



Example 2 **Conversion of an Historic into an Accessible Metro System**

City (country) **Athens (Greece)**

Similar service in Brussels (Belgium)

good practice for people with ...	kind of vehicle	kind of measure/approach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ... motor impairment ... visual impairment ... hearing impairment ... cognitive/learning impairment 	underground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> engineering/technology approach financial support measure

Project description

Athens is a symbol for the transformation of an initially non-accessible underground system into one that could become a prototype of accessibility for other historic underground systems.

The construction of the metro in Athens was one of the biggest and most complicated infrastructure projects in Greece. The system started out carrying 300,000 passengers daily, but it was not initially designed to integrate facilities for mobility-reduced persons. As the metro project unfolded, disability organisations were involved meaning that the final version of the metro system includes services and facilities for mobility-reduced people. This makes the metro a landmark for accessible public transport systems.

Athens’ metro consists of three lines. Line 1, the oldest, has renovated stations and is fully accessible to disabled people. In all stations one can find elevators, escalators, ramps, tactile floor guide lines for visually impaired people, visual and acoustic announcement systems, accessible toilets, easily readable signs and accessible connections between opposite platforms. The infrastructure and the underground trains of the new parts of the metro (lines 2 and 3) are also fully accessible for mobility-reduced persons.

A wheelchair user visiting Athens on holiday says: “... [we] navigated ourselves to the Athens Metro, which I have to say is wonderful and very accessible ...” This confirms the statement of Vasilis Galis, a researcher from the Linköping University, who said that the underground system in Athen symbolizes a landmark for accessible systems.

Sources:

Linköping University: From Shrieks to Technical Reports: technology, disability and political processes in building Athens metro www.ep.liu.se/abstract.xsql?dbid=7851 (07/11/2007)

ECMT: Developments in Greece, <http://www.cemt.org/topics/handicaps/develop/GRdev06.pdf> (07/11/2007)

Muffy Davis: Newsletter #1 - Sacramento, CA to Athens, Greece <http://muffydavis.com/index.asp?pgid=16> (07/11/2007)