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Special

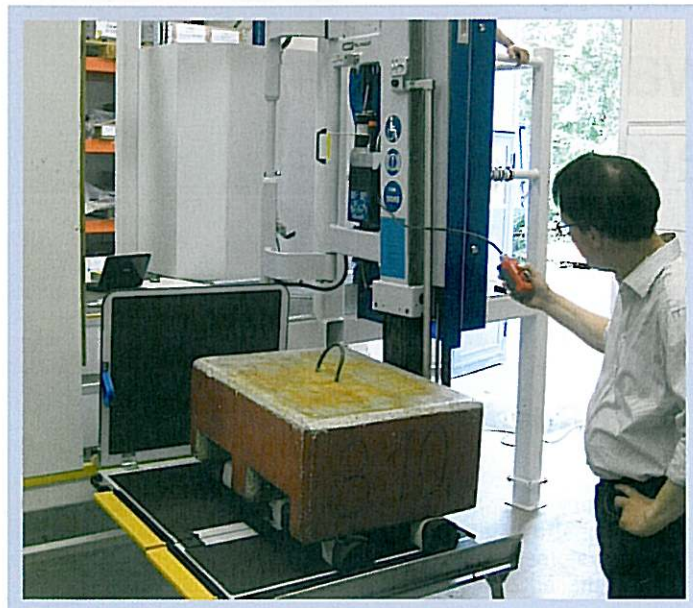
Accessible Boarding

Technology and Service Concepts, Experiences and Recommendations



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**Front cover:**

New Boarding Assistance System
for UIC Coaches, Tested on Bulga-
rian Network.

Source: Peter Tauschitz TU-Wien



Reinhard Rodlauer
Geschäftsführer
Rodlauer Consulting

Dear Readers,

as delegate for accessibility for the Austrian Federal Ministry of Transport, Innovation and Technology and as Austrian Federal Railways company coordinator of barrier-free services as well as electric wheelchair user myself it is my personal concern to highly engage myself for people with reduced mobility and barrier-free travelling.

The experiences I have made in my professional activities show however that in the Eastern European Countries barrier-free travelling by train will not be possible for a long period of time or only with huge difficulties.

For this reason I have initiated and planned the project PubTrans4All – Public Transportation for All. PubTrans4All is a R&D project funded with 1.8 Mio. Euro under the 7th Framework Programme of the European Union.

The PubTrans4All consortium consists of 13 project partners of seven different nations in which the participation of several Eastern European Partners is especially enriching for the project.

The aim of the project is to develop a prototype of a boarding assistance system that can be installed into new rail vehicles or retrofitted into existing rail vehicles improving accessibility for persons with reduced mobility. Accessibility for rail vehicles is particularly problematic since rail vehicles have a long life cycle (40 years or longer) which means that many currently inaccessible vehicles will remain in service well into the future.

The prototype of a boarding assistance system which will be developed in our project PubTrans4All is not only in compliance with EU regulations and the TSI PRM (Technical Specification for Interoperability – Persons with Reduced Mobility) but also highly contributes to fulfill the UN convention on the rights of persons with disabilities for an equal participation in society.

But this can only be a first step towards a full accessible mobility in Eastern European countries which is a precondition for the full integration of persons with reduced mobility in society. Only when full accessible mobility is given, persons with reduced mobility have full access to education and can exercise a profession.

Reinhard Rodlauer
(Reinhard Rodlauer)

■ Operators' needs

ing the vehicle-structure are regarded as important and very important.

3 Summary

The main accessibility problem for railway operators are the significant vertical differences, between one and very often three or four steps, as well as horizontal gaps between the vehicle and the platform. Because of the very long service life of the current rolling and their using for many more

years, there must be found temporary solutions until the fleet will be replaced with modern fully accessible rolling stock. For heavy rail it is difficult to develop a standard "one-fits-all" boarding assistance system as a universal accessibility solution due to the huge variety of differences within rolling stock and platform heights. The findings of the survey clearly shows, that one stair can still be overcome by persons with reduced mobility. In this case, ramps are in use, which proved to be an effective solution. In cases with higher vertical differences, electro-hydraulic lifts are the typical occasion.

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