in order to receive assistance, for example in the form of a disability ID card. This was opposed by some PRM organisations.

6.14 Stakeholders also considered that a number of other terms were not sufficiently defined. These included:

- **Mobility equipment:** The reference in Annex II to mobility equipment states that it should include electric wheelchairs but does not define the term any further. Stakeholders had differing views on what should be included in this: several airlines believe that it should refer only to equipment that is required to make it possible to travel by air, but a number of PRM organisations believed it should include items which make the *purpose* of the trip possible. This could include, for example, joists for lifting passengers in and out of seats.
- **Medical equipment:** Several stakeholders believed there was insufficient clarity on which items were classified as medical equipment and which as mobility equipment. It was also uncertain whether airlines could any limits (for example on weight) on its carriage.
- **Accessible formats:** It was reported that the requirement for designated points of arrival and departure to offer basic information about the airport in accessible formats did not define what was required, for example, whether all such points should include a map in Braille of the airport.
- **Safety rules:** Article 4(3) requires airlines to make publicly available the safety rules that it applies to the carriage of PRMs, and any restrictions on the carriage of PRMs or mobility equipment. Several stakeholders informed us that such documents were not defined, and it was not clear what this term referred to.

#### *Lack of clarity in the Regulation*

- 6.15 In one case, the requirements of the Regulation appear contradictory. Several NEBs noted that the responsibility for enforcement defined in Article 14 contradicts that specified in Recital 17. Article 14 states that NEBs are responsible for enforcement regarding flights departing from or arriving at airports within their State, while Recital 17 places responsibility on the NEB of the State which issued the carrier's operating license.
- 6.16 Stakeholders identified a number of other provisions where they considered the description of obligations was insufficiently clear, including:
- **Article 7:** Under this Article, airports are required to provide assistance to PRMs holding reservations so that they able to take their flight, however, it does not define what an airport is required to provide to a PRM who does not hold a valid reservation. In addition, it does not define the airport's liability when a PRM misses their flight, in particular where the passenger has not pre-notified their requirement for assistance.
  - **Article 11:** One airport had been the subject of a legal challenge by an airline regarding the inclusion within its PRM service charge of the costs of providing training under Article 11(b) to subcontractors at the airport. The airline contended that since the paragraph did not refer to subcontractors (unlike Article 11(a)) the airport was not obliged to provide such training. Several airports believed that the requirement under this Article to provide disability-related training to all new staff (not just those whose role required them to interact with PRMs) was unnecessary. In contrast, some PRM organisations believed that training should be explicitly extended to Commanders of aircraft, to enable them to make better-informed decisions on whether to embark PRMs. PRM organisations also noted

that it was not clear whether airports were required to provide training on specific procedures for handling mobility equipment; as damage to mobility equipment is perceived to be a significant issue, they believed this requirement should be explicitly included.

- **Article 12:** Several PRM stakeholders raised concerns that the compensation referred to in this Article would be consistent with the Montreal Convention, and that the limits under the Convention were insufficient for some mobility equipment, such as technologically advanced wheelchairs (see 4.55). Although this had not been an issue to date – in almost all cases that we were informed of, airlines waived the limits – it creates uncertainty for wheelchair users travelling by air. This is heightened by the reported difficulties in obtaining insurance for such equipment.
- **Annex I:** A number of airlines raised concerns regarding the allocation of liability when boarding a passenger. For example, they did not believe that liability was clear in the case that an accident occurs on board an aircraft when airport staff are present. Some airports raised concerns regarding liability for damage to wheelchairs while in their care. In addition, the services which should be provided to transfer passengers and the measures which should be taken to accommodate assistance dogs are not defined.

- 6.17 Regarding training, some stakeholders raised the issue of the legal weight of ECAC Document 30, particularly Annex 5-G which sets out recommended guidance for training regarding PRM services. While this is referred to in the Regulation as a policy which should be considered when developing quality standards, the same reference is not made in Article 11 where training requirements are defined.

#### *Conflicts with 14 CFR Part 382*

- 6.18 As discussed in section 4 above, the US regulations on carriage of PRMs (14 CFR Part 382) apply to European carriers operating flights to/from the US, and other flights where these are operated as codeshares with US carriers. There are a number of differences between these rules and the Regulation, the most significant of which is the allocation of responsibilities for assistance: the Regulation requires airports to arrange the provision of services to PRMs, while under the US legislation it is the airlines that have this responsibility. This has caused difficulties for carriers who are required to comply with legislation that conflicts, although the US legislation does allow carriers to apply for a waiver where there is a conflict of laws.

#### *Pre-notification*

- 6.19 The requirement to pre-notify requests for assistance and problems in doing so were raised by many stakeholders (see 4.98). Stakeholders held differing views on how this should be improved. Several airlines (in particular those with operations to the US, where requiring pre-notification is usually prohibited) believed that the requirement to pre-notify should be removed; they believed that the resulting increases in costs of provision would be marginal, as most resourcing requirements could be planned on the basis of observed variation in demand (over the course of a year, a week or a day as appropriate). This approach was supported by some PRM organisations. In contrast, a number of airports believed that pre-notification should be made compulsory, and

this proposal was opposed by some PRM organisations.

*Level of detail*

- 6.20 Almost all stakeholders informed us that there was significant variation in the services provided under the Regulation. This is partly a result of the approach taken by the Regulation, which does not seek to define in detail the services to be provided. In contrast, the equivalent US rules set out in detail all aspects of the services to be provided, in effect setting out procedures to be followed by all service providers.
- 6.21 Several stakeholders have raised the lack of detail in the Regulation as an issue, and believe that a more prescriptive approach would lead to greater harmonisation of the services provided. In particular, they believed that the services set out in Annexes I and II and the training required under Article 11 should be defined with greater precision.



## Conclusions

- 6.22 We asked each stakeholder we contacted for the study whether they believed that changes should be made to the Regulation. Slightly more thought that there should be changes than did not, but there was not a clear majority in favour of changes. The reasons given for making changes and what those changes should be varied depending on the stakeholder.
- 6.23 No significant problems were identified with the drafting of the Regulation, although there is a conflict between Recital 17 and Article 14. In general, stakeholders had not found it difficult to follow the provisions of the Regulation. The most common issue raised with regard to the text of the Regulation is that the definitions used are not sufficiently precise; in particular, the definition of PRM is believed by airports and some airlines to be too broad, and this is believed to make it difficult for them to take action to counter abuse. The Regulation is much less precise about the policies and procedures that have to be followed, particularly by air carriers, than the equivalent US regulation on carriage of PRMs, 14 CFR Part 382.
- 6.24 In addition, many stakeholders pointed out the significant differences between the Regulation and 14 CFR Part 382, which applies to European carriers on flights to/from the US and other flights operated as codeshares with US carriers. One of the most significant is the requirement to pre-notify requirements for assistance was raised as an issue, particularly by airlines operating to the US, and by airports where the rates of pre-notification were low. Two different approaches were proposed to address the perceived problem. Some airlines (primarily those flying to US) proposed removing the requirement to pre-notify, which would resolve the conflict with US legislation; this was opposed by airports on the grounds that it would reduce service quality and increase cost. Some airports proposed making pre-notification compulsory; this was opposed by some PRM organisations on the grounds that it would reduce the freedom of PRMs to travel.

## 7. FACTUAL CONCLUSIONS

### Introduction

- 7.1 This section summarises our conclusions in relation to how effectively airports and airlines are providing the assistance required by the Regulation, and how effectively Member States and National Enforcement Bodies (NEBs) are undertaking their roles specified in the Regulation.

### Implementation of the Regulation by airports

- 7.2 We selected a sample of 21 airports for detailed analysis for the study, and reviewed how they had implemented the Regulation, through desk research and through interviews with representatives of airport management and other stakeholders.
- 7.3 Prior to the introduction of the Regulation, assistance at airports was provided by airlines and usually contracted from ground handlers. The Regulation places responsibility for provision of this assistance with the airport management company. We found that all airports in the sample for this study had implemented the provisions of the Regulation, although we were informed by airlines and other stakeholders that the regional airports in Greece had yet to effect the change from provision by ground handlers to provision by airports. We were not informed by stakeholders of any other EU airports at which the Regulation has not been implemented.
- 7.4 Most of the sample airports had contracted the provision of PRM assistance services to an external company, generally selected through a competitive tender process. However, several airports had changed their service provider within 18 months of the Regulation coming into force; this was interpreted by some as a sign that the service initially specified and procured had been inadequate. One major hub airport acknowledged that it had had significant problems with a PRM service provider.
- 7.5 The service provided at the sample airports varies in terms of: the resources available to provide the services; the level of training of the staff providing assistance; the type of equipment used to provide services; and the facilities provided to accommodate PRMs (such as PRM lounges). According to the information provided by PRM organisations, this results in variability in service quality. PRM representative organisations, airlines and some airports cited a number of examples of poor quality or even unsafe provision of services at airports, although it is not possible to infer how regular these occurrences are. Overall, most stakeholders believed that the Regulation had been implemented effectively by airports.
- 7.6 There is also significant variation between airports in the frequency with which PRM services are requested: the level of use of the service varies by a factor of 15 between the airports for which we have been able to obtain data, although in most cases between 0.2% and 0.7% of passengers requested assistance. The type of PRM service requested also varies considerably between airports although in all cases the largest category is WCHR (passengers who cannot walk long distances but can board the aircraft, including using stairs, unaided). Both the frequency of use and the type of service required are likely to be affected by the varying demographics of the passengers using different airports; PRMs account for the highest proportions of

passengers at holiday airports, such as Alicante, and airports serving pilgrimage destinations, such as Lourdes.

- 7.7 The Regulation requires airports to publish quality standards. Most of the sample airports had done so, although some had published them only to airlines. Almost all quality standards followed the example format set out in ECAC Document 30, which defines the percentage of PRMs who should wait for up to given numbers of minutes. Some airports published qualitative measures in addition to these time standards, such as descriptions of the treatment the passenger should expect at all points of the service. However, none of the sample airports had published the results of any monitoring of these quality standards, and whilst most did undertake monitoring in some form, only four had commissioned external checks of the service.
- 7.8 The Regulation allows airports to levy a specific charge to cover the costs of assistance. All but one of the sample airports had done so. The level of charges varied considerably: the highest charges of the sample airports were at Paris CDG and Frankfurt. We analysed the charges to examine whether variation could be explained by higher frequency of use of the service, differences in levels of wages and other costs between States, or differences in service quality, but there was no evidence that this was the case. The design of the airport is a further factor influencing the cost of service provision and hence the level of charges: the assistance service can be provided at lower cost at an airport such as Amsterdam Schiphol, which is on a single level and has one integrated terminal building, than at an airport with a more complex configuration such as Paris CDG.
- 7.9 Some stakeholders believe that the requirements to select contractors and establish charges in cooperation with users and PRM organisations were not followed thoroughly. Many airlines did not believe that consultation on either element had been sufficient, and this view was shared by some PRM organisations. There were a number of barriers to effective consultation, including linguistic restrictions and airport user committees which did not adequately represent all air carriers. Consultation with air carriers was reported as particularly poor in Spain, Portugal and Cyprus. In contrast to this, we note that several airports stated that they had sought the participation of PRM organisations but had found this difficult to obtain.
- 7.10 The Regulation requires airports to provide specialised disability training for staff directly assisting PRMs, and whilst all sample airports had done so, there were significant variations in the length and format of this training. The shortest training course among those for which we have data was 3 days long, while the longest lasted 14 days. There was similar variation in the length of training provided for passenger-facing staff who did not provide direct assistance. A number of airports informed us that they did not provide disability-awareness training for staff not in public-facing roles, or only provided it on a voluntary basis.

**Implementation of the Regulation by air carriers**

- 7.11 We selected a sample of 20 air carriers for the study. We reviewed how they had implemented the Regulation, both through review of their published policies, procedures and Conditions of Carriage, and through interviews with the carriers themselves and with other stakeholders.
- 7.12 The main obligation that the Regulation places on air carriers is that it prohibits refusal of carriage of PRMs, unless this is necessary to meet national or international safety rules or requirements imposed by the carrier's licensing authority, or is physically impossible due to the size of the aircraft or its doors. We found that air carriers largely comply with this, although some state in their Conditions of Carriage that carriage of PRMs is conditional on advance notification. In our view, this is not consistent with the Regulation, which does not allow for a derogation on the prohibition of refusal of carriage on the basis that the passenger has not provided advance notification. In addition, we found that a small number of carriers impose requirements for medical clearance which appear to be excessively onerous and to be worded to include PRMs as well as passengers with medical conditions.
- 7.13 We found significant differences in policies relating to carriage of PRMs between carriers – even between carriers with similar aircraft types and operational models. The most significant difference is that some carriers impose a numerical limit on the number of PRMs that can be carried on a given aircraft. These can be quite low: some carriers have limits of 2-4 PRMs on a standard single-aisle aircraft such as an Airbus 319. These limits are not required by any international or European safety rules, although in some cases they are required by the licensing authority for the carrier concerned; often, although not always, this is the same organisation that has been designated as the NEB. However, in most cases, these requirements are defined by carriers in their Flight Operations Manuals; although the licensing authority has to approve this, it appears that in most States, little has been done to challenge the limits proposed by carriers. Whilst the stated rationale for these limits is safety, there does not seem to be a clear evidence base for them, and they are specifically prohibited by the equivalent US regulation on carriage of PRMs (14 CFR part 382).
- 7.14 The Regulation also allows carriers to require that PRMs be accompanied, subject to the same safety-based criteria. We found that a number of carriers require PRMs to be accompanied where they are not 'self-reliant', which can mean that the PRM cannot (for example) eat unaided. In our view this may be an infringement of the Regulation because there is no direct link to safety; for those carriers that fly to the US, it is also an explicit breach of the US PRM rules. This type of condition is also, in our view, unreasonable for short haul flights for which passengers could decide to (for example) not eat or drink during the flight. Other carriers require PRMs to be accompanied only where they are not self-reliant **and** this has a safety impact (for example, if the PRM could not exit the aircraft unaided in an emergency or put on an oxygen mask without assistance); this is consistent with the Regulation.
- 7.15 The Regulation also requires carriers to publish safety rules relating to the carriage of PRMs, although it does not specifically state what issues these safety rules should cover. We found that carriers all published some PRM-related information, but few published a notice specifically described as being the safety rules related to carriage of

PRMs. In some cases there appeared to be significant omissions from the information published by carriers: for example, some of the carriers which imposed a numerical limit on the number of PRMs which could be carried did not publish this.

- 7.16 Annex II of the Regulation sets out various requirements for services which have to be provided to PRMs by carriers. Evidence for the extent to which this is provided is limited, and restricts a fair assessment of compliance with these requirements. There is however sufficient evidence to conclude that the vast majority of case study air carriers are complying with the requirement to carry up to two items of mobility equipment free of charge. Some PRM representative groups were critical of the effectiveness of airlines in implementing the Regulation, and we were informed of some particularly bad passenger experiences, but it is difficult to assess how common such occurrences are.

### **Enforcement and complaint handling by NEBs**

- 7.17 Member States are required to designate a body responsible for enforcing the Regulation regarding flights from or arriving at its territory. They may also designate separate bodies responsible for handling complaints, and for enforcing Article 8. All Member States except Slovenia have designated an NEB. In the majority of States, the NEB for this Regulation is the same organisation as the NEB for Regulation 261/2004, in most cases the Civil Aviation Authority. In a number of States, the Regulation is not explicitly referred to in the law designating the NEB, and in Spain, the imposition of sanctions has been challenged, in one case successfully, on the basis that the NEB was not competent to impose the sanction.
- 7.18 Member States are also required to introduce penalties in national law for infringements of the Regulation, which must be effective, proportionate and dissuasive. All States except Poland and Sweden have introduced sanctions into national law, although there are a number of States where sanctions have not been introduced for infringements of all Articles. There is significant variation in the level of the maximum sanctions which can be imposed for infringements, and in some States the fines may not be at a high enough level to be dissuasive. While some States allow unlimited fines to be imposed and may also impose a prison sentence, maximum sanctions in Estonia, Lithuania and Romania are lower than €1,000.
- 7.19 The Regulation allows any passenger who believes that the Regulation has been infringed, and is dissatisfied with the response they have received from the service provider, to make a complaint to the appropriate body (usually an NEB). However, very few complaints have been received relating to the Regulation: to date, since the introduction of the Regulation, 1,110 complaints have been received, compared to a total of 3.2 million passengers assisted in 2009 across the case study sample of 21 EU airports. There is also a significant disparity in which States had received complaints: 80% of all complaints about infringements of the Regulation were received by the UK NEBs; none of the NEBs in the other 26 Member States had received more than 50 complaints.
- 7.20 In the UK, national law grants rights additional to those in the Regulation: passengers who suffer injury to feelings as a result of an infringement of the Regulation may seek financial compensation from the air carrier or airport concerned. This is in line with

disability rights legislation applying to other sectors in the UK. A consequence of this is that the process for handling complaints is significantly different in the UK from other Member States, because passengers may have a right to claim compensation from the carrier or airport concerned. At least in part, this also explains the significantly higher number of complaints in the UK compared to the other Member States.

- 7.21 Where an NEB identifies an infringement (through a complaint or other means) it may choose to enforce the Regulation by imposing sanctions. No sanctions have yet been imposed, but the NEBs for France, Portugal and Spain have opened proceedings to impose fines. In most States, the process to impose sanctions is equivalent to that for Regulation 261/2004. In a number of States, there are likely to be significant practical difficulties in imposing and collecting sanctions, in particular in relation to airlines registered in different Member States. This is due to the same reasons identified in our recent study for the Commission of Regulation 261/2004<sup>14</sup>: either specific limitations in national law on imposition of sanctions on foreign companies, or administrative requirements which cannot be met if the carrier is based outside the State. This means that, in these States, the system of sanctions cannot be considered to be dissuasive as required by the Regulation.
- 7.22 There is no requirement in the Regulation that the NEB must be separate from the service providers that it has to regulate. The only case we have identified where the NEB is also a service provider is Greece, where HCAA is the operator of the airports other than Athens, as well as the NEB. Although not an infringement of the Regulation, this is a breach of the principle of separation of regulation and service provision. As noted above, the most significant failure to implement the Regulation that we have identified is at the HCAA airports, and HCAA has not imposed a sanction on itself for this failure to implement the Regulation.
- 7.23 Many NEBs have taken at least some action, other than the monitoring of complaints, to assess whether service providers were complying with the Regulation. NEBs in 14 of the 16 case study States have undertaken at least one inspection of airports for compliance with the Regulation. However, most inspections have focused on checks of systems and procedures, and did not assess the actual experience of PRMs using the service provided by the airport. NEBs for 9 of the 14 States have undertaken no direct monitoring of the charges levied by airports for providing PRM services, although Hungary and Italy informed us that they had undertaken in-depth audits of the charges levied at airports.
- 7.24 Member States are required to take measures to inform PRMs of their rights under the Regulation, and the possibility of complaining to appropriate bodies. Of those that provided information, relatively few NEBs had made significant efforts to promote awareness of the Regulation by passengers; only two informed us of national public awareness campaigns they had undertaken, and even in one of these States, a key national PRM organisation was not aware that the public campaign had taken place. Awareness of the NEBs performance appeared in general to be poor: most

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<sup>14</sup> Evaluation of Regulation 261/2004; Steer Davies Gleave on behalf of European Commission, February 2010

stakeholders contacted for the study held no opinion on the effectiveness of enforcement by NEBs, and many informed us that this was because they had had no interaction with them.

### **Other issues that have arisen with the Regulation**

7.25 Stakeholders also pointed out a number of other issues with the Regulation. Whilst few significant problems have been identified with the drafting of the Regulation, the following issues were identified:

- there is a conflict between Recital 17 and Article 14, regarding which NEB is responsible for enforcing the Regulation in relation to air carriers;
- the definition of PRM used in the Regulation is very broad, and could be interpreted to include some categories of passenger who it might not have been intended to cover (such as obese passengers, or even passengers temporarily incapacitated due to excess alcohol consumption); and
- the Regulation does not specify in detail the policies or procedures that have to be followed by air carriers, particularly if compared to the equivalent US regulations, and this has resulted in significant differences in policies between carriers.

7.26 In addition, stakeholders emphasised the significant differences between the Regulation and the equivalent US regulations on carriage of PRMs (14 CFR part 382). These can cause difficulties for air carriers, as part 382 applies to non-US carriers on flights to/from the US and all other flights that are operated as codeshares with US carriers (even if not to/from the US). The most significant differences are:

- in most circumstances, part 382 does not permit carriers to request pre-notification;
- part 382 does not allow limits on the number of PRMs on an aircraft and limits the circumstances in which an accompanying passenger may be required; and
- part 382 places the responsibility for provision of PRM assistance services on the air carrier, whereas the Regulation places this responsibility on the airport.

### **Conclusions**

7.27 Overall, despite difficulties with service provision at some airports, the services required by the Regulation have been implemented at most European airports and compliance with the Regulation appears to be relatively good. Most stakeholders considered that the quality of service provision had improved since the introduction of the Regulation, although some airlines strongly disagreed with this.

7.28 The key issue we have identified with the implementation of the Regulation is that there are significant differences between carriers in their policies on carriage of PRMs. This arises in part from the fact that the Regulation does not specify in detail the services to be provided and the procedures to be followed, in particular if compared to the equivalent US regulations on carriage of PRMs. The Regulation allows carriers to refuse carriage or require a passenger to be accompanied on the basis of safety requirements, but these requirements are not specified in law, and therefore there are significant differences in interpretation of these requirements.

## 8. RECOMMENDATIONS

### Overview

- 8.1 This section sets out our recommendations relating to how to improve the operation and enforcement of the Regulation. We present first a number of recommendations which would improve the operation of the Regulation without requiring any changes to be made to the text. However, we believe some changes are necessary which could only be implemented through amendments to the Regulation.

### Measures to improve the operation of the Regulation

- 8.2 This section sets out measures to improve the operation of the Regulation. It covers the following:
- improvement in the operation of PRM services at airports;
  - issues relating to the carriage of PRMs by airlines;
  - actions to be taken by or in relation to NEBs; and
  - guidance on PRM services and carriage which should be produced by the Commission, in consultation with other parties.

### Airports

- 8.3 All airports in the sample for the study had implemented the provisions of the Regulation in some form, although as the Regulation does not precisely specify the quality of service to be provided, PRM organisations have reported this as being variable. We do not recommend any significant changes, and recommend a number of measures which will help airports to move towards consistency of service.

### *Maintain allocation of responsibility*

- 8.4 Several airlines (primarily those operating low-cost business models) argued in their submissions to the study that they should be permitted to provide or contract their own PRM assistance services, as they could provide it more cost-efficiently than airports. We believe that this could create an incentive to minimise the service provided and hence would risk a reduction in service quality. Whilst there were initially significant issues with the quality of PRM service provision at certain airports, most stakeholders believed that these issues had now been addressed, and therefore we recommend that allocation of responsibility for PRM services to airports should **not** be amended.

### *Monitor misuse of services*

- 8.5 A number of airports (in particular larger and busier airports) reported that the services they provided for PRMs were sometimes used by passengers who did not appear to have the right to do so under the Regulation. There was no consensus amongst airports about how significant this issue was. This variation in perception of the problem, combined with the nature of the problem itself, makes it difficult to accurately assess its extent. We recommend that the Commission monitor reports of misuse of services, so that it is alerted if the problem becomes more consistently serious.



*Improve provision of information*

8.6 Several PRM organisations informed us that provision of information on accessibility by airports could be improved. In particular, we were informed that many PRMs would find it helpful to have access to information, in a consistent format, regarding the accessibility of airports to which they were travelling. This could be provided through a webpage on an airport's website included, for example:

- the maximum likely walking distance within the airport;
- locations of any flights of stairs;
- the means used for access to aircraft (airbridge or stairs);
- any facilities available for PRMs;
- appropriate contact details for PRM services both for airlines and the airport<sup>15</sup>.

8.7 Whilst some of this information is often available on airport websites, it can be difficult to find and is not always complete. To address this, we suggest that ACI could develop a single website which would either include all of this information or alternatively provide links to the specific pages on airport websites which include this information.

*Share best practice on contracting of PRM service providers*

8.8 We identified two issues with the process for selection of PRM service providers:

- several airports which had subcontracted PRM services had re-tendered within 18 months of the Regulation entering into force, as there were significant issues with the operation of the service; and
- many airlines informed us that they did not believe the extent of consultation from airports was sufficient.

8.9 To address these issues, we recommend that the Commission, in co-operation with ACI, develop and distribute best practice advice on contracting for services, including:

- **Content and structure of the contract:** This could include the level of detail at which contract terms relating to services should be specified, and any penalties for failure to meet required standards. It could be provided in the form of a sample contract. This would help to reduce the likelihood of issues with the contract leading to retendering.
- **Recommended methods of cooperation:** This could give details of the level and manner of consultation an airport should undertake. It could detail how to involve airport users in consultation at all points of a tendering process, including from drafting of invitation to tender documents, to evaluating and scoring bids, and might include input on the eventual decision. It could also include how to involve PRM organisations in this process. Where implemented, this would improve the perception by airport users and other parties of airport consultation.

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<sup>15</sup> London Luton airport provides a good example of this; see <http://www.london-luton.co.uk/en/content/3/1427/how-to-book-special-assistance.html>.

*Share best practice on training*

- 8.10 Our research found that approaches to training of staff to provide PRM services varied significantly. In particular, there was significant variation in length of training (between 3 and 14 days) and method of delivery (videos, classroom-based or practical), to provide what should in principle be the same services. In addition, some airports reported that they had sought assistance on developing training from local PRM organisations, but the PRM organisations were too resource-constrained to be able to provide the required assistance. We therefore recommend that the Commission work with ACI and EDF to develop and distribute best practice advice on training, which would include recommended minimum levels.

**Airlines**

- 8.11 A key problem identified in our research is the lack of consistency between airline policies on the carriage of PRMs. These policies are subject to approval by the carriers' licensing authorities (which are often the same organisation as the NEB), but in many cases they approve policies with little or no challenge.

*Work with EASA to determine safe policies on carriage of PRMs*

- 8.12 Article 4 of the Regulation permits air carriers to refuse to accept reservations from a PRM, or to require that a PRM be accompanied, in order to meet safety requirements set out in international, Community or national law, or established by the authority that issued the carrier's operating certificate. However, other than minimal requirements in EU-OPS, Community law does not impose specific requirements regarding the safe carriage of PRMs. There is little published research into safety issues regarding carriage of PRMs, so even where licensing authorities do seek to challenge proposed airline policies or impose their own, there is a limited evidence base on which to do this. This results in wide and unjustifiable variation in airline policies.
- 8.13 Therefore, we recommend that the Commission work with EASA to determine policies on carriage of PRMs which are consistent with safe operation. Such policies should include any limits on the number of PRMs permitted on board an aircraft, where PRMs may be seated, and whether and under what circumstances PRMs must be accompanied. The policies should take into account the type of aircraft and the different safety implications of carriage of different types of PRMs.

*Airlines to publish clear policies on carriage of PRMs*

- 8.14 We have identified a number of airlines which are failing to publish clear policies on carriage of PRMs. We recommend that the Commission encourage the relevant NEBs to ensure that the airlines identified in Table 4.1 as not publishing sufficient information do so. The Commission could also encourage NEBs to review the policies of airlines outside the study sample to ensure that these provide sufficient information.

*Monitor pre-notification*

- 8.15 Pre-notification of requirements for assistance should have two benefits:

- it should ensure that PRMs are able, on arrival at an airport, to promptly receive the assistance they require to take their chosen flight; and
- it should allow airports to plan their staffing requirements efficiently, minimising the cost of service provision .

8.16 However, at present, as discussed in section 4.74 above, pre-notification is not functioning well. Of the 16 airports which provided us with information on levels of pre-notification, 11 have rates of pre-notification under 60%. The result of this is that at most airports, the rate of pre-notification is too low for the airport to gain efficiency benefits, and the incentive for PRMs to pre-notify is reduced (since at many airports a similar quality of service is provided regardless of pre-notification). Therefore the system as it presently operates requires airlines and airports to incur the costs of enabling pre-notification, but not to realise the benefits of reduced costs or smoother provision of services. We recommend that the Commission monitor the operation of pre-notification (for example by encouraging NEBs to collect appropriate data), and in future assess the situation and consider either eliminating the requirement for pre-notification or alternatively retaining it and providing passengers and carriers with more incentive to pre-notify.

*Encourage airlines to provide receipts for pre-notification*

8.17 Several PRM organisations reported problems where PRMs had pre-notified their requirements for assistance, but then found that this information had not been passed on to airport or airline staff. To address this, and to provide PRMs with evidence that they can use when making a complaint, we recommend that the Commission encourage airlines to provide PRMs with a receipt for pre-notification. Once this voluntary scheme has been in place for an appropriate length of time, the Commission could consider amending the Regulation to make it compulsory.

*Monitor implementation of ECAC Document 30 recommendations on carriage*

8.18 Section 5 of ECAC Document 30 contains a number of recommendations regarding on-board provisions for PRMs which it recommends airlines commission in new or significantly refurbished aircraft. These include (depending on the type of aircraft) the provision of on-board wheelchairs, provision of at least one toilet catering for the special needs of PRMs, and ensuring that at least 50% of all aisle seats should have moveable armrests<sup>16</sup>. We recommend that the Commission monitor uptake of these recommendations.

**NEBs**

8.19 The greatest problem identified by the study regarding NEBs was the lack of proactive measures taken to monitor or enforce the Regulation. In most cases this has not had significant detrimental effect, as most airports and airlines have implemented the provisions of the Regulation, but could become an issue if the situation changes in the future. In most States few complaints had been received by the NEB, and as a result

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<sup>16</sup> See ECAC/CEAC DOC No. 30 (PART I), 11th Edition/December 2009, Section 5.10.5.

the handling of complaints has not been raised as a significant issue.

*Encourage all States to implement the Regulation*

- 8.20 We identified in section 5.13 above that some States have not as yet either introduced penalties into national law for all infringements of the Regulation, or designated an NEB. We recommend that the Commission encourage all States to comply with their obligations under the Regulation.

*Encourage better promotion of rights under Regulation*

- 8.21 Article 15(4) of the Regulation requires Member States to take measures to inform PRMs of their rights under the Regulation and of the possibility of complaint to the relevant NEB. Of the NEBs which provided information on this point, few had taken direct actions to promote the Regulation. Many had published sections with information on their websites, but unless PRMs are made aware that this website exists and is relevant to them, we do not believe that this is sufficient. Only two case study NEBs informed us that they had commissioned national promotional campaigns relating to the Regulation. We recommend that the Commission takes actions to encourage NEBs to inform PRMs of their rights under the Regulation.

*Encourage NEBs to pro-actively monitor application of Regulation*

- 8.22 Article 14 of the Regulation requires Member States to take the measures necessary to ensure that the rights of PRMs are respected. Our research found that most NEBs were taking only limited actions to monitor the application of the Regulation (see 5.42), and few NEBs were directly monitoring whether airports were meeting published quality standards. Many NEBs rely on complaints as a method of monitoring, but without promotion of awareness of rights and of the NEB as the body able to receive complaints (see above), a low number of complaints cannot be interpreted as evidence that there are no issues with the application of the Regulation.
- 8.23 We therefore recommend that the Commission encourage NEBs to pro-actively monitor the application of the Regulation. This could take a number of forms:
- increased interaction with PRM organisations;
  - direct monitoring of quality of service provided, for example through ‘mystery shopping’ and other types of inspections of airports (which could be conducted in cooperation with PRM organisations);
  - collection of airline pre-notification data; and
  - reviews of airline websites for accessibility.

***Guidance to be produced***

- 8.24 We recommend that the Commission should, in collaboration with airlines, airports, PRM representatives and NEBs, develop a detailed good practice guide regarding implementation of the Regulation. This could take the code of practice issued by the

UK Department for Transport<sup>17</sup> as a model, and could form the basis for later detailed revisions of the Regulation. Publishing voluntary policies would allow potential future amendments to the Regulation to be tested in practice before adoption.

- 8.25 The good practice guide could address the following areas (some of which are discussed in previous sections on recommendations regarding airports and airlines):
- recommendations on safety limits;
  - the format and content of policies on carriage (including safety rules);
  - detailed training modules implementing the recommendations in Annex 5G of ECAC Document 30, in addition to recommended minimum duration;
  - consultation; and
  - airport accessibility information.
- 8.26 A key issue to be addressed in this guidance would be the quality standards to be published by airports. At present, most airports follow the format of the minimum standards recommended in ECAC Document 30<sup>18</sup> (see 3.57). However, these standards are a limited measure of the quality of service received by PRMs. We recommend that the Commission work with ECAC to develop recommended minimum standards which are wider in scope, and cover qualitative aspects of the service received. Airports such as London Luton, which publishes a wide range of quality standards which address all aspects of the service, could provide a model for this approach.
- 8.27 The guidance should also specify the information which should be included in carriers' published policies on carriage of PRMs, which should cover at least the areas identified in 4.8.

### **Recommendations for changes to the Regulation**

- 8.28 The measures described above could significantly improve the operation of the Regulation. However, we believe that some issues could only be addressed through amendments to the text, and therefore we also set out:
- Recommendations for some minor amendments to address issues with the text (such as areas where the Regulation is unclear) which we believe should be implemented as soon as possible.
  - Suggestions for more significant revisions to be considered in the longer term. These would require consultation with stakeholders and an impact assessment to be undertaken.

### ***Changes to be implemented as soon as possible***

#### *Training*

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<sup>17</sup> *Access to Air Travel for Disabled Persons and Persons with Reduced Mobility – Code of Practice*, UK Department for Transport, July 2008.

<sup>18</sup> See ECAC/CEAC DOC No. 30 (PART I), 11th Edition/December 2009, Annex 5C section 1.6.

- 8.29 We recommend that Article 11 be extended to require airlines to ensure that the personnel of their ground handling companies are trained to handle mobility equipment. Several PRM organisations informed us that damage to mobility equipment was one of the most serious problems for PRMs travelling by air, and that such damage could cause considerable distress to PRMs.
- 8.30 We recommend that Article 11 be amended to include the provisions in Recital 10, namely to specify that the provisions regarding training in ECAC Document 30 be taken into account when commissioning and developing training. This could be phrased in the manner of Article 9(2) on quality standards.
- 8.31 We recommend that Article 11b be amended to clarify that disability-equality and – awareness training is required for passenger-facing subcontractors as well as personnel directly employed by an airport. This would be consistent with Article 11a regarding personnel providing direct assistance. We were informed by one airport that an airline had disputed the level of PRM charges on the basis that the charges recovered the costs of training subcontractors, which the airline believed was not required by the Regulation.
- 8.32 We recommend that the Commission consider removing the requirement in Article 11c for disability-awareness training for non-passenger facing personnel, as it is not clear why this should be any more necessary in this sector than in others.

*Obligatory charges where costs recovered*

- 8.33 Article 8 permits airports to levy specific charges on airport users to fund the assistance provided under the Regulation, which must be reasonable, cost-related, transparent and established in cooperation with airport users. However, it does not *require* airports to levy such charges; several of the airports we researched for the study recovered costs through their general passenger charges, and did not identify the PRM component separately. Where specific charges are not applied, airports are not required to follow the requirements on reasonability, cost-relatedness, transparency and cooperation. We therefore recommend that, for airports above a minimum size, Article 8 be amended to make specific charges obligatory if costs are to be recovered from users.

*Airport charges*

- 8.34 We recommend that Article 8 be amended where necessary to make clear that PRM charges are airport-specific and cannot be set at a network level. At present, the translation into some languages (for example Spanish) could be interpreted to permit network charges, which we believe is contrary to the intention of the Regulation.

*Independence of NEBs*

- 8.35 We recommend that Article 14 be amended to require that NEBs must be independent of any bodies responsible for providing services under the Regulation.

*Scope of Regulation*

- 8.36 We recommend that Article 14 be amended to clarify that NEBs are responsible for

flights departing from (rather than, as is currently stated, both departing from and arriving at) airports in their territory, in addition to flights by Community carriers arriving at airports within State's territory but departing from a third country.

- 8.37 We also recommend that Recital 17 (which states that complaints regarding assistance given by an airline should be addressed to the NEB of the State which issued the operating license to the carrier) be amended to be consistent with Article 14.

*PRMs without a reservation*

- 8.38 Article 7 requires airports to provide assistance to PRMs arriving at an airport so that they are able to take the flight for which they hold a reservation. However, there may be rare occasions where a PRM (like any other passenger) arrives at an airport *without* a reservation, expecting to purchase a ticket at the airport. We therefore recommend that Article 7 be amended to set out the airport's responsibilities to such PRMs.

***Longer term changes to the Regulation***

- 8.39 The key issue that we have identified with the Regulation is that the text is much less detailed or specific than other comparable legislation (in particular, the equivalent US regulations on carriage of PRMs) and therefore leaves much more scope for interpretation and variation in service provision. We suggest that, to ensure greater consistency and that PRMs rights are adequately respected, the Commission should consider making the text more detailed and specific about the requirements for airlines and airports. The rest of this section describes key areas in which we suggest that changes could be made.
- 8.40 It would be necessary to consult with stakeholders about these changes and to undertake an impact assessment, and therefore these changes could not be introduced immediately.

*Provisions on safe carriage PRMs*

- 8.41 Once the Commission has established with EASA policies on the safe carriage of PRMs, particularly regarding any permissible limits on carriage and requirements for passengers to be accompanied (see 8.13), we recommend that either the Regulation or EU-OPS be extended to include these policies.

*Definitions*

- 8.42 We recommend that the following definitions should be clarified:
- **PRM:** The definition of PRM used in the Regulation is very broad and this has led to disputes as to whether obese passengers or those impacted by temporary injuries (e.g. winter sports) are included; and even that those temporarily incapacitated e.g. due to alcohol consumption might be included. We suggest that, at a minimum, the definition should be amended to clarify this, and ideally (but subject to consultation) a much more precise definition of passengers entitled to assistance should be used, along the lines of that used in the equivalent US Regulations (see below).
  - **Mobility equipment:** The Regulation should make clear whether this includes

equipment required by PRMs for the trip but not required for them to be able to take the flight (e.g. joists for assisted lifting of PRMs).

- **Cooperation:** The Regulation should to specify what measures airports must take when required by the Regulation to set out policies and charges in cooperation with airport users and PRM organisations - in particular in Article 8(4).

**Definition of disability used in US CFR part 14 rule 382**

*Individual with a disability* means any individual who has a physical or mental impairment that, on a permanent or temporary basis, substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment. As used in this definition, the phrase:

(a) *Physical or mental impairment* means:

(1) Any physiological disorder or condition, cosmetic disfigurement, or anatomical loss affecting one or more of the following body systems: neurological, musculoskeletal, special sense organs, respiratory including speech organs, cardio-vascular, reproductive, digestive, genito-urinary, hemic and lymphatic, skin, and endocrine; or

(2) Any mental or psychological disorder, such as mental retardation, organic brain syndrome, emotional or mental illness, and specific learning disabilities. The term physical or mental impairment includes, but is not limited to, such diseases and conditions as orthopedic, visual, speech, and hearing impairments; cerebral palsy, epilepsy, muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, cancer, heart disease, diabetes, mental retardation, emotional illness, drug addiction, and alcoholism.

(b) *Major life activities* means functions such as caring for one's self, performing manual tasks, walking, seeing, hearing, speaking, breathing, learning, and working.

(c) *Has a record of such impairment* means has a history of, or has been classified, or misclassified, as having a mental or physical impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities.

(d) *Is regarded as having an impairment* means:

(1) Has a physical or mental impairment that does not substantially limit major life activities but that is treated by an air carrier as constituting such a limitation;

(2) Has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits a major life activity only as a result of the attitudes of others toward such an impairment; or

(3) Has none of the impairments set forth in this definition but is treated by an air carrier as having such an impairment.

*Supplementary charges*

- 8.43 Although we have not been made aware of any incidences of airlines or airports charging for assistance provided under the Regulation, several airlines charge for the supply of medical oxygen, and for multiple seats where one seat is insufficient for the passenger (for example, in the case of obese or injured passengers). Several PRM organisations informed us that they believed these charges were unjust. We recommend that in any amendment of the Regulation it should be clarified whether airlines may levy such additional charges.

*Information on rights of PRMs*

- 8.44 Regulation 261/2004 requires airlines to display at check-in a notice informing passengers that they may request information on their rights under the Regulation. To assist the promotion of awareness of rights under Regulation 1107/2006, we recommend that the Regulation be extended to include a provision requiring airports



to publish information on the rights of PRMs (including the right to complain) at accessible points within the airport, for example at check-in desks and help points.

*Liability for mobility equipment*

- 8.45 The Montreal Convention allows for compensation for damage to baggage up to 1,131 SDRs (€1,370), however this is insufficient for many technologically advanced electric wheelchairs, which can cost several thousand euros. Although most airlines we contacted for the study informed us that they waived the Montreal limits in this type of situation, several PRM organisations informed us of cases where they did not. Even in the case that an airline voluntarily waives the limit, the PRM is in a position of uncertainty. This is exacerbated by the difficulty of obtaining insurance for such wheelchairs; the high cost combined with the high probability of damage means that the PRM organisations we spoke to had been unable to find any insurers willing to provide coverage.
- 8.46 We therefore recommend that the Commission work with non-EU States to amend the Montreal Convention to exclude mobility equipment from the definition of baggage.



**APPENDIX A**

**AIR CARRIERS POLICIES ON CARRIAGE OF PRMS**



APPENDIX TABLE A.1 POLICY ON DENIAL OF BOARDING, ACCOMPANYING PASSENGERS AND MEDICAL CLEARANCE

Airline	Circumstances for refusal of carriage	Circumstances requiring accompanying passenger	Circumstances requiring medical clearance
Aegean Airlines	Not stated <i>Unpublished limit on unaccompanied PRMs</i>	Not stated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRM requires oxygen</li> </ul>
Air Berlin	May limit number of PRMs on each flight for safety reasons	<p>'Advised' if the following apply (although the use of 'must' in terms of the criteria for the companion suggest that this may not be optional):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRM has severe walking disability</li> <li>PRM has severe visual impairment</li> </ul> <p>Also required if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRM is on stretcher</li> <li>PRM is mentally ill / blind / deaf if unable to follow crew instructions</li> <li>ID states that continuous accompaniment required</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRM has infectious disease</li> <li>PRM is on stretcher</li> <li>PRM requires oxygen</li> </ul>
Air France	Not stated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRM cannot safely exit aircraft alone</li> <li>PRM cannot follow safety instructions</li> <li>PRM has visual or hearing impairment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRM is on stretcher or in incubator</li> <li>PRM will need extraordinary medical equipment during flight</li> <li>PRM requires oxygen</li> </ul>
AirBaltic	<p>To meet safety requirements</p> <p>If aircraft doors make boarding physically impossible</p> <p>If number of PRMs exceeds number of cabin crew per flight, where PRMs form a large proportion of passengers on flight</p>	<p>PRM requires assistance beyond that provided by cabin crew. Cabin crew will provide additional information to PRMs, but will not:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist with eating or personal hygiene;</li> <li>Administer medication; or</li> <li>Lift or carry passengers.</li> </ul> <p>Also required if unable to follow safety instructions, e.g. if in stretcher, incubator, of if both blind and deaf</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRM has infectious disease</li> <li>PRM has 'unusual condition' which could affect welfare of crew or other passengers, or could be considered a potential hazard to flight or its punctuality</li> <li>PRM will require medical attention or special equipment during flight</li> <li>PRM has medical condition which may worsen during, or because of, flight</li> <li>PRM cannot use normal seat in upright position</li> </ul>

Airline	Circumstances for refusal of carriage	Circumstances requiring accompanying passenger	Circumstances requiring medical clearance
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pregnant passengers, except when uncomplicated and with more than 4 weeks until due date.</li> </ul>
Alitalia	Conditions of Carriage state that boarding may be denied if advance arrangements have not been made	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRM uses wheelchair</li> <li>PRM is blind or deaf</li> <li>PRM is on stretcher</li> <li>PRM is not self sufficient</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>PRM will require medical assistance on board</i></li> </ul>
Austrian	Not stated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRM cannot evacuate aircraft alone</li> <li>PRM cannot follow safety instructions</li> <li>PRM needs assistance in feeding or using toilet</li> <li>PRM is deaf and blind</li> <li>PRM requires assistance beyond that provided by cabin crew</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRM has chronic illness or disability</li> </ul>
British Airways	Not stated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRM cannot lift themselves</li> <li>PRM cannot evacuate aircraft alone</li> <li>PRM cannot communicate with crew on safety matters</li> <li>PRM cannot unfasten seat belt</li> <li>PRM cannot retrieve and fit life jacket</li> <li>PRM cannot fit oxygen mask.</li> </ul>	Not stated
Brussels Airlines	<p>To meet safety requirements</p> <p>If size of doors makes boarding or alighting physically impossible</p> <p>Limit of PRMs of up to 31 per flight depending on aeroplane type</p> <p>Conditions of Carriage state that boarding may be denied if advance arrangements have not been made</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRM is mentally disabled and does not have prior medical clearance of airline</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRM is on stretcher or bed</li> <li>PRM requires oxygen</li> <li>PRM is under care of a doctor</li> <li>PRM has unstable medical condition</li> <li>PRM suffers from illness</li> <li>PRM has recently been to hospital, or has operation</li> </ul>

Airline	Circumstances for refusal of carriage	Circumstances requiring accompanying passenger	Circumstances requiring medical clearance
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRM has medical disability and cannot be accompanied</li> <li>PRM is more than 34 weeks pregnant</li> </ul>
Delta	<p>On basis of safety, or if in violation of Federal Aviation Regulations</p> <p>If advance arrangements have not been made (this requirement is more stringent in the Conditions of Carriage)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRM requires constant monitoring at departure gate</li> <li>PRM requires assistance beyond that provided by cabin crew</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRM has infectious disease</li> <li>PRM requires oxygen</li> <li>PRM will require extraordinary medical assistance during flight</li> </ul>
EasyJet	<p>If the safety and welfare of the PRM or other passengers may be compromised</p> <p><i>In only extreme circumstances, e.g. where special seats or torso restraints are required, or if a passenger's condition makes them potentially violent or disruptive.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRM cannot evacuate aircraft alone</li> <li>PRM cannot communicate with staff</li> <li>PRM cannot unfasten seat belt</li> <li>PRM cannot retrieve and fit life jacket</li> <li>PRM cannot fit oxygen mask</li> <li>PRM cannot take care of own personal needs and welfare</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRM has infectious or chronic illness</li> <li>PRM has broken limb in plaster</li> <li>PRM is 28-35 weeks pregnant</li> <li>PRM is a child with a chronic lung disease</li> <li>PRM has severe asthma or has recently been prescribed oral steroids.</li> </ul>
Emirates	Not stated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRM needs to travel in stretcher or incubator</li> <li>PRM requires medical attention during flight</li> <li>PRM cannot follow safety instructions</li> <li>PRM cannot evacuate aircraft alone</li> <li>PRM has severe hearing and visual impairments and cannot communicate with staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRM is on stretcher</li> <li>PRM requires oxygen</li> <li>PRM requires medical escort or in-flight treatment</li> <li>PRM is carrying medical equipment or instruments</li> <li>PRM is 29 or more weeks pregnant</li> </ul>
Iberia	<p>If PRM poses a risk to themselves and other passengers for medical reasons</p> <p>Limit on number of PRMs per flight</p> <p><i>May also refuse carriage for security reasons, e.g. aggression.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In order to meet safety requirements</li> <li><i>PRM is considered as a 'medical case'</i></li> </ul>	Not stated
KLM	Not stated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRM requires assistance beyond that provided by</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRM has infectious disease</li> </ul>

Airline	Circumstances for refusal of carriage	Circumstances requiring accompanying passenger	Circumstances requiring medical clearance
	<i>Passenger cannot sit up straight</i> <i>Wheelchair will not fit through aircraft door.</i>	cabin crew <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRM cannot move unassisted between wheelchair and seat / toilet</li> <li>PRM not compliant with normal safety rules</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRM requires medical care or specific equipment in-flight</li> <li>PRM has medical condition that could result in a life-threatening situation or could require the provision of exceptional medical care for their safety during the flight.</li> <li>PRM requires in-flight personal care</li> <li>PRM cannot use normal seat in upright position</li> <li>PRMs up to 36 weeks pregnant who are expecting complications</li> </ul>
Lufthansa	Limit on number of unaccompanied limited mobility PRMs per flight	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not stated for non-US flights</li> </ul>	Stringent medical clearance requirements – see text
Ryanair	Limit on number of disabled or sensory or mobility impaired PRMs per flight. Conditions of Carriage state that failure to advise on special needs will result in denial of boarding.  <i>PRM limit can be overridden at the discretion of the crew on a case-by-case basis</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRM cannot use toilet unaided</li> <li>PRM cannot feed themselves unaided</li> <li>PRM cannot administer own medication.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRM requires oxygen, portable dialysis machine or continuous portable airway pressure machine</li> </ul>
SAS	Not stated  <i>When PRMs cannot be safely carried or physically accommodated</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Not stated</li> <li>PRM is blind, deaf; or both</li> <li>PRM is Disabled Passenger with Intellectual or Developmental Disability Needing Assistance</li> <li>PRM is on stretcher</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRM requires stretcher or other flat transportation</li> </ul>
TAP Portugal	Not stated  <i>Unpublished limit on unaccompanied PRMs</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRM is in an incubator</li> <li>PRM is on trolley / stretcher</li> <li>PRM requires oxygen</li> <li>PRM uses wheelchair or has 'great difficulty in mobility'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRM uses emotional support dog</li> <li>PRM is more than 36 weeks pregnant</li> </ul>



Airline	Circumstances for refusal of carriage	Circumstances requiring accompanying passenger	Circumstances requiring medical clearance
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRM is reliant on others</li> </ul>	
TAROM	Not stated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRM suffers from a disease</li> <li><i>PRM cannot self-evacuate</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRM has disease</li> <li>PRM requires stretcher</li> <li>PRM requires oxygen</li> </ul>
Thomas Cook	Not stated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRM cannot lift themselves</li> <li>PRM cannot use toilet unaided</li> <li>PRM cannot feed themselves unaided</li> <li>PRM cannot administer own medication</li> <li>PRM cannot communicate or follow instructions</li> <li>PRM reliant on oxygen.</li> </ul>	Unspecified – see text
TUI (Thomsonfly)	Not stated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRM cannot lift themselves</li> <li>PRM cannot use toilet unaided</li> <li>PRM cannot feed themselves unaided</li> <li>PRM cannot administer own medication</li> <li>PRM cannot communicate or follow instructions</li> <li>PRM reliant on oxygen</li> <li>PRM requires wheelchair.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>PRM is unaccompanied and does not meet self-sufficiency requirements</i></li> <li><i>PRM has declared medical condition</i></li> <li><i>PRM has requested a service for which there is a risk of abuse, e.g. extra legroom seats would normally be chargeable.</i></li> </ul>
Wizzair	<p>If medical certification is not provided on request</p> <p>If airline is unable to provide for specific medical requirements</p> <p>Limit of 28 PRMs per flight</p> <p>Conditions of Carriage state that boarding may be denied if advance arrangements have not been made</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>PRM unable to care for themselves</li> <li>PRM cannot use toilet unaided.</li> </ul>	Unspecified, but could be required in all cases – see text.



**APPENDIX B**  
**SERVICES PROVIDED BY AIR CARRIERS**



APPENDIX TABLE A.2 SERVICE AND RESTRICTIONS

Airline	Assistance dogs	Wheelchairs and other equipment	Assistance offered	Accessible information	Seating and onboard assistance
Aegean Airlines	Prenotification required Carried free in cabin Case / carrier required Subject to weight restriction Not carried on UK flights	Wheelchairs carried free Not subject to baggage allowance Passenger's oxygen allowed with medical certification Conditions of Carriage state that wet cell batteries are not allowed in cabin	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated
Air Berlin	Carried free in cabin Case / carrier not required Harness required	Wheelchairs carried in hold only Wet cell batteries subject to safety regulations Other medical aids carried free with medical certificate Limit of one wheelchair per passenger defined in Conditions of Carriage	Not stated	Not stated	Free seat reservation for passengers with severe disability pass (or equivalent) for 50% disability or more, and for companion  PRMs cannot reserve XL / extra large seats (i.e. in exit rows)  Conditions of carriage state that seating may be restricted for safety reasons
Air France	Carried free in cabin Leash required, attached to seat in front Muzzle not required	Up to two wheelchairs carried free of charge Onboard wheelchairs on most flights Stretchers accepted with medical clearance Oxygen allowed on board on payment of fee	Cannot lift passengers Cannot administer medication	Braille seat numbers in new aircraft Safety briefing in French or English Braille Some crew members able to communicate in French sign language	Additional seat may be reserved at discounted rate if needed Seats with retractable armrests Easy access toilets
AirBaltic	Carried free in cabin Excluded from weight	Carried free of charge Only collapsible wheelchairs	Will provide extra information Cannot assist with eating or	Not stated	Depending on aircraft, provide movable aisle armrest seats

Airline	Assistance dogs	Wheelchairs and other equipment	Assistance offered	Accessible information	Seating and onboard assistance
	restrictions Prohibited from exit rows	allowed in cabin Spillable batteries accepted if removed and packed and labelled Stretchers not carried Oxygen provided free with prenotification, doctor's verification and accompanying passenger	personal hygiene Cannot lift or carry passengers Cannot administer medication		PRMs cannot obstruct crew or emergency exits Companion must travel in seat next to PRM
Alitalia	Carried free in hold, or in cabin if space available Leash required Muzzle required	Wheelchairs carried free Stretcher service offered for a fee and with authorisation and accompanying passenger, only one per aircraft. Oxygen must be booked in advance, and not available on all flights	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated
Austrian	Carried free in cabin Leash required Subject to size and weight restriction Proof of status required	Up to two wheelchairs carried free, subject to space and prenotification for electric wheelchairs Onboard wheelchairs available	Preparation for eating Use of on-board wheelchair Accessing lavatory Stowing / retrieving carry-on items	Will communicate effectively as required.	Choice of seat may be limited Some seats with moveable armrests Accessible lavatories on long haul flights
British Airways	Prenotification required Limit on no. of guide dogs per flight Carried free in cabin Carried on all UK and certain international routes	Up to two wheelchairs carried free Preparation required for certain types of electric wheelchair Onboard wheelchairs on some flights Portable Oxygen Concentrators accepted with medical clearance, included in cabin	Cannot assist with breathing apparatus Cannot assist with eating Cannot administer medication Cannot assist with going to toilet Can assist in access to and from toilet when on-board wheelchair is available	Individual safety briefings and subtitles on English safety video Braille cards on some flights	Lifting armrests on some seats Cannot be seated on emergency exit aisle due to safety regulations. Will be allocated bulkhead seat when requested, unless already allocated to PRM. Adapted toilets on 747-operated flights

Airline	Assistance dogs	Wheelchairs and other equipment	Assistance offered	Accessible information	Seating and onboard assistance
		baggage allowance Conditions of carriage state that the airline reserves the right to refuse stretchers on any flight			
Brussels Airlines	Prenotification required Carried free in cabin Leash required Muzzle required Subject to national regulations	Electric wheelchairs carried in hold Spillable batteries accepted under certain conditions In-flight wheelchair on some flights Up to two stretchers on certain planes Can supply oxygen with prenotification and payment of fee in advance	Moving to toilet facilities Cannot lift passengers Cannot assist during visit to lavatory	Not stated	Not stated
Delta	Carried free in cabin Prohibited from exit rows Must occupy space where passenger sits No documentation required Subject to national entry requirements	One wheelchair can be carried in cabin per flight Wet cell batteries accepted with preparation One onboard wheelchair per flight Personal oxygen tanks can be transported but not used in flight Can provide oxygen on many flights, subject to medical certification Conditions of Carriage state that carriage of passengers requiring stretcher kit may be refused	Cannot assist with feeding or personal hygiene and lavatory functions. Cannot lift or carry passengers Cannot provide medical services such as giving injections.	Pre-booked passengers with hearing disabilities can be accompanied by agents who will provide updates on flight information	FAA regulations limit exit seats to certain customers Customers with service animals or immobilised leg are entitled to bulkhead seats On board aircraft with 100 seats or more, Delta provides a stowage location specifically for the first collapsible wheelchair

Airline	Assistance dogs	Wheelchairs and other equipment	Assistance offered	Accessible information	Seating and onboard assistance
EasyJet	Carried free in cabin if space available Must occupy space where passenger sits Harness required Proof of training and status required Only allowed on routes within UK or mainland Europe	Up two to portable mobility items carried free, subject to weight restriction Wet cell batteries not accepted No onboard wheelchairs Allow up to two oxygen cylinders per passenger, with medical certification Conditions of Carriage state that stretchers are not carried	Stowing and retrieving of hand baggage Opening food packages and describing the contents Cannot lift passengers Cannot provide personal care Cannot administer medication Cannot assist with feeding or children	Can provide a verbal explanation of the safety card information and location of emergency exits	Body supports required for passengers who cannot sit upright
Emirates	All animals carried in hold, subject to IATA Live Animals and national regulations	Wheelchairs carried free of charge Do not count towards baggage allowance Battery-powered wheelchairs subject to safeguards Stretcher kit provided Oxygen provided Portable Oxygen Concentrators allowed	Cannot assist with transfer Cannot assist with feeding Cannot assist with toilet functions	Not stated	Not stated
Iberia	Carried free in cabin Must not use seat Muzzle required Does not count towards luggage allowance Deaf passengers will require medical certificate	All wheelchairs carried free in hold Wet cell batteries accepted with preparation Carriage of stretchers may be restricted on smaller aircraft Oxygen allowed in cabin subject to certain conditions	Cannot provide sanitary, hygienic or safety onboard assistance.	Not stated	'The entire fleet has been adapted to carry Passengers with Reduced Mobility, despite the space limitations that air transport normally poses.'
KLM	Carried free in cabin Must be with PRM, but not using seat or blocking aisle of	Up to two pieces of mobility equipment carried free Collapsible wheelchairs allowed	Transporting passengers using on-board wheelchair	Braille safety cards Toilets with Braille attendant call	Seats with moveable armrests Leg rests available



Airline	Assistance dogs	Wheelchairs and other equipment	Assistance offered	Accessible information	Seating and onboard assistance
	exit Leash required Subject to national regulations	in cabin, electric wheelchairs carried in hold Wet cell batteries accepted with preparation Onboard wheelchairs on all flights Stretcher service offered, subject to medically trained companion Oxygen allowed on board on payment of fee Own oxygen not allowed Approved Portable Oxygen Concentrators allowed	Cannot assist with eating Cannot lift or carry passengers Cannot administer medication Cannot assist with personal hygiene	buttons	
Lufthansa	Carried free in cabin Limited number allowed per flight Subject to national regulations	Wheelchairs carried free in hold (small collapsible devices allowed in cabin to/from US) Non leak-proof wet cell batteries not accepted except to/from US Limit on number of wheelchairs per flight Limited oxygen available with advance payment of an unspecified fee	Assistance in boarding / disembarking Stowing hand luggage Opening of food items Getting to / from toilet Cannot provide assistance in toilet Cannot lift or carry passengers Cannot feed passengers Cannot administer medication	Will explain arrangement of meal tray to partially sighted Flights to/from US section of website also includes: Separate safety briefings Separate briefings about delays and other issues Captioning of in-flight video in English and German	Disabled toilets in long-haul aircraft Flights to/from US section of website also includes: Bulkhead seats provided if travelling with service animal Some seats with lifting armrests May not be able to sit near exit
Ryanair	Carried free in cabin Must travel on floor at passenger's feet Max of 4 per flight Not carried on some international routes	Wheelchairs carried free of charge in hold Not subject to weight limit Wet cell batteries not accepted One oxygen request per flight allowed at cost of £100.	Will provide water for taking medication Cannot administer medication Cannot lift passengers Cannot assist with personal hygiene	Not stated	Passengers with reduced mobility, or whose physical size prevents them from moving quickly cannot be seated near exit. Passengers with pre-booked special assistance will be

Airline	Assistance dogs	Wheelchairs and other equipment	Assistance offered	Accessible information	Seating and onboard assistance
		Personal oxygen not allowed on board Conditions of carriage state that stretchers are not carried			boarded after general boarding is completed as seats will be held on board. Conditions of carriage state that seating may be restricted for safety reasons
SAS	Carried free in cabin Case / carrier not required Excluded from weight restriction	One collapsible and one power-driven wheelchair carried free of charge Wet cell batteries accepted as cargo In-flight wheelchair on some flights Personal oxygen allowed if required for transport to/from aircraft Will provide oxygen with payment of fee	Cannot lift passengers Cannot assist during visit to lavatory	Not stated	Not stated
TAP Portugal	Dogs and cats allowed in cabin Leash required Must not occupy a seat Must comply with sanitary regulations Proof of status required	Prenotification of type of wheelchair battery required On-board wheelchair on larger planes Stretchers accepted in economy class subject to medically trained companion Oxygen provided with medical certification Personal oxygen not allowed	Not obliged to provide any on-board assistance contradicting passenger statement of self-reliance, e.g. assistance in toilet, lifting, carrying or feeding.	Not stated	May request an additional seat for greater comfort in coach class only. This seat must be requested when booking and is charged as an occupied place
TAROM	Prenotification required Carried free in cabin Case / carrier not required	Wheelchairs carried free and allowed in cabin on some planes Preparation of some electric	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated

Airline	Assistance dogs	Wheelchairs and other equipment	Assistance offered	Accessible information	Seating and onboard assistance
	Muzzle required	wheelchairs may be required Stretchers not allowed on certain planes. PRM using a stretcher is considered as 'medical case' and is consequently required to obtain a medical certificate, and to be accompanied by a medical professional. Oxygen provided free, subject to limits on no of passengers per flight Personal oxygen not allowed			
Thomas Cook	Carried on many routes	Wheelchairs carried free in hold Electric wheelchairs accepted subject to IATA Dangerous Goods Regulations Limit on no of wheelchairs Stretchers not carried One oxygen request per flight allowed at cost of £100. Personal oxygen not allowed on board	Can assist in opening food containers	Will describe catering arrangements to blind people In-flight safety video includes subtitles Also offer separate briefing about safety procedures for passengers with hearing impairments	PRMs cannot be seated near exits
TUI (Thomsonfly)	Carried on many routes Conditions of Carriage state that this will incur 'a nominal charge'	Wheelchairs carried free in addition to normal baggage allowance Electric wheelchairs accepted subject to IATA Dangerous Goods Regulations Passengers may bring their own oxygen supply onboard if authorised to do so by Special	Not stated	Not stated	Not stated

Airline	Assistance dogs	Wheelchairs and other equipment	Assistance offered	Accessible information	Seating and onboard assistance
Assistance Team.					
Wizzair	Not stated	Wheelchairs carried subject to weight limit Spillable batteries not accepted Do not provide additional oxygen, and passengers cannot carry their own supply Conditions of carriage state that stretchers are not carried	Free 'Meet and Assistance Service' provided to deaf and blind passengers on request	Not stated	PRMs cannot be seated on exit rows











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