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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

Title of Report:

State of the Accessibility of Public Transport Systems for People with Disabilities in Lithuania (LT)

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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 Lithuania (LT).

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 Lithuania (LT).

What can be expected from this report

This report gives an overview of the state of the accessibility of public transport in Lithuania (LT). 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 Lithuania (LT) 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 Lithuania (LT)**, 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	Ass. Prof. Dr. Daiva Griškevičienė	Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, Transport Management Department
Interview partners:	Name	Organisation
Representative of Governmental Authority	Petras Mikalonis, Vaida Vasilis Vasiliauskienė	LT Ministry of Transport and Communication, Road and Road Transport Department
	Povilas Malinauskas, Arūnas Rutka	Lithuanian automobile road administration under Transport and communications ministry
	Director Genovaitė Paliušienė, Rasa Kalinauskaitė	Department of Disabled Affairs under the Ministry of Social Security and labour
Representative of People with Disabilities	Auksė Andriūnienė	Lithuanian society of people with mental disabilities "Giedra"
	Marija Klimavičienė	Lithuanian Association of Hard of Hearing Youth
		Lithuanian Disabled Union
		Lithuanian Association of the Blind and Visually Handicapped
		Lithuanian Deaf Society
	Joana Vanagiene (Program Coordinator)	Lithuanian Community of Families with deaf and dull of hearing Children PAGAVA
	Danute Kasubiene (Chairperson)	Lithuanian Community of Care of People with Mental Trouble
Aldona Droseikiene (General Secretary)	Lithuanian Union of Pervade Sclerosis	
Representative of Transport Operators	Jurgis Šarmavičius, Laimutė Mikalauskiene	JS „Lithuanian Railways“, Passenger Transport Unit
	Rimantas Markauskas (Director)	JS „Vilnius buses“
	Algirdas Arlauskas (Head of Traffic Department)	JS „Vilnius trolley-buses“
	Vilius Laužikas (General Director)	JS „Busturas“
	Vaidotas Antanavičius (Director) Alfredas Mažūna (Deputy Director for Exploitation)	MC „Transport service“
	Director Semenas	JSC "Utena bus stock"

Table 1: Interviewer and Interview-partners in Lithuania

General remarks about the situation in Lithuania

The territory of the Republic of Lithuania is divided into 10 counties: Alytus; Kaunas; Klaipėda; Marijampolė; Panevėžys; Šiauliai; Tauragė; Telšiai; Utena and Vilnius. Territories of the counties include the 42 districts and 18 towns. All they have the local municipalities.

2.1.2 Statistical Data from Lithuania

Statistical Data for Lithuania	
Number of inhabitants	3,425,300 ²
Inhabitants with disabilities	7 % of the total population ³
Inhabitants with motor impairments	63,300 of the total population ⁴
Inhabitants with visual impairments	12,400 of the total population ⁴
Inhabitants with hearing impairments	7,700 of the total population ⁴
Inhabitants with cognitive / learning impairments	19,600 of the total population ⁴
Inhabitants who are functional illiterates	No details available. ⁵
Share of disabled people living in urban areas	No specific data available. General information: 66.7 % of all Lithuanians are living in urban areas ¹ .
Share of disabled people at working age	58 % ⁶
Share of disabled people at working age who are actually working	7,800 persons ⁷

Table 2: Statistical data for Lithuania

2.1.3 Legal and regulatory framework conditions in Lithuania

There is a national anti-discrimination law existing in Lithuania: The Law on Equal Opportunities. This Law consists of concepts determined in the main directives of the EU. The Law determines the actions of government and administration, education and science institutions, employers, sellers, producers, service providers which impinge on the principles of equal opportunities.

² 2005 data; Source: The Statistics Department under the Government of Republic of Lithuania, <http://www.stat.gov.lt>

³ Source: The Ministry of Social Security and Labour, <http://www.socmin.lt/index.php?-372955327>

⁴ 2001 general statistic accounting of population, Source: The Statistics Department under the Government of Republic of Lithuania, <http://www.stat.gov.lt>, <http://www.stat.gov.lt/lt/news/view/?id=705&PHPSESSID=59a389979fbf2e8248cdd5f30bab51f9>

⁵ In accordance with the Law on Education of the Republic of Lithuania, attendance of general or other type of schools is compulsory for children under the age of 16 inclusive.

⁶ Source: The Social Report of 2005-2006. Social security and Labor Ministry, <http://www.socmin.lt>

⁷ 2001 data; Source: The Statistics Department under the Government of Republic of Lithuania, <http://www.stat.gov.lt/lt/news/view/?id=705>

⁶ Data provided by the Disability and Working Capacity Assessment Office

Anti-discrimination law

The purpose of the Law on Equal Opportunities is to ensure implementation of equal rights of women and men guaranteed in the Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania and to forbid any kind of direct or indirect discrimination based on gender, age, sexual orientation, disability, race, ethnic dependence, religion or certitude. This Law consists of concepts determined in the main directives of the EU. State and local institutions and organizations, education, science and study institutions, employers are committed to implement equal opportunities and also to ensure them in the sphere customers rights. The Law determines the actions of government and administration, education and science institutions, employers, sellers, producers, service providers which impinge upon the principle of equal opportunities. The execution of the Law is supervised by the Equal Opportunities Ombudsman according to the Law of Equal Rights for Women and Men. Complaints based on infringements of the Law can be submitted to the Ombudsman.

Regulations regarding the accessibility of public transport

There are some national legal acts, related to the rights and problems of people with disabilities:

- The Constitution of the Republic of Lithuania (adapted by citizens of Republic of Lithuania in the referendum of 25 October, 1992)⁸
- Republic of Lithuania Law on the Social Integration of the Disabled, 2004-05-11, No. IX-2228, Vilnius⁹
- Republic of Lithuania Labour Code: ww.sdm.lt
- Republic of Lithuania Law on Equal Opportunities: w.sdm.lt
- Republic of Lithuania Law on the Foundation on Transport Activity: ww.transp.lt
- Republic of Lithuania Law on Construction: w.aam.lt
- Republic of Lithuania Law on Transport Privileges and other laws and legislation: www.transp.lt

General standards for public transport are regulated by Republic of Lithuania legislation.

Republic of Lithuania standards:

- The standards for bus stations are determined by the Minister of Transport and Communication order on the Ratification of the Regulation of Bus Station Activity. 2003-12-31 No 3-734
- STR 2.03.01:2001. Regulation of Buildings and territory, and Requirements for Disabled People. 2001-06-14. LR Environment Minister order No. 317, Vilnius⁹
- STR 2.06.03:2001. Regulation on Motor Roads. 2001-12-18 LR Environment Minister and LR Transport Minister order No. 603/456, Vilnius⁹

According to the interview-partner from Lithuanian society of people with mental disabilities “Giedra” there is no specific law for accessible public transport existing in Lithuania.

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

According to the interviewed governmental authorities, accessibility of public transport is part of political program, which is included in the resolution of LR Government 2005-06-23 No. 692 “The sustained strategy of Lithuanian transport system development”. Public transport services have to be combined with the needs of private car owners; public transport has to be accessible for disabled people.

⁸ <http://www3.lrs.lt/home/Konstitucija/Constitution.htm>

⁹ http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter2/dokpaieska.showdoc_e?p_id=24732&p_query=&p_tr2

According to the interview-partner from the Lithuanian Society of People with Mental Disabilities “Giedra” the accessibility of public transport is not a mainstream topic on the political agenda. The main aspiration of disabled people is to be integrate into a healthy society, where they do not feel like outcasts. Disabled people need more attention from the society side. The social integration policy has included the special modes of equal opportunities for people with disabilities. But there is a great weakness in inaccessible infrastructure and communication systems.

Monitoring of the accessibility of public transport

The Government transport institutions have not monitored the situation of accessibility of public transport. All the questions of social integration are under the monitoring of LR Ministry of Social Security and Labour. “The National Program on the Social Integration of the disabled in 2003-2013” approved by the Government Resolution in 2002-06-07, No. 850, Vilnius¹⁰

The responsible authorities are:

- LR Ministry of Social Security and Labour: <http://www.socmin.lt>
- The Department for disability affairs under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour: www.ndt.lt

Special fares and public transport tariffs for people with disabilities

According to the interviewed governmental authorities “The National Programme on the Social Integration of disabled people in 2003-2013” approved by the Government Resolution in 2002-06-07, No. 850, Vilnius¹⁰.

The responsible authorities are:

- LR Ministry of Social Security and Labour: <http://www.socmin.lt>
- The Department for Disability affairs under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour: www.ndt.lt

For the planning and implementation:

- LT Ministry of Transport and Communication: www.transp.lt
- Lithuanian automobile road administration under LR Ministry of Transport and Communications: www.lra.lt

According to the interviewed disability organisations there are special tariffs for people with disabilities. Transport privileges are applied according to the level of working capacity. The reduced fare is defined by the level of disability; discounts of ½ and 4/5 are used. The loss of income for operators are compensated by the state budget.

The discount for people with hearing impairments are 30% - 50% of the whole fare.

According to the interviewed public transport operators the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania has determined categories of passengers who have to pay a lower price. The Government of the Republic of Lithuania recovers the loss of income for operators with the help of local authorities. The disabled people have transport privileges. The local authority pays the compensation. The right to purchase a single ticket for using long-distance regular route buses, passenger trains and single or fixed-term nominal local regular route buses and trolleybuses, regular route ships and ferries ticket with 80 per cent discount is granted to disabled persons of determined categories or persons who are identified as invalid.

¹⁰ http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter2/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=279741

Travel prices for disabled passengers are regulated according to the Law of Transport Privileges, 30th March 2000, No. VIII-1605, Vilnius.¹¹ The aim of this law is to determine types of privileges and categories of people subject to privileges. Privileges shall be applied when riding on regular buses and trolleybuses, passenger trains and regular boats and ferries. The mentioned privileges shall not be applied to those riding motorcars - taxis and route taxis. The right to purchase single tickets for using passenger trains in 3 and 2 category vans with 50-80% discount is granted to disabled children, disabled persons of category I, persons who are ill with diseases included in the list drawn-up by the Ministry of Health and whose treatment constantly requires haemodialysis and to their escort (one escort for one person), as well as to participants of resistance to 1940-1990 occupations - military volunteers who have reached 70 years of age or older.

2.1.4 Organisational framework conditions

The Government of the Republic of Lithuania adapted the National Antidiscrimination Program for 2006-2008. The Government of the Republic of Lithuania coordinates and implements the system of social integration of people with disabilities, validates long-term national strategies and programs on social integration of disabled people. The ministries prepare and offer suggestions for the development of laws and other legal acts projects on social integration of disabled people to the government and organize the implementation of social integration. The Department for the Affairs of People with Disabilities coordinates and implements the National Program for Social Integration of Disabled. Heads of counties prepare, coordinate and implement social programs on the level of counties and social projects for disabled people, perform other functions determined by the Law on the county-government level. Local authorities prepare and implement social programs on the level of local government, respond for general and special services to meet the needs of disabled people and conditions for better integration of disabled people to the society, and also cooperation with organizations representing people with disabilities.

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

- **The Government of the Republic of Lithuania**
Gedimino av. 11, LT-01103 Vilnius, phone 00370 / 5 / 266 3711, e-mail: kanceliarija@lrvk.lt
- **The Ministry of Social Security and Labor**
Vivulskio st. 11, Vilnius, phone: 00370 / 5 / 2664 201, e-mail: post@socmin.lt
 - **Equal Opportunities and Social Integration Department**
Director of Department: Alfredas Nazarovas, phone: 00370 / 5 / 266 42 19, e-mail: ANazarovas@socmin.lt
 - **Equal Opportunities Division**
Head - Eglė Čaplikienė, phone: 00370 / 5 / 266 42 61, e-mail: ECaplikiene@socmin.lt
 - **Social Work and Social Services Division**
Head - Daiva Buivydaite, Phone: 00370 / 5 / 266 42 62, e-mail: DBuivydaite@socmin.lt

¹¹ http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter2/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=275866

- **Department of Disabled People Matters under the Ministry of Social Protection and Labour**
Direktor Genovaitė Paliušienė, phone: 00370 / 5 / 2316650, e-mail: Genovaite@ndt.lt
Deputy Direktor Jolanta Šliužienė, phone: 00370 / 5 / 2316662, e-mail: Jolanta.Sliuziene@ndt.lt
- **The Ministry of Health**
Vilnius st 33, LT-01506 Vilnius, Phone: 00370 / 5 / 268 51 10, e-mail: ministerija@sam.lt
- **The Ministry of Environment**
Vilnius st 33, LT-01506 Vilnius, Phone: 00370 / 5 / 268 51 10, e-mail: ministerija@sam.lt
- **The Ministry of Finance**
Tumo-Vaižganto st. 8A/2, 01512 Vilnius, Phone: 00370 / 5 / 239 0000, e-mail: finmin@finmin.lt
- **The Ministry of Culture**
J. Basanavičiaus st. 5, LT-01118 Vilnius, Phone: 00370 / 5 / 261 94 86, e-mail: culture@lrkm.lt
- **The Ministry of Transport and Communication**
Gediminas av. 17, Vilnius., Phone : 00370 / 5 / 239 3999, e-mail: transp@transp.lt
- **The Ministry of Education and Science**
Volano st. 2/7, LT-01516, Vilnius, Phone: 00370 / 5 / 219 1190, e-mail: smmin@smm.lt
- **The Ministry of Economy**
Gedimino ave. 38/2, LT01104 Vilnius, Phone: 00370 / 5 / 262 3863, e-mail: kanc@ukmin.lt
- **The Ministry of Interior**
Šventaragio st 2, LT 01510 Vilnius, Phone: 00370 / 5 / 271 71 30, e-mail: bendrasisd@vrm.lt
- **Department of Disability Affairs at the MSSL**
Vaidilutės str. 69, Vilnius, Phone: 00370 / 5 / 2316649, www.ndt.lt
- **Centre of Technical Aid for Disabled People at the MSSL**
Smolensko str. 10, Vilnius, Phone: 00370 / 5 / 2790189, e-mail:centras@tpnc.lt
- **Disability and Working Capacity Assessment Office at the MSSL**
Svitrigailos st. 10, LT-2006 Vilnius, phone: 00370 / 5 / 2651230, e-mail info@ndnt.lt
- **The Lithuanian Labour Exchange at the MSSL**
Gelezinio Vilko St. 3A, LT-2600 Vilnius, Phone: 00370 / 5 / 2360770, e-mail info@ldb.lt
- **State Social Insurance Fund Board at MSSL**
Konstitucijos St. 12, LT-2600 Vilnius, Phone: 00370 / 5 / 2724864, e-mail: sodrainfo@sodra.lt
- **Local: Lithuanian Association of Municipalities**
T. Vrublevskio st. 6, LT-01100 Vilnius, Phone: 00370 / 5 / 261 6063, e-mail: bendras@lsa.lt

Governmental authorities responsible for public transport

- **The Ministry of Transport and Communication**

Gediminas ave. 17, Vilnius, Phone: 00370 / 5 / 239 3999, e-mail: transp@transp.lt

Every municipality has the transport divisions or sub-divisions:

- **Vilnius City Municipality**

- City Economics Division, Phone: 00370 / 5 / 211 2104, e-mail: Juozas.Gedvilas@vilnius.lt

- Division of Public Transport, Phone: 00370 / 5 / 211 2115, e-mail: Kastytis.Lubys@vilnius.lt

- **Kaunas City Municipality**

City Development Department - Transport Division, Phone: 00370 / 5 / 20 00 18,

e-mail: PauliusK@kaunas.sav.lt

- **Klaipėda City Municipality**

City economy department – Transport service division, Phone: 00370 / 396090,

e-mail: leonas.stonkus@klaipeda.lt

- **Siauliai City Municipality**

Urban Infrastructure Division, Phone: 00370 / 41 / 59 63 20, e-mail: z.augustinas@siauliai.lt

- **Panevezys City Municipality**

- City Economics Department, Phone: 00370 / 50 13 11, e-mail: miestoukis@panevezys.lt

- Urban Transport Division, Phone: 00370 / 50 13 14, e-mail: urbonaviciene@panevezys.lt

- **Alytus Region Municipality**

- Rotušės a. 4, LT-62504 Alytus, Phone: 00370 / 315 55 111, e-mail: alytus@ams.lt

- Urban economics Department, e-mail: miestoukis@ams.lt

- **Utena Regional Municipality**

Utenio sq.4, 28503 Utena, Phone: 00370 / 389 61620, e-mail: j.slapsinskas@utena.lt

Main transport operators and Public Transport associations

- **SC “Lithuanian Railways”**

Mindaugo st. 12/14, LT-03603 Vilnius, Phone: 00370 / 5 / 269 2038, e-mail: lgkanc@litrail.lt

- **MC „Transport Service“**

Phone: 00370 / 5 / 270 9339, e-mail: info@vilniustransport.lt

- **JSC „Vilnius City Buses”**

Verkiu st. 52, LT-09109 Vilnius, Phone: 00370 / 5 / 273 8602, e-mail: autobusai@vap.lt

- **JSC “Vilnius Trolley-buses”**

Zolyno g. 15, LT-10209 Vilnius, Phone: 00370 / 85 / 239 4700, e-mail: vilnius@troleibusai.lt

- **JS Bus company "Long-distance Passenger transport company"**

Sodu st. 22, LT-03211 Vilnius, Phone: 00370 / 5 / 216 0054, e-mail: nfo@toks.lt

- **JS Bus company “Kautra”**
Vytauto ave. 24, LT-44355, Kaunas, Phone: 00370 / 37 / 409060, e-mail: autobusustotis@kautra.lt
- **JS Trolley-bus “Autrolis”**
Islandijos street 209, 49162 Kaunas, Phone: 00370 / 8-37 / 38 71 11, e-mail: autrolis@autrolis.lt
- **JSC "Klaipeda Bus stock "**
Garazu st. 2, LT- 92101 Klaipėda, Phone: 00370 / 46 / 411 599, e-mail: sekretore@klap.lt
- **JSC "Panevėžys bus stock"**
J.Basanavičiaus st. 67, Panevezys, Phone: 00370 / 845 / 433232, e-mail: info@panevezioautobusai
- **JS Bus company „Busturas“**
Sarūno st. 2, Siauliai, Phone: 00370 / 8 ~ 41 / 592000, e-mail: busturas@busturas.lt
- **JSC “Alytus bus park”.**
Jotvingių st.5, LT-62116, Alytus, Phone: 00370 / 315 / 51747, e-mail: aap@infoseka.lt
- **JSC "Utena bus stock"**
K. Donelaičio st. 30, Utena, Phone: 00370 / 8389 / 61737, e-mail: sedra@utenosap.lt
- **JSC "Tibus" ("Eurolines Baltic")**
Sodu st. 22, Vilnius, Phone: 00370 / 5 / 2151377
- **Lithuanian National Road Carriers' Association Lithuanian "LINA VA "**
J.Basanavičiaus st. 45, LT-03506 Vilnius, Phone: 00370 / 5 / 2786 501, e-mail: office@linava.lt
- **Vilnius International Airport**
Rodunios road 10A, LT-02189 Vilnius, Phone: 00370 / 5 / 2739 305, e-mail: airport@vno.lt
- **Kaunas Airport**
Karmelava, 54460 Kaunas area, Phone: 00370 / 37 / 399 396, e-mail: info@kaunasair.lt
- **Palanga International Airport**
Liepojos road 1, LT-00169 Palanga, Phone: 00370 / 460 / 52066, e-mail: head@palanga-airport.lt
- **Siauliai airport**
Lakunu st. 3, 5404 Siauliai, Phone: 00370 / 41 / 542 005
- **Klaipeda State Sea Port**
J. Janonio st. 24, LT- 92251 Klaipeda, Phone: 00370 / 46 / 499 799

Main disability organisations

- **Association „Lithuanian Forum of Disabled People“**
Labdarių g. 7/11, LT-01120, Vilnius, Phone: 00370 / 8-5 / 2612501, e-mail: info@lnf.lt
- **The society for the Physically Disabled People of Lithuania**
Saltoniskiu st. 29/3, Vilnius, Phone: 00370 / 5 / 275 77 16, e-mail: info@draugija.lt, www.draugija.lt
- **Lithuanian welfare society for people with intellectual disability “Viltis”**
Kalvarijų st. 143, Vilnius, Phone: 00370 / 5 / 261 52 23, 211 35 25, e-mail: viltis@viltis.lt, www.viltis.lt

- **Lithuanian Union for the people with disabilities**
Geliu st. 7, Vilnius, Phone: 00370 / 5 / 269 13 09, e-mail: lzns@negalia.lt, www.negalia.lt
- **Lithuanian Community of Disabled people with intellectual disability "Giedra"**
S. Konarskio 49, bloc 4-33, post box 22, Vilnius, Phone: 00370 / 5 / 2 33 28 20, e-mail: bgiedra@erdves.lt
- **Lithuanian Association of the Blind and Visually Handicapped**
Labdariu st. 7/11, Vilnius, Phone: 00370 / 5 / 262 48 66, e-mail: ct@lass.lt , www.lass.lt
- **Lithuanian Disabled Union**
Saltoniskiu 29/3, Vilnius, LT-08105, Phone: 00370 / 5 / 2757716, e-mail: info@draugija.lt
- **Lithuanian Deaf Society**
Snt. Kazimiero st. 3, Vilnius, Phone: 00370 / 5 / 262 81 15, e-mail: centras@lkd.lt , www.lkd.lt
- **Lithuanian association of the addaptation of environment for the people with disabilities**
Zemaites st. 21, Vilnius, Phone: 00370 / 5 / 2333576, e-mail: aplinka-visiems@takas.lt
- **Lithuanian Union of Pervade Sclerosis**
A.Jaksto st. 9 , LT- 001105 Vilnius , Phone: 00370 / 8-5 / 260 90 68, e-mail: info@liss.lt, www.liss.lt
- **Association of Cerebral Paralysis**
Kauno st. 2/21-1, Vilnius, Phone: 00370 / 8-5 / 262 24 66, e-mail: CPA@info.com
- **Lithuanian Arthritis Association**
Zygimantu st. 9, Vilnius, Phone: 00370 / 8-5 / 276 59 38, e-mail: artritas@mail.lt, http://artritas.bchi.lt/
- **Lithuanian Community of Care of People with Mental Trouble**
T. Vrublevskio st. 6 , Vilnius LT-01100, Phone: 00370 / 686 43014, e-mail: lspzgb@takas.lt , danutekas@takas.lt
- **Lithuanian Association of Dull of Hearing**
Vytauto av. 79-410, Kaunas, Phone: 00370 / 685 / 42952, e-mail: klimarija@gmail.com, www.lna.lt
- **Kaunas Community of Care of blind and weak-eyed Children „Light of Eyes“**
Phone: 00370 / 837 330860, e-mail: nijolemajeriene@yahoo.com
- **Lithuanian Association of Paraplegic**
LPA, Striūnos st. 9 Panevėžiukas, Kauno area, Phone: 00370 / 37 56 22 73, e-mail: lpa@takas.lt, paraplegikai@gmail.com
- **Lithuanian association of people with Spinal Lesions**
Ozo g. 19, Vilnius, Phone: 00370 / 8-5 / 242 70 42, e-mail: lzspa@dtiltas.lt
- **Lithuanian Community of Families with Deaf and Dull of Hearing children**
PAGAVA, Snt. Kazimieras st. 3, Vilnius, Phone: 00370 / 5 / 2120763, e-mail: risi@grigiskes.lt
- **International Virtual Club of Families with disabled children**
e-mail: saule9@splius.lt
- **Lithuanian Association of disabled people with nerve-muscle illness**
Prancūzų st. 59-13, 44429 Kaunas, Phone: 00370 / 837 / 348413, e-mail: nendre@nendre.lt
- **Lithuanian Union of Blind and weak-eyed Medics**

LASMEDA, Labdarių 5, LT-01120 Vilnius, Phone: 00370 / 5 / 262 70 56, e-mail: info@lasmeda.w3.lt, <http://lasmeda.w3.lt>

- **Lithuanian Parolimpic Committee**
Žemaitės st. 6, Vilnius, Phone: 00370 / 5 / 212 08 62, e-mail: lpok@one.lt
- **Lithuanian Sport Federation of Blind people**
Labdarių st. 7/11, Vilnius, Phone: 00370 / 5 / 262 46 42, e-mail: lasf@post.omnitel.net
- **Lithuanian Association of Disabled people for Sport Orientation and Tourism**
Justiniškių st. 70-65, Vilnius, Phone: 00370 / 5 / 212 84 09, e-mail: sportof@yahoo.com
- **Lithuanian Volleyball Association of Disabled People**
Fabijoniškių st. 75-44, Vilnius, Phone: 00370 / 5 / 240 82 14, e-mail: jurate@unit.lt

Cooperation among stakeholders

Cooperation between the governmental authorities and disability organisations

According to the interviewed governmental authorities the activities and cooperation between governmental institutions or municipalities and their responsibility are regulated by laws and other legislation.

According to the interviewed disability organisations associations and organisations of disabled people think that the level of cooperation is very low.

Cooperation between the transport operators and disability organisations

According to the interviewed disability organisations transport operators cooperate with municipalities in relation to modernization of public transport, composing traffic schedules or in questions of passenger services. The local organisations of disabled people should participate in this process. Research should be prepared for solving the problems of people with disabilities.

According to the interviewed public transport operators the city municipality cooperates with various organisations of people with disabilities, organises meetings and discussions on transport problems. The Division of Social Aid participates in the cooperation between transport operators and disability organisations. A workgroup formed of representatives of the municipality and operators solve all public transport problems. Transport operators do not believe enough cooperation exists. The main barrier to the improved development of public transport is the limited budget. No analysis of transport services needs is conducted; only general requirements from people with disabilities for ensuring transport accessibility are determined. Although investment is necessary, a larger budget is necessary for buying new rolling stock and installing stations as required in European standards. However, these funds are not available from the government. Potential needs of people with disabilities have to be analysed in detail and economic and technical possibilities of Lithuanian public transport must be figured out.

Cooperation between the transport operators and governmental authorities

According to the interviewed governmental authorities there is insignificant cooperation between transport operators and governmental authorities.

According to the interviewed public transport operators there is a moderate level of cooperation between transport operators and governmental authorities. Principally, Lithuanian, the EU and international rail transport organisations' legal documents are being harmonised.

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

According to the interviewed governmental authorities the main barriers are:

- a lack of new, comfortable, accessible vehicles.
- Insufficient public interest.
- a lack of financing resources

According to the interviewed public transport operators, public transport companies are always aiming to increase passenger numbers; therefore the integration of people with disabilities is very important. Various features are implemented – public transport operators try to transfer good practice examples from other countries. Public transport accessibility for disabled people also improves the quality of transport for other users. Recently the attitude of disabled people regarding public transport has improved. New technologies for better adaptability are being installed; new transport modes are being adapted for disabled people. Vilnius city municipality cooperates with organisations of disabled people on the topic of transport. The Social Aid Division of the municipality participates in the cooperation process between organisations of disabled people and public transport operators.

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

According to the interviewed disability organisations about 95 % of disabled people are using the public transport service. The majority of disabled passengers try to adapt the operating transport system. But sometimes they are hardly hit by the psychological stress. There is a great lack of the attention from the drivers: for example they don't try to drive the vehicles to the stop close to the ramp/ sidewalk; and they don't pay attention to the flow of passengers to notice whether there are any disabled persons. The controllers are also a problem as they don't respect if people with disabilities are slower in the process of ticketing or are less orientated. The controllers are only looking for the delivery of the payment of a penalty bill. The key question is the necessity of visual and hearing information at transport stations and in the vehicle. It is important that intercity and regional public transport drivers are trained on the communication peculiarities with persons with hearing impairments (clear articulation, contact in front writing).

According to the interviewed public transport operators development and accessibility of public transport for disabled people can help to ensure better accessibility of workplaces. As Lithuania is a small country, the most realistic way of social contacts for disabled people is transport, because it is used for travelling. The possibility to provide transport service is not enough to keep a job – it is necessary to ensure the integration of people with disabilities.

2.2 Accessibility of Public Transport

Pre-trip information / On-trip information: There is already some accessible information available; especially in larger towns the information via the internet is quite good. Timetables and information concerning routes is always available as a print product and often telephone information is provided (although these calls are sometimes charged). A lot of buses (especially the new low-floor and trolleybuses) provide acoustic and visual information (the visual information is often via displays with running text). Stops are equipped with timetables and route information; the larger train stations provide more dynamic information and information desks. The next big step will be to implement real-time information at the stops and stations.

Ticketing: The discount on tickets for disabled people is determined in the Law on Transport Privileges ratified by governmental resolution No. VIII-1605, 200-03-30. People with disabilities are allowed to purchase a single ticket with up to 80% discount, according to the level of working capacity. The Government of the Republic of Lithuania recovers the loss of income for operators by the help of local authorities. Tickets can be purchased at kiosks and in the public transport vehicles. It is planned that tickets can also be bought via mobile phone (this should be realised in the near future). There are no ticket vending machines in Lithuania. There are no statistical data about which tickets are mainly bought by people with disabilities.

Stops and stations: Stops in urban areas are facilitated with bus shelters, benches, and displayed information material. According to the interviewed public transport operators the bus stops in Lithuania are not accessible for disabled people. There is very little information about the strategy of making public transport stops more accessible.

Vehicles: The cities Vilnius and Kaunas bought a number of new city-buses and low-floor buses, which are low-floor vehicles and relatively accessible. The buses provide dedicated seats for disabled people and have non-slip flooring as well handrails. The city buses in smaller towns as well as regional buses are not accessible. Local and long-distance trains are not accessible, mainly because of the old fleet. There is only one van which provides accessible interior design.

Safety, Reliability, and Service: According to the interviewed disability organisations disabled people using public transport trust the public transport system. However, there are very few vehicles with special safety equipment installed for people with disabilities. The newer city buses provide non-slip flooring and comfortable handrails. There are no special evacuation plans for people with disabilities. The reliability of the accessibility of public transport is higher in larger cities that use modern vehicles. The reliability of the accessibility of regional buses and trains is very low because of the old fleet. In larger bus terminals luggage storage is provided and it is more accessible if it is operated by persons and not an automatic system. Ticket counters and information desks are only provided in larger stations.

2.2.1 Accessibility of passenger information

According to the interviewed governmental authorities the accessibility of passenger information is positive; transport passenger information is available via the internet. Urban road transport passenger information is not suitably developed in medium and small towns and villages. There is no general web page for the whole country.

According to the interviewed disability organisations there is tolerable information. For regular passengers the information system is clear and acceptable. They know where to find the information they need.

According to the interviewed public transport operators for the regular passengers the information system is clear and acceptable. They know where to find the information they need. The accessibility of information in the bus stations, on the stops and on the web pages is acceptable. However in some towns the information service by phone requires a charge.

Pre-trip information

According to the interviewed governmental authorities a travel planning information system is under development. It is accessible for disabled people, as they can access the transport pre-trip information by phone and the internet. Travel planning information is only available from some larger public transport companies. Smaller transport companies have not implemented such information services yet. Pre-trip information about public transport tariffs and tickets is available, disabled people can access the information by phone and the internet (about long-distance bus transport). There is no information about accessibility of purchasing tickets, especially for blind people. Suitable information is available at service desks.

According to the interview-partner from the JSC “Transport Service”¹² the information system is in general sufficient. A good information system is available in Vilnius, as people can access information by phone and the internet. Information about low-floor buses is available via the internet. The daily schedules of buses and trolley buses are available at the bus stops in larger cities and their suburbs.

According to the interviewed disability organisations there is sufficient pre-trip information by phone, internet, and timetable boards at stations. For railways, pre-trip information on timetables is available by internet, phone (almost everywhere), various print brochures and information boards of the largest city stations. The main information for buses is available at stops, internet, and via press. Some city buses and trolley-buses have visual information on scoreboards. All trolley-buses have special information equipment for passengers with visual impairments. Intercity and local bus traffic schedules are published in every bus stop through the entire county. Urban, intercity and railway transport information is offered by phone, internet, and printing products. There is insufficient pre-trip information on regional buses.

According to the interviewed public transport operators the main means of travel planning for train journeys is the timetable. All timetables are available by internet, phone (almost everywhere), various print brochures and information offices in the main city stations. Special travel offers are represented in additional print products. The main information for buses are provided at the stops, on the internet and via press. There are acoustic announcements about changes to routes, traffic arrival and departure times for buses and trolley-buses. 17 % of trolley-buses and new buses have visual information and light-signalling panels with running text. All the trolley-buses have special information equipment for passengers with visual impairments. City public transport information is provided by phone, internet, and printing products. People with disabilities may also choose to use a special bus service, where the buses are specially adapted for disabled people. This system is regarded as sufficient because of the real possibilities of the transport fleet.

In Vilnius the information on public transport (routes, timetables, travel planning, schemes of all routes, news) can be retrieved via the internet (www.vilniustransport.lt) and mobile-phones (wap.vilniustransport.lt). All information can be retrieved by the free telephone line (+370 800 22922) during work time. Route timetables can be found at public transport stops. There is a new system installed in trolleybuses for people with visual impairments to get information on route with the help of a console: one communication item is installed in the trolleybus, the user has got the other.

¹² Source: JSC „Transport Service“, www.vilniustransportas.lt

Railway transport information is available by telephone or by writing a request to the Passenger Directorate of “Lithuanian Railways” and administrations of train stations. Pre-trip information on public transport tariffs and tickets is available via the internet.

For long-distance and local (regional) public transport passengers, pre-trip information on customer services is available on the internet, phone (almost everywhere), various print brochures and information offices in the larger train stations. Special travel offers are represented in additional print products. In the vehicles itself there are regulations on the passengers and baggage transport. In city buses, for every case, the driver has to help disabled people to board or alight of transport mean. The information is available by phone. Pre-trip information on special transport services is available on the internet and by phone. It is possible for passengers with disabilities to book a taxi or additional service in the railway station area. By using a mobile phone it is possible to book a taxi on the bus trip from any place in the country. For the coordination of various transport modes there is the possibility to get pre-trip information by mobile phone (free line) or internet about the traffic schedules of low-floor buses or trolley buses.

On-trip information

According to the interviewed governmental authorities there are timetables and route information of low-floor vehicles at all bus stops in the two large cities (Vilnius and Kaunas) and at some of the stops in the smaller towns. For people with visual impairments timetables are available by phone or on the internet, in which low floor buses are marked yellow. There is no special adaptation for disabled people with hearing impairments. The same information is available for the suburbs of Vilnius and Kaunas. However, in rural areas trip information is only available in writing at the stops, as well as on the internet. At train stations travel information is available in written form on the notice board. There is also a radio announcement and visual information about the departure, arrival and destination of the trains. There are information-terminals for the selection of routs or the combination of trains. There are ticket selling and booking-offices with special information for passengers in written form.

All new buses and trolley buses are equipped with a running text-display, which shows the name of the next stop and the request to buy tickets (driver sells during the stop time) and to prepare for ticket control. New buses have specially marked accessible seats for disabled people. Acoustic and visual information during the trip: audiotape phonogram about the route, the next stop and ticketing.

According to the interviewed disability organisations on-trip information is partially provided. The timetables are put too high for people in wheelchairs to read. The information is very brief and insufficient. Only stations in large cities have information screens.

Some new low-floor buses and special equipment for passengers with disabilities have a display with running text information. All buses, trolley-buses and trains have acoustic announcements with information on the next stops and requests to give seat places to disabled passengers or older people. The long distance buses are equipped with displays with running text.

About 50 % of public transport in Kaunas has boards with information on the routes and stops. In Lithuania many people with hearing impairments present notes with the station they have to get off to the driver so the driver knows that he has to stop there. The drivers sell the tickets at the stops therefore they often do not have time for more intensive contact with people with disabilities. Some new low-floor trolley-buses provide special equipment for disabled passengers and have displays with running text (ticker).

According to the interviewed public transport operators 95% of the public transport stops provide necessary information for passengers: timetables, routes, public transport work time on work days and separately on Saturday and Sunday (including state holiday) in urban areas. A telephone number for getting more detailed information is mentioned on the information boards. In the future it is foreseen to provide real-time information

at the stops. Especially for passengers with visual impairments there are 4 improved stops in the Zemaites Street in Vilnius close to the centre of blind and weak sighted people. 169 buses and 45 trolley buses (they are all low-floor vehicles) provide display information inside the vehicle. For better orientation there is an acoustic announcement in the vehicle when the vehicle is stopping and opening the doors. All public transport stops in rural areas provide written information concerning routes and timetables. The regional bus companies do provide information via the internet. About 50 % long-distance buses are better equipped but they are running only on the main inter-city routes on the best highways. About 2% of information does not correspond to the real situation because of changing of the operation bases. The information changing is late.

The best situation concerning accessible on-trip information can be found in the larger cities. Other cities and smaller towns are looking for an improvement of the information system due to the electronic ticket implementation. 100% of the buses provide acoustic announcements with information about the names of the stops, the next stop and the request to offer seat places to disabled passengers or old people. 40% of bus stops provide information on the route and stops. There is less information concerning long-distance and local transport service. The accessibility of information still needs to be improved. Plans for this improvement are related to the implementation of electronic tickets, starting in the largest cities and then going further towards the whole public transport system.

2.2.2 Accessibility issues in Ticketing

According to the interviewed governmental authorities tariffs for travelling by public transport and the values of discount for disabled people are determined in the Law on Transport Privileges ratified by governmental resolution No. VIII-1605, 200-03-30 (also additions)¹³. Disabled people have some transport privileges regarding the tariffs: they are allowed to purchase a single ticket with 80% discount for using long-distance buses, passenger trains, local buses and trolleybuses, regular ships and ferries. The local authority has to pay the budget compensation. The right to purchase single ticket for using passenger trains in 3 and 2 category vans with 50-80 per cent discount is granted to disabled children, disabled persons of category I, persons who are ill with diseases included in the list drawn-up by the Ministry of Health and whose treatment constantly requires haemodialysis and to their escort (one escort for one person), as well as to participants of resistance to 1940-1990 occupations - military volunteers who have reached 70 years of age or older. Tickets are sold at newsagents, in the public transport vehicles, and at ticket-offices at bus stations. It is possible to order tickets by phone (only for the largest bus terminal). It is planned that tickets can also be bought via mobile phone (this should be realised in near future). There are no ticket vending machines in Lithuania. Terminable electronic tickets are a good alternative.

According to the interviewed disability organisations transport privileges are applied according to the level of working capacity. The reduction of the price is defined by the level of disability. Discounts of 50% and 80% are used. The loss of income is compensated by the state budget. The discount for people with hearing impairments is 30% - 50% of whole price. Tickets can be purchased at kiosks and in the public transport vehicles. It would be easier for people with hearing impairments to purchase tickets at ticket vending machines or by electronic means. Tickets could also show information on the arrival time at the destination station. Intercity buses have no information on changed tickets prices or stops. Public transport drivers do not usually have change and sometimes refuse entry to the vehicle if the passenger does not have the exact amount.

According to the interviewed public transport operators, the Parliament of the Republic of Lithuania determined categories of passengers who should receive reductions on the public transport ticket prices. The Government of

¹³ http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter2/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=275866&p_query=&p_tr2=

the Republic of Lithuania recovers the loss of income for operators with the help of local authorities. Information on public transport ticketing (types of tickets, prices, reductions) can be retrieved by the internet (www.vilniustransport.lt), via cell-phone (wap.vilniustransport.lt). All verbal information can be retrieved by a free phone line (+370 800 22922) during working hours, kiosks or other ticket sale places. Ticket prices for disabled passengers are regulated according to the Law of Transport Privileges. 2000-03-30, No. VIII-1605, Vilnius¹⁴. There are no statistical data to show which tickets are purchased by people with disabilities.

2.2.3 Accessibility of stops and stations

According to the interviewed governmental authorities, bus stops in urban areas are facilitated with ramps, bus shelters, benches, and displayed information material (stops and schedule). There is no more special equipment for people with disabilities.

According to the interviewed disability organisations city transport is overcrowded. Frequent traffic-jams cause drivers to hurry passengers boarding and alighting in order to follow the timetable. The society's attitude towards disabled people is exclusive. The drivers' as well as the passengers' tolerance for people with disabilities is rather low. People are not allowed to board the transport vehicle through the front doors. There is no special equipment for people with disabilities and no supervision.

According to the interviewed public transport operators the bus stops in Lithuania are not accessible for disabled people. Toilets are installed at the end-stops of the routes; however they can only be used by drivers. There are no ticket vending machines or vending machines for drinks at the bus stops.

Strategy regarding the improvement of the accessibility of public transport in Lithuania

According to the interviewed governmental authorities the strategies regarding the improvement of the accessibility of public transport are stated in the following documents:

- The Minister of Social Security and Health order on the ratification of the Strategy for the Provision of Technical Aid to Disabled people in 2004-2010 (issue 2004-04-30 No A1-114),
- Health economy centre under the Ministry of Health research study on methods of financing social integration programs and the effectiveness of programs implementation (2001, www.socmin.lt),
- Institute of Labour and Social Research study on guidelines for planning the need for compensation facilities for the disabled people and regional distribution, 2002.
- National programme of the social integration of people with disabilities for 2003-2012 years, Plan for implementation of mean 6.1.4; The responsible authorities are:
 - Work group in Lithuanian Road Administration under Ministry of Transport and Communications. Chief - Povilas Malinauskas, Deputy Head of Long-term Planning Division, ph: + 370 5 2131361
 - Work group in Ministry of Transport and Communications. Chief - Vidas Ramanavičius, Deputy Director of Information Technologies and Telecommunications Department

According to the interviewed disability organisations there is no information about the strategy of improving the accessibility of public transport in Lithuania. The whole transport infrastructure is being modernised very slowly

¹⁴ (http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter2/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=275866)

as the necessary finance is missing. The needs of people with disabilities are a small part in this process. This information is spread by media and press.

For the interviewed public transport operators the strategy is unknown and not declared to the general public. Some general guidelines are included in the city development plans. Services of all types of transport are going to be harmonised with the help of urban transport research as well as by the installation of new technologies for passenger travel. Construction regulation documents show that essential questions are elaborated and introduced. Therefore, development and introduction plans have to be developed further by governmental organisations and discussed in society. There is a lack of environmental adaptation for disabled people in the level of local authorities.

Current state regarding the accessibility of bus stops and stations in Lithuania

According to the interviewed disability organisations the Lithuanian society just begins to take care about social integration of people with disabilities. It is hoped State institutions will involve accessibility of public transport infrastructure to their plans.

According to the interviewed public transport operators the accessibility of public transport stops and stations is good. Comfortable approach, information and timetables are accessible everywhere.

According to the interviewed governmental authorities, stops and stations in rural areas are not accessible for disabled people. In the future the Directorate of Infrastructure will reconstruct these stops and stations and adapt them for the needs of disabled people. In the largest cities the train stations are partly accessible for disabled people: comfortable entrances, new lighting, non-slippery pavement, escalators, lift, and new toilets. In the smaller stations there were renovated platforms with ramps.

2.2.4 Accessibility of vehicles

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

According to the interviewed governmental authorities there is no strategic paper regarding the improvement of the accessibility of public transport vehicles. Under implementation is the Strategy for the Provision of Technical Aid to the Disabled People in 2004 -2010 ratified by the Ministry of Health, 2004-04-30, No A1- also the national Program on the Social Integration of the disabled People 2003-2013 approved by the Government Resolution in 2002-06-07, No. 850, Vilnius¹⁵. The responsible authorities are:

- The Ministry of Social Security and Labour¹⁶,
- The Department for the affairs of the Disabled People under the Ministry of Social Security and Labour

According to the interviewed public transport operators the accessibility of public transport vehicles for disabled people is one of the main directions in transport policy. The group of specialists of “Lithuanian Railways” participates in the activity of international organisation ERA and analyses problems concerning interoperability and rail transport accessibility for disabled people. As Lithuania is a member of the EU and company

¹⁵ http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter2/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=279741

¹⁶ <http://www.soemin.lt>

“Lithuanian Railways” is a member of many international organisations, the principles of public transport accessibility for disabled people are gradually being installed. These principles have already been approved in the regulation documents of the EU and these international organisations. Currently two important forms of traffic management systems are being installed: automatic traffic-light control system and electronic ticketing system. Modern traffic control techniques with acoustic signals for disabled people can help to improve the accessibility of public transport. Accessibility of electronic ticketing can help to ease the purchase and controlling of tickets for all passengers. It is planned to install acoustic equipment in buses and provide acoustic information at stops for people with visual impairments. The renovation of the whole bus and trolleybus fleet is being performed and old vehicles are substituted by low-floor vehicles having special equipment for passengers with wheelchairs. Public transport companies are always aiming to increase passenger numbers; therefore the integration of disabled people is very important. The accessibility of public transport for people with disabilities has a positive influence on the quality of public transport for all users.

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

According to the interviewed governmental authorities the principles of technical environment adaptation for the needs of disabled people are formulated or partially noted in:

- The Long-term (till 2025) Transport System Development Strategy of the Republic of Lithuania ratified the governmental resolution, 2005-06-23 No.692,
- the Law on the Principles of the Activities of Transport (art.3, it.1),

The responsible authority is the Ministry of Transport and Communication.¹⁷

As bus floors are usually higher than the pavement, boarding and alighting are not comfortable for people with disabilities. There are 150 low-floor buses and 101 buses that have ramps in Vilnius. The buses also provide special seats with belts for disabled people. In the beginning of 2007, 110 low-floor buses and 45 low-floored trolleybuses were operating in the public transport city network. The average share of city buses that provide accessible boarding and alighting (according to the interviewed governmental authorities) is as follows:

- 44% with special equipment for people with motor impairments
- 100% with special equipment for people with visual impairments
- 44% with special equipment for people with hearing impairments
- 100% with special equipment for people with cognitive/learning impairments

Also in regional buses people with disabilities have difficulties with boarding and alighting, as the level of most of the bus floors is higher than the level of the bus-stops.

All new trolleybuses are low-floor buses and do provide ramps and are adapted to the various altitudes of the pavements. All trolley-buses also do provide comfortable handrails.

Average share of trolley-buses that provide accessible boarding and alighting (according to the interviewed governmental authorities):

- 17% with special equipment for people with motor impairments
- 100% with special equipment for people with visual impairments

¹⁷ <http://www.transp.lt>

- 17% with special equipment for people with hearing impairments
- 100% with special equipment for people with cognitive/learning impairments

New buses have priority seats, high-contrast handrails, and enough space for storage of wheelchairs. In Vilnius 55% of all buses have enough space for wheelchairs. All buses have special seats for older and disabled people. Handrails are coloured in very bright colour. Floors are covered with rough pavement.

Average share of city buses that provide accessible interior design (according to the interviewed governmental authorities):

- For people with motor impairments: 55% of the city buses have enough space for wheelchairs. Every bus has free space for disabled and elder people.
- All city-buses are equipped with special means for people with visual impairments (high-contrast interior design, etc.)
- 44% of the city buses are equipped with special means for people with hearing impairments (e.g visual information)
- 100% of the city buses are accessible for people with cognitive/learning impairments.

The buses in Vilnius and Kaunas are much more accessible than the buses in other towns.

There are no regional buses with barrier-free interior design. Few buses on the inter-city routes have some special equipment for passengers with disabilities.

New trolleybuses have priority seats, high-contrast handrails and enough space for storage of wheelchairs. All low-floored trolley-buses have seats available for disabled people and accessible interior. Handrails are painted in a very bright colour. Floors are covered with pavement rough surface. There are 45 trolleybuses in Vilnius and 55 trolleybuses in Kaunas with one or two designated "spaces" for wheelchairs or buggies per trolleybus.

Few features are installed on the railways to support accessibility. This is mainly due to the age of the fleet. Older vehicles provide enough space for manoeuvring and storage for wheelchairs and crutches. Local trains do not offer technical features supporting barrierfree boarding and alighting or accessible services on trains. At present only one carriage of train No. 19/18 "Pajury" is accessible for disabled people: it provides larger doors, lifts, enough space for storage of wheelchairs, more spacious toilet with handrails, etc.

According to the interviewed disability organisations the topic of accessibility of public transport is not discussed in public. Public transport vehicles will be purchased gradually (a lack of finance) of foreign producers. Passengers in wheelchairs, and also people with partial motor impairments, have problems using public transport. A suitable floor level is necessary for better alighting and boarding as people with motor impairments struggle to climb steps. In winter boarding and alighting are even more complicated as drivers cannot manoeuvre the vehicles close to the platforms. People with hearing impairments try to act in the same way as other passengers do. They try to synchronize their motion in the process of boarding or alighting. People with hearing impairments are the most vulnerable in all public places. Transport vehicles have to be equipped with more acoustic and clear information (in written form, pictograms). Special buttons to press for information about alighting should be installed in every public transport vehicle.

According to the interviewed public transport operators the local authorities should stimulate transport operators to modernise their transport fleet. New transport vehicles that are accessible (regarding the equipment, and the interior design) for disabled people have been already bought. There are 150 low-floored buses and 101 buses

with moving ramps in Vilnius. Buses with moving ramps are adapted to various levels of pavements borders. Three buses do provide dedicated seats with belts for disabled people.

Average share of city buses that provide accessible boarding and alighting (according to the interviewed public transport operators):

- 44% with special features for people with motor impairments
- 100% with special features for people with visual impairments
- 44% with special features for people with hearing impairments
- 100% with special features for people with cognitive/learning impairments.

17 % of all trolleybuses - new low-floored trolleybuses - are accessible for disabled people. There are still problems with boarding and alighting as the stops have different pavement-altitudes. The 45 new trolleybuses are low-floor vehicles. These buses are equipped with moving platforms and can be adapted to various levels of pavements borders. All provide comfortable handrails.

Average share of trolley buses that provide accessible boarding and alighting (according to the interviewed public transport operators):

- 17% with special features for people with motor impairments
- 100% with special features for people with visual impairments
- 17% with special features for people with hearing impairments
- 100% with special features for people with cognitive/learning impairments.

Stops and stations in rural areas are not accessible for disabled people. In the near future the Directorate of Infrastructure will reconstruct these stops and stations and adapt them according to the needs of people with disabilities. JSC “Lithuanian Railways” renovated platforms and built ramps in 10 train stations. Local and small stations are also systematically renovated.

Train stations were designed to ensure safe movement of disabled people; also new video and audio information systems were installed. According to the height of passenger platforms new low-floor trains with accessible boarding equipments are going to be bought in the near future.

According to the interviewed public transport operators 55% of all buses in Vilnius provide enough space for wheelchairs. All buses have designated seats for older and disabled people. In Siauliai 30 % of all buses are low-floor vehicles. They also have designated seats for disabled people. Handrails are painted in a very bright colour. Floors are covered with pavement rough surface.

Average share of city buses that provide accessible interior design (according to the interviewed public transport operators):

- For people with motor impairments: 55% have enough space for wheelchairs.
- 100% with special features for people with visual impairments
- 44% with special features for people with hearing impairments
- 100% with special features for people with cognitive/learning impairments.

In total there are 180 places for wheelchairs in city buses of Vilnius and two spaces in city buses of Siauliai. There are no regional buses with barrier-free interior design.

In Vilnius 17% of all trolleybuses have accessible interior for disabled people. All low-floored vehicles have special seats for disabled people. Handrails are painted in a very bright colour. Floors are covered with a rough surface.

Average share of trolley-buses that provide accessible interior design (according to the interviewed public transport operators):

- 17.5% of trolley-buses are equipped with special means for people with motor impairments
- 100% of trolley-buses are equipped with special means for people with visual impairments
- 17.5% of trolley-buses are equipped with special means for people with hearing impairments
- 100% of trolley-buses are accessible for people with cognitive/learning impairments.

There are 45 trolleybuses in Vilnius.

There is only one train (No. 19/18 “Pajury”) that is accessible for disabled people: it provides larger doors, a lift, enough space for the storage of wheelchairs, a more spacious toilet with handrails, and etc.

2.2.5 Safety, Reliability and Service

Safety aspects

According to the interviewed governmental authorities the ministries do not control safety aspects. New public transport vehicles provide safety equipment. There is a general announcement system in the public transport vehicles: acoustic announcement by radio and sometimes visual running text information on a display. There are no special evacuation plans; general evacuation plans are used.

According to the interviewed disability organisations, disabled people using public transport trust the public transport system. However, disabled people at working age are increasingly using cars when travelling to work. Some buses are low-floor vehicles and provide designated space for wheelchairs. Every bus has special seats for disabled and older people. Regional buses have no special features. Local trains are not equipped for disabled people. Only one long-distance train (Vilnius-Klaipeda) has a specially equipped coach. In most cases people with disabilities ask other passengers or the driver for assistance. The majority of disabled people try to move together with other passengers and to synchronize their behaviour with others.

According to the interviewed disability organisations the modern city buses provide a button to contact the driver. However, personal assistance for people with disabilities is only provided by other passengers. In regional buses the only contact with the driver is when boarding the vehicle and buying a ticket. People with disabilities again need the help of other passengers. In local trains there is no means of contacting the driver. Disabled people need the help from other passengers. In long-distance trains it is possible to ask the conductor for assistance.

According to the interviewed disability organisations there is no special information channel for information about accidents. The drivers have to use the acoustic announcement system.

According to the interviewed public transport operators 44% of new buses and trolley buses in the two largest cities are equipped with safety belts for wheelchairs. There is a dedicated space for a wheelchair in 30% of the new buses. When looking at public transport in larger towns, approximately 10% of city buses provide safety belts. In Vilnius and Kaunas all city buses have non-slip flooring, accessible handrails and acoustic information system. In terms of public transport in the larger towns of Lithuania approximately 28% of the city buses have non-slip floors and 20% have accessible handrails. The fleet of regional buses is very old and does not provide any safety equipment for people with disabilities. 17 new trolley buses are equipped with safety belts for wheelchairs in Vilnius and Kaunas. All trolley-buses in Vilnius and Kaunas provide non-slip flooring, accessible handrails and acoustic information system. Local trains do not provide any safety equipment for people with disabilities.

In relation to accessible information in an emergency the interviewed public transport operators state that there are acoustic announcements given by drivers in the city buses and regional buses. In the trolley-buses the driver communicates with the central traffic controller by cell-phone. The central traffic controller informs the driver about dangers and interferences on the roads; if passengers are concerned, they are also informed. The drivers inform the traffic controller about passengers' health impairments and unexpected accidents.

According to the interviewed public transport operators there are no special plans for evacuating people with disabilities.

Reliability and Punctuality

According to the interviewed governmental authorities the level of reliability of the accessibility of public transport vehicles and stops/stations is low, as the special features for disabled passengers are implemented in only some vehicles. The level of reliability of the accessibility of city buses and trolley-buses is medium as the vehicle fleet is not completely renovated. The reliability of accessibility of regional buses is low, as the fleet is a very old one. The reliability of accessibility of local trains is low, as the local train fleet is old. The reliability of accessibility of long-distance trains is medium as the fleet is not completely renovated.

The interviewed governmental authorities assess the level of punctuality of public transport as good. They state that approximately 30% of the city buses and 20% of the trolley-buses are delayed more than 5 minutes. 98% of the regional buses are delayed less than 5 minutes and 99% of the local and long-distance trains arrive in time.

According to the interviewed disability organisations the level of reliability of the accessibility of public transport is low. The main reasons are the lack of ramps and lifts and the indifferent and untrained staff and drivers. The level of reliability of the accessibility of city buses and trolley-buses is low as assistance is only given by other passengers and the drivers. Technical support has only recently been implemented. The reliability of the accessibility of regional buses, local and long-distance trains is also low, as "everything depends on the assistance of drivers and other passengers". However, at larger intercity bus stations and at some train stations new ramps have been implemented.

Regarding the level of punctuality, the interviewed disability organisation states the city buses and trolley-buses do not follow the schedules during peak hours in the city centres and they are late during the winter season. The majority of regional bus operators try to follow the schedules. Local and long-distance trains arrive punctually.

According to the interviewed public transport operators the level of reliability of the accessibility of city buses is high. However, for some buses it is sometimes difficult to drive close enough to stop at platforms, as the street and road infrastructure is poorly designed and parked cars can hinder the bus. The same problem occurs for trolley-buses. The reliability of the accessibility of regional buses is low. Ramps to higher platforms have been installed on main streets. However, bus stops on local roads do not meet the requirements of disabled passengers. The level of reliability of accessibility of local and long-distance trains is low.

The interviewed public transport operators assess the level of punctuality of city buses and trolley-buses as moderate. They state that it depends on the traffic density in the city. During the peak hours buses are further delayed – especially in the larger cities. Because of the historical narrow street network and high frequency traffic at crossings it is difficult to implement bus lanes. Intercity buses are quite punctual and there are no complaints. The punctuality of regional buses depends on the technical level of the vehicle: if the buses are repaired frequently the punctuality is good. Trains are on a high level of punctuality with the level at about 99%.

Customer Service

According to the interviewed governmental authorities customer services are not developed enough. Rural bus stations provide luggage storage services but they are not totally accessible.

According to the interviewed disability organisations disabled people can use rooms for luggage storage in terminals with ramps. Usually these services are the same as for all passengers. It is necessary to ask for directions to the luggage storage. Luggage storage and return is quick if this service is a personnel one. Ticket counters are used in the largest city stations. Information desks are provided in all stations. Disabled people use the same information desks.

According to the interviewed public transport operators there are no bus stations without barriers for disabled people. Bus stations in rural areas provide luggage storage services. City transport does not provide these services. Small train stations do not have luggage storage offices. These offices were closed because of reduced passenger flows. Train stations in urban areas have automatic luggage storage rooms and offices. Train stations in urban areas are sufficiently accessible for people with disabilities, although finance is necessary. Only bus stations in large cities have ticket-counters and information desks. City stations are better equipped with modern techniques. Some assistance is offered at railway stations.

Staff Training

The interviewed governmental authorities think that people working in public transport have an insufficient understanding of disabled people travelling on public transport. No special training is provided for public transport staff. Public transport vehicles are often overcrowded at peak time and there is no space for disabled people in wheelchairs. Special training is necessary in the point of view of the interviewed governmental authorities.

According to the interviewed disability organisations, special training for public transport operator staff would be very useful.

According to the interviewed public transport operators there are no special training schemes for public transport operator staff. Staff training is conducted according to general training schemes. The aim is to help every passenger. Programs for special help for people with disabilities are not offered. Bus drivers are trained how to communicate with disabled people. Training is organised every 3 months. Annual training concerning the regulations of passenger and luggage transport are being organised for drivers. Representatives of disability organisations participated in some of the training sessions. Regional bus fleets do not give enough attention to staff training of the needs of disabled people.

2.3 Alternatives to public transport

According to the interviewed governmental authorities the car is the only alternative to public transport for disabled people. If disabled people are able to drive a car they may ask for financial support of the local municipality¹⁸

According to the interviewed disability organisations the only alternative to public transport accessible for disabled people are specially adapted cars. Those who can drive cars have the opportunity to ask the local authority for financial support or tax privileges.

¹⁸ 2005-06-14 the Social Security and Labour Minister order No. A1-165 “For approving of the order of compensation of expenses and purchase of specials cars, compensation of expenses for the their technical adaptation for the disabled persons with the motor impairment” (State news. 2005 06 18 No. 76-2781)