

EN

E-003290/2022

Answer given by Mr Breton
on behalf of the European Commission
(8.12.2022)

The adaptation of M2 or M3 vehicles, i.e. buses and coaches, for wheelchairs that are larger and heavier than conventional wheelchairs remains possible, but it is not mandatory under the current rules. The Commission is aware of the issue, but there is a lack of data concerning the exact scale of the problem regarding buses and coaches¹. More data would be required to assess possible solutions outside the type approval framework for motor vehicles.

In November 2019, the European Parliament and the Council adopted the General Safety Regulation (GSR) for motor vehicles², which did not include a revision to the accessibility requirements in the United Nations (UN) Regulation No 107³. The GSR started to apply in July 2022.

Since the answer to written question E-003365/2019, there have not been any developments at the UN World Forum for the Harmonisation of Vehicle Regulations on this particular issue of accessibility for larger wheelchairs, also taking into account that, during COVID 19, the working methods of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) working groups focussed on a limited number of priority deliverables.

For other modes of transport, the situation is clearer. As regards rail transport, the Commission considers including in the next update of the Technical Specifications for Interoperability for Passengers with Reduced Mobility (TSI PRM)⁴ new specification allowing the transport of more recent wheelchair models with greater width.

Annex III of Directive (EC) 2009/45 on safety rules and standards for passenger ships⁵ introduced wheelchair accessibility rules applicable for maritime passenger ships that are general enough to allow the transport of more recent wheelchair models with greater width.

¹ Respondents to the 2021 evaluation of Regulation (EU) No 181/2011 on the rights of passengers travelling by bus and coach did not raise this issue.

² Regulation (EU) 2019/2144, OJ L 325, 16.12.2019, p. 1–40, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2019/2144/oj>

³ <https://unece.org/transport/documents/2021/05/standards/un-regulation-no-107-rev7>

⁴ Commission Regulation (EU) No 1300/2014 of 18 November 2014 on the technical specifications for interoperability relating to accessibility of the Union's rail system for persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility, OJ L 356, 12.12.2014, p. 110–178, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32014R1300>

⁵ Directive 2009/45/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 6 May 2009 on safety rules and standards for passenger ships, OJ L 163, 25.6.2009, p. 1–140, <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/en/TXT/?uri=CELEX:32009L0045>