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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 Denmark (DK)

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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 Denmark (DK).

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 Denmark (DK).

What can be expected from this report

This report gives an overview of the state of the accessibility of public transport in Denmark (DK). 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 Denmark (DK) 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 Denmark (DK)**, 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	Anette Enmark	Tetraplan
	Lykke Magelund	Tetraplan
Interview partners:	Name	Organisation
Representatives of Transport Operators	Christian Kirketerp-Møller	DSB (Danish national train operator)
	Henrik Severin Hansen	Danish regions. On demand oriented handicap transport
Representatives of People with Disabilities	Karsten Gravesen	Danish Council of Organisations of Disabled People (DSI)
Representative of Governmental Authority	Niels Hame	Ministry of Transport and Energy

Table 1: Interviewer and Interview-partners in Denmark

The overriding problem in addressing accessibility for disabled people in Denmark is the total lack of uniform standards and guidelines. This results in a lot of different designs, approaches and guidelines that differ from region to region, city to city, and from operator to operator. This also makes it very difficult to get and give answers to the questionnaire that are valid for all areas.

However, accessibility for disabled people has attracted some political attention in 2007. The Ministry of Transport and Energy has initiated a process to create overview general guidelines on accessibility for disabled people in Denmark. The process started in August 2007 and will result in the first national overview (properly) by the end of 2007.

2.1.2 Statistical Data from Denmark

Statistical Data for Denmark	
Number of inhabitants	5,000,000
Inhabitants with disabilities	No data available ²
Inhabitants with motor impairments	No data available
Inhabitants with visual impairments	No data available
Inhabitants with hearing impairments	No data available
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

Table 2: Statistical data for Denmark

2.1.3 Legal and regulatory framework conditions in Denmark

A general anti-discrimination law (based on gender, race and age) exists in Denmark. However, there is neither an anti-discrimination law concerning people with disabilities nor a specific law regarding the accessibility of public transport, and there is no policy to guarantee mobility for people with disabilities. Accessibility of public transport is not a mainstream topic on the political agenda in Denmark.

Anti-discrimination law

There is a general anti-discrimination law prohibiting discrimination based on gender, race and age. There exists neither an anti-discrimination law concerning people with disabilities nor a specific law for accessible public transport.

Regulations regarding the accessibility of public transport

Denmark does not have a common national policy to guarantee mobility for people with disabilities. All statutory transport of disabled persons is embedded in (and defined through) various sector laws, and is enforced by the relevant national, regional or local body. This is a result of the “Sector Responsibility Act”, that stipulates that all sectors must implement national legislation into the sector laws. In this case the responsibility to provide transport to (amongst others) disabled persons to specific destinations regulated by the sector (eg. Education,

² The Danish legislation does not allow a registration of persons based handicap. The percentage is properly the same as in other EU countries

doctor). According to the Danish Council of Organisations of Disabled People (DSI) this results in various solutions directed at specific user groups and for specific needs.

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

According to the Ministry of Transport and Energy as well as to the Danish Council of Organisations of Disabled People the accessibility of public transport is not a mainstream topic on the political agenda.

However, the Ministry of Transport and Energy is currently working on an overview of the accessibility for people with disabilities in Denmark. The result of this study will be some general guidelines for Denmark.

Monitoring of the accessibility of public transport

The interview-partner of the Danish Ministry of Transport and Energy as well as the interview-partner from the Danish Council of Organisations of Disabled People state that monitoring of the accessibility of public transport is not carried out. However local (municipal) initiatives are taken to monitor accessibility for disabled. This is done on a voluntary basis and is not regulated by national laws or systems.

Special fares and public transport tariffs for people with disabilities

On all national and regional trains discounts are given for people with disabilities. When using the S-Trains and the Metro in Copenhagen discounts are given for visually impaired people. People with visual impairments and wheelchair users get discounts on more than 50% of private local trains. More than 50% of regional and local busses and all long-distance buses give discounts for visually impaired passengers. Only less than 50% of the national ferries give discounts for visually impaired people and wheelchair users.

2.1.4 Organisational framework conditions

In Denmark the Equal Opportunities Centre for Disabled Persons is dealing with anti-discrimination issues referring to people with disabilities, and according to the principle of sector responsibility all Danish authorities are responsible for social inclusion. The Ministry of Transport and Energy is responsible for public transport in Denmark.

The public transport operators, disability organisations and governmental authorities have no formalised co-operation regarding the accessibility of public transport on a national level. There are ad-hoc co-operations if any specific problems occur and some working groups have formed (rather on regional level). However there are no regular collaborations.

The representative of public transport operators states that with making public transport accessible much effort, time and resources are spent for a relatively small user group. He thinks that it would make more sense to invest the resources in financial support for private cars and specially adapted modes of transport.

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

- **The Equal Opportunities Centre for Disabled Persons**
Center for Ligebehandling af Handicappede, Bredgade 25 F, 4., 1260 København K, Tel: 33 11 10 44,
www.clh.dk

According to the principal of sector responsibility all authorities are responsible for social inclusion.

Governmental authorities responsible for public transport

- **Ministry of Transport and Energy**
www.trm.dk

The various municipalities are responsible for the local bus transport

Main transport operators and Public Transport associations

- **Dansk Busvognmaend - Organisation of Danish Bus operators**
www.db-dk.dk
- **Danish Railroads (DSB)**
www.dsb.dk
- **Arriva**
www.arriva.dk

Main disability organisations

- **The Danish Council of Organisations of Disabled People (DSI)**
www.handicap.dk

Cooperation among stakeholders

Cooperation between the governmental authorities and disability organisations

The Danish Council of Organisations of Disabled People (DSI) states that the municipalities have handicap councils (they are not legally binding, but play a more advisory role) where questions of accessibility and transport are discussed. On national level there is no formalised cooperation or advisory board.

The interview partner from the Danish Ministry of Transport and Energy states that there are several ad-hoc co-operations.

Cooperation between the transport operators and disability organisations

The interview partner from the Danish Council of Organisations of Disabled People states that most public transport providers have formed their own advisory bodies, being heard/asked in cases regarding transport of disabled either by “regular” public transport or by special solutions.

The interview partner from the Danish national train operator states that the main transport providers and operators have a formalised co-operation with disability organisations.

Cooperation between the transport operators and governmental authorities

The interview partner from the Danish Ministry of Transport and Energy states that there are several ad-hoc co-operations.

The interview partner from the Danish national train operator says that the co-operation and coordination is on an ad-hoc basis, for example when the law changes, when technical standards have to be worked out, etc.

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

Both of the interviewed representatives of public transport operators in Denmark (DSB and Danish regions) think that resources, time and energy are spent on adapting the systems for a very small group. They think that it would be better to spend the resources on providing other modes of transport for this group. As an example, for wheelchair users it would be better (and they would also gain a higher mobility) if they receive financial support for private cars and the individual adaptation of those or for specific user-adapted transport solutions.

According to the Danish Council of Organisations of Disabled People people with disabilities can not be lumped together as one group. Like all other persons they have individual wishes and needs. A generalised perception is that people with visual impairments are most likely to use public transport (there are relatively good conditions for this specific group). However, some visually impaired people prefer to use a taxi or other individually organised modes of transport similar to the one offered for people with motor impairments. It is the perception of the disability organisation that as many people as possible should be able to use public transport. However the disability organisation also says that the weaker group of motor and visually impaired people are not physically able to do this.

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

According to the representative from the national disability organisation only very few people with motor impairments use public transport regularly (about 10%). But about the half of people with visual impairments use public transport regularly. He furthermore states that people with hearing impairments have the same possibilities as all other passengers, and therefore there is no reason why they could not use public transport. For blind people public transport is the only possibility if they do not want to pay a taxi. For people with motor impairments the private car most times is the first choice. In Denmark various disability groups can get financial support for buying a car and adapting the interior.

Both interview partners, representing the public transport operators, stated that it depends on the type and severity of the impairment, whether people with disabilities use public transport.

2.2 Accessibility of Public Transport

Pre-trip information: The accessibility and availability of pre-trip information is assessed to be quite good, as it is available through various media like internet, telephone or direct contact. The national travel planner (www.reiseplanen.dk) covers all types of public transport and is very popular and quite reliable.

On-trip information: At the underground and train stations and vehicles there is acoustic and visual passenger information provided. However, most information provided at (smaller) stops is not accessible for people with visual impairments.

Ticketing: Tickets can be bought via the internet, at the counter, at ticket vending machines or in the bus / train itself. The disability organisation as well as the governmental authority state that only 10% of the ticket vending machines are accessible for people with motor impairments and nearly none are accessible for people with visual impairments.

Stops and stations: Underground stations are most accessible, followed by train stations. Train stops in rural areas and bus stops (in urban and rural areas) are those which are the least accessible. In general, stops and stations are least accessible for people with motor or visual impairments. All interviewed persons stated that people with hearing impairments do not have any problems with the accessibility of stops, stations and vehicles.

Vehicles: The main problem with the accessibility of vehicles is the boarding and alighting. Although improvements have been made and the situation is improving there are still a number of barriers like high steps and gaps. The interior of the vehicles is assessed as much more accessible. Again the underground is the most accessible vehicle, regional buses and local trains have the most barriers.

Safety, Reliability, and Service: The majority of city buses and some regional buses provide safety belts for wheelchairs. In trains a folder informs how to react in the case of an emergency. Bus and train drivers are trained in emergency procedures. The underground stations in Copenhagen are equipped with glass fronts between the platform and the tracks therefore reducing the risk of falling from the platform onto the tracks. The interview partners assess that 95% of the buses, undergrounds and local trains are in average not delayed more than 5 minutes. Long distance trains are more likely to be delayed more than 5 minutes. The accessibility of customer services differs from stop to stop and from station to station as there are no national standards. However the majority of stops and stations do not provide accessible customer services like luggage storage or vending machines. The interviewed person from the Ministry of Transport and Energy explains that people with disabilities are allowed to buy their ticket onboard on national, regional and local trains without paying a fine (normally a passenger travelling without a ticket has to pay a fine). The interviewed person from the Ministry of Transport and Energy states that staff training regarding the service for passengers with disabilities is integrated in the normal training schemes.

2.2.1 Accessibility of passenger information

According to the interview-partner from the Ministry of Transport and Energy there is no standardisation for making passenger information accessible. The comprehensive digital national travel planner (www.rejseplanen.dk) is also accessible for many people with disabilities. Accessible on-trip information is of varying quality and availability.

Pre-trip information

The Ministry of Transport and Energy states that all pre-trip information is available via various media (internet, telephone, sms, etc.).

According to The Danish Council of Organisations of Disabled People pre-trip information in general is good in Denmark. The national travel planner (www.rejseplanen.dk) covers all types of public transport and is very popular and quite reliable. Pre-trip information is available through various media with the most common being the internet and telephone.

The representatives of public transport operators states that all information is available through various media such as the internet, printed timetables or direct contact.

On-trip information

According to the Ministry of Transport and Energy oral information is given at the Metro stations in Copenhagen. In the vehicle an electronic announcement (sound and text) of the next stop is given. Only at a few local and regional train stops is oral information given. However, irregularities are announced through speakers at the platform. Most trains are equipped with speakers and displays for electronic sound and text announcement of the next stops. In older vehicles (which are mainly used on local lines) this service is not available. A few buses give electronic sound announcements and about one out of five buses display information digitally.

The Danish Council of Organisations of Disabled People states that most of the major train stations do have “speaking” info screens, that can give spoken information on departures, track no, ect. on request.

The representative of public transport operators states that people with disabilities get the same information as all other passengers. People with visual impairments are those who get the least information, unless there are oral announcements (like in undergrounds and trains and their stations).

2.2.2 Accessibility issues in Ticketing

Tickets can be bought via the internet, at a counter, at ticket vending machines and in the bus and train itself.

The Danish Council of Organisations of Disabled People states that the most usual way to buy a ticket is to buy it at the station or via the internet.

The disability organisation as well as the governmental authority state that only 10% of the ticket vending machines are accessible for people with motor impairments and almost none are accessible for people with visual impairments.

2.2.3 Accessibility of stops and stations

The interview-partner from DSB, the national train operator, states that all public transport operators are continuously improving the conditions for all passengers. Some changes, however, are very time and resource consuming and will benefit only a few passengers. Furthermore he estimates that only a few stops and stations are accessible for people with motor and visual impairments. All stops and stations are accessible for people with hearing impairments.

According to the Danish Council of Organisations of Disabled People the physical barriers (like high curbs or steps) at stops and stations are the greatest barriers. The problem is that there is no national standard; therefore a lot of different solutions are implemented, which not always meet the needs of people with visual or motor impairments. In general it can be said that the underground stations are more accessible than bus or trains stations.

The representative of the Danish Ministry of Transport and Energy states that most train stations are equipped with lifts. For visually impaired people the lack of a standard design of train stations make navigation difficult.. Bus stops are difficult to be located by visually impaired people. The most accessible stops and stations are those of the underground. Special care has been put into the design: Lifts, visual aid, screens and ramps help people with disabilities to find their way.

2.2.4 Accessibility of vehicles

According to the interview-partner of the Danish Ministry of Transport and Energy the main problems for wheelchair users are the boarding and alighting of trains. Although there are new wagons which provide nearly barrier free design old wagons with poor accessibility (like high steps) are still in use on smaller train lines. DSB (the national railway operator) provides personal assistance at all larger stations. Furthermore he states that nearly all city buses are low-floor vehicles but only a few of them are equipped with a ramp to bridge the gap between the curb and the bus. Only a few regional buses are low-floor buses. The Metro (underground trains) in Copenhagen are nearly barrier free.

The interviewed person from the Danish Council of Organisations of Disabled People states that the accessibility of vehicles differs from mode to mode. The Metro in Copenhagen is the most accessible with the local bus the least accessible mode. For people with motor impairments and for people with visual impairments only the underground provides good accessibility. Long distance trains are sufficient, local trains and buses (city buses as well as regional buses) provide poor accessibility.

The representative of public transport operators also states that nearly all city buses are low-floor and the number of low-floor trains is steadily increasing. He also states that most regional buses, local trains and long distance trains can not be boarded or alighted by people with motor or visual impairments without barriers. In his opinion only the Metro provides accessible boarding and alighting. The interior of the vehicles is in his opinion much more accessible: At least 75% of the city buses, 50% of the regional buses and 50% of the long distance trains provide accessible interior for all kinds of disabilities. All undergrounds and all local trains have barrier-free design.

2.2.5 Safety, Reliability and Service

Safety aspects

According to the interview-partner from DSB the majority of city buses but only a few regional buses offer safety belts for wheelchairs. In the case of an emergency the evacuation of people with disabilities is part of the general evacuation plans. The Danish Emergency Management Agency (<http://www.brs.dk/uk/>) is responsible for the safety of all passengers (not the operators).

The interview-partner from the Ministry of Transport and Energy states that information about emergency procedures is not directly given to the passengers. In trains a folder informs how to react in the case of an emergency. Bus and train drivers are trained in emergency procedures.

The interviewed person from the Danish Council of Organisations of Disabled People states that guiding lines on the train-platforms indicating the platform edge and the position of the doors were implemented on local train stations in the greater Copenhagen area after an accident in which a blind person fell from the platform. The Metro stations in Copenhagen are equipped with glass fronts between the platform and the tracks, so that it is not possible to fall from the platform.

According to the Danish Council of Organisations of Disabled People some people with disabilities perceives public transport as dangerous. Nevertheless he estimates that the general safety equipment in buses and trains as sufficient and in trains as excellent.

Reliability and Punctuality

The Danish Council of Organisations of Disabled People assesses the reliability of the accessibility of all transport modes as moderate. 95% of the buses, undergrounds and local trains are on average not delayed more than 5 minutes. Long distance trains are more likely to be delayed more than 5 minutes. The same assessment and estimation is given by the representative of the public transport operator.

The interview partner from the Ministry of Transport and Energy assess the reliability of the accessibility of buses and undergrounds as high, and trains as moderate.

Customer Service

DSB (National rail provider) states that luggage storage is available at a few larger train stations. The accessibility for people with disabilities varies from station to station. Assistance is offered at the larger train stations in urban areas.

According to the Council of Organisations of Disabled People assesses the accessibility of luggage storage at stops and stations as rather poor. Assistance at train stations must be booked in advance.

The interview-partner from the Ministry of Transport and Energy states that the accessibility of customer services varies from place to place as there are no common standards. Buying tickets from vending machines is a common problem for people with visual impairments; therefore they can buy the tickets onboard on national, regional and local trains without paying a fine (normally a passenger travelling without a ticket has to pay a fine of approximately 120 Euro).

For wheelchair users the ticket counters and vending machines are usually too high to access.

Staff Training

According to the interview-partner from the Danish Ministry of Transport and Energy there are special training schemes for transport operator's staff regarding the service for passengers with disabilities. These training sessions are part of the regular staff training.

The Danish Council of Organisations of Disabled People perceives that the helpfulness and the ability to help vary from person to person but most are helpful and friendly. Problems arise when there are no staff present or when it is busy. The interviewed person has no information whether there are special training schemes regarding the service for passengers with disabilities.

The representative of the public transport operator states that there are no special training schemes regarding the service for passengers with disabilities.

2.3 Alternatives to public transport

The Ministry of Transport and Energy and the Danish Council of Organisations of Disabled People state that the individual demand-oriented travel based on taxis and minibuses is widespread, not only in Denmark but in all Scandinavian countries. In Denmark only people with motor impairments have access to pre-paid transport of this kind. The public transport providers are administrating the service which is financed by the municipalities. The level of service is set by national law, and provides 104 trips per year for leisure trips. In principle the costs for the users should be comparable to the regular public transport tariffs, however, in reality the trips are often more expensive.