RAIL PASSENGERS RIGHTS

Experience and challenges SNCB

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WHO AM I?

Name: Tommy Zonnekein
Function: Accessibility Manager @ SNCB (Belgian Railway Company)
According to the latest BeMob survey (FPS Mobility and Transport, 2023), more than one Belgian in four experiences difficulties using public transport.

Every traveler benefits from easily accessible platforms, ground-level boarding of trains, information displayed both visually and audibly, a digital platform where all relevant info is visible at a glance.

SNCF plays a key role in making public transport more accessible for everyone.
ACCESSIBILITY TODAY

- No match between rolling stock and infrastructure
- 132 stations with assistance for everyone + 27 stations with limited assistance
- PRM have to book assistance 3 to 24 h in advance.
The 4 pillars of an ACCESSIBLE RAIL SYSTEM

INFRA-STRUCTURE
- Autonomous Accessible stations

ROLLING STOCK
- Accessible rolling stock

SERVICES
- Assistance
- Information
- Ticketing

CULTURE
- Staff Training
- Stakeholder Inclusion
The 4 pillars of an ACCESSIBLE RAIL SYSTEM

- INFRA-STRUCTURE
  - Autonomous Accessible stations

- ROLLING STOCK
  - Accessible rolling stock

- SERVICES
  - Assistance
  - Information
  - Ticketing

- CULTURE
  - Staff Training
  - Stakeholder Inclusion

The pillars to which the passengers rights regulation relates
SERVICES

- Right to transport
- Assistance
- Services on board
- Information on accessibility
- Ticketing
Where and under which conditions assistance is provided is determined by the National Implementation Plan Accessibility from 2016 as referred to in the TSI 1300/2014.

It requires the involvement of
- public authorities,
- infrastructure manager,
- rail operators and
- stakeholder organizations.
132 stations with assistance free of charge (limited assistance in 27 additional stations.)
Increasing the number of stations with assistance is planned during the course of our public service agreement.

Reservation delay: 24h
(3h between 43 stations if direct connection)

Key Issues: accessibility of the station & availability of staff

The introduction of level access trains with automatic ramps should allow people in a wheelchair to travel autonomously
Right to transport

Assistance

Services on board

Information on accessibility

Ticketing

No extra services on board such as bars or resto

Our new and renewed rolling stock are equipped with accessible toilets and service and help buttons.

Since 2020 we actively involve stakeholder organizations in testing and evaluating the usability of these equipments.
One of our biggest challenges.

Projects are ongoing in making accessibility information available for a wider audience.

- Info on Stations
- Info on Rolling stock
Shift towards digital Channels
• Working together with AnySurfer to achieve WCAG compliancy

Large stations: Travel Store
• Mobility guides assist every passenger while purchasing a ticket

Small stations: Ticket Vending Machines
• Our future TVM (market is ongoing) will be equipped with an induction loop and allow users to contact an assistant when needed
CULTURE

- Staff Training
- Stakeholder inclusion
- User experience
Customer facing staff

- **Customer centered training** through blended learning. It includes awareness on accessibility and handicap.
- **Function specific** training: procedures, how to... (both basic as on the job)

Station design and maintenance

- **Awareness** training and interactive simulation on handicap
- Training on accessibility

Collaboration with **stakeholder organizations** in providing training and learning materials
CULTURE

Staff Training

Stakeholder inclusion

User experience

Stakeholder organizations
• Formal and informal platforms to discuss accessibility

Users with disabilities or reduced mobility
• We aim to actively involve users to improve the accessibility of our services (eg. Ticket machines, mobile apps, rolling stock, …)
• User test panel
The proof in the pudding is in the eating

- Polling **user satisfaction** on a daily basis.
- Provide **feedback** to the different actors in the company
FINAL TOUGHTS

We still have a long way to go, compared to some other European countries, and the speed of the transition will be the result of the efforts of all stakeholders in our society as a whole.

**Accessibility runs like a common thread through our public service agreement.** The idea that public transport should be accessible to all is gaining ground and **the passengers rights regulations helps us** realizing that idea.
Thank you!