



## People with Disabilities: Integration of People with ASD in Aviation Security Services at G4S Belgium

**Background:** G4S follows a stringent policy of diversity and corporate sustainability responsibility. When G4S Belgium was awarded a new contract for Brussels Airport, the company was looking for an optimisation of its services, based on its values, and developed a programme for the integration of people with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) in aviation security services, in cooperation with the Belgian initiative "Passwerk".

**Collaboration with Passwerk:** Passwerk specialises in finding jobs for people with ASD and accompanies workers in their integration in the job market. The initiative supported G4S in selecting suitable worker profiles, providing recommendations to HR and instructors on the integration of people with ASD and the work environment. The private initiative receives public funding in Belgium.

**Adapting to the strengths and needs of people with ASD:** The initiative focused on the strengths that people with ASD bring to work assignments, such as:

- high levels of concentration and focus
- eye for details
- visual memory
- analytical skills

Likewise, the working environment for people with ASD needs to consider that they have weaker inter-personal skills, high sensitivity to stimuli such as light and noise, and a high need for structure and logical processes. At Brussels Airport, passengers' cabin baggage are remotely screened from a separate location, which allows people with ASD to work in an appropriate low stimuli environment. They can focus 100% on x-ray cabin baggage screening without having contacts with passengers.

**Selection of workers:** the first set of applicants was selected by Passwerk based on motivation, attitude, concentration skills and visual memory. The second selection round was carried out by G4S following the basic criteria set for security officers and an object recognition test.

**Training:** selected candidates followed an introductory training in a separate class that provided an emotionally safe and low stimuli environment. The rest of the training followed the usual, basic training requirements of aviation security staff (Basic Security Training of 139hrs, Specialised Aviation Security Training of 64hrs, X-ray training of additional 4 weeks). While trainings related to first aid and conflict management were more challenging for people with ASD, they scored for example 20-40% higher than usual apprentices in object recognition tests. All candidates passed the exams at the first attempt, while the normal score is at around 70-80%. Passwerk and G4S closely accompanied the applicants in these trainings.



**Work environment and coaching:** the workers with ASD are located in a separate screening room and only receive supervision through radio communication, not in person. They have fixed work schedules which respect workers' preferences for day- or night-time work. Deviations from screenings and breaks for operational reasons during the day are communicated in advance and work plannings are not changed within the current month. During shifts, the agents can also ask for extra breaks if needed. Passwerk continues to coach the workers on the job within the first year and provides ongoing feedback to G4S. A G4S mentor is available for the workers by phone .

**Feedback:** the security officers with ASD show high satisfaction with their job, as it provides structure and routine, and responds to their skills set. Their x-ray performance is above average. The company however had to work in the beginning with the other colleagues to enhance understanding of people with ASD and disperse fears of being replaced.

Contact: *Christophe Tack, Manager Aviation, G4S, Belgium*



Co-funded by the European Union  
Support for Social Dialogue - VP/2020/001

