Public Transport Passenger Rights and Quality of Service in the EU: Regulation and Standard

Regulation (EU) No 181/201117

Standard (UNI en 13816:2002

Giacomo pesaro, Porter Intl. Internship Program
Transport Today and Tomorrow

Regulation (EU) No 181/201117

The objective of Regulation (EU) No 181/201117 is to ensure an equivalent level of protection and assistance to passengers in bus and coach transport throughout the Member States.

It covers non-discrimination between passengers regarding transport conditions offered by carriers, rights of passengers in the event of accidents, non-discrimination and assistance for disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility, rights of passengers in case of cancellation or delay, minimum information to be provided to passengers, the handling of complaints and general rules on enforcement

The EU rules oblige Member States to designate "national enforcement bodies", whose role is to verify that transport operators are treating all passengers in accordance with their rights.

According to this law, in Italy, it was created the Transportation Authority

Passengers who believe that they have not been treated correctly should contact directly the transportation company that provided the service, or in case they are not satisfied, the national enforcement body of the Member State from which the service departed; (in case of services departing from third countries the national enforcement body in the Member State of the bus terminal or bus stop of arrival).

The local Authority:

- establish the minimum conditions of quality of transport services characterized by national and local public service obligations, as identified in accordance with local characteristics of supply and demand;
- define, in relation to different types of services and infrastructure, the minimum content of specific rights, including the nature of indemnity, which may require users to operators of transport services and infrastructure, subject to the additional guarantees that transportation companies may include in their services;
- define the patterns of the competition for the allocation of transport services, and establishes the criteria for the selection of committees authorities;
- evaluate complaints, petitions and reports submitted by the users and consumers, individual or groups for the respect of quality and tariff levels by the parties operating the services
- encourage the establishment of simple and inexpensive procedures for conciliation and settlement of disputes between operators and users;

Regulation (EU) No 181/201117

Rights applicable to long distance services (i.e. of more than 250 km) include amongst others:

1. adequate assistance (snacks, meals and refreshments as well as, if necessary, up to two nights' hotel accommodation, for a total amount of €80 per night, except in case of severe weather conditions and major natural disasters) in situations of cancellation or following a delay of more than 90 minutes in the case of a journey of more than three hours,
2. guarantee of reimbursement or rerouting in situations of overbooking or in case of cancellation or following a delay of more than 120 minutes from the estimated time of departure,
3. Information when the service is cancelled or delayed in departure.
4. Protection of passengers in case of death, injury, loss or damage caused by road accidents, particularly with regard to immediate practical needs in case of accident (including up to two nights' hotel accommodation, for a total amount of €80 per night)
5. specific assistance free of charge for disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility both at terminals and on board, and, where necessary, transport free of charge for accompanying people

Additionally, the following rights will be applicable to all services (including those below 250 km):

1. non-discrimination with respect to tariffs and contract conditions for passengers based - directly or indirectly – on nationality,
2. non-discriminatory treatment of disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility as well financial compensation for loss or damage of their mobility equipment in case of accident,
3. minimum rules on travel information for all passengers before and during their journey as well as general information about their rights in terminals and online; where possible, this information shall be provided in accessible formats upon request precisely in the interest of the persons with reduced mobility,
4. a complaint handling mechanism by carriers available to all passengers,
5. independent national bodies in each Member State with the mandate to enforce the Regulation and where appropriate to impose penalties.

Standard parameters for quality

Standard (UNI en 13816:2002): Transportation. Logistics and services. Public passenger transport. Service quality definition, targeting and measurement

The EN 13816 is the European standard for the detection of service quality of transport companies in public transport

Establishes parameters so that operators of collective passenger transport services are able to assume commitments to quality and schedule a service that meets the needs and expectations of their customers. Basically, adopting this standard the company ensure that the passenger opinion are the focus of the policy.

The ministry of transportation established that each transportation company has to adopt a Carta dei servizi (Passenger charter), with all the standards to adopt in the service they provide.
More specifically, the Chart of services will achieve the following objectives:
• improving the quality of services provided
• improvement of the relationship between the user and the service provider.

According to the standard, there are 8 criteria to measure the overall quality of service

- Availability
- Accessibility
- Information
- Time
- Comfort
- Security
- Environmental impact
- Customer care

The questionnaire, contains 19 statements in relation to the 8 customer service areas as defined by the European Norm 13816 and one general question on overall satisfaction. The objective is to understand cumulative satisfaction of bus customers.

Respondents were asked to best describe their reaction on a scale from "1 – disagree strongly" to "5 – agree strongly" to each of the following nineteen statements:

1. Availability
1.1 The bus service is usually reliable
1.2 The buses are frequent
1.3 The bus routes are convenient for me

2. Accessibility
2.4 It is easy for me to get on and off the bus
2.5 It is easy to move around inside the bus
2.6 It is convenient to pay for the bus / buy tickets

3. Information
3.7 It is easy to get information about the bus services
3.8 It is easy to find out how well the buses are running
3.9 If there are problems, I can easily find an alternative route

4. Time
4.10 The bus gets me to my destination on time

5. Customer Care
5.11 Staff are well dressed
5.12 Staff are helpful
5.13 It is easy to resolve problems or complaints

6. Comfort
6.14 The seats are comfortable and there is enough space
6.15 The bus is well driven and gives a comfortable ride
6.16 The bus is clean
6.17 The bus is quiet, well lit, ventilated and at an adequate temperature

7. Security
7.18 The bus is a secure place for me

8. Environmental Impact
8.19 The bus does not cause too much pollution

9. Overall Satisfaction (on a scale from "1 – very dissatisfied" to "5 – very satisfied")
9.20 How satisfied are you overall with the bus services in the city?

10. What are the 3 most important areas of service for you as a user of public transport?
(Respondents selected a 1st, 2nd and 3rd priority)
- Availability (frequency and reliability of the service, hours of operation)
- Accessibility (ease of getting on and off the bus)
- Information (availability and quality of maps, timetables and information on delays)
- Time (travel time and on-time running)
- Customer Care (helpful staff, responding to your suggestions or complaints)
- Comfort (temperature, ventilation, comfortable journey, cleanliness, crowding)
- Security (feeling safe and secure)
- Environment (effect on pollution, noise, congestion, etc)

SERVICE'S STANDARD

The standard can be formulated on the basis of quantitative indicators that are directly measurable and can be specific or general:

- Specific when referring to the single service provided, is expressed by a minimum or maximum and can be verified by individual user. For this purpose, specific standards must be properly communicated to users (example of specific standard: waiting time at stops);
- General when it is expressed by an average value referred to all the services related to the same indicator (example of general standard: the percentage of buses on time);

Some parameters used to measure standard's services are:

• Daily coverage of transportation: Standard 24h
• The regularity: racing made/programmed races (standard 85%)
• Punctuality: rides on time / rides carried (Standard 85%)
(A bus is punctual when the departure from the first station is on time and with a delay/advance of +/-20% of the time between the stations)
• Quality maintenances: number of interventions for failure for 1,000 km of mileage programmed
• Number of stops equipped with information board
• Updating information time at bus stops
• Average response time to complaints (Standard 30 days)
• Causalities every 10.000 km
• Percentage of vehicles with air conditioning
• Percentage of urban vehicles with fully lowered floor for accessibility to users with low mobility, compared to the total number of vehicles
• Percentage of buses with natural gas, hybrid, or electrical

Other parameters to measure user's <u>satisfaction</u> are:

• Level of responses to requests or complaints about the service
• Courtesy, manners and appearance of personnel (drivers, inspectors, etc.).
• Commitment to the environment
• Appropriate price of tickets and passes
• Comfort on board (ease of access, air conditioning, etc.).
• Functioning of the equipment on board (doors, stamping machines, etc.).
• Cleaning of the bus
• Comfort of the bus stops (bus shelters, light displays, etc.).
• Cleaning of infrastructure (shelters, bus stops, offices information)
• Driving behavior of the drivers
• Safety with respect to theft, pick pocketing or harassment
• Availability and clarity of the information (time, material information, etc.).
• Accessibility to tickets and passes

The identification of quality indicators constitutes the starting point to start the process of continuous measurement and improvement of quality levels of the service, i.e. the capacity to meet the expectations of users of the service over time.

As required by the Quality Management System, the results of the investigations are analyzed to identify the critical issues to be resolved and to define possible actions improvement with direct intervention, where possible, the causes of inefficiency.

In fact, the quality indicators are subjected to constant monitoring in order to verify the actual results (Quality Delivered) and compare them respect to the degree of customer satisfaction. In correspondence of the indicators quality targets are set as easily measurable by the same users of the service.

The standard has essentially two meanings:
- is a dynamic target fixed annually by the service provider
- is an element of transparent information for the user about the level of quality of service provided.

What are the benefits to be obtained from the implementation of the UNE-EN 13816 standard?

- An improvement in the competitiveness and quality of public transport
- Greater trust on the customer's behalf in the service offered and promotes the company's image among the society
- Ensures the satisfaction of customers who understand the bus service as a response to their needs and expectations
- The availability of a controlled service, allowing cost savings
- Continuous improvement in the Management System
- Enables the company to access data for making important decisions, such as:
    - •Costs
    - •Customer satisfaction
    - •Operation of suppliers
    - •Identify and solve potential problems
    - •Undertake improvement actions on behalf of the users
- Greater environmental conservation