

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 Estonia (EE)

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

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]

Table of Contents

1	Introduction.....	4
2	Accessibility of Public Transport in Estonia (EE).....	6
2.1	<i>General Information.....</i>	7
2.2	<i>Accessibility of Public Transport.....</i>	13
2.3	<i>Alternatives to public transport.....</i>	18

1 Introduction

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

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 Estonia (EE).

What can be expected from this report

This report gives an overview of the state of the accessibility of public transport in Estonia (EE). 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

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.

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 Estonia (EE) 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 Estonia (EE)**, 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	Mall Villemi	Tallinn University of Technology, Road Institute
Interview partners:	Name	Organisation
Representatives of Transport Operators	Ivo Volt	Union of Estonian Automobile Enterprises
Representatives of People with Disabilities	Gennadi Vaher	Estonian Foundation of Disabled People
	Auli Lõoke	Estonian Union of Persons with Mobility Impairment
Representative of Governmental Authority	Pärt Põldemaa	Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communication

Table 1: Interviewer and Interview-partners in Estonia

Estonia is a with a population of about 1.4 million and an area of about 45 000 km². The population density is very low in the rural areas. The rural areas (15 regions) are mainly served by buses. There are three modes of public transport in the capital Tallinn (which has about 400,000 inhabitants): bus, trolleybus and tram. Local trains operate in the surrounding areas of Tallinn and Tartu (university city and the second largest city with 100,000 inhabitants). Long distance trains operate between Tallinn-Tartu and Tallinn-Pärnu. Pärnu (40,000 inhabitants) and Haapsalu (10,000 inhabitants) are mainly health resorts.

The public transport in Estonia is not very well developed. To be able to compete with the private car the level of service of the public transport has to be much higher. The local public transport is managed and regulated by local authorities. They are responsible for the planning of the route network and the level of service of the local public transport. In most regions the lack of manpower and knowledge and the insufficient financial resources hinder the development of local public transport. For example, if the state budget in 2008 increases at 20%, the public transport subsidies remain the same (at the same time the fuel excise duty increases at 14% and drivers salaries at 20%). This trend has started from the beginning of 1990s and is continuing since then. So the current task is to survive. If the situation for local public transport cannot be changed within the next five years there will be few opportunities for public transport. Because of these facts the most local public transport operators (especially in rural areas) cannot think about accessibility issues, as they firstly have to survive.

The national contact person who conducted the interviews states that all interviewees were ready to cooperate within the interviews and help to get the best results. In addition to the four main interviewees, other transport companies, local authorities and train operators were interviewed in order to get a comprehensive picture of the situation in Estonia. Only one of those organisations showed a negative attitude: their answers to the questions gave the impression that they don't care about any passengers including disabled passengers.

The answers of the interviewees highlighted that, on paper, the accessibility of public transport is satisfactory. Estonia has harmonised main laws with the EU laws. However, in reality the picture differs a lot from that on the paper: Monitoring is at a very low level; buses are old, stops and stations are not equipped with special facilities

for disabled people. The most unsatisfactory situation in public transport are for people with motor and visual impairments. For example, electric wheel chairs are not allowed on long distance buses as they are too heavy and not dissembled.

The interviews showed that all disabled people are afraid to use public transport. In fact, public transport remains the main barrier to securing employment (although the companies in Estonia are willing to employ people with disabilities).

As the local authorities have the obligation to ensure disabled people mobility, this demand is often realised by the implementation of special transports. For example, an on demand taxi for people with disabilities has been installed in Tallinn, in Tartu and in the health resorts Pärnu and Haapsalu. The health resort cities have a lot of tourists with disabilities and they have realised the importance of this kind of transport service.

A problem in Estonia, and also within the survey of PTaccess, is that Estonia does not have a Ministry of Transport. The issue is included in the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communication although there is no explicit responsibility for the accessibility of public transport. Therefore a lot of questions within the interview with the governmental authority stay unanswered as the person responsible for public transport did not know the answers.

For this reason the description of the status quo of the accessibility of public transport in Estonia in this report is mainly constructed from the interviews with the disability organisations and the national public transport association.

2.1.2 Statistical Data from Estonia

Statistical Data for Estonia	
Number of inhabitants	1,342,409 ²
Inhabitants with disabilities	181,942 ³
Inhabitants with motor impairments	42 % of the total number of people with disabilities ⁴
Inhabitants with visual impairments	4% of the total number of people with disabilities ⁵
Inhabitants with hearing impairments	2% of the total number of people with disabilities ⁶
Inhabitants with cognitive / learning impairments	19% of the total number of people with disabilities ⁷
Inhabitants who are functional illiterates	1% of the total number of people with disabilities ⁸
Share of disabled people living in urban areas	no data available
Share of disabled people at working age	56% of the total number of people with disabilities ⁹
Share of disabled people at working age who are actually working	18% ¹⁰

Table 2: Statistical data for Estonia

2.1.3 Legal and regulatory framework conditions in Estonia

Estonia does not have an anti-discrimination law, but the Estonian constitution ensures all people human rights. The EU standards are used for the construction of the vehicles. The accessibility of public transport for people with disabilities is not a mainstream topic on the political agenda. Monitoring of the accessibility of public transport does not really exist, especially on a national level.

Anti-discrimination law

There is no anti-discrimination law in Estonia, as the Estonian constitution ensures all people human rights, which of course also covers the people with disabilities. The chancellor of justice is the person responsible for protecting discrimination victims.

² Estonian Office of Statistics

³ Ministry of Social Affairs. This figure results from the persons who get a pension of incapacity for work and disabled people who get social aid

⁴ research study: "The needs of disabled people", 2006

⁵ research study: "The needs of disabled people", 2006

⁶ research study: "The needs of disabled people", 2006

⁷ research study: "The needs of disabled people", 2006

⁸ research study: "The needs of disabled people", 2006

⁹ research study: "The needs of disabled people", 2006

¹⁰ research study: "The needs of disabled people", 2006

Regulations regarding the accessibility of public transport

In Estonia the national law no 41 (07.06.2000) “Recommended service levels in public transport” gives standards for main service level indicators. The local authorities are responsible for the local public transport service management. The long distance public bus transport is not regulated. The Ministry is responsible for the train transport, both local and long distance.

The EU standards are used in Estonia for the construction of vehicles. For stops Estonia has got its own regulations: no 17 (28.11.2002) and no 55 (28.09.1999) include standards for the construction of accessible buildings and transport.

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

According to the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communication the accessibility of public transport is not a mainstream topic, but it is mentioned in different legislation documents and development plans.

The disability organisations as Estonian Foundation of Disabled People and Estonian Union of Persons with Mobility impairments state that the Estonian national government trend is that the local authorities have to include the issue of the accessibility for disabled people in their development plans.

Monitoring of the accessibility of public transport

According to the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communication the monitoring of the accessibility of public transport is the responsibility of local authorities. The departure time, the regularity, etc. are monitored, but not the accessibility of the public transport.

According to the two interviewed disability organisations monitoring of the accessibility of public transport does not really exist, especially at a national level.

Special fares and public transport tariffs for people with disabilities

All disabled children (until the age of 16), people with extensive disabilities and accompanying persons to blind people and to wheelchair users can use public transport for free. The operating costs are covered by subsidies.

2.1.4 Organisational framework conditions

Estonia does not have a Ministry of Transport; the responsibilities for public transport are included in the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communication. The main responsibility for public transport is on a local level: the local authorities plan the local public transport. The Ministry of Social Affairs deals with anti-discrimination and social inclusion referring to people with disabilities.

The cooperation between the stakeholders (governmental authority, public transport operator and people with disabilities) is not very good.

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

- **Ministry of Social Affairs**
Monika Haukanõmm, monika.haukanomm@sm.ee, Tel: +372 626 9233

On regional and on local level social workers, with special training for people with disabilities, are responsible to solve any problems, based on the legislation.

Governmental authorities responsible for public transport

- **Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communication**
Competences: laws, legal documents, etc.
Peeter Tiks, Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communication, senior specialist; peeter.tiks@mkm.ee; +372 656 491; www.mkm.ee

The main responsibility for public transport is on local level. The local authorities plan the public transport networks, the level of service, etc.

Main transport operators and Public Transport associations

- **Union of Estonian Automobile Enterprises**
Ivo Volt, ivo.volt@autoettevoteteliit.ee; + 372 6 412 513

Main disability organisations

- **Estonian Chamber of Disabled People**
is the umbrella organisation in Estonia. There are 47 members: 16 regions and 31 organisations representing various kinds of disabilities.
www.epikoda.ee

Cooperation among stakeholders

Cooperation between the governmental authorities and disability organisations

The interviewed disability organisations state that the cooperation-level between governmental authorities and disability organisation is good concerning the preparation of legislation and development plans. However, there lacks a realisation of development plans and the monitoring of legislation implementation. So the cooperation works on “paper” but disabled people are not happy with the cooperation within implementation and realisation.

Cooperation between the transport operators and disability organisations

According to the national public transport association the cooperation between the transport operators and disability organisations in Estonia is low.

From the point of view of the disability organisations the cooperation is low. It happens very seldom on a personal level (disabled people); however the cooperation between the organisations at the organization level is better.

Cooperation between the transport operators and governmental authorities

The national public transport association states that the cooperation between the public transport operators and the governmental authorities is moderate.

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

According to the national public transport association the attitude in general is positive. The main barrier is the old fleet, which is not appropriate for people with disabilities.

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

The interviewed persons of the disability organisations state that people with disabilities have rather a negative attitude regarding public transport in Estonia. However, everybody is expecting an improvement of the accessibility of public transport systems.

From the point of view of the disability organisations, technical as well as human assistance is important, as disabled people have to be able to help themselves to public transport.

The disability organisations have no information regarding the percentage of people with disabilities using public transport in Estonia. They perceive that people in a wheelchair can only use the newer vehicles of the public transport fleet, as the older ones are inaccessible.

The national public transport association estimates that people with an electric wheelchair do not use public transport. Blind people and people with cognitive/learning impairments perhaps use public transport to go to work, for shopping or visiting friends.

2.2 Accessibility of Public Transport

Pre-trip information: The accessibility and availability of pre-trip information (by internet and telephone) regarding public transport tariffs and tickets is assessed by the interviewed disability organisations and the national public transport association to be quite good. Information on timetables and travel planners can be found in the internet, the Tallinn public transport even provides timetables that show which buses are low-floor vehicles.

On-trip information: In urban areas all stops are equipped with timetables, some do also show an overview of the public transport routes. In rural areas only the main stops are equipped with timetables, smaller stops do not provide any information. Newer vehicles (buses and trams in Tallinn) give acoustic and visual information about the next stop.

Ticketing: Neither the national public transport association nor the disability organisations has any information what share of public transport ticket vending machines are accessible.

Stops and stations: The accessibility of bus stops in the city centres of big cities is mainly good. However smaller cities and rural areas do not have accessible bus stops at all. In the peripheral areas of big cities, stops often even do not have platforms and ramps discouraging disabled people from using those stops. Some train platforms are very high and are not accessible as they do not have ramps.

Vehicles: Boarding and alighting the vehicle are the main problems within accessibility of public transport in Estonia. Some newer vehicles are low-floor vehicles (buses, trolleybuses and trams in Tallinn), which also provide accessible interior. However, the majority of the vehicles are older ones, which are not accessible at all. An accessible interior is not provided in the majority of regional buses and trains.

Safety, Reliability, and Service: Safety equipment can nearly only be found in the new vehicles in Tallinn. Most vehicles (regional buses, trains, etc.) do not provide any safety equipment. The interviewed disability organisations even state, that for people with disabilities it would be dangerous using a rural bus. Therefore they do not use them. Usually public transport vehicles are quite punctual in Estonia.

People with disabilities can ask for assistance at railway stations, however the staff are not specially trained regarding the needs of people with disabilities.

2.2.1 Accessibility of passenger information

The interviewed person from the Union of Estonian Automobile Enterprises (national public transport association) as well as the interviewed disability organisations estimates the accessibility of public transport passenger information as good.

Pre-trip information

According to the national public transport association the all pre-trip information is available via the internet and by phone. Information about an on demand taxi service, which is a special transport service, is also available by phone.

The interviewed disability organisations state that timetables and route planners can be found in the internet. The public transport operators in Tallinn provide timetables that show which buses are low-floor vehicles. Information about tariffs and tickets are available via phone, internet and in the vehicles itself, whereas pre-trip

information on customer service is rather sufficient. To get information about special public transport services the main channel is the phone.

On-trip information

The Estonian Foundation of Disabled People and the Estonian Union of Persons with Mobility Impairment state that the on-trip information is rather poor. The disability organisations as well as the national public transport association state that all bus and tram stops in urban areas are equipped with timetables, at stops with shelters there is also an overview of the routes. At a quarter of the bus stops in rural areas timetables can be found, smaller bus stops do not provide timetables at all. All train stations provide written timetables and at newer train stations information is also given orally.

According to the interviewed disability organisations accessible information in the vehicles depend on the mode of transport and on how old the vehicle is. The new buses and trams in Tallinn have acoustic announcements and electronic displays of the next stops and possible interchanges. Trains do give acoustic announcements and electronic display of the next stop. Regional buses do not offer any accessible information as normally there are old buses in use.

The national public transport association – Union of Estonian Automobile Enterprises also states that in the new vehicles of city buses and trams displays are installed which give electronic written information. The interview partner states that regional buses and trains do not provide any on trip information at all.

2.2.2 Accessibility issues in Ticketing

Neither the national public transport association nor the disability organisations has any information what share of public transport ticket vending machines are accessible.

Estonia does not have a common ticketing policy, ticketing depends mainly on the operator. As a general rule it can be said that tickets can be bought in the vehicle.

2.2.3 Accessibility of stops and stations

The interview partner of the national public transport association “Union of Estonian Automobile Enterprises” has no information regarding the share of public transport stops and stations that are accessible for people with disabilities.

He also states that there is no general strategy regarding the improvement of the accessibility of public transport stops and stations. The national and local governments are responsible for the stops and stations and therefore it is also their responsibility to improve the accessibility.

The interviewed disability organisations state that the accessibility of bus stops in the city centres of big cities is mainly good. However smaller cities and rural areas do not have accessible bus stops at all. In the peripheral areas of big cities stops often do not have platforms and ramps and therefore disabled people are afraid to use those stops. The accessibility of tram stops in the city centre of Tallinn is “ok” but only in the city centre. The interviewed persons also state that the bus stops of regional buses are not really accessible for people with motor

impairments. Sometimes there are seats at the stations although these are not secure. Public transport stops and stations are nearly inaccessible for people with visual impairments. Some train platforms are very high and are not accessible as they do not have ramps.

According to the interviewed disability organisations, from 2008 to 2012 reconstruction work at local train stations will be conducted. Furthermore, all new build bus stops will be accessible for people with disabilities.

2.2.4 Accessibility of vehicles

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

The interview partner from the national public transport association states that all new vehicles are going to be low floor vehicles (buses, trolleybuses and trams). The timeframe of the replacement of the old vehicle fleet depends on the financial resources. However, in terms of subsidies, public transport does not really have high priority.

According to the interviewed disability organisations the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Communication and the governments of the large cities in Estonia have development plans to support investments into new public transport vehicles. Tallinn will substitute the whole vehicle fleet during the 5 years. At present approximately 15% of the transport fleet in Tallinn are low-floor vehicles. The situation in rural areas is worse still due to the financial deficits of the regional governments.

Actual state of the accessibility of the public transport vehicles in Estonia

The interviewed persons of the disability organisations state that boarding and alighting is not really accessible. Some vehicles are low floor, but only in Tallinn. The interviewed person states: *In other places the people with wheelchair don't move.* In general the situation is not good and disabled people must help themselves when boarding and alighting. The same situation can be found regarding the interior of the vehicles. The newer vehicles, which are low-floor buses and trolleybuses, provide a quite good accessibility of the interior. In average city buses provide space for two wheelchairs, as well as trams and trains (trains sometimes have designated spaces for 3 wheelchairs). Regional buses do not have a designated space for wheelchairs. The accessibility of the interior of the vehicles is very poor for people with visual impairments, hearing impairments and people with cognitive/learning impairments.

According to the interviewee from the national public transport association the new vehicles of trams and city buses are totally barrier free for people with motor impairments. People with hearing impairments and people with cognitive and learning impairments do not face any problems either. As the regional buses are only operated with old buses it is impossible for wheelchair users to use regional buses. City buses as well as low floor trams provide two designated spaces for wheelchairs. Long distance trains even provide two designated wheelchair spaces per wagon. The interviewee estimates that 10% of the local trains do have barrier-free interior design.

2.2.5 Safety, Reliability and Service

Safety aspects

The national public transport association “Union of Estonian Automobile Enterprises” has very little information about the safety equipment for people with disabilities in public transport vehicles. He estimates that in Tallinn 15% of the city buses and 10% of the trams do have safety equipment for wheelchair users, however, apart from Tallinn there is no information available. He also states that regional buses and trains do not have any safety equipment at all.

The interviewed persons from the Estonian Foundation of Disabled People and the Estonian Union of Persons with Mobility Impairment state that using rural buses would be dangerous for people with disabilities, as the vehicles are very old. However people with motor impairments do not use rural buses, and so there is little danger considered. People with disabilities do not think that riding by tram is dangerous, but the boarding and alighting sometimes is difficult. The same can be said for local and long-distance trains: riding itself is not dangerous, but the boarding and alighting is often a problem. The new vehicles of city buses and trams in Tallinn are equipped with safety equipments for people with disabilities (for example safety belts for wheelchair users). On trains some wagons provide safety belts.

According to Union of Estonian Automobile Enterprises acoustic announcements are made in the vehicles of all modes of transport in the case of an emergency. However, there are no special plans for the evacuation of people with disabilities in the case of an emergency.

The disability organisations state that acoustic announcements are given at bus and train stations in the case of an emergency.

Reliability and Punctuality

According to the national public transport association “Union of Estonian Automobile Enterprises” the reliability of the accessibility of public transport is low for all modes: city buses, regional buses, trams, local trains and long distance trains. Bus and tram stops only have platforms at main stops, with regional stops having even less. So the main problem with buses and trams are the missing platforms and therefore the vertical gap between street and vehicle. The low reliability of the accessibility of trains results mainly from the horizontal and vertical gap between platform and vehicle. The interviewed person states that *the distance between platforms and vehicles are too big even for healthy people.*

The representatives from the two interviewed disability organisations state that the reliability of accessibility of city buses and trams are moderate, as there are low-floor buses and low-floor trams. The reliability of accessibility of regional buses and trains is low. The vehicles used for regional bus lines mostly are very old and therefore not accessible. The problem with local trains is that most platforms are very old and do not have ramps, the reliability of accessible long distance trains is poor as the staff do not guarantee accessibility to the wagon and disabled people have to help themselves when getting on and off the train.

Regarding the punctuality of public transport the interviewed person from the Union of Estonia Automobile Enterprises states that on average each of 1% of city buses, trams and local trains are delayed more than 5 minutes. Regional buses are the ones which are most often delayed, on average 10% are delayed more than 5 minutes, long distance trains are most punctual, only 0.5% of them are delayed more than 5 minutes.

The disability organisations estimate that 1% of each of trams and local trains, 3 % of city buses, 15% of regional buses and 0.5% of long-distance trains are in average delayed more than 5 minutes.

Customer Service

The disability organisations Estonian Foundation of Disabled People and Estonian Union of Persons with Mobility Impairment perceive that the accessibility of customer services (luggage storage, counters, information desks, ticket machines, etc.) is in general not good. However, the interviewees also state that all bus and train stations provide accessible luggage storage as well as accessible counters and information desks for people with motor impairments, people with hearing impairments and people with cognitive/learning impairments. For wheelchair users it is difficult to use such service. If any personal assistance at stations is needed, this can be asked for at the information desks. Assistance services are for free.

The general perception of the interviewed representing public transport operators regarding the accessibility of customer services is moderate. He has no information what share of bus and train stations offer accessible luggage storage and counters. Regarding the personal assistance at stops and stations he also states that people have to ask for this assistance and they will receive it without any payment. There is no special assistance organised for people with disabilities.

Staff Training

According to the national public transport association as well as the two disability organisations, staff training for the needs of people with disabilities is rather poor. When new vehicles are bought the drivers get an explanation how to use the special equipment for people with disabilities.

2.3 Alternatives to public transport

According to the disability organisations it is the responsibility of the local authorities to guarantee mobility possibilities for people with disabilities (law of social secure). The special service implemented most often by local authorities is the so called INVA taxi. INVA taxi works as regular taxi service for disabled people. The main part of the costs for the taxis are paid by the city, passengers in Tallinn for example only have to pay 10 Eurocents per ride. The demand for these taxis is much higher than the supply.