

WRITTEN QUESTION P-1606/09  
by Riitta Myller (PSE)  
to the Commission

Subject: Equal rights for people with disabilities when using public transport

One of the European Union's objectives is genuine and effective mobility for EU citizens. In order to promote genuine mobility, however, all European citizens should have equal opportunities to travel. People with disabilities who require an escort when travelling are not on a footing of equality with other travellers on public transport. The differing practices in the various Member States with regard, for example, to whether the escort is required to pay a fare or not make the cost of travelling unpredictable. On train services operating in some Member States, it is customary to inform passengers in the country of departure that a person with disabilities will not be required to pay a fare for his escort on the outgoing journey but that when returning from another Member State payment of the fare may nonetheless be demanded, contrary to the original instruction. A person with disabilities who requires an escort must himself ascertain what the practice is in each individual Member State with regard to payment of an escort's fare on public transport. Other passengers do not have to undertake such laborious research in order to obtain information about travel.

Is it true that the Commission has plans to make it easier for people with disabilities who require escorts to travel? Does the Commission intend to introduce a uniform procedure for defining disability, which would involve issuing people who have disabilities with a certificate of disability? A single uniform permanent certificate would make it easier for people with disabilities to obtain services and promote mobility while at the same time guaranteeing fair and equal treatment irrespective of Member State. Is it true that the Commission is creating a common European escort's pass, applying a uniform procedure for defining disability, which will give people with disabilities evidence of their disabilities and of the need for an escort for presentation to the various service providers in Europe?