



Správa železniční dopravní cesty

PRESS RELEASE

The railway approaches persons with sight handicaps

Prague, 20 July 2016 – Both Správa železniční dopravní cesty (the Czech Railway Infrastructure Administration) and České dráhy (Czech Railways) participate in a long term on eliminating barriers and improving conditions for passengers with a physical handicap in railway transport. For passengers with a sight handicap, they gradually install leading or acoustic components and voice information systems at railway stations and in trains. Správa železniční dopravní cesty continues the work of České dráhy while eliminating barriers at passenger buildings and as their new owner it currently prepares setting unified and comprehensible rules for handicapped passengers in a project designated as Orientation and information system at railway stations and stops. The project involves also the Unified organisation for sightless and weak-eyed persons in the Czech Republic (SONS) and will concern both passenger buildings and underpasses, platforms and other publicly accessible premises of railway stations.

Already now, leading touch components are installed at some railway stations on access points for sightless and weak-eyed passengers, These are especially signalling and warning stripes, leading lines, touch labels with inscriptions in Braille on railings in underpasses as well as acoustic components – e.g. orientation voice beacons in passenger buildings and on platforms, voice readers on electronic tables with information on trains' departures or integrated voice outputs

"The objective of our company is to implement such orientation and information components including new technologies which allow maximum participation of sightless persons in common life, that means also travelling", said Mr. Pavel Surý, Director General of SŽDC and added: "At railway stations, we will be gradually installing new space information panels with trains' departures and arrivals, their numbers, destination stations or delays at a maximum height of 160 cm above the ground. Voice readers or a headpiece connector will be commonplace".

SŽDC will moreover cooperate on extending acoustic phrases in acoustic beacons for sightless persons, their unified localisation and unification so that they are more comprehensible and can simplify movement and orientation in stations' premises.

Within cooperation with the SONS organisation, information electronic tables will be gradually selected to be able to read current information from given tables upon activation by acoustic signal. In underpasses on walls near accesses to each platform and near labels with Braille inscriptions 140 cm above the ground, tables with colour contrast will be installed with information about the order of sectors on the platform.

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Více informací naleznete na internetové adrese www.szdc.cz

ŽELEZNICE PRO BUDOUCNOST

The national carrier České dráhy also continues eliminating barriers for persons with a sight and hearing handicap which make moving and orientation especially in an unknown environment much harder for them. *"Our modern trains are equipped with an audio-visual information system which informs passengers with a sight or hearing handicap about the train stops, running as well as any possible exceptional events. Boarding is facilitated by acoustic beacons and a system of remote doors opening through a transmitter which is being used by passengers with a sight handicap. There are also labels with information in Braille in the cars"*, says Mr. Michal Štěpán, member of the Board of Directors of České dráhy responsible for passenger transport while enumerating all technical accomplishments facilitating travelling by train. Training of ČD personnel for assisting passengers with various handicaps is also important.

"We focus on helping handicapped persons while planning the journey already. The ČD website is designed in such a way for special electronic readers to transform them into a voice form. České dráhy also offers a special ordering system of transport for handicapped passengers. It is being mainly used by passengers on wheelchairs but it can also help handicapped persons and we can assure their accompaniment at the largest and most frequented railway stations", adds Michal Štěpán. He also reminds that interest in travelling quickly grows among handicapped passengers: *"This year, we have received more than 3,200 requests in the ordering system which is approximately by one-third more than last year for the same period"*. Next year, the company would like to extend services of its contact centre by a possibility of communication with persons with a hearing handicap also by phone, not by email only.

Making travelling more simple to weak-eyed and sightless passengers has a positive feedback. The possibility to outline feelings of sightless passengers while travelling by train to the public was welcome by representatives of the Foundation Fund Mathilda. *"Travelling by train for sightless persons has been recently much more agreeable, especially thanks to touch and acoustic leading systems. We welcome the efforts of SŽDC to expand these systems even by more components. This will lead to higher self-reliance of persons with a sight handicap"*, says Mr. Luboš Krapka, the Foundation Director. The Foundation Fund Mathilda was established in 2010 with a mission to support persons with a serious sight handicap. It looks for, supports and implements meaningful projects which can facilitate life for these persons.

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