



The Voice  
of European  
Railways



## ***Towards better accessibility of transport services***

Brussels, January 2013

Representing a wide coalition of European organisations acting on behalf of the railway sector and the transport passengers, we would like to share our common views on the upcoming European Accessibility Act. **We look forward to the European Accessibility Act as a key milestone to further improve the accessibility of goods and services to EU citizens, but also to contribute to the establishment of a level playing field between modes regarding accessibility of transport services.** In this respect, we would like the following elements to be duly considered by EU decision-makers:

- **Key role of transport for access to goods and services:** Accessible transport systems are crucial for the provision of accessible transport services to all passengers. They are vital for Europe's socio-economic welfare and they have a pivotal role for the daily life of citizens and their freedom of movement. In practice, it would allow persons with disabilities, older people, and more generally all persons with reduced mobility, to enjoy their freedom of movement, and to participate in and benefit from the internal market as any other EU citizen.
- **Holistic approach of transport:** We share the objective that the whole transport sector should be made accessible to all passengers, including persons with disabilities, older persons and persons with reduced mobility. Excluding transport accessibility for certain categories of passengers contradicts the vision of the Transport White Paper to go towards a single European Transport Area that facilitates seamless mobility and accessibility for all transport users. Access conditions of the transport sector as a whole needs to be, therefore, improved in order to deliver an accessible door to door service delivery to all passengers. Requirements on accessibility are already in

place in the rail sector and the European Accessibility Act presents a key opportunity to further foster solutions and initiatives to ensure the accessibility of all transport modes as well as the entire built area.

- **Increasing market demand for accessibility:** It is expected that developing transport services which are accessible for all types of customers can bring benefits for the entire society. Indeed, in view of Europe's demographic challenge, transport accessibility has become a crucial societal challenge and it is essential to ensure that transport services adapt to the needs of our rapidly ageing population.
- **Need of EU incentives:** The upcoming European Accessibility Act should create an incentive for the transport industry and should not result in a burden increasing costs of transport. A financial commitment of public authorities to invest in accessibility is thus fundamental to accelerate an achievement of the common objective to deliver a transport system that can be used by all passengers. In the case of the rail sector, EDF and CER have already called for National Strategic Investment Plans including milestones and appropriate public financing to enable the implementation of the upcoming revised standards on accessibility. The recognition of the relevance of EU funding opportunities for projects enhancing transport accessibility should be, therefore, properly addressed in the Act.
- **Strengthened dialogue between stakeholders:** Both the transport industry and the associations representing transport passengers have an extensive experience in working together on accessibility and are committed to continue this positive co-operative relationship. For instance, already before the entry into force of the rail regulation on passenger rights, the rail sector and EDF agreed on access conditions for disabled passengers and passengers with reduced mobility to be included in the individual terms and conditions of railways. To this end, the upcoming European Accessibility Act could provide an opportunity to look not only at the common objective of making the transport network as a whole accessible to all passengers, but also at a framework that supports voluntary initiatives and the exchange of good practices of the industry transport sector and its customers to further improve the accessibility of the transport system.

Undoubtedly, there is still a lot of work ahead of us to improve the mobility of all transport users, including persons with disabilities, older persons and persons with reduced mobility. Each of the transport modes has a key role to play there, and European legislation must guarantee a level playing field by setting minimum accessibility requirements applicable equally across transport modes. It is also through increased cooperation between users, operators, manufacturers and infrastructure owners that we will manage to go smoothly and efficiently towards an inclusive transport service that satisfies the needs of all customers.

We trust the European Commission to take due account of our common views in preparation for the European Accessibility Act.

**Interest groups supporting this joint statement:**

AGE Platform Europe

CER – Community of European Railway and Infrastructure Companies

EDF – European Disability Forum

EPF – European Passengers' Federation

**Contact details for each organization:**

AGE Platform Europe – Anne-Sophie Parent, Secretary General ([annesophie.parent@age-platform.eu](mailto:annesophie.parent@age-platform.eu)); Julia Wadoux, Policy Officer ([julia.wadoux@age-platform.eu](mailto:julia.wadoux@age-platform.eu))

CER – Libor Lochman, Executive Director ([Libor.Lochman@cer.be](mailto:Libor.Lochman@cer.be))

EDF – Carlotta Besozzi, Director ([carlotta.besozzi@edf-feph.org](mailto:carlotta.besozzi@edf-feph.org))

EPF – Trevor Garrod, Chairman ([chairman@epf.eu](mailto:chairman@epf.eu))