

Meeting the Needs of Disabled Air Travellers: Best Practice in Ground Handling and Staff Training

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A European Union Regulation approved late last year significantly strengthens the rights of disabled people and people with reduced mobility (prms) when they travel by air. The Regulation, which will come into effect from early 2008 applies to airports with annual traffic higher than 150 000 commercial passenger movements as well as to airlines and introduces a range of requirements including the provision of assistance throughout the airport and to board the aircraft.

The European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) has drawn up codes of good practice in meeting the needs of disabled travellers and prms in the provisions of ground handling and in staff training. The codes are aimed at helping airports and airlines prepare for the introduction of the Regulation and provide a high quality service that will enable disabled people to travel with confidence and with dignity.

The presentation will explore some of the barriers facing disabled air travellers in Europe today and will describe the key elements of best practice set out in the codes.