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THE RIGHT TO MOBILITY FOR THE DISABLED AND MINORS ASSISTANCE PROVIDED TO 60 THOUSAND PEOPLE AT MILAN BERGAMO AIRPORT IN 2019

60 thousand reduced-mobility passengers assisted in 2019, a figure that has doubled over the last five years. This is the result for the Sala Amica service published by SACBO, the company managing Milan Bergamo Airport, where on average 160 arriving and departing passengers receive assistance every day for boarding and deplaning via Ambulift. In the third most important airport in Italy in terms of passenger movement, one out of every 115 departing passengers requires assistance.

An overall figure that reflects the commitment to the right to mobility for the disabled and minors, the theme of the seminar promoted by SACBO in collaboration with the Italian Civil Aviation Authority, and which allowed for an overview of the Management of Reduced Mobility Passengers and the experience gained in the application of the Autism Protocol at Milan Bergamo Airport.

“It is important to go beyond the obligations assigned to airport management - stated Giovanni Sanga, president of SACBO - in order for reduced-mobility passengers, whether they have a permanent disability or a momentary requirement for assistance, to have a positive welcome, to be facilitated in the various stages of departure and to be able to enjoy the services available for airport users”.

“The new eastern wing of the terminal, which is due to open this April, will allow a larger and more comfortable space to be dedicated to the Sala Amica, gained from the current location of the airside VIP Lounge on the first floor of the departure terminal - added Emilio Bellingardi, Managing Director of SACBO - A solution that will allow reduced-mobility passengers to be in direct contact with the airport environment”.

The assistance offered to reduced-mobility passengers at Milan Bergamo Airport received the approval of Monica Piccirillo, Airport Director for ENAC Lombardy, who expressed her appreciation of the constant exchange between SACBO and associations representing categories of disabled people, from the Association for Invalid Civilians to the Italian Union for the Blind and the Association for the Deaf, as well as various associations for the autistic, for whom assistance is the subject of a specific protocol that Milan Bergamo Airport was the first to adopt.

“The Italian Civil Aviation Authority, identified as the Organisation responsible for the application of Regulation EC 1107/2006 regarding the rights of disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility when travelling by air, is constantly committed, in the carrying out of its role and functions, to ensuring adequate standards of quality of the services offered by operators in terms of the criteria of efficiency, effectiveness and transparency - stressed Mark De Laurentiis, manager

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of the Italian Civil Aviation Authority's Charter for Rights and the Quality of Airport Services - in order to allow disabled and reduced mobility passengers to be able to use air transportation under accessible and adequate conditions on a par with all other citizens".

The activity of supervision and monitoring is carried out by the Authority through verification that the aforementioned European Community regulation is correctly applied, through auditing of the quality and range of assistance services offered to reduced-mobility passengers, through the approval of the Services Charter of airport management companies and domestic airlines, through the promotion on a national scale of best practices, and lastly through the promotion of initiatives such as that in favour of subjects in the autism spectrum entitled "*Autism. Travelling through the airport*".

This latter aspect was the subject of the speech made by Aldo Vignati, Manager for Quality and User Relations for SACBO. "Autism, which until recently represented an obstruction to air travel, is managed through visual guides and a process of familiarisation of the itineraries for departure from and arrival in the airport, thus offering the opportunity for flight to subjects who wish to experience this moment together with their families and companions".