

Project no.: **44289**  
Project acronym: **PTaccess**  
Project title: **Public Transport Systems' Accessibility for People with Disabilities in Europe**

**Specific Support Action**

**CALL IDENTIFIER: FP6-2005.SSP-5A**

**Priority Area 2.4: Quality of life issues relating to handicapped/disabled people**

**Task 1: Accessibility of public transport systems for people with disabilities**

Title of Report:

# **State of the Accessibility of Public Transport Systems for People with Disabilities in Cyprus (CT)**

**Status: final**

Start date of project: **1. February 2007**

Date of preparation: **3.November 2008**

Duration: **24 months**

Prepared by: **FGM-AMOR**

Quality control by: **JMP**

Dissemination level: **PU (public)**

## PTaccess – Public Transport Systems' Accessibility for people with disabilities in Europe

One specific area, for which there is still a lack of EU level data, is the accessibility of public transport for people with disabilities and its impact on their employment and social integration prospects.

The European project 'PTaccess' offers the chance to fill this gap in knowledge and obtain information on the current state of accessibility of urban and rural public transport systems in 25 EU member states. For each member state PTaccess analyses the state of accessibility of public transport from the point of view of national disabled organisations, national transport operators, and governmental authorities. For regions where public transport is not accessible PTaccess identifies and analyses applied alternative transport solutions (WP1).

PTaccess also identifies and analyses good practices and innovation in making public transport accessible, and enhances the scientific base of policy by providing a sound assessment of the costs and benefits of making public transport accessible (WP2).

Furthermore PTaccess deepens the understanding of the transport-related contexts of social exclusion of disabled people, and draws conclusions about the effects that accessible public transport has on the employment and social inclusion prospects for disabled people. (WP3).

The PTaccess-project runs from the 1st of February 2007 until the 31st of January 2009.

More information about PTaccess can be found on the project's website: [www.ptaccess.eu](http://www.ptaccess.eu)

The PTaccess consortium:

- FGM AMOR (Austria)
- Independent Living Institute ILI (Sweden)
- TU Dresden, Lehrstuhl für Verkehrsökologie (Germany)
- JMP Consultants Limited (United Kingdom)

This project is supported through the **Research for policy support** heading of the **European Union's Sixth Framework Programme**, PRIORITY 8.1 Policy-oriented research, Scientific support to policies – SSP CALL IDENTIFIER: FP6-2005.SSP-5A

Priority Area 2.4: Quality of life issues relating to handicapped/disabled people, Task 1: Accessibility of public transport systems for people with disabilities]

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## 1 Introduction

This document aims to give an overview on the current state of the accessibility of public transport in Cyprus (CT).

This document has been prepared within the framework of the European project PTaccess by FGM-AMOR based on interviews conducted with representatives of people with disabilities, transport operators and governmental authorities in 25 European countries.

In order to draw a comprehensive picture of the current state of the accessibility of public transport in Europe, the following topics have been discussed with the interviewed national experts:

- Statistical data
- Legal and regulatory framework conditions
- Organisational framework conditions
- Accessibility of passenger information
- Accessibility issues in ticketing
- Accessibility of stops and stations
- Accessibility of vehicles
- Safety, reliability and services
- Alternatives to public transport

### How this report has been made

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In order to obtain actual information on the current state of accessibility of urban and rural public transport systems in Europe, the PTaccess team has directly contacted and interviewed national experts within 25<sup>1</sup> EU member states. In each of these 25 member states a representative of a national disabled organisation, a representative of national transport operators, and a representative of a governmental authority have been interviewed and asked to provide their point of view regarding the accessibility of public transport in their country. In order to obtain comparable interview results in each of these countries, interview guidelines and questionnaires have been prepared by the PTaccess consortium. The interviews (at least three per country) have been conducted personally by “national contact persons” in their national language.

For each of the investigated 25 countries the results of all the interviews with the national experts have been compiled into a draft “country report” by FGM-AMOR. These “country reports” describe the state of the accessibility of public transport from the point of view of disabled people, transport operators and governmental authorities. In order to make sure that the interview results have been interpreted correctly, these draft country reports have been checked and corrected by the national contact persons, who had conducted the interviews with the national experts. This is the finalised country report for Cyprus (CT).

### What can be expected from this report

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This report gives an overview of the state of the accessibility of public transport in Cyprus (CT). However, this report does not provide only “official” data and information, since in most countries such data and information does not exist. Instead the report provides spotlights on the current situation regarding the accessibility of public transport from the subjective, but informed, point of view of people with disabilities, transport operators and

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<sup>1</sup> At the time of the preparation of the PTaccess-project Bulgaria and Romania haven't been member states of the European Union, yet. Therefore no interviews have been conducted in these two countries.

governmental authorities. Since each interview-partner brought in her/his subjective viewpoint, it must not be expected to get an objective overview of the situation in the country. However, by asking different experts (representing three important stakeholder groups) about their point of view, and by taking into account the viewpoints of all these concerned stakeholder-groups the authors of this report hope to be able to draw a picture of the situation regarding the accessibility of public transport for people with disabilities in Cyprus (CT) that is not too biased.

**Important:** The reader of this report must always keep in mind that this report is based on the viewpoints of individual people (i.e. each interview partner has brought in her/his personal point of view and her/his personal experiences), and therefore the information given in this report must not be interpreted as an objective official “national” view!

### How to use this report

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People, who are interested to get **more (detailed) information on the accessibility of public transport in Cyprus (CT)**, should read this “country report”. There are also “country reports” for each of the other 24 countries, where PTaccess surveys have been made.

People, who are interested to get **a quick overview on the actual state of the accessibility of public transport in Europe**, should read chapter 3 of the summary report “State of the Accessibility of Public Transport Systems for People with Disabilities in Europe”.

People, who would like to know more **details about the interviews** which form the basis of this report, should read Annex II of the summary report “State of the Accessibility of Public Transport Systems for People with Disabilities in Europe”, where all interviewers, interview-partners and questionnaires are listed.

**2 Accessibility of Public Transport in Cyprus (CY)**

## 2.1 General Information

### 2.1.1 About the PTaccess interviews

Interviewer:	Name	Organisation
PTaccess National Contact Person	Michalis Nikiforou	Lardis & Partners
Interview partners:	Name	Organisation
Representative of Transport Operators	George Kyriacou, Managing Director	Limassol Urban Bus Company (E.A.L.) Ltd
Representative of People with Disabilities	Mr Dimitris Lambrianides, President	Cyprus Organisation of the Paraplegic
Representative of Governmental Authority	George Tsiamettis	Ministry of Communications & Works - Road Transport Department

**Table 1: Interviewer and Interview-partners in Cyprus**

Improving the accessibility of public transport services in Cyprus does not appear to be a priority for bus operators or the government. However, improvement of the existing public transport system is becoming an issue: the government is now aware that the EU will divert the money from the EU Cohesion Funds from projects for building new roads to improving the public transport system. As part of this new policy, it is anticipated that the existing bus fleet will be upgraded. The new buses in line with the EU Directive 2001/85 will comply with the necessary technical specifications that will make them accessible for disabled people. Improvement of the infrastructure e.g. bus stops, terminal stations etc, will take more time to be implemented.

Disability organisations in Cyprus are now represented by one confederation (The Cyprus Confederation of Organisations of the Disabled). In fact there is a new law 143(I)/2006 which forces every governmental authority to consult this confederation if a decision on issues related to disabled people has to be made.

Bus operators in Cyprus are non-profit organisations which operate on a district level. There are smaller organisations covering rural areas. The government exercises its policy on transport matters through the Road Transport Department of the Ministry of Communications & Works.

## 2.1.2 Statistical Data from Cyprus

Statistical Data for Cyprus	
Number of inhabitants	715,000 <sup>2</sup>
Inhabitants with disabilities	53,425 (7.4% of the total population <sup>3</sup> )
Inhabitants with motor impairments	8,738 (1.2% of the total population <sup>4</sup> )
Inhabitants with visual impairments	1,826 (0.25% of the total population <sup>5</sup> )
Inhabitants with hearing impairments	615 (0.08% of the total population <sup>6</sup> )
Inhabitants with cognitive / learning impairments	no data available
Inhabitants who are functional illiterates	no data available
Share of disabled people living in urban areas	no data available
Share of disabled people at working age	no data available
Share of disabled people at working age who are actually working	no data available <sup>7</sup>

**Table 2: Statistical data for Cyprus**

<sup>2</sup> Source: Statistical service of Cyprus

<sup>3</sup> Source: Cyprus Confederation of Organisations of the Disabled. Total number 53,425: people with long standing health problems including disabilities

<sup>4</sup> Source: Statistical Service of the Republic of Cyprus, Survey for People with Long Standing Disabilities, 2002

<sup>5</sup> Source: Statistical Service of the Republic of Cyprus, Survey for People with Long Standing Disabilities, 2002

<sup>6</sup> Source: Statistical Service of the Republic of Cyprus, Survey for People with Long Standing Disabilities, 2002

<sup>7</sup> The interview-partner from the Cyprus Organisation of Paraplegics personally guessed that more than 50% of people with disabilities at working age are unemployed. He mentioned, that statistical data could be obtained from the "Υπηρεσία Μέριμνας Αναπήρων" (Care Service for the Disabled People).

### 2.1.3 Legal and regulatory framework conditions in Cyprus

An anti-discrimination law exists in Cyprus. There is no specific law for accessible public transport existing in Cyprus, but according to the anti-discrimination law disabled passengers can apply to the ombudsman. Accessibility of public transport is not a mainstream topic on the political agenda in Cyprus and accessibility of public transport is not monitored. The Road Transport Department of the Ministry of Communications & Works is currently working on restructuring the public transport system and is planning to include also national standards with respect to accessibility issues. There is now policy aspiring to guarantee mobility for people with disabilities.

Regarding the issue of special public transport fares and tariffs for disabled people, there are different points of view: the representative of the governmental authority stated that people with disabilities, who own a “social card” (social card holders include people with disabilities), may use public transport free of charge, but the representative of the public transport operators and the representatives of the disabled people both stated that there is no fare reduction or special tariff for disabled people in Cyprus.

#### Anti-discrimination law

There is a national anti-discrimination law existing in Cyprus: The Law for Disabled People (N.127(I)/2000,57(I)/2004) has been enacted on 1st May 2004. The Minister of Social Insurance & Work is responsible for the preparation and transmission of a report to the European Commission every 5 years, describing the implementation of this law. If there is violation of this law, one can submit a complaint to the Ombudsman or can apply to the Court or, if the matter is relevant to a discrimination against equal opportunities at work, one can apply to the Court for Labour Disputes.

#### Regulations regarding the accessibility of public transport

According to the interview-partner from the Road Transport Department, there is no specific law for accessible public transport existing in Cyprus. Currently there are also no national standards for Public Transport (vehicles, stops/stations, passenger information) existing in Cyprus. However, the new plan for public transport, which is currently under consideration, will include high standards as regards to accessibility of public transport vehicles. Standards for bus stops actually depend on the local municipalities. However, in the new plan for public transport bus stops and other facilities are included, taking into account accessibility issues. Since public transport in Cyprus is privately operated, public transport passenger information depends on the policy of each public transport operator and is not centrally regulated. However, a sign indicating the bus fares should be displayed in every bus. The sign is provided by the Road Transport Department and indicates that “social card” holders are transferred for free.

According to the interview-partner from the Cyprus Organisation of the Paraplegic, there is no specific law for accessible public transport existing in Cyprus. But disabled passengers can apply to the ombudsman. The interviewed person made reference to a European Directive for the Accessibility of Public Transport which Cyprus has to implement by the year 2011. He was not aware of any law which is in line with this Directive.

#### “Priority” of the accessibility of public transport on the political agenda

According to the interview-partner from the Road Transport Department, the importance of accessibility of public transport is relatively low (in comparison with other EU countries). However, the importance of public transport as a topic in the political agenda is continuously increasing. Since the national government does not

think that the current public transport system of Cyprus offers efficient services to the public, the Road Transport Department of the Ministry of Communications & Works is currently in the process of designing the restructuring of the whole public transport system.

According to the interview-partner from the Road Transport Department, in Cyprus it is implied that there is a policy since in the new restructuring plan there are specific provisions for people with disabilities.

According to the interview-partner from the Cyprus Organisation of the Paraplegic, the accessibility of public transport is not a mainstream topic on the political agenda in Cyprus. The interview-partner from the Cyprus Organisation of the Paraplegic stated that there is a national policy to support mobility for people with disabilities, but this policy covers the use of private cars only: The government subsidises the car import duties and fuel tax.

#### Monitoring of the accessibility of public transport

According to all interview-partners, current monitoring of the accessibility of public transport is not conducted. The interview-partner from the Road Transport Department stated that standards for monitoring the accessibility of public transport will be included in the new public transport plan.

#### Special fares and public transport tariffs for people with disabilities

According to the interview-partner from the Road Transport Department people with disabilities are entitled to travel by public transport free of charge, if they possess a social card.

The interview-partner from the Limassol Urban Bus Company also acknowledges that social card holders (including people with disabilities) can travel free of charge.

According to the interview-partner from the Cyprus Organisation of the Paraplegic, there are no special tariffs for people with disabilities, and there is no formal policy on this issue.

### **2.1.4 Organisational framework conditions**

The Road Transport Department of the Ministry of Communication and Works is responsible for public transport in Cyprus. In Cyprus there is no rail-based public transport (trains, trams, undergrounds), but only public bus transport operated by private companies.

There are different levels of cooperation among the stakeholders (governmental authorities, transport operators, disability organisations) in Cyprus. The recently enacted law 143(I)/2006 says that every government service which needs to make a decision on issues related to the disabled people has to consult the Cyprus Confederation of Organisations of the Disabled.

According to the interviewees, it is the responsibility of the government to improve the accessibility of the infrastructure and to specify standards for public transport vehicles that take into account accessibility issues.

Very few disabled people in Cyprus use public transport, since the buses and the stops/stations are not accessible for people with disabilities.

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## Governmental authorities dealing with anti-discrimination and social inclusion issues referring to people with disabilities

- **Ministry of Social Insurance & Work (Υπηρεσία Μέριμνας Αναπήρων)**

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## Governmental authorities responsible for public transport

- **Ministry of Communications & Works**  
Permanent Secretary, Email: permsec@mcw.gov.

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## Main transport operators and Public Transport associations

- **Limassol Urban Bus Company (E.A.L.) Ltd**  
George Kyriacou, Managing Director, george.kyriakou@eallemesou.com.cy , Tel: 25354050
- **Pafos Bus Company**  
Chrysostomos Chrysostomou, Managing Director Tel 26 934252

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## Main disability organisations

- **Cyprus Confederation of Organisations of the Disabled**  
President: Mr M. Floretzos, Fax:22-318463, E-mail: ccod-kysoa@cytanet.com.cy
- **Cyprus Organisation of the Paraplegic**  
President: Mr D. Lambrianides, Mob: 99 686655, Fax: 22871072, Email: dimi1@cytanet.com.cy
- **Cyprus Organisation of the Blind**  
President: Mr Chr. Nicolaides, Mob: 99 657467, Email: pot@logos.cy.net
- **Cyprus Organisation of the Deaf**  
President: Mr Yiannakides, Fax: 22 356767, Email: cyprusdeafe@cytanet.com.cy

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## Organisational framework conditions for public transport in Cyprus

According to the interview-partner from the Limassol Urban Bus Company, the Bus Operators in Cyprus are non-profit making private companies with shareholders. The government regulates the operation of these companies operating in the various Districts so as to provide similar levels of service i.e. similar bus specification, ticket pricing and issuing of vehicle and other permits. A Pan-Cyprian Association of Buses will soon be established. The rural buses operate under similar conditions.

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## Cooperation among stakeholders

### Cooperation between the governmental authorities and disability organisations

According to the interview-partners from the Road Transport Department and from the Cyprus Organisation of the Paraplegic, governmental authorities and people with disabilities could not cooperate until now in defining better accessibility of public transport. According to the interview-partner from the Road Transport Department disabled people are in touch with other government services and submit their views and recommendations. Furthermore in accordance with the law 143(I)/2006 which has been recently enacted, every government service

which needs to make a decision on issues related to the disabled people has to consult the Cyprus Confederation of Organisations of the Disabled. The Road Transport Department as a government service will implement this law requirement.

#### Cooperation between the transport operators and disability organisations

According to the interview-partner from the Cyprus Organisation of the Paraplegic, there is no cooperation of transport operators and disability organisations.

According to the interview-partner from the Limassol Urban Bus Company there is currently no cooperation between public transport operators and people with disabilities. Public transport operators in Cyprus do not see any reason to approach the disability organisations at this stage because the public transport operators do not have the financial means to take measures to improve the accessibility problem. The public transport operators are not politicians to give promises to the disabled people, since they are not the ones who take the policy decisions. Once these decisions are taken by the government and new vehicles are ordered, then the public transport operators will seek the advice of the people with disabilities. The interviewer asked the representative of the public transport operators, why the people with disabilities should not be contacted before ordering the new buses. The interview-partner from the Limassol Urban Bus Company replied that it is the Ministry of Communication and Work's responsibility to fix the vehicle specifications, which will have to satisfy the needs of the disabled people.

According to the Road Transport Department the EU Directive 2001/85 will be implemented as part of their new policy. This directive specifies the required technical characteristics of the buses for the disabled people.

#### Cooperation between the transport operators and governmental authorities

According to the interview-partner from the Road Transport Department, governmental authorities and public transport operators are now cooperating in defining and developing better accessibility of public transport. The first public dialogue regarding the new policy has already taken place and views have been sought. The interview partner from the RTD states that there is a close (daily) cooperation with the bus operators.

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### **Attitude of the stakeholders regarding the importance of accessibility of public transport**

According to the interview-partner from the Road Transport Department, transport operators have an interest to improve their services to disabled people but until recently have not been provided with the necessary financial means. The situation is about to change with the new system that is now being designed.

According to the interview-partner from the Road Transport Department, the main barrier hindering improved accessibility of public transport in Cyprus is people's attitude towards public transport. Having few passengers means having less financial means to improve public transport in general.

According to the interview-partner from the Limassol Urban Bus Company, accessible public transport is not a priority issue. The main barriers against the improvement of the accessibility of public transport are the lack of political decision and strategic planning. In order of priority the government has to decide about the specification of the buses, the design / construction of footpaths with appropriate low level kerbstones and bus-stops. The operators are not policy makers. Public transport operators in Cyprus are interested in relevant experiences of public transport operator's in other countries. During the interview it became apparent that Greece, and in particular Thessalonica, offered to the Cypriot public transport operators a good example of the way forward to improve public transport and accessibility.

According to the interview-partner from the Road Transport Department and according to the interview-partner from the Limassol Urban Bus Company, there are no good practice examples regarding accessible public transport in Cyprus. Furthermore the interview-partner from the Cyprus Organisation of the Paraplegic stated that there are no good practice examples regarding pre-trip /on-trip information and accessible ticketing. Similarly for the participation and cooperation of stakeholders. There is generally a lack of interest for the development of the public transport system.

According to the interview-partner from Cyprus Organisation of the Paraplegic, disabled people want to use public transport but they cannot because of the lack of accessible vehicles (buses). Disabled people are interested in cooperating with the other stakeholders, but at this stage no dialogue has started. The main barrier for faster improvement of the accessibility of public transport is the lack of funds or limited funds made available to the development of the public transport, let alone the improvement of accessibility. The interviewed person as the president of the Paraplegics Organisation is very active and very often appears in the mass media pleading for better accessibility to disabled people. He personally believes one of the main reasons the public transport improvement is low on the government's agenda is due to the pressure exerted by the private car importing firms.

According to the interview-partner from the Cyprus Organisation of the Paraplegic, the main reasons for unemployment of disabled people in Cyprus are: Lack of accessibility, prejudice, lack of training plans for necessary changes to ones occupation (if someone has become disabled at a latter stage in his life), not very attractive (financial) measures to encourage employers to offer jobs to disabled people. (There is no law to cover the employment of disabled people in the government.) According to the interview-partner from the Cyprus Organisation of the Paraplegic, the provision of accessible public transport would help disabled people to find a job, since accessible public transport will increase their level of independence.

According to the interview-partner from the Cyprus Organisation of the Paraplegic, it would be likely for people with an electric wheelchair to use public transport for their everyday trips, if accessible public transport would exist in Cyprus. According to the interviewee, accessible public transport would be more convenient for electric wheelchair users since the use of an electric wheelchair restricts the use of a private car unless the disabled person has human assistance. For users of a manual wheelchair it would be less convenient to travel by bus than to travel by car, since the disabled person has to spend more physical effort. The interviewee thinks that it is not likely for blind people to use public transport without a personal guide for their everyday trips.

#### Attitudes of the stakeholders towards alternatives to public transport

The interview-partner from the Cyprus Organisation of the Paraplegic mentioned a good practice example regarding the accessibility of vehicles whereby two city buses had recently been bought in Nicosia which have a mechanical ramp and one seat for people with motor impairments. 6 mini buses with 1-3 seats per vehicle for wheelchairs operate in the island. The Road Transport Department (RTD) has issued 11 licences for the operation of such vehicles island-wide.

The interview-partner from the Cyprus Organisation of the Paraplegic made reference to a private car that was bought by the Paraplegics Organisation, which can accommodate one wheel chair, and is used by people with motor impairments.

#### Attitudes of the stakeholders regarding the use of public transport by people with disabilities

According to the interview-partner from the Road Transport Department, disabled people usually do not use the public transport system as it is inaccessible.

The interview-partner from the Road Transport Department thinks that the provision of accessible public transport would of course help disabled people to find or keep a job although the accessibility of public transport is not the determinative factor.

According to the interview-partner from the Road Transport Department, it is likely that people with cognitive/learning impairments would use public transport for their everyday trips. According to the interview-partner from the Road Transport Department with the current situation as it is today it is not likely that people with an electric wheelchair would use public transport.

According to the interview-partner from the Limassol Urban Bus Company theoretically it is perhaps likely for people with an electric wheelchair or accompanied blind people to use public transport for their everyday trips. However, the interviewee said that these questions were theoretical. He strongly believes that for the disabled people to be able to use the public transport the whole infrastructure has to be improved (footpaths, stops, stations, etc.) and the bus routes have to be expanded to cover more geographical areas.

According to the interview-partner from Cyprus Organisation of the Paraplegic, Tetraplegics need human assistance, technical assistance alone is of little use to them.

In Cyprus there is no statistical data available regarding the share of disabled people that (regularly or occasionally) use public transport. However, the interview-partner from the Cyprus Organisation of the Paraplegic estimated that less than 1% of the people with disabilities living in Cyprus use public transport, since the number of accessible vehicles is extremely limited.

According to the “Survey for People with Long Standing Health Problems or Disabilities, 2002” only 12% from the total 53,425 people with long standing health problems including disabilities, have stated that their ability to travel to and from their work place is restricted to a substantial degree.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Statistical Service of the Republic of Cyprus: Survey for People with Long Standing Health Problems or Disabilities, 2002

## 2.2 Accessibility of Public Transport

**Pre-trip information / On-trip information:** According to the interview-partners, in Cyprus there is neither accessible pre-trip nor accessible on-trip information available.

**Ticketing:** According to the interview-partners, although disabled people do not need to buy a ticket as they are holders of a “social card” issued by the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, it is not so relevant since they do not use public transport.

**Stops and stations:** In Cyprus there are no sheltered bus-stations with customer services. Only a few bus stops/stations are accessible for people with disabilities. These stops have ramped kerbs at the embarking point, tactile guiding flagstones with contrasting colours, and enough space for manoeuvring of wheelchairs. However, there is no information available about the location of these stops along the various routes.

**Vehicles:** Most buses are not accessible for people with disabilities. There are only a few buses that are low floor and are equipped with a manual ramp, but also these buses do not have accessible interior design.

**Safety, Reliability, and Service:** There are no safety equipments for people with disabilities in the buses and at the stops. There is no accessible information in emergencies and there are no special evacuation plans for disabled people in emergency cases. The buses in Cyprus are not punctual (the majority of the buses are estimated to have a delay of more than 5 minutes). There are no special services offered by the bus operators to people with disabilities and there is no staff training with respect to special needs of passengers with disabilities, etc.

### 2.2.1 Accessibility of passenger information

The interview-partner from the Road Transport Department stated that his general perception is that the accessibility of public transport passenger information in Cyprus is insufficient.

#### Pre-trip information

A printed timetable of bus routes is available at the central bus station of each city in Cyprus. There is nothing specifically designed for the disabled people. There is no information available regarding the accessibility of public transport stations, stops, vehicles, and services. Information on public transport tariffs and tickets is available in the form of printed products and on the telephone. Since there are no customer services offered by public transport operators specifically for people with disabilities, there is also no information specifically designed for disabled people.

According to the interview-partner from the Limassol Urban Bus Company, the level of pre-trip passenger information is poor. Bus schedules do not exist at bus stops because in most places these are not covered and do not have announcement boards. For pre-trip information one could theoretically phone to the company. There is no Web Site or other print products. The interviewee commented on the creation of a Web Site, and the misleading information displayed regarding time schedules due to traffic congestion. Information regarding the accessibility of public transport stations, stops and vehicles is not existing. Information on public transport tariffs and tickets is not available - people can get the information by telephone or from the bus drivers. Also there is no information available on customer services offered by public transport operators for people with disabilities, and there is no information available on special transport services for people with disabilities additional to regular public transport services.

According to the interview-partner from the Cyprus Organisation of the Paraplegic, pre-trip passenger information is not existing and pre-trip information regarding the accessibility of public transport stops, stations, and vehicles is simply not available. Pre-trip information on public transport tariffs and tickets does not exist although people can get the information from the bus drivers. Since there are no customer services offered by the public transport operators for people with disabilities (e.g. accompanying service, luggage transport service), there is also no information about these issues available. Pre-trip information on special transport services (additional to public transport) is available: Pre-trip information is available by telephone for the privately owned mini-buses which can carry wheel chairs.

### On-trip information

According to all the interview-partners, in Cyprus there is no on-trip information in bus-stops or buses available that is accessible for people with disabilities.

## **2.2.2 Accessibility issues in Ticketing**

According to the interview-partner from the Road Transport Department people with disabilities are entitled to travel by public transport free of charge, if they possess a “social card”. Therefore disabled people need not to buy a public transport ticket.

According to the interview-partner from the Limassol Urban Bus Company, in Cyprus public transport tickets can only be bought from the bus driver. However, people with disabilities do not use the public transport in Cyprus.

The interview-partner from the Cyprus Organisation of the Paraplegic stated, that the question may not be relevant since the buses except a limited number, are not accessible to people with disabilities.

## **2.2.3 Accessibility of stops and stations**

According to the PTaccess “national contact person” in Cyprus, there are no sheltered stations with proper facilities (e.g. counters, information desks, luggage storage, displays with information in real-time, service facilities, vending machines for tickets / drinks, acoustic announcements, passenger's assistance services, etc.) existing in Cyprus.

### Strategy regarding the improvement of the accessibility of public transport in Cyprus

According to the interview-partner from the Road Transport Department, the new public transport system that is now being designed, provides for the restructuring of all bus stops and stations, taking into consideration accessibility issues for disabled people. The interviewed person from the Road Transport Department also states that in all urban areas the bus stops are in the responsibility of the local municipalities and not of the government.

According to the interview-partner from the Limassol Urban Bus Company, passengers are not informed about the current state and planned developments regarding the accessibility of stops and stations. Improvement of the stops and stations is the government's responsibility and it depends on the budget that will be decided to be spent. At the moment the government has not put in writing its commitment towards the achievement of accessible public transport. The interviewee said that in his own opinion it would be more sensible and realistic to start the improvement of the accessibility of selected routes (e.g. the route to the town hospital).

According to the interview-partner from the Cyprus Organisation of the Paraplegic, a design office operates under the umbrella of the Ministry of Communications & Works and is responsible for the preparation of standardised details / specifications that include the accessibility of stops. This office is understaffed and any actions towards the improvement of the accessibility take time. Newly constructed roads have accessible bus stops, although at this stage there is no plan to improve selected existing public transport stops.

#### Current state regarding the accessibility of bus stops and stations in Cyprus

The interview-partner from the Road Transport Department stated that the general perception is that the accessibility of public transport stops and stations in Cyprus is low, although progress has been achieved during the previous years and further alterations are being planned. Currently most bus stops in Cyprus are equipped with seating possibilities. There are no special facilities available for people with visual or hearing impairments.

The interview-partner from the Road Transport Department estimates that about 50% of the bus-stops are accessible for people with motor impairments, 0% of the bus-stops are accessible for people with visual impairment, 50% of the bus-stops are accessible for people with hearing impairments, and about 50% of the bus-stops are accessible for people with cognitive/learning impairments.

The interview-partner from the Limassol Urban Bus Company estimates that none of the existing bus stops in urban or in rural areas of Cyprus are accessible for people with disabilities.

The interview-partner from the Cyprus Organisation of the Paraplegic stated that the people with disabilities are not at all satisfied with the accessibility of the bus stops/stations: There exist no visual guiding or visual announcement systems (for people with hearing impairments), and (for people with cognitive/learning impairments) there exist no clear guidance systems, no clear announcements, and there are no staff available for assistance. There are some bus stops that have ramped kerbs at the embarking point, tactile guiding flagstones with contrasting colours, and enough space for manoeuvring of wheelchairs, but there are no data available on the location of these stops along the various bus routes.

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### **2.2.4 Accessibility of vehicles**

#### Strategy regarding the improvement of the accessibility of the public transport vehicles

According to the interview-partner from the Road Transport Department, the new public transport system that is now being designed, provides for the replacement of all public transport vehicles.

The interview-partner from the Limassol Urban Bus Company stated that from the contacts between the public transport operators and the government it seems that all vehicles (buses) will be replaced over a short period (possibly 3 years). The new vehicles will be spread out to cover the whole network. The interviewee commented that the replacement of the vehicles is not going to be a problem. Once the government decides on the vehicle specifications and a budget is fixed, the public transport operators will make a loan and proceed with the replacement of their bus fleet. The main problem for the improvement of the accessibility for the disabled people is the improvement of the infrastructure, i.e. footpaths, bus-stops, bus stations.

The interview-partner from Cyprus Organisation of the Paraplegic stated he is not aware of any plans to improve vehicles in the next few years. Passengers are not informed about the current state and any planned developments regarding the accessibility of vehicles or the strategy for use of these vehicles in service. The interviewee stressed the fact that there is no formal dialogue between the stakeholder groups.

### Actual state of the accessibility of the public transport vehicles in Cyprus

The interview-partner from the Road Transport Department stated that the general perception is that the accessibility of public transport vehicles in Cyprus is insufficient, although the perception on the importance of public transport has increased over the last years. The interview-partner from the Road Transport Department estimates that about 2% of the city-buses in Cyprus provide barrier-free boarding and alighting for people with motor impairments, 0% of the city-buses provide barrier-free boarding and alighting for people with visual impairments and for people with hearing impairments, and about 30% of the city-buses provide barrier-free boarding and alighting for people with cognitive/learning impairments. The interview-partner from the Road Transport Department estimates that none of the regional-buses provide barrier-free boarding and alighting for people with disabilities.

The interview-partner from the Road Transport Department estimates that only 2% of the city and regional-buses in Cyprus do have barrier-free interior design. The city-buses and the regional-buses in Cyprus do not have any designated “spaces” for wheelchairs.

The interview-partner from the Limassol Urban Bus Company estimates, that none of the city and regional buses in Cyprus provide barrier-free boarding and alighting for people with disabilities at stops along the route they operate.

The interview-partner from the Limassol Urban Bus Company estimates, that none of the city and regional buses in Cyprus provide barrier-free interior design. None of the city and regional buses in Cyprus offer dedicated spaces for wheelchairs. Even the two buses that exist in Limassol and have a mechanically operated ramp, they do not have other facilities in their interior to accommodate wheelchairs.

The interview-partner from the Cyprus Organisation of the Paraplegic stated disabled people are not at all satisfied regarding barrier-free boarding and alighting of the public transport buses, and regarding accessible interior design of the public transport buses in Cyprus. For example: according to the interviewee only a very small number of buses exist in Nicosia with a mechanical ramp, and wheelchairs cannot be secured in these buses. “Pafos Bus Company”, the operating company in Pafos, confirmed that 7 buses with a mechanical ramp are in operation in the Pafos-area. These buses are 4 to 7 years old and do not have any other facilities for people with disabilities. (These buses are used on three bus routes which connect the city market with the tourist area and "Coral Bay" a tourist destination to the west of Pafos.) Furthermore, according to the interview-partner from the Cyprus Organisation of the Paraplegic, in Nicosia one of the few buses with a mechanical ramp cannot be used by people with motor impairments because the driver has a spinal problem and cannot physically operate the ramp!

According to the interview-partner from the Cyprus Organisation of the Paraplegic, city buses have one space per vehicle designated to wheelchair users.

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## **2.2.5 Safety, Reliability and Service**

### Safety aspects

According to the interview-partner from the Road Transport Department and according to the interview-partner from the Limassol Urban Bus Company, there have been no accidents involving people with disabilities in public transport in Cyprus within the last years.

The interview-partner from the Road Transport Department estimates that about 2% of the city-buses have safety equipment for wheelchair users and general safety equipment for passengers with disabilities. None of the

regional-buses have safety equipment for wheelchair users and general safety equipment for passengers with disabilities.

According to the interview-partner from the Road Transport Department there is no accessible information in case of an emergency in city and regional buses and stations. There are also no special plans for evacuating people with disabilities in city and regional buses.

According to the interview-partner from the Limassol Urban Bus Company, none of the city or regional buses in Cyprus have safety equipment for wheelchair users or general safety equipment for passengers with disabilities. There is no accessible information in emergencies and there are no special plans for evacuating people with disabilities in the case of an emergency.

According to the interview-partner from the Cyprus Organisation of the Paraplegic, people with disabilities perceive travelling by bus as dangerous in Cyprus. According to this interviewee, wheelchair users are not even able to use the accessible buses because there are no safety "clutches" to secure the wheelchair while the vehicle is in motion. None of the public transport vehicles in Cyprus have safety equipment for wheelchair users. Only the 6 privately owned mini-buses apparently have safety equipment for wheelchair users. Disabled people are not at all satisfied with the general safety equipments in public transport buses in Cyprus.

According to the interview-partner from the Cyprus Organisation of the Paraplegic, there is no accessible information in emergencies in public transport buses and stations in Cyprus, and there are no special plans or training schemes for bus-drivers when evacuating people with disabilities..

#### Reliability and Punctuality

The interview-partner from the Road Transport Department assesses that the level of reliability of the accessibility of buses and stops/stations in Cyprus is low.

The interview-partner from the Road Transport Department assesses that 50% of the scheduled services in public bus-transport are delayed more than 5 minutes.

The interview-partner from the Limassol Urban Bus Company assesses the level of reliability of the accessibility of buses and stops/stations in Cyprus to be low. According to the interviewee, a limited number of buses with manually operated ramps are in operation in Cyprus (e.g. in Limassol there are only 2 buses). Apart from the ramp, they have no other facilities for the disabled people, and there is no formal training provided regarding the needs of disabled customers. There are buses from the 1970's still in operation! The interviewee remarked that there are no disabled customers apart from some tourists in wheelchairs who are on holidays and are thus always accompanied by relatives.

The interview-partner from the Limassol Urban Bus Company assesses that 80% of the scheduled services in city bus transport are delayed more than 5 minutes. According to the interviewee only buses operating in the tourist area of Limassol (mainly along the seafront) are punctual. These buses make up 20 out of a total of 100. The interviewee commented that the lack of dedicated bus lanes is the reason that buses can not keep to their time schedule and get caught into the traffic, like the rest of the vehicles in the congested town streets. According to the interviewee there are no data available regarding the punctuality of regional buses.

According to the interview-partner from the Cyprus Organisation of the Paraplegic, the reliability of the accessibility of buses and stops/stations is extremely low. According to the interview-partner from the Cyprus Organisation of the Paraplegic, punctuality of public transport buses is non-existent in Cyprus, 100% of the public transport buses are delayed more than 5 minutes.

### Customer Service

The interview-partner from the Road Transport Department and the interview-partner from the Limassol Urban Bus Company both perceive that the accessibility of customer services (e.g. luggage storage, counters, information desks, ticketing machines) is not good. There are no bus stations that provide luggage storage accessible for people with disabilities, and public transport operators do not offer assistance at the stations.

According to the interview-partner from the Cyprus Organisation of the Paraplegic, customer service does not exist in Cyprus, and there are no sheltered stations with proper facilities (e.g. counters, information desks, luggage storage, displays with information in real-time, service facilities, vending machines for tickets / drinks, acoustic announcements, passenger's assistance services, etc.).

### Staff Training

According to the interview-partner from the Road Transport Department and according to the interview-partner from the Limassol Urban Bus Company public transport operators do not provide any training for their staff with respect to special needs of people with disabilities and with respect to interaction with people with disabilities. There are no special training schemes for bus-transport operator's staff regarding the service for passengers with disabilities.

The interviewed person from the Road Transport Department states that in accordance with the new law 3(I)/2007 all new professional drivers as well as the existing ones will be educated in a 5 years interval with respect to special needs of people with disabilities and with respect to interaction with peoples with disabilities.

According to the interview-partner from the Cyprus Organisation of the Paraplegic, the bus drivers receive no training except in the use of the mechanical ramps on the limited number of the existing "accessible" buses.

### 2.3 Alternatives to public transport

**Alternatives to public transport:** There are 8 mini buses / taxis operated by disability organisations and by the private sector, which have places for 1-3 wheelchairs and are accessible to people with motor impairments. These accessible “taxis” can be hired by telephone.

According to the interview-partner from the Road Transport Department, the Licensing Authority has licensed 8 special taxis which can only carry people with special needs, and can be hired by telephone.

According to the interview-partner from the Cyprus Organisation of the Paraplegic, the Organisation of the Paraplegic and the Organisation of the Blind, operate their own vehicles for the transport of their members with disabilities (The Organisation of the Paraplegic has one vehicle with one place for a wheelchair). Apart from vehicles owned by the Organisations of Paraplegics and the Blind, there are six more privately owned mini-buses / taxis operated by the private sector, which have spaces for 1-3 wheelchairs and are accessible to people with motor impairments.