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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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State of the Accessibility of Public Transport Systems for People with Disabilities in Czech Republic (CZ)

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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

The PTaccess consortium:

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

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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 Czech Republic (CZ).

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

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 25¹ 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 Czech Republic (CZ).

What can be expected from this report

This report gives an overview of the state of the accessibility of public transport in Czech Republic (CZ). 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,

¹ 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.

transport operators and 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 Czech Republic (CZ) 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

People, who are interested to get **more (detailed) information on the accessibility of public transport in Czech Republic (CZ)**, 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.

2.1 General Information

2.1.1 About the PTaccess interviews

Interviewer:	Name	Organisation
PTaccess National Contact Person	Petr Moos	Technical University of Prague, Faculty of Transport
Interview partners:	Name	Organisation
Representatives of Transport Operators	Jan Urban	Prague Public Transport Company
Representatives of People with Disabilities	Václav Krása	National council of disabled people in the Czech Republic (Národní rada osob se zdravotním postižením – NRZP)
Representative of Governmental Authority	Jan Snopek	Ministry of Transport

Table 1: Interviewer and Interview-partners in the Czech Republic

Czech Association of Public Transport Authorities – CAPTA (in Czech: Česká asociace organizátorů veřejné dopravy - CAOVD²) was founded in 2004 as a representative of the public transport authorities: organisers (companies owned by regions or cities) are responsible for the organisation and coordination of integrated public transport systems in specific areas in the Czech Republic.

There are two main types of the integrated public transport systems in the Czech Republic. Some of the regions have decided to build up their systems more like the tariff union of bus lines, sometimes with partially integration of trains or urban public transport. They did not establish the organiser (coordinator) and try to organize the system by the regional administrative officers. They resigned from the redefining the network and intermodality. The effectiveness of such system could not increase very much. The fares are also not unified and integrated completely.

The second approach is more systematic. Some regions (sometimes together with municipalities) established an organiser (coordinator) responsible for most of the tasks connected with the transport management. The organiser is responsible for network defining, timetable solution, common fare and transport directives, controlling, revenues division and marketing. In such cases all transport modes are usually integrated very efficiently and passengers can make use of all advantages of such systems.

Information on CAPTA members:

“KIDS KK p. o. - Coordinator of the integrated public transport in Karlovy Vary Region” is owned and fully financed by the region. It was established in January 2003. The main objective of the KIDS KK is to control and manage the public transport in the region Karlovy Vary to build and develop the Integrated Public Transport of

² <http://www.caovd.cz/IndexEN.htm>

the Karlovy Vary Region (Czech abbr. IDOK). The organizer also serves as an institution that orders the transport included into the common interest. It deals with the municipalities, schools, companies etc. and consults their needs with operators. The final decision making process is controlled by the Karlovy Vary Region.

KODIS - Coordinator of the Integrated Public Transport in Moravia-Silesia Region: the Integrated public transport (abbr. ODIS) was established in Moravia-Silesia Region in November 1997. The coordinator of this system is the private company “Koordinátor ODIS s. r. o.” (KODIS). His owners are Moravia-Silesia Region, City of Ostrava and further 11 municipalities in the region. Integrated system ODIS is being expanded to further municipalities. There are included 145 municipalities lying on 2000 square km with more than 800 000 residents. The area is divided into zones. Integration of the railways is only partial and customers can not use all tariff offers (in the trains they can use only seasonal tickets). The changes of the network connected with cancelling of parallel lines with preference of railways are introduced since 1998.

Coordinator of the \integrated Public Transport in Zlín Region “Koordinátor veřejné dopravy Zlínského kraje, s.r.o.“ - was established in December 2005. It is a private company fully owned by the Zlín Region. The task of the organizer is to prepare different analysis of the present and future state of the public transport in the region, to prepare proposals and projects, to organize promotion, to deal with stakeholders, to prepare the development and enlargement of the existing integrated public transport system between the cities Zlín and Otrokovice.

KORID LK - Coordinator of the Integrated Public Transport in Liberec Region: the private company „KORID LK, spol. s r.o.“ was established and is fully owned by the Liberec Region. It is responsible for organizing the public transport service in the region. It collects the needs of municipalities and other stakeholders and transform them into optimized order of public transport service. KORDIS LK is responsible for the project of Integrated public transport system of the Liberec Region. It partner for regional administration and for municipalities.

KORDIS JMK - Coordinator of the Integrated Public Transport in Southern Moravia Region: the Integrated public transport system of the Southern Moravia Region (abbr. IDS JMK) has been established in January 2004. Its organizer is private company (KORDIS JMK, s. r. o.) which is owned by the region and the City of Brno. IDS JMK is being expanded to further municipalities. The aim of Southern Moravia region is to integrate its whole area until 2010. There are included more than 350 municipalities with more about 800 000 residents. The area is divided into zones with two “core“ zones 100 and 101 representing the City of Brno. All railways are fully integrated. The integrated tickets are valid in all local and regional trains, regional and city buses, trolleybuses as well as in trams. The aim of KORDIS JMK is to restrict the ineffective parallel lines and use the savings for new connections in the low served areas. About 15 operators are included in the system.

OREDO - Organiser of the integrated public transport in Hradec Králové Region: integrated public transport IREDO is operating in several parts of the Hradec Králové Region. Its area is divided into zones. Customers can use both single and seasonal (monthly) ticket. Organizer of the integrated public transport in Hradec Králové Region is the private company OREDO, s. r. o. owned fully by the region. It was established in 2003. It collects data on transport needs in the region, evaluate it and proposes possible solutions to the region.

ROPID - Regional organiser of the Prague integrated transport³: Prague integrated transport (abbr. PID) was based in January 1993. Its organizer is the municipal company „Regionální organizátor Pražské integrované dopravy, příspěvková organizace hl. m. Prahy“ (abbr. ROPID). PID is based on preference of the railways, underground and trams as the backbone modes. Bus transport is organized mostly as the feeding lines to the interchanges. The system enables to combine the individual car commuting with public transport. P+R are built near important interchanges in Prague as well in its surroundings. The integrated single and seasonal tickets are

³ <http://www.ropid.cz/index-en.htm>

possible to use in most of the vehicles (except some trains). The area of PID is divided into stripes (zones). The system includes about 30 operators.

2.1.2 Statistical Data from the Czech Republic

Statistical Data for the Czech Republic	
Number of inhabitants	10,400,000
Inhabitants with disabilities	11.5% of the total population (1,200,000)
Inhabitants with motor impairments	2.8% of the total population (300,000) ⁴
Inhabitants with visual impairments	0.6% of the total population (60,000)
Inhabitants with hearing impairments	0.96% of the total population (100,000)
Inhabitants with cognitive / learning impairments	No data
Inhabitants who are functional illiterates	No data
Share of disabled people living in urban areas	No data
Share of disabled people at working age	250,000 ⁵ (20.8%)
Share of disabled people at working age who are actually working	70,000 ⁶ (5.8%)

Table 2: Statistical data for the Czech Republic

2.1.3 Legal and regulatory framework conditions in Czech Republic

There are existing laws mainly dealing with equal opportunities for men and women and equal opportunities for all races. Currently a new law anti-discrimination law is in negotiations. There is no specific law for accessible public transport but some issues is part of public transport acts (for example definition of designated seating places for people with disabilities). According to the interviewed person from the Ministry of Transport the accessibility of public transport is not a mainstream topic on the political agenda.

Anti-discrimination law

There are existing laws mainly dealing with equal opportunities for men and women (76/207/EEC, 2002/73/EEC, 2006/54/EC, 2004/113/ECO) and equal opportunities for all races (2000/43/ES). Currently a new anti-discrimination law is in negotiations with the government/parliament.

⁴ Source: <http://www.vlada.cz> (website of the government of the Czech Republic)

⁵ Very rough estimation based on the knowledge of the National Council of Disabled People in the Czech Republic (NRZP)

⁶ Very rough estimation based on the knowledge of the National Council of Disabled People in the Czech Republic (NRZP)

Regulations regarding the accessibility of public transport

According to the interviewed person from the Ministry of Transport there is no specific law for accessible public transport in the Czech Republic. This issue is part of the public transport acts no266/1994 and 111/1994. In these acts it is defined, that some seating places (in general 2) have to be reserved for people with disabilities. General standards for accessibility do not exist.

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

The interviewed-person from the governmental authority states that accessibility of public transport is not a mainstream topic on the political agenda.

The interviewed disability organisation states that on the national level the National development programme of mobility for all, proclaimed by the Government Board for People with Disabilities as well as the National Council of Disabled People in the Czech Republic was established on 16.04.2002. By the government decree Nr. 545 from the 29.5.2005 this programme was added into the National plan of equalizing the opportunities for disabled people. On July, the 17th 2004 Czech government passed the resolution Nr. 706 concerning the financing of the National development programme of mobility for all. On regional level the transport of disabled people is a part of Regional plans of equalizing the opportunities for disabled people.

Monitoring of the accessibility of public transport

According to the interviewed ministry there is no monitoring of the accessibility of public transport on national level.

The interview-partner from the National council of disabled people in the Czech Republic also states that there is no monitoring done yet. But a monitoring of barrierfree public transport is under consideration – in the context of EU money-drawing.

Special fares and public transport tariffs for people with disabilities

The interview-partner from the Czech Ministry of Public Transport states that there is a special card for disabled people (ZTP - disabled person, ZTP/P - disabled person with guide), which allows a 75% reduction of the normal tariff.

According to the National council of handicapped people in the Czech Republic the use of public transport is free of charge for the guides of holders of the “disabled card” ZTP/P.

The interviewed person from the Prague Public Transport Company states that there is no special tariff for people with disabilities. But the Prague public transport system is free of charge for people with disabilities.

2.1.4 Organisational framework conditions

In the Czech Republic the Government Board for People with Disabilities (a governmental co-ordinating and advisory body for the problems of disability) and the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs are dealing with anti-discrimination issues referring to people with disabilities. The Ministry of Transport is responsible for Public Transport in the Czech Republic.

According to the interview partners there is cooperation between the different stakeholders concerning making public transport accessible for people with disabilities. The level of cooperation has been estimated from moderate to high.

All interviewed persons do think that people with disabilities want to and actually do use public transport. The public transport operator and the Ministry of Transport express their interest and their ambitions to make public transport more accessible.

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

- **Vládní výbor pro zdravotně postižené občany – Government Board for People with Disabilities**
Mrs. Jaroslava Selicharova, Tel.: 00420 224002705
The Board was established in 1991 by the resolution of the Czech Government as its coordinating and advisory body for the problems of disability. The main task of the Board is to highlight the respective problems and to suggest their solution. The Board co-operates with the public administration authorities as well as with the non governmental sphere. It consists of the representatives of the government and ministries and representatives of associations of persons with disabilities and their employers.⁷
- **Ministerstvo práce a sociálních věcí – The Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs**
Na Poříčním právu 1/376, 128 01 Praha 2, posta@mpsv.cz Tel.: +420221921111

Governmental authorities responsible for public transport

- **Ministerstvo dopravy – The Ministry of Transport**
Nábř. L. Svobody 1222/12, 110 15 Praha 1, posta@mcr.cz, Tel.: +420225 131 111

Main transport operators and Public Transport associations

- **ČSAD Střední Čechy, a.s. – Public Bus operator**
U Přístavu 811, Brandýs nad Labem - Stará Boleslav, 250 01, Tel: +420 326 911 954, Fax: +420326911954,
E-mail: csadsc@csad-me.cz ;
- **Sdružení dopravních podniků ČR – Association of Public Transport Companies**
Drahobejlova 6/2215, 190 00 Praha 9, tel.: (00420) 266 310 571, e-mail: sdpcr@sdpcr.cz ;
- **České dráhy, a.s. – Czech Railways**
Nábřeží Ludvíka Svobody 12, 110 15 Praha 1, Tel.: +420 972 111 111 info@cd.cz

Main disability organisations

- **Svaz tělesně postižených v ČR – Association of disabled people of the Czech Republic**
Karlínské náměstí 12, 18603 Praha 8, Helena Klasnová, Tel./Fax.: +420 224 819 083,
helena.klasnova@svaztp.cz;

⁷ Source: <http://www.vlada.cz/en/rvk/vvzpo/uvod.html>

- **Národní rada osob se zdravotním postižením – National council of disabled people in the Czech Republic**

Partyzánská 1, Praha 7, tel. 266 753 421, NRZP@NRZP.CZ, Mr. Václav Krása

Cooperation among stakeholders

Cooperation between the governmental authorities and disability organisations

According to the Ministry of Transport there is cooperation between governmental authorities and people with disabilities in defining and developing better accessibility of public transport.

The interview-partner from the National council of disabled people in the Czech Republic assesses the level of cooperation between governmental authorities and disability organisations as moderate. There do exist common programmes; the improvement of the accessibility of public transport is a part of national policies.

Cooperation between the transport operators and disability organisations

From the point of view of the interviewed person from the National Council of disabled people in the Czech Republic the level of cooperation between public transport operators and disability organisations is moderate. The companies Czech Railway Company and the Prague Public Transport Company (as well as some other smaller public transport operators) do cooperate with the National council of disabled people in the Czech Republic.

According to the interview-partner from the Prague Public Transport Company the cooperation between public transport operators and disability organisation is high – there are regular meetings.

Cooperation between the transport operators and governmental authorities

From the point of view of the Ministry of Transport governmental authorities and public transport operators cooperate in defining and developing better accessibility of public transport.

The interviewed-person from the Prague Public Transport Company assesses the level of cooperation between public transport operators and governmental authorities as moderate.

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

The Prague Public Transport Company states that they make a great effort to improve the accessibility of public transport stops, stations and vehicles. The cooperation between public transport operators and disability organisations emphasises that. Old metro stations take a lot of time to be improved in their accessibility as their construction is rather complicated and the modification/rebuilding is related to extra costs. In some cases there is no possibility to build ramps or lifts.

From the point of view from the interviewed person of the Ministry of Transport the main barrier that hinders faster improvement of the accessibility of public transport is the availability of public budget.

According to the interviewed-person of the NRZP (National Council of disabled people) disabled people are interested in using the various modes of public transport and they struggle for accessible public transport. The “National development program of mobility for all” (Národní rozvojový program mobility pro všechny) is one proof/result of this struggle.

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

The interviewed person from the Ministry of Transport states that people with disabilities lobby for better conditions in public transport. People with disabilities want to use public transport. He also states that public transport operators cooperate with governmental authorities and disability organisation with the aim to improve the accessibility of public transport. The representative of governmental authorities assumes that blind people and people with cognitive/learning impairments do use public transport for going to work, visit friends, go shopping, or bring their children to kindergarten/school/leisure activities, whereas people with an electric wheelchair do not use public transport for all these activities (especially not for going to work or bringing their children somewhere to). He does think that accessible public transport would help disabled people to find or keep a job.

According to the interviewed person from NRZP the highest percentage of disabled people using public transport are those with visual or hearing impairments. He estimates that about 90% of people with visual and 90% of people with hearing impairments do use public transport regularly. In his opinion only 50% of people with motor impairments use public transport regularly; he cannot estimate the percentage of people with cognitive/learning impairments. He assumes that people with an electric wheelchair use public transport to go for work, for shopping, and to leisure activities (cinema, theatre, etc), eventually to visit friends, but not to bring their children to kindergarten, school or leisure activities. However, he assumes that blind people use public transport for all the above mentioned activities.

The interviewed person from Prague Public Transport Company states that accessible public transport helps with the integration into daily life. In his opinion people with disabilities use public transport to go for work, to go for shopping, to go for visiting friends and to bring their children to kindergarten, school and leisure activities. He is not sure whether people with disabilities would also use public transport to go for cinema, theatre or discotheque.

2.2 Accessibility of Public Transport

Pre-trip information: The accessibility and availability of pre-trip information (by internet, telephone and brochures) regarding public transport tariffs and tickets is assessed by the interviewed disability organisations as low, by the interviewed governmental authority and public transport operator as rather good.

On-trip information: Again the disability organisation estimates the accessibility of the on-trip information as not sufficient (in most times), the governmental authority as well as the public transport operator estimate the level as good. Some stations and vehicles do provide acoustic and optic announcements, but the share can still be improved.

Ticketing: Public transport tickets can be bought at ticket vending machines, at the counter, in the vehicle itself or via mobile phones. However, the existing ticket vending machines are not accessible at least for people with visual impairments.

Stops and stations: The general perception of the interviewed person from the National Council of Disabled People is that the accessibility of stops and stations in some big cities is sufficient but in general the accessibility is bad. In general underground stations are quite good accessible as well as some bus and tram stops in urban areas as they are equipped with ramps. In rural areas the accessibility of stops and stations is quite low.

Vehicles: There are some low-floor vehicles in urban areas (city buses and trams) which provide accessible boarding and alighting as well as accessible interior. Trains are less accessible as well as regional buses. Most vehicles in urban areas are equipped with handrails, dedicated seats for people with disabilities and non-slippery floors.

Safety, Reliability, and Service: In general the safety for people with disabilities in public transport is regarded as high. According to the interviewed disability organisation disabled people do not think that using public transport is dangerous. The reliability of the accessibility of public transport varies from mode to mode. According to the interviewed public transport operator low-floor buses and trams do provide a high level of reliability of accessibility as they are equipped with manual ramps and the drivers are trained to use them. The reliability of the accessibility of undergrounds is only moderate as lifts are sometimes out of order. There are no special training schemes for the public transport staff concerning the needs of people with disabilities, but the issues are integrated in the regular staff training.

2.2.1 Accessibility of passenger information

The general perception of the interviewed Person from the Ministry of Transport regarding the accessibility of public transport passenger information in the Czech Republic is that a sufficient level of accessibility has been reached.

According to the representative of the National Council of Disabled People public transport information is often not sufficiently accessible for people with disabilities

Pre-trip information

The interviewed person from the Ministry of Transport states that all kinds of travel planning information are available via phone, internet and print products. Timetables on the internet are also available for blind people. Timetables also include the information whether a bus or train is low-floor or is equipped with a ramp. Information on public transport tariffs, tickets, and customer services offered by public transport operators for people with disabilities are available by telephone, internet and print products. However, there is no pre-trip information on special transport services.

The interviewed person from the National Council of Disabled People states that travel planning information exists, but it is not sufficient accessible for people with visual or hearing impairments respective for people with other disabilities. In general the level of accessible pre-trip information is very low: cramped text, inconveniently placed, not adapted for the need of persons with visual impairments. The information provided on the internet is not adapted for blind people. Sufficient information on special transport services can be obtained via the internet or phone. However, the accessibility is problematic from the point of view of various kinds of disabilities.

According to the interviewed person of the Prague Public Transport Company the accessibility of pre-trip information (travel planning information; information regarding the accessibility of public transport stations, stops vehicles; information on public transport tariffs and tickets) is good. The website of the Prague Public Transport Company offers the possibility to plan a journey only with low-floor vehicles. Pre-trip information on customer services or on special transport services is not offered.

On-trip information

The interviewed person from the Prague Public Transport Company (PPT) states that 90% of the bus stops in urban areas, 50% of the tram stations and 60% of the underground stations provide accessible information for people with motor impairments. In his opinion 100% of underground stations provide accessible information for people with visual impairments. He states that all city buses, trams and undergrounds provide accessible information in the vehicles: city buses, trams and undergrounds announce next stops, possible interchanges, unexpected incidents and emergency issues.

The interview-partner from the Ministry of Transport estimates that all public transport stops and stations provide passenger information that is accessible for people with motor impairments, people with hearing impairments and people with cognitive/learning impairments. However, only train stations (20% in rural areas, 50% in urban areas) provide passenger information that is accessible for people with visual impairments. Printed timetables can be found at all stations real time information is only given at modern tram and bus stops. He further estimates that 100% of city buses, trams and undergrounds provide accessible passenger information for all kinds of disabilities, as there are optic and acoustical announcements of the next stop and possible interchanges. 10% of the regional buses provide passenger information accessible for people with visual impairments, and 30% for people with hearing impairments. In general regional buses are equipped with similar systems as the urban transport is, but the share of regional buses with modern equipment is much lower. The level of local trains providing accessible information for people with disabilities even is a bit lower, the interviewed person from the Ministry of Transport estimates that 20% of the trains provide passenger information accessible for people with visual or hearing impairments. Modern suburban electric trains (CityElefant) and local trains (RegioNova) are equipped with optical and acoustical information systems, but their share in the total fleet is still low. He estimates that passenger information in long-distance trains is if at all accessible for people with visual impairments: in some long-distance trains the next stops are announced (~20%).

According to the interviewee from the National Council of Disabled People on-trip passenger information at stops and stations is rather poor: the information is not regularly actualised and in many cases the information is inconveniently placed for people with disabilities. He estimates in general the information at stops and stations

as badly accessible for people with motor impairments and visual impairments. For people with hearing impairments the provided information is sufficient accessible, but in the case of an immediate route-change or a change in the timetable the information is not accessible for them. Concerning the accessibility of passenger information provided in the vehicles he states that the information is only accessible if it is provided as acoustic and visual announcements. He estimates the accessibility of passenger information in trains as bad (for people with visual impairments) and poor (for people with motor or hearing impairments), the accessibility of passenger information in city buses from sufficient (for people with hearing impairments) to good (for people with visual or motor impairments), in regional buses from bad (for people with visual impairments) to poor (for people with motor or hearing impairments), in trams as sufficient and in underground trains from sufficient (for people with hearing impairments) to good (for people with motor or visual impairments)

2.2.2 Accessibility issues in Ticketing

According to the interviewed person from the National Council of Disabled People in the Czech Republic there are no special barrier-free ticket vending machines. He does not know what the usual way for people with disabilities is to get a ticket.

The interviewed person from Prague Public Transport Company states that tickets can be bought at ticket vending machines, at the counter, in the vehicle itself or via mobile phones. Within the Prague public transport system people with disabilities do not need to buy a ticket, as they can use the system free of charge.

The interview-partner from the Ministry of Transport estimates that 100% of the ticket vending machines are accessible for people with motor impairments, hearing impairments or cognitive/learning impairments. But none of the ticket vending machines are accessible for people with visual impairments.

2.2.3 Accessibility of stops and stations

The general perception of the interviewed person from the National Council of Disabled People is that the accessibility of stops and stations in some big cities is sufficient but in general the accessibility is bad. Subsequently the barriers at stops and stations are eliminated. The accessibility is influenced by the financial resources dedicated for that purpose. For people with motor impairments the accessibility of stops and stations is in general insufficient. In some areas the accessibility is satisfactory or even good. However he estimates the accessibility of stops and stations for city buses, regional buses, trams and trains as poor, the accessibility of underground stations as sufficient for people with motor impairments. In his perception stops and stations are often not adapted for the movement of people with visual impairments therefore city bus stops, regional bus stops and train stations are poor accessible for people with visual impairments, tram stops and underground stations can be sufficiently accessed by people with visual impairments. People with hearing impairments do find sufficient access to all kinds of public transport stops and stations.

According to the interview partner from the Prague Public Transport Company (PP) it is a big effort (of PP) to improve the accessibility of stops, stations and vehicles. PPT has a strategy for the development and improvement of accessibility: there is cooperation between PPT and disability organisations and the stops and stations for improvement are selected by recommendations of disability organisations. Some bus and tram stops in urban areas are equipped with ramps, seating possibilities and information in Braille. He estimates that about 80% of bus stops and 50% of tram stops are accessible for people with motor impairments. In underground stations acoustic announcements are given after pressing a button on the blind walking cane.

Concerning the strategy regarding the improvement of the accessibility of stops and stations the interviewed person from the Ministry of Transport states that passengers are regularly informed about the current state and planned developments regarding the accessibility of stops and stations. Some bus lines in Prague are especially created for disabled people. He states that with difficulties all bus and tram stops are accessible for people with disabilities. Standard bus stops have some seating possibilities but only very few provide special equipment. In general underground stations are well equipped for people with motor or hearing impairments. Blind people can use underground stations only with difficulties. Train stations can also be used with more or less difficulties by people with disabilities. The train stations in big towns are usually more accessible than stations in rural areas.

2.2.4 Accessibility of vehicles

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

According to the interviewed person from the Ministry of Transport the number of suitable/accessible vehicles grows, but it is still not sufficient.

The interviewed person from the National Council of Disabled People states that the government is financing the purchase of barrier-free buses and participates on the financing of the National development program of mobility for all. There are priorities dedicated for enhancing the transport security in the Operation Programme Transport – this programme provides the possibility to draw financial support for the improvement of the transport accessibility.

The interview-partner from the Prague Public Transport Company (PPT) states that they make great efforts to improve the accessibility of their vehicles. The general strategy is to purchase only low-floor vehicles (buses and trams) and to reconstruct existing trams – including the insertion of a low-floor part to the trams.

Actual state of the accessibility of the public transport vehicles in the Czech Republic

The interviewed person from the Ministry of Transport estimates that about 5% of the buses (city and regional buses) provide accessible boarding and alighting: these buses are low-floor vehicles and provide automatic doors and ramps. 10% of trams are low-floor trams and should be therefore accessible for people with motor impairments. All underground trains provide accessible boarding and alighting, but only 20 of local and long-distance trains can be accessed by people with disabilities. He assumes that only 1 percent of city buses provide accessible interior for people with disabilities. The buses on the special line for people with disabilities provide enough space for manoeuvring, for storing wheelchairs and are equipped with handrails, handholds and ramps. He further estimates that 2 percent of the regional buses, 10 percent of trams and 100% of the undergrounds do provide accessible interior for people with disabilities. Each long-distance train has officially a carriage which enables the transport of people with disabilities, but only some of them are equipped with a ramp. So he estimates that in fact 30 percent of the long distance trains and 10% of local trains do provide accessible interior.

According to the interview-partner from PPT 31% of the city buses and 4% of the trams in Prague are low-floor vehicles and do provide ramps, handrails, high-contrast design and a non-slippery surface. He states that city buses and trams do provide enough space for manoeuvring, enough space for storage of wheelchairs and crutches and priority seats. PPT operates just 3 different types of low-floor trams: 14T (60% accessible interior; KT8N” (17% accessible interior; T3R.PLF 36% accessible interior). All underground trains are low-floor vehicles and do provide handrails, high-contrast design and non slippery surface and are 100% accessible for people with disabilities.

2.2.5 Safety, Reliability and Service

Safety aspects

The interviewed person from the National Council of Disabled People states that people with disabilities do not think that riding by public transport is dangerous. The level of satisfaction of wheelchair-users regarding the safety equipment in general is sufficient. For modern and new modes of public transport the level of satisfaction is even high. He states that in emergencies there is accessible information in city buses, trams and undergrounds but not in regional buses and local trains. There are no special plans for evacuating people with disabilities in the case of an emergency.

The interview-partner from the Ministry of Transport estimates that all city buses, 20% of the regional buses and local trains, 10% of trams 30% of undergrounds and 80% of long distance trains provide safety belts for wheelchair users and emergency buttons. He states that there is accessible information in emergencies as there are acoustic or light announcements in urban and local buses, trams and undergrounds. In the cases of an emergency the doors of all vehicles can be opened manually.

The interview-partner from the Prague Public Transport Company (PPT) states that all low-floor city buses and all low-floor trams as well as all undergrounds provide emergency buttons and non slippery floors in the vehicles. Undergrounds additionally provide safety belts. He states that there is accessible information in emergencies via acoustic announcements. There are no special plans for evacuating people with disabilities in the case of an emergency.

Reliability and Punctuality

According to the interviewed person from the National Council of Disabled People the level of reliability of the accessibility is high for undergrounds, moderate for city buses, trams and long-distance trains and low for regional buses and local trains. He estimates that 10% of the city buses and trams, 20% of the regional buses and local-trains and 30% of the long distance buses are in average delayed more than 5 minutes. He assesses undergrounds as always punctual.

According to the interviewed person from the Ministry of Transport the bus the faster modernisation of the bus fleet that of the railway rolling stock enables the wider implementation of special equipments for people with disabilities in buses. He assess the level of reliability of the accessibility of city buses and undergrounds as high, the reliability of the accessibility of regional buses and trams as moderate and the one of trains as low. He estimates that 10% of city buses, regional buses and trams, 3% of the undergrounds, 20% of local trains and 30% of long distance trains are in average delayed more that 5 minutes.

The interviewed person from PPT estimates the level of reliability of the accessibility of city buses and trams as high. These vehicles provide manual ramps and the drivers are trained in the use of them. The reliability of the accessibility of undergrounds is estimated as moderate, as lifts are sometimes out of order. He states that city buses, undergrounds and trams are nearly all punctual, in average there is a maximum delay of 3 minutes.

Customer Service

The interview-partner from the Ministry of Transport assesses the accessibility of customer services in general on a good level. However, he states that luggage storage facilities, counters and information desks are not specially designed for people with disabilities. The public transport operator crew (also bus drivers) are obliged to help customers with boarding/alighting a vehicle, but there is no special assistance organised.

According to the PPT 100% of the counters and information desks in bus and underground stations are accessible for people with disabilities, but none of the luggage storage facilities. He states that the staff assists with boarding/alighting, etc.

Staff Training

According to the interview-partner from the Ministry of Transport there is no special training for the public transport operators' staff regarding special needs of people with disabilities, however this subject is included in the general trainings. Public transport operators' staffs get a regular training once a year, disabled people are not included.

According to the interview-partner from the National Council of Disabled People most of the public transport staff is not informed about the problems and needs of disabled people. Most of the employees in the public transport do not know facts concerning the needs of disabled people. The National Council of Disabled People (NRZP) is launching the project "Ten Commandments" which is addressed to the public administration and health services. This project aims at the improvement of the communication between disabled people and administration/health workers⁸.

The interviewed person from PPT states that there are special training schemes for transport operators' staff regarding the service of passengers with disabilities. They participate in several regular training programs, which are continuously improved.

⁸ More information can be obtained under: www.nrzp.cz

2.3 Alternatives to public transport

In big agglomerations there are some door-to-door services operated by minibuses adapted for the needs of disabled people.

According to the interview-partner of the Ministry of Transport there are no special transport services for people with disabilities in the Czech Republic.

The interviewed person from the National Council of Disabled People states that there are minibuses adapted for the needs of disabled people. This is a so called door-to-door transport. This transport service can only be realised in big agglomerations.