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**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 Poland (PL)**

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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](http://www.ptaccess.eu)

The PTaccess consortium:

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

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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 Poland (PL).

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

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

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

### How this report has been made

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

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

### What can be expected from this report

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

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

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

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

### How to use this report

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People, who are interested to get **more (detailed) information on the accessibility of public transport in Poland (PL)**, 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	Jan Friedberg	Jan Friedberg Consulting, planning & management
Co - Author	Liliana Schwartz	retired, expert on transport for disabled people
Interview partners:	Name	Organisation
Representatives of Transport Operators	Adrian Obuchowicz	MPK Krakow PLC
	Joanna Siecinska	PKP Group and Memembr Companies
Representatives of People with Disabilities	Krzysztof Kaperczak	Individual Person with motor impairments – active member of various disability organisations, incl. NGO Working Party “Seen from the Sidewalk”
Representative of Governmental Authority	Boguslawa Rychta	Ministry of Infrastructure (Department of Strategic Planning and Transport Policy)

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

Poland is a recent member of the European Union (since 1st May 2004) and according to the national contact person it is not very well organised in the areas of public transport and disability issues. However, the access to the European Union created a new situation and offered new opportunities:

- access to technology, services and experience; and
- particular requirements (including legal) of the organisation, economic standards and human rights.

In Poland the situation of public transport and disability issues varies between different levels: on one hand a wide majority of disabled people are living in post-communist conditions where disability was treated as a reason for “shame” and with no social solidarity and chariness of people. On the other hand new facilities and technologies are very user-friendly for people with disabilities and today’s society is much more open and active in this field. For this reason there are great differences seen and it is hard to demonstrate a general picture of the problem.

The same situation seems to exist in the public transport sector itself. The sector is dispersed in terms of organisation and level of services:

- Public Transport is an official priority of the governments (on all levels), although practical activities are only visible at a local level in large urban areas,
- Public transport as a sector does not appear to be consistently organised:
  - Interurban bus transport is generally deregulated.
  - In some cities urban transport it is organised by controlled competition principles, in some cities it is a natural monopoly.
  - The rail system is controlled by the state; some proposals on decentralisation have been debated for several years with little positive progress.

- The quality of services is rising and new technologies are being introduced. However, there is no detailed information on the extent of this phenomenon.
- The lack of a needed reform in the rail sector causes great delays.

The result of this situation is that disabled people are buying cars and do not use public transport for their mobility.

## 2.1.2 Statistical Data from Poland

Statistical Data for Poland	
Number of inhabitants	38,125,000 <sup>2</sup>
Inhabitants with disabilities	5,546,700 (14% of the total population) <sup>3</sup>
Inhabitants with motor impairments	No data available
Inhabitants with visual impairments	No data available
Inhabitants with hearing impairments	No data available
Inhabitants with cognitive / learning impairments	No data available
Inhabitants who are functional illiterates	No data available
Share of disabled people living in urban areas	58.8% <sup>4</sup>
Share of disabled people at working age	58.0% <sup>5</sup>
Share of disabled people at working age who are actually working	21.0% <sup>6</sup>

Table 2: Statistical data for Poland

## 2.1.3 Legal and regulatory framework conditions in Poland

An anti-discrimination law exists in Poland. There is no specific laws relating to the accessibility of public transport systems, but there are a number of regulations addressing the topic. There are non-formalised standards in use in Poland (worked out by the ECMT forum). Accessibility of public transport is a topic on the political agenda on local level, but it is not on a national level.

<sup>2</sup> Source: Concise Statistical Yearbook 2006

<sup>3</sup> Source: Central Statistical Office in Poland. National Census 2002. There are no more recent data available as this figure is collected only within the national census.

<sup>4</sup> Source: Central Statistical Office in Poland. National Census 2002

<sup>5</sup> Source: Concise Statistical Yearbook 2006

<sup>6</sup> Disabled People and Their Households in 2002, Central Statistical Office in Poland, Warsaw, October 2003

### Anti-discrimination law

At a national (parliament) level: Act on Professional and Social Rehabilitation and Employing Disabled People (enacted 27.08.1997). Charter of Disabled People's Rights. The Sejm of Republic of Poland Resolution (01.08.1997).

On a local level it has become common (in the recent 20 years), for the local councils to enact resolutions on the importance and necessity of the elimination of architectural and transport barriers and for new infrastructure to be barrier free.

However, neither at a national nor local level has the responsibility for the enforcement of this law been defined. There is no ombudsman for discrimination victims. The enforcement is only based on a construction law - particular requirements are obligatory in designing an implementation phase.

### Regulations regarding the accessibility of public transport

According to the representative of disabled people there are no specific laws for accessible public transport in Poland. Policies and initiatives to guarantee mobility for people with disabilities more likely to be at local level.

According to the Ministry of Infrastructure (previously the Ministry of Transport) Poland does not have a formal standard in use that has been created from a ECMT forum, such as: a Code of Good Practice "Transport friendly for all users", Manual regarding training staff in transport, Improve in accessibility of taxi, Manual prepared in the framework of COST Action 335 – Passengers' accessibility to heavy rail systems

The interviewed person from the Ministry of Infrastructure states that the activities successively taken in the field of public transport (adjusting new or modernized infrastructure and vehicles, changes of transport modes) followed by law regulations, strategic documents, operational programmes and those planned in the drafts of the documents aim at meeting the disabled people's needs. Furthermore replenishment of public transport's system account for the tasks financed from the funds of "State Fund for Rehabilitation of Disabled People" (PFRON). In recent years the following programmes have been carried out: Education – helping programme in the access to help disabled children and youths", "Pegaz 2003" – one of the goals of the programme is enabling the free movement through the reduction of transport barriers. The programme has been working since 2003. "Levelling out the differences between regions" – the strategic purpose of the programme is levelling out chances of disabled people who live in low economically and socially developed regions in their access to professional and social rehabilitation. In its framework the financing has been granted by PFRON particularly for reducing transport barriers (purchase of buses, minibuses and adjusting the vehicles to the carriage of disabled people).

### List of regulations in Poland

1. The Constitution of the Republic of Poland of April 2, 1997 (The Journal of Laws of 1997. No.78, item 483, as amended), Article 69 - Public authorities shall provide, according to the act, aid to disabled people in order to ensure their subsistence, adaptation to work and social communication.
2. Resolution of Polish Parliament of August 1, 1997, The Charter of right of disabled people (Official Journal No. 50, item 475) – The right of disabled people including the right to live in environment that is free of barriers, the right to free movement and the use of public transport modes.
3. Act of November 15, 1984, Transport Act (Journal of Laws of 2000, No. 50, item 601)  
Article 14:
  - a. Paragraph 1 – "The carrier is obliged to ensure the passengers suitable safety, hygiene and comfort and due service"

- b. Paragraph 2 – “ The carrier should take measures that will make the use of transport means, bus stops and platforms easier, also for the people moving on the wheelchair”.

On the basis of Article 34 of the act the Minister of Transport and Building published the regulation of January, 13. 2006 on the content, method, terms of publishing timetables (Journal of Laws, No. 12, item 79) - according to which the timetable should specify the modes of transport accessible to people with disabilities and information related to concessionary fares.

- 4. The Act of July 7, 1994, Building Act (Journal of Laws of 2006, No. 158, item 1118, as amended) Regarding the facilities of public service:
  - a. Article . 5 par. 1 point 4 (ensuring the conditions to use the facilities of public service by disabled people)
  - b. Article . 29 par. 1 point 18 (building permit does not demand for building a ramp for disabled people)
  - c. Article . 34 par. 3 point 2 (includes the description of accessibility for disabled people in architectural project for the facilities mentioned in the Article icle 5 par. 1 point 4)
  - d. Article . 36a par. 5 point 5 (it is forbidden to change the project elements if it concerns the accessibility for disabled people)
  - e. Article . 59 par. 2 point 2f (obligatory control of building aiming at ensuring the necessary conditions to use this facility by disabled people, in Particular people moving on wheelchairs in public service facilities and building for many families)

#### Regulations published on basis of Building Act

- f. Article . 7 Par. 2 point 1 – Regulation of the Ministry of Infrastructure of April 12, 2002 on the technical conditions which buildings and their location should meet (Journal of Laws of 2002, No. 75 item 690, as amended)
- g. Article .7 par. 2 point. 2
  - a/ Regulation of the Ministry of Transport and Maritime Economy of May 30, 2000 on technical conditions which the road engineer objects and their location should meet (Journal of Laws, No. 63 item 735);
  - b/ Regulation of the Ministry of Transport and Maritime Economy of March 2, 1999 on technical conditions which the public roads and their location should meet (Journal of Laws, No. 43 item 430);
  - c/ Regulation of the Ministry of Transport and Maritime Economy of September 10, 1998 on technical conditions which the railway buildings and their location should meet (Journal of Laws, No. 151 item 978);
  - d/ Regulation of the Ministry of Transport and Maritime Economy of February 26, 1996 on technical conditions which the junctions of the railways and public roads and their location should meet (Journal of Laws, No. 33 item 144 as amended);
  - e/ Regulation of the Ministry of Infrastructure of January 16, 2002 on technical-building regulations regarding paid motorways (Journal of Laws No. 12, item 116) – describes the

conditions, which ensure particularly suitable utilitarian conditions, including the needs of disabled people. Moreover it states that objects and facilities in the motorway area, earmarked for road users, should ensure safety of their use, including disabled people.

5. The Act of 21 March 1985 on public roads (Journal of Laws of 2004, No. 204, item 2086, as amended) Article . 13 par. 4, point 2 exempts marked vehicles, originally earmarked for carrying disabled people with lower level of fitness or the vehicles that have the parking card from fares. Article . 13b, par. 6. point 1 states that in the paid parking zone there are places designated for the originally marked vehicles aimed at carrying disabled people with lower level of fitness or the vehicles that have parking cards.
6. The Act of June 20, 1997 on road traffic (Journal of Laws of 2005, No. 108, item 908, as amended) specifies the details of special laws in the road traffic for disabled people and for driving the vehicles carrying the disabled persons (“with lower level of fitness”).

Regulations issued on basis of the act on road traffic

a/ Article . 7, par. 2 – Regulation of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Ministry of Interior and Administration of July 31, 2002 on road signs and signals (Journal of Laws No. 170, item 1393)

b/ Article . 8, par. 7 – Regulation of the Ministry of Infrastructure of March 30, 2004 describes the samples of parking cards for disabled people and institutions dealing with care, rehabilitation or their education.

c/ Article . 8, par. 8 – Regulation of the Ministry of Infrastructure of March 30, 2004 on type of institutions dealing with care, rehabilitation or education of disabled people eligible to get the parking card and the mode of issuing the card. (Journal of Laws No. 167, item 617)

d/ Article . 66, par. 5 – Regulation of the Ministry of Infrastructure of December 22, 2003 on technical standards of trams and trolley buses and their essential equipment (Journal of Laws No. 230, item 2301) – the requirement for trams to install wide enough doors for wheelchairs.

e/ Article . 68. par. 19, point 1 – Regulation of the Ministry of Infrastructure of October 24, 2005 on certification of approval of vehicles and trailers (Journal of Laws No. 238, item 2010) + Polish standard, Buses, Basic requirements, PrPN-S-47010 (Polish Committee of Standardization) This standard is not binding (draft), but is used in practice.

f/ Article . 76, item 1, point 1, letter a – Regulation of the Ministry of Infrastructure of July 22, 2002 on registering and marking the vehicles (Journal of Laws No. 133, item 1123, as amended) – reduction of fares for disabled people

g/ Article . 100, item 1, point 1 – Regulation of the Ministry of Infrastructure of April 21, 2004 on the samples of documents confirming the entitlement to drive the vehicles (Journal of Laws No. 89, item 855) - reduction of fares for disabled people

h/ Article . 115, item 1, point 1-4 – Regulation of the Ministry of Infrastructure of October 27, 2005 on training, examining and acquiring the entitlements by the drivers, instructors and examiners (Journal of Laws No. 217, item 1834, as amended)

7. The act of June 20, 1992 on the rights to concessionary fares while traveling by public transport (Journal Laws of 2002, No. 175, item 1440, as amended) describes the level of reduction for disabled people and their carers is dependant on the particular transport modes (78% of reduction while travelling by common railway and buses (children and youths) public transport, 49%-37% of reduction

for adults)

The regulations issued based on the act on entitlement:

Regulation of the Ministry of Infrastructure of October 25, 2002 on the kinds of documents certifying the rights to use concessionary fares on public transport (Journal of Laws No. 179, item 1495, as amended)

8. Act of March 28, 2003 on railway transport (Journal of Laws No. 86, item 789, as amended)  
Regulations issued based on the act on railway transport

a/ Article . 25d, par. 1 – Announcement of the Chairman of the Railway Transport Office of August 8, 2005 on establishing the list of national technical specifications and standardization documents, which will ensure fulfilment of the main requirements concerning railway interoperability (Journal of the Ministry of Infrastructure of September 2, 2005, No. 9, item 62)

b/ Article . 25 t – Regulation of the Ministry of Infrastructure of June 29, 2004 on main requirements concerning railway interpretability and procedures of the assessment of compliance for Trans European system of high speed railway (Journal of Laws No. 162, item 1697)

c/ Article . 38, par. 8 – Regulation of the Ministry of Infrastructure of December 17, 2004 on the procedures, way and financing conditions or co-financing of purchase and modernization of trains designed for transporting people (Journal of Laws No. 273, item 2710) – Taking into consideration the needs of disabled people in the field of using the vehicles it is mentioned as one of parameters of financial support by the European Regional Development Fund and by the state budget or by named subsidy. The draft of the regulation for the next financial perspective 2007-2013 is under construction.

Furthermore the Regulation of the Ministry of Infrastructure of October 8, 2004 on implementing Sector Replenishment of the Operational Programme Transport for 2004-2006 (Journal of Laws of 2004, No. 235, item 2350 issued on basis of Article . 11, item 5 of the act of April 20, 2004 on National Development Plan (Journal of Laws, No. 116, item 1206) specified detailed procedures of selecting the projects co-financed from the European Regional Development Fund and in relation to the projects in the field of modernization of the railway lines between urban areas and among them specifies the condition of adjusting trains to transport disabled people.

d/ Article . 40, item 7 – Regulation of the Cabinet of April 21, 2004 on organizing regional railway passengers transport (Journal of Laws, No. 95, item 953) – One of the criteria of contracting out transport is offering the comfort of travel, taking into consideration the number of seats in the trains and their adjustment to transporting people with limited ability to move, particularly in the case of disabled, pregnant and people with small children.

e/ Regulation of the Ministry of Transport of May 31, 2006 on registering and marking the railway transport means (Journal of Laws of 2006, No. 105, item 713)

According to vehicles construction standards there are no specific regulations in Polish legal system, as necessary requirements are included in overall regulations listed above

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

According to the interviewed person representing people with disabilities the accessibility of public transport is a mainstream topic on the political agenda at a local (especially urban) level, not on regional level and partly at a national level.

According to the Ministry of Infrastructure the accessibility of public transport systems is not a mainstream topic on the political agenda in Poland. The majority of attention is given to architectural barriers and conditions for wheelchair users.

Previous official policy documents only highlight general guidelines concerning disabled people and public transport. The preparations of a recent draft document “Transport policy for the years 2007-2020” produced by the Ministry of Transport (now Ministry of Infrastructure) is in progress with a new approach a likely outcome.

#### Monitoring of the accessibility of public transport

According to the interviewed person representing people with disabilities generally there is no monitoring of the accessibility of public transport. However, local urban organisations do in some cases monitor although irregularly.

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

According to the interviewed representative of disabled people and the public transport operator there are special fares for people with disabilities.

The reductions depend on type of disability and are as follows:

- 95% reduction for guides of a disabled person with cognitive/learning impairments,
- 78% for disabled children and teenagers (only for trips concerning education and health and rehab treatments),
- 78% for single parent (all types of disability) for trips as above,
- 78% - war victims disabled persons of class I (the highest level of disability), also their guides,
- 37 - 49% - for disabled person with cognitive/learning impairments, depending of type of transport
- 37% - for children over 4 and below education age,
- 37% - for blind people, not treated as those with cognitive/learning impairments
- 37% - war victims other than those with class I disability.

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#### **2.1.4 Organisational framework conditions**

According to the interviewees there is no real cooperation between governmental authorities and disability organisations. Public Transport Operators and disability organisations do cooperate although at a local level and with moderate success. The interviewed representative of governmental authorities and the representative of disability organisations both state that accessible public transport definitely helps disabled people to find/keep a job.

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

National level:

- **Secretary of State in the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy - Government Plenipotentiary of Disabled People.** His/her competences are specified in the Act on Professional and Social Rehabilitation and Employment of Disabled Persons (27.08.1997). The main competences are: development and evaluations of legal acts according to employment, rehabilitation and living conditions for disabled people, also drafting governmental programmes according to disabled people problems, initiating actions towards reduction of disability effects and barriers for disabled people to be members of the society; also cooperation with NGOs and foundations acting for disabled people. The advisory body to the Government Plenipotentiary for Disabled People is the National Council for disabled Persons.  
<http://www.mps.gov.pl>, ul. Nowogrodzka 1/3/5, 00-513 Warszawa , telephone: +48 22 661 10 00
- **National Fund for Rehabilitation of Disabled Persons (PFRON).** The resources of this fund are available to sponsor the creation of jobs and start of independent economic activities of disabled people and for support to eliminate architectural barriers, to communicate and other needs of disabled person. The resources of National Fund are allocated by the Chairman of the Fund's Board to: voivodship and powiat – level local governments, to finance specific tasks – based on the relevant formula, entities performing tasks assigned by the Fund or other tasks under the Act. PFRON: Tel +48 22 5055500, <http://www.pfron.org.pl>, Al. Jana Pawła II 13, 00-828 Warszawa

On local level:

- **Mayor Plenipotentiary for Disabled People** in a few cities for example Gdansk, Wroclaw, Zielona Gora.
- **Unit of State Fund in each of 16 voivodships**  
The following bodies are authorized to assess the level of disability: powiat disability assessment teams (body of first instance) and voivodship disability assessment teams (acting as second instance body). The tasks of the voivodship-level local government that may be co-funded with the resources of State Fund are specified in the regulation of the Minister of Labour and Social Policy of 6 August 2004. The tasks performed by powiat-level local government which may be co-funded with the resources of State Fund are specified in the regulation of the Minister dated 25 June 2002.

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## Governmental authorities responsible for public transport

National level:

- **Ministry of Infrastructure** (or Transport, it changes recently). The Ministry of Infrastructure is responsible for legislation and for the budget preparation for subsidies for interurban rail reduced fees repayments to operators. Also some regulations and concessions issuing for rail services. Regional level: regulation of bus services, including concession for inter-urban services.

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## Main transport operators and Public Transport associations

- The rail system is based on the state-owned PKP Group (**Polish National Rail, Plc**), under reform from 2000. The Group includes among others: PKP Rail Lines Company, PKP Inter City Company, PKP Cargo Corporation, PKP Regional Rail Company plus Gdansk agglomeration regional operator (SKM); two more passenger rail operators owned by local/regional governments in Warsaw metropolitan area. There are no major private operators for passenger rail transport.
- **Interurban bus operators** are mostly private, the former PKS state system is under a advanced privatisation process. There are few major independent private operators, including Conex Group as the most active in the market. In some areas minibus independent companies are very active.
- **Urban transport** based on municipal operators, some of high quality services (Krakow, Wroclaw, Lodz, Poznań). One metro municipal operator in Warsaw.

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## Main disability organisations

In Poland there are more than 5000 disability organisations. The most important are listed below:

- **National Council for disabled Persons** – an advisory body for the Government Plenipotentiary of Disabled People, composed of officers, civil servants, scientists and representatives of disabled people organisations; works for the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy (see above)
- **Polish Association of the Blind**. President Anna Wozniak-Szymanska, Director Malgorzata Pacholec tel. +48 22 8313383, e-mail: pzn@pzn.org.pl <http://www.pzn.org.pl>. Number of members 80 000.
- **Polish Association of the Deaf**. President Andrzej Kopec tel. +48 22 8314071, <http://www.pzg.org.pl> Number of members and charges 100 000.

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## Cooperation among stakeholders

### Cooperation between the governmental authorities and disability organisations

The Ministry of Infrastructure does not have any information about cooperation between governmental authorities and disability organisation.

The interviewed person representing people with disability also states that there is no cooperation between governmental authorities and disability organisations.

### Cooperation between the transport operators and disability organisations

According to the interviewed representative of disabled people urban public transport operators do cooperate with disability organisations, whereas private organisations offering public transport do no cooperate with them.

According to the MPK Krakow there is cooperation between disability organisations and public transport operators, but with moderate success. Public transport operators try to solve problems together with disability organisations; however it is not always easy to find an appropriate solution.

### Cooperation between the transport operators and governmental authorities

The interviewed person from MPK Krakow cannot say whether there is cooperation between governmental authorities and public transport operators, the interviewed person from the Ministry of Infrastructure does not have any information regarding cooperation.

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

According to the interviewed person representing people with disabilities there are a lot of technical barriers in public transport. No major (wide scale) initiatives towards improving the accessibility can be noticed and the work of the organisations in this area is rather weak and dispersive. There are no significant initiatives on particular improvements or programmes but more on assistance and subsidies. He also states that people with disabilities prefer human assistance more than technical assistance. The program “disabled person assistant”, based in Warsaw, is very popular.

The public transport operator MPK Krakow follows the policy to increase the use of public transport by people with disabilities. According to the interviewed person from MPK Krakow this is one of their priorities, especially regarding fleet replacement and adjustment. MPK Krakow permanently cooperates with Mayor’s Plenipotentiary for disabled persons. A big threat for MPK Krakow are the high costs of a modern low-floor tram fleet.

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

The interviewed person representing people with disabilities assumes that that blind people are in general well organised and therefore use public transport. He also states that people with an electric wheelchair are not likely to have work and therefore do not use public transport for going to work, but they use public transport for shopping, visiting friends or attending leisure activities. He states that accessible public transport helps disabled people to find/keep a job.

The interviewed representative of public transport operators (MPK Krakow) assumes that accessible public transport would definitely help people with disabilities to find/keep a job. He thinks that people with an electric wheelchair are not likely to use public transport, as even if the public transport vehicles would be adjusted and barrierfree the street, public buildings and urban environment provide a lot of barriers. Blind people are more likely to use public transport, although they would need assistance to enter the right vehicle at the stops. People with cognitive/learning impairments could also use public transport; however this is related to the extent of the impairment.

## 2.2 Accessibility of Public Transport

The interviewed person of the Ministry of Infrastructure could not give any information concerning the accessibility of public transport. He states that the accessibility of public transport “...is not a field of any activity by government administration”. So the information in this section is provided by the interviewed public transport operators and representative of disabled people.

**Pre-trip information:** There is pre-trip information available via telephone, internet and printed information. Timetables can also be reached via mobile phones.

**On-trip information:** Printed timetables are available at the stops. In cities the newer trams provide oral and visual announcements of the next stop. The interviewed person representing people with disabilities assesses the on-trip information in the vehicles itself as good

**Ticketing:** There are reduced fares for people with disabilities using public transport. Ticket counters as well as ticket vending machines provide a number of physical barriers. Tickets can also be bought at kiosks or in the vehicle itself.

**Stops and stations:** The stops and stations in the city centres are generally more accessible than stops at the periphery or in rural areas. A lot of stops do not have their level adjusted to the vehicles’ floors, making entry into the vehicle (even low-floor vehicles) difficult.

**Vehicles:** Most urban buses are low floor vehicles; the tram fleet is successively renewed and adjusted for the needs of people with disabilities. The accessibility of long distance trains and regional buses is very poor. According to the interviewee representing disabled people a lot of disabled people complain about the lack of accessibility of public transport and buy cars to avoid public transport dependence.

**Safety, Reliability, and Service:** The interview-partner representing disabled people states that people with disabilities do not think that travelling by public transport is dangerous, but they are afraid of the physical barriers. “It is not a matter of being afraid; it is the fear that they can not overcome the difficulties”. A lot of buses offer special buttons for disabled people, which signals the driver to give assistance with alighting the vehicle. The customer service is assessed as rather poor; special staff training with respect to the needs of people with disabilities is improving.

### 2.2.1 Accessibility of passenger information

According to the interviewed person of the public transport operator MPK Krakow PLC passenger information is available on various ways: printed information at the ticket offices and on board, ticket machines, via telephone or internet (for example the websites of MPK and the municipality). Timetables can also be reached via mobile phones.

#### Pre-trip information

The MPK Krakow website ([www.mpk.krakow.pl](http://www.mpk.krakow.pl)) provides pre-trip information such as timetables for lines and stops, route planner (stop- to- stop) and an interactive network map.

According to MPK Krakow PLC information on the accessibility of stops and stations is not published. It is possible to receive information via the telephone information line. Information on the accessibility of vehicles is also provided via telephone. Information on tariffs is available via the website and via telephone.

The interviewed person representing people with disabilities states that pre-trip information via the internet is quite good. Pre-trip information regarding the accessibility of public transport on regional level is rather poor.

### On-trip information

According to the interviewed person of the MPK Krakow printed timetables are displayed on all stops. All vehicles are equipped with timetables, network maps and tariff information. This information seems to be good; however there is no specific information dedicated for disabled people. To improve access for people with disabilities (wheelchair-users) the information is located low, to be reachable and readable for wheelchair users and short people. There is no possibility for blind people to get information at the stops. Buses do not provide voice or visual information. All new trams (25% of the fleet) are equipped with visual announcements of stops. Displays receive news on-line by the driver.

The interviewed person representing people with disabilities assesses the on-trip information in the vehicles itself (such as announcement of next stops, possible interchanges, etc.) is good.

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## **2.2.2 Accessibility issues in Ticketing**

According to the interviewed person representing people with disabilities there are special tariffs for people with disabilities. However, ticket-counters are not barrierfree.

The interviewed person from the public transport operator MPK Krakow assumes that people with disabilities mostly buy their tickets at ticket counters, at kiosks, at ticket machines or in the vehicles. All ticket machines are equipped with multicolour touch screens.

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

The interview-partner of the MPK Krakow PLC states that the physical accessibility of stops and stations in the city centres in general is much better than stops and stations at the periphery or in rural areas. All modernised and new built stops are adjusted for disabled people according to Polish building law (e.g. lower curbs for pedestrian passes). However, stops do not have their level adjusted to the vehicles' floors, making entry to the vehicle (even low-floor vehicles) difficult. In general the poor quality of many streets makes the use of public transport difficult.

On separated tram tracks the platforms are elevated to the floor level, there are special pavement structures and colours for people with visual impairments to so the edge of the platform.

According to the interview-partner representing people with disabilities public transport is rather poor; however in some areas there is a positive development (mostly in urban areas). In general there are many complaints about the accessibility of public transport. Most people with disabilities buy cars to avoid public transport dependence.

## 2.2.4 Accessibility of vehicles

The interview-partner representing people with disabilities assesses the accessibility of public transport vehicles (public transport in general) as rather poor. He states that people with disabilities would rather buy cars than use public transport.

In the opinion of the interviewed person representing people with disabilities the newer public transport vehicles offer quite high quality and present high standards. The railway-system has the worst accessibility.

The representative of public transport operators estimates the accessibility of the public transport fleet in Krakow as relatively good. In particular the bus fleet is almost totally modernised and the majority of the buses are low floor vehicles. The tram system still use old vehicles – the percentage of modern low floor vehicles is approximately 25%. Nevertheless, the replacement of the old fleet is a constant and long-term process due to financial threats. However, this policy is 10 years old and still remains.

The strategy for the improvement of the accessibility of public transport vehicles relates to the modal split patterns and the fleet replacement. The transport policy is announced to the public regularly (the recent document was adopted in September 2007).

According to MPK Krakow 90% of the buses are low floor and offer low entrance/exit. A few stops are adjusted for easy access to the vehicles, 15% of the buses are equipped with LED displays. The stops are not equipped with any facilities or infrastructure helping disabled people to board the vehicle.

In Krakow 25% of the trams are low-floor vehicles. Only a few stops have pavements with a special structure (orienting systems).

The interview-partner from MPK Krakow states that all buses provide designated seats for people with disabilities; these seats are located close to the doors. Each vehicle has a specially marked door, which is to be used by wheelchair-users and gives appropriate space for the wheelchair inside the vehicle. Communication between passengers and the driver is possible via dedicated buttons (close to the door) and the emergency buttons.

All trams have special seats for disabled persons close to the doors. Each vehicle also has a marked door which is dedicated to be used by wheelchair users and gives appropriate space for the wheelchair inside the vehicle to park it and manoeuvre. All vehicles have handrails especially dedicated to help to enter or alight. Oral announcements and visual information are available in some of the newer vehicles (50 trains - 25%).

## 2.2.5 Safety, Reliability and Service

### Safety aspects

The interview-partner representing disabled people states that people with disabilities do not think that riding by public transport is dangerous, but they are afraid of the physical barriers. *“It is not a matter of being afraid; it is the fear that they can not overcome the difficulties”*.

He estimates the level of satisfaction of disabled people with the general safety equipments in city buses as sufficient, in trams, undergrounds and local trains as poor and in regional buses and long-distance trains not at all satisfied.

The interview-partner of MPK Krakow states that approximately 90% of buses do have special buttons for disabled people, which signals the driver to give assistance with alighting the vehicle. The floors in all vehicles are covered with non-slippery materials. He further estimates that 25% of trams have such special buttons (to inform the driver) and all are equipped with non-slip floors. In some vehicles drivers have the option to give announcements via loudspeakers (for example in the case of an emergency). All emergency exits are specially marked.

#### Reliability and Punctuality

The interviewed person of the public transport operator MPK Krakow estimates the reliability of the accessibility of public transport as relatively high due to the high percentage of low-floor vehicles. Concerning the punctuality he states that about 15% of city buses and 3% of trams are delayed more than 5 minutes.

#### Customer Service

The interviewed person representing people with disabilities assess the accessibility of customer services (like luggage storage, counters, information desks, etc.) as rather poor; however there is some improvement.

MPK Krakow PLC states that there is no special service for people with disabilities. He states that there is no assistance personnel at the stations, only the drivers can help entering or leaving the vehicle. In practice other passengers help disabled people if assistance is needed.

#### Staff Training

According to the representative of public transport organisations training with respect to the needs of people with disabilities is needed. Not all staff members (drivers, conductors, etc.) are familiar with taking care of disabled people. Currently there are only general instructions to take care of disabled people and staff members are obligated to pay attention and assist where they can.

The interviewed person representing people with disabilities states that there are experimental courses offered for public transport staff, which are provided by disability organisations.

The interview-partner of the Ministry of Infrastructure states that the trainings for drivers are organised locally in urban public transport. A special training film for drivers, which gives information about the various kinds of disabilities and practical instructions how to help people with disabilities has been prepared.

### **2.3 Alternatives to public transport**

According to the representative of people with disabilities there are several special services based on special funds. The most popular is a minibus on-demand service subsidised by local communities, special services provided by health centres. Usually they are subsidised by PFRON, depending on local needs and initiatives.