

ENAC AND SACBO INTRODUCE THE PROJECT “**AUTISM, TRAVELLING THROUGH THE AIRPORT**” AT BERGAMO AIRPORT (ORIO AL SERIO)

Today, 26 October 2016, ENAC and SACBO, the management company of Bergamo Airport, have introduced the project “**Autism - Travelling through the airport**” devised by the organisation, in collaboration with Assaeroporti, with the airport management companies and industry associations.

The principal objective of the project, which began as a “pilot project” in Bari Airport in November 2015, is to help autistic people fly with peace of mind, allowing them to be able to see the airport’s organisation beforehand, thanks to ENAC’s identified procedure and in coordination with the management companies. It would also allow them to obtain information on the experience that they are about to be a part of through dedicated materials published on the management companies’ websites involved in the initiative.

SACBO, the management company of Bergamo Airport, has adopted the protocol, publishing it on its website (www.orioaeroporto.it) in the section dedicated to those with reduced mobility.

The project intends to provide some simple recommendations and basic strategies aimed at helping caregivers accompanying adults and children with autism to calmly undertake the travel itinerary. SACBO is prepared to welcome people with autism with structures, facilities and qualified and dedicated personnel, specific to the DNPA category (passengers with intellectual or behavioural problems).

With the aim of providing adequate and personalised assistance, suitable for the needs of the autistic individual, SACBO have included support facilities and associations organised in the area, which are able to assist families and/or the caregiver in the preparation and preliminary phases of flying.

The General Director of ENAC, **Alessio Quaranta**, has commented favourably on the initiative implemented at Bergamo Airport: “*The project launched by ENAC aims, above all, to create a more calming air travel experience for people with autism and their caregivers, making the airport experience more friendly and familiar for those affected, and creating as much of a harmonious connection as possible, while recognising the complexity of the situation*”.

“*After Bari Airport, and now Bergamo – stated **Giovanna Laschena**, ENAC Economic and Airport's Oversight Deputy Directorate – we hope that many other airports will soon participate in the project and, with the objective of focusing on passengers that ENAC also wishes to pursue as an institutional mandate, ensure the possibility for people with autism to fully exercise their right to mobility, with the guarantee of high quality standards*”.

*“SACBO has implemented the initiative promoted by ENAC, recognising the importance of the general attention that is required to weaker individuals who should be permitted access to the aircraft’s means of transportation – states **Emilio Bellingardi**, SACBO General Director –. The task assigned to the airport managing company is to provide high quality assistance for everyone, in every circumstance. The caregiving of an autistic individual is an additional responsibility that SACBO undertakes in a general context to welcome passengers who have reduced mobility or who are disabled, and with the support, professionalism and sensitivity of operating personnel appointed to this role”.*

*“Every year, 40 thousand passengers with reduced mobility pass through the airport of Bergamo - Orio al Serio on national and international connections – emphasises **Aldo Vignati**, manager of the quality of airport services and relationships with SACBO customers –. The assistance procedures are agreed with the main regional associations representing disabled people, certified on the basis of the International Standard ISO 9001 and approved by ENAC who verify the quality of service provided on a regular basis. The assistance process takes into consideration all the procedures and transit areas, inside and outside of the terminal, and even has a Sala Amica (designated waiting area for disabled people) as a reference point, complete with a wide-screen television, information screens regarding flight status, dedicated disabled toilets and staff who are always available to help”.*

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