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Priority Area 2.4: Quality of life issues relating to handicapped/disabled people

Task 1: Accessibility of public transport systems for people with disabilities

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State of the Accessibility of Public Transport Systems for People with Disabilities in Slovakia (SK)

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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 Slovakia (SK).

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 Slovakia (SK).

What can be expected from this report

This report gives an overview of the state of the accessibility of public transport in Slovakia (SK). 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 Slovakia (SK) 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 Slovakia (SK)**, 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	Milan Ondrovic	DIC Bratislava s.r.o.
Interview partners:	Name	Organisation
Representatives of Transport Operators	Mgr. Marek Modranský	Slovenská autobusová doprava Zvolen, a.s., public transport operator
	Bc. Jozef MARUŠÍK,	Zelenzničná spoločnosť Slovensko, a.s.
	Ing. Karol Kajdi	Dopravný podnik Bratislava, a.s. (public transport operator in Bratislava)
	JUDr. Martin Jerguš	Association of Public Transport Operators in City
Representatives of People with Disabilities	Mária Orgonášová MD., PhD., honorary president	Alliance of Organisations of Disabled people in Slovakia
Representative of Governmental Authority	Ján Krak Section of Transport policy - director	Ministry of Transport, Post and Telecommunications SR. Section

Table 1: Interviewer and Interview-partners in Slovakia

2.1.2 Statistical Data from Slovakia

Statistical Data for Slovakia	
Number of inhabitants	5,379,455 ²
Inhabitants with disabilities	645535 or 12% of the total population ³
Inhabitants with motor impairments	No data
Inhabitants with visual impairments	No data
Inhabitants with hearing impairments	No data
Inhabitants with cognitive / learning impairments	No data
Inhabitants who are functional illiterates	No data
Share of disabled people living in urban areas	56% ⁴
Share of disabled people at working age	No data
Share of disabled people at working age who are actually working	No data

Table 2: Statistical data for Slovakia

² Information from the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, Inhabitants counting 2001, <http://www.statistics.sk/webdata/slov/scitanie/tab/zu.htm>

³ This is an estimate. There is no statistical evidence of people with disabilities in Slovakia

⁴ is the average percentage of inhabitants living in urban areas in Slovakia (estimation)

2.1.3 Legal and regulatory framework conditions in Slovakia

There exists a national anti-discrimination law in Slovakia. The main focus of this law is the principle of equal treatment. However equal treatment through this law is only guaranteed in a labour related context, not with regard to health, social welfare, delivery services etc.

There are two laws that include aspects which relate to the accessibility of public transport: Law No. 168/96Z.z. (on road transport) states that the tendering/contracting authority of public transport services should develop a strategy for PT-services with respect to needs of disabled people, and Law No. 164/96 (on railway) deals with requirements on public spaces (e.g. barrier-free access to platforms, stops, buildings), but there are no specifications for vehicles. There are no general national standards for public transport in Slovakia.

The accessibility of public transport isn't a mainstream topic on the political agenda at national level, but it is a mainstream topic on the political agenda on local level of some municipalities.

There's no monitoring of the accessibility of public transport on national level in Slovakia.

In Slovakia there're special public transport tariffs for people with disabilities and their accompanying person: usually they get 50% fare reduction, but in some cities (e.g. in Bratislava) they can use public transport free of charge. The transport operators are paid by the contracting authority for the resulting loss of income.

Anti-discrimination law

Yes there is an anti-discrimination law in Slovakia. It's a national anti-discrimination law. It was enacted on 1st July 2004. Main content of this law are principles of equal treatment. The responsible parties for the enforcement of this law are the national authorities, local authorities, persons and legal persons. If this law is violated you can file a petition. There is an ombudsman.

Remarks regarding this disability law: equal treatment for disabled person is only guaranteed in a labour relation context, and is not mentioned in social welfare, health welfare, delivering services and goods where only gender, race, nationality and religion are mentioned – but not disability.

http://jaspi.justice.gov.sk/jaspiw1/htm_zak/jaspiw_maxi_zak_fr0.htm

Regulations regarding the accessibility of public transport

According to the representative of the Slovak government there is no national law for accessible public transport. There are general non obligatory recommendations for regions and municipalities. There are two laws regarding to the PT. Law No 168/96Z.z. on road traffic and No.164/96 on railway. In these laws are defined not quantified what is public interest in public transport. In law No 168/96Z.z. on road traffic, the buyer of public transport services should develop a strategy for public transport services with respect to needs of disabled. There is law No. 532/2002Z.z. which deals with requirements on public spaces in order to assure accessibility (in context of public transport: barrier free access to platforms, stops, station, specify services which should be barrier free in public buildings, application of tactile navigation systems in different cases. But there are no specification for vehicles, height of platforms, etc.

According to the interviewed governmental authority there is also a policy to guarantee mobility for people with disabilities. It is the national transport strategy. It states that the mobility of disabled should be supported mainly by the renovation of rolling stock. The strategy is that the Ministry of Work, Social and Family gives subsidies to operate and buy private cars, subsidies for the operation of private car, subsidies for taxi services.

The representative of the people with disabilities confirms the information about specific laws provided by the interviewed governmental authority; he says that there is an ombudsman, but not specialized for disabled passengers.

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

The representative of the Slovakian government states that the accessibility of the public transport is not a mainstream topic on the national level, but on the regional level it is and also somewhat on the local level.

The representative of the people with disabilities is of the opinion that public transport is not a mainstream topic on the political agenda, on national and regional level. The situation is better on the local level, where some municipalities (e.g. state below) consider accessibility of public transport as a mainstream topic on the political agenda.

Monitoring of the accessibility of public transport

According to the representative of the government there are no general national standards for public transport in Slovakia. The accessibility of public transport is not monitored on a national level. The buyer of public transport services should have monitored or placated under the public transport operator under contract. Each self governmental region is bound to develop a public transport strategy, also with respect to needs of disabled.

The representative of the people with disability thinks that there might be some monitoring done at the level of the public transport operator.

Special fares and public transport tariffs for people with disabilities

According to the interviewed governmental authority there are special tariffs for people with disabilities. For disabled and the accompanying person the reduction is usually 50 percent. The loss of revenue is paid by the buyer of public transport services.

According to the interviewed disability organisation disabled persons with a certificate and the accompanying person are entitled to receive a special price. The amount of the price reduction in public transport differs from city to city 100-50% (e.g. in Bratislava public transport is free, in Zilina 50%) In regional public transport transport train and buses there is 50 % reduction.

According to the representative of the Slovakian public transport bus operators there are special tariffs for the disabled person and the person accompanying them.

The Slovakian train operator states that there are special tariffs as stated in an agreement between ZSSK and MDPT SR. Disabled with certificate are entitled to receive reduced price. The reduced price for disabled is 50 %. If a disabled person needs accompanying person, this person receives a free ticket. The loss of revenue is paid by the Ministry of Transport, Post and Telecommunication SR (MDPT SR).

The public transport operator in Bratislava states that disabled and their guide travel free of charge. The buyer of performance is paying for the loss of revenue.

The Association of Public Transport Operators in the City states that there are special tariffs.

2.1.4 Organisational framework conditions

In Slovakia the governmental authorities responsible for anti-discrimination and social inclusion issues referring to people with disabilities are the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Work, Social Affairs and Family. The governmental authority responsible for public transport is the Ministry of Transport, Post offices and Telecommunications. There is a national operator for the railway.

The cooperation of governmental authorities and disability organisations occurs mainly on the level of defining and developing better accessibility. There is no cooperation where monitoring and assessment of accessibility is concerned. There is only low level cooperation between representatives of the disabled and public transport operators and no cooperation at all at the monitoring level. With regard to the cooperation between the governmental authorities and the public transport operators cooperation happens also on the level of defining and developing better accessibility but is limited to the restricted competence of the respective Ministry.

Higher mobility of disabled people and better accessibility of public transport is an important issue for representatives of the government and the representatives of people with disabilities. It is considered important also by the representative of the Association of Public Transport Operators in the City because it would stimulate higher employment for disabled people.

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

- **Ministry of Health**

<http://www.employment.gov.sk/new/index.php?SMC=1&id=146>

- **Ministry of Work, Social Affairs and Family**

<http://www.employment.gov.sk/new/index.php?SMC=1&id=146>

Governmental authorities responsible for public transport

- **Ministry of Transport, Post offices and Telecommunications**

<http://www.telecom.gov.sk/index/index.php>

Main transport operators and Public Transport associations

- **Association of Public Transport Operators in City Agglomerations**
Zelezničná spoločnosť Slovensko, a.s.
- **Slovenská autobusová doprava Zvolen, a.s., public transport operator in Zvolen**
- **Dopravný podnik Bratislava, a. s. (public transport operator in Bratislava)**

Main disability organisations

- **ALLIANCE OF ORGANIZATIONS OF DISABLED PEOPLE IN SLOVAKIA**, MUDr. Mária Orgonášová, aozpo@stonline.sk, +421-2-52444119, , AODPS associate 33 other organisation of disabled in Slovakia.
<http://www.aozpo.sk/> <http://www.unss.sk/en/index.html> http://www.shr.sk/php/organizacia.php?id_org=82

- **SALOVAK BLIND AND PARTIALY SIGHTED UNION**, RNDr. Branislav Mamojka, CSc. - MEMBER OF EDF, mamojka@unss.sk, +421 2 65420 796, +421 2 654 20 844,
- **SLOVAK UNION OF HEARING IMPAIRED PEOPLE**, name not accessible, szsp@changenet.sk, +421 2 6381 1197

Cooperation among stakeholders

Cooperation between the governmental authorities and disability organisations

The interview-partner of the government states that governmental authorities and people with disabilities cooperate in defining and developing better accessibility of public transport. Cooperation exists but is not regular. Disabled people were able to make suggestion when e.g. transport policy SR was prepared. Governmental authorities and people with disabilities do not cooperate in monitoring and assessing the accessibility of public transport.

The representative of the disabled people agrees that there is cooperation at the level of the government council for disabled.

Cooperation between the transport operators and disability organisations

According to the representative of the disability organisations there is cooperation on a low level. Occasional meetings between representatives of disabled and public transport operators occur (on conference or when the public transport operators will introduce new devices in to the practice). There is no cooperation in the monitoring.

Cooperation between the transport operators and governmental authorities

The representative of public transport states that the cooperation with governmental authorities is low. There is a fiscal policy, and due to this policy the responsibility for public transport was moved to municipalities, so there is low cooperation with governmental authorities and better cooperation with local authorities.

The representative of the government states that governmental authorities and public transport operators cooperate in defining and developing better accessibility of public transport. But the cooperation is limited to restricted competence of ministry.

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

According to the interview partner from the Slovak government the main barriers that hinder faster improvement of the accessibility of public transport are finance sources. Barrier free public transport in Slovakia need a big budget to renovate the rolling stock and renovate stations, stops.

According to the representative of the association of public transport operators in the city accessible PT is a priority issue because it is a public service and is related to the local policy. The main barrier is a lack of money. Public transport operators are interested in cooperation with other stakeholders. Mainly there is cooperation with other operators from foreign countries (Czech Republic, Austria, Germany), and minimally with disabled union. The representative from the public train operators states that accessibility is one of the priority issues. The main barriers hindering faster improvements are financial. Public transport operators are interested in cooperation, but nowadays no cooperation with disabled organization exist, there is only cooperation with authorities. Public transport operators are interested in relevant experiences of operators in other countries. The operator from Zvolen states that the priority of all public transport operators is to motivate the widest scope of passenger to use

services. The main barrier hindering the faster development of accessibility of public transport services is the insufficient size of the public transport services budget (municipality or self government region) for renewal of rolling stock and for development of information system for passenger. Finally the operator from Bratislava states that accessible public transport is a priority issue. Public transport operators are dealing together with the performance buyer with the accessibility issue. There is close cooperation with the Czech public transport operators. The transport and operational legislation is created jointly.

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

The representative of the government said that people with disabilities want to use public transport. They plead/lobby for better accessibility in public transport and are interested in cooperation with other stakeholders. With regard to the attitudes of public transport operators regarding accessibility issues in public transport the general feeling of operators is that public transport is insufficiently funded from public sources. Accessible public transport is a priority issue and they are interested in cooperation with other stakeholders and public transport operators in other countries.

The representative of the interviewed governmental authority also thinks that the provision of accessible public transport could help disabled people to find/keep a job. Higher mobility of disabled people will stimulate higher employment rate of disabled people.

The interview partner from the people with disabilities states that currently public transport is not satisfying, therefore disabled prefer individual transport, because disabled can get subsidies for transport (70Euro/month), in occasionally disabled can get subsidies for purchasing and operating a private car. With a better level of services provided for disabled, the disabled would use public transport more frequently. Disabled plead/lobby for better accessibility in public transport on national level. Disabled have close cooperation along their community. Other stakeholders are not interested in cooperating. He also states that disabled people in Slovakia prefer technical support if it exists. But in most cases disabled people in Slovakia are dependent on human assistance. According to the interviewed disability organisation people with motor impairments rarely use public transport, because there are too many barriers. People with visual impairments use public transport often with the assistance of another person. People with hearing impairments use it often without many problems and people with cognitive/learning impairments sometimes with the assistance of other persons, but they often have a psychological barrier to use public transport.

The interview partner of the association of public transport thinks that the provision of accessible public transport would help people with disabilities to find/keep a job.

2.2 Accessibility of Public Transport

Pre-trip information: The accessibility and availability of pre-trip information (by internet, telephone and brochures) regarding public transport tariffs and tickets is assessed by the interviewed disability organisation to be quite good, however, there should be better accessibility of pre-trip information in stops, stations and vehicles. There is only sufficient or poor pre-trip information available with regard to customer services, offered by the public transport operators.

On-trip information: For people with motor impairments the provided on-trip information is good in buses, trains and trams but there is no information in local trains. The situation for people with visual impairments is bad because there is no information in Braille and usually an absence of audio information on all modes of transport. For people with hearing impairments the assessment of information in public transport is sufficient and poor to not existent for people with cognitive/learning disabilities.

Ticketing: In Slovakia tickets for public transport can be bought at vending machines, public transport operators, information offices and kiosks. At some regional public transport operators, like in Zolven, they can also be bought in the vehicles.

Stops and stations: The accessibility of stops and stations in Slovakia is only good in new or modernized stations otherwise the general accessibility is bad. Bus stops and tram stops in urban area often have installed curb ramps with tactile surfaces but there is a lack of barrier free vehicles. In general accessibility of stops and stations is slowly improving because in new stops and stations accessibility issues are taken into account and in old stations accessibility issues are addressed during renovation.

Vehicles: The accessibility of the interior of the vehicle is not monitored on the national level and should be monitored on the municipality level for all modes of transport. At the moment the accessibility of public transport vehicles is bad in Slovakia. Hopefully by 2015 there will be barrier free vehicles all over the country. Boarding and alighting of the vehicles is difficult for all people with disabilities in all modes of transport and also the situation regarding the accessibility of the interior of the vehicles is not satisfactory for disabled people in Slovakia.

Safety, Reliability, and Service: According to their representative people with disabilities in Slovakia think that usage of public transport is quite dangerous. There are no safety belts for wheelchair users and safety devices can only be found in new buses. Slovakia has no national standards regarding the safety of disabled people.

The reliability of accessibility of vehicles and stops/stations is low for all modes of public transport, since in bus-transport there is a lack of low-floor vehicles and in rail-transport there's often a lack of portable ramps for boarding and alighting and a lack of low-floor-vehicles. Only the reliability of the accessibility of long-distance trains is assessed to be a bit better in urban train-stations. However, a barrier free carriage is only available on demand, and reservations have to be made 5 days in advance. Assisting staff is not always available. The level of punctuality of public transport is assessed to be quite high in Slovakia.

2.2.1 Accessibility of passenger information

According to the representative of the Slovakian government the accessibility of public transport passenger information is improving mainly through the internet.

The interview partner from the main disability organisation states that nowadays the situation is better, mainly due to the internet. The community of disabled people starts to use the internet. It would be very useful if there would be acoustic signals announcing incoming vehicles on stops and station. There should be much more beams for blind. In railways vehicles audio signalization is missing to announce on which side is platform they can find the platform.

The representative of the association of public transport operators in cities states that the accessibility of public transport passenger information is good and improving. The representative of the public transport operator in Zvolen states the accessibility of passenger transport information is sufficient and that there are often times imperfection in providing passenger information on stops (mainly in cities), because there is high level of vandalism.

Pre-trip information

According to the interview partner from the government there is good accessible pre-trip information for travel planning. Most of information is available on web pages, there are also helpdesks and printed information. With regard to the pre-trip information about accessibility of public transport stations, stops, vehicles and services the information is sufficient or poor. Railways have printed information, phone and also on web pages. Other operators usually do not inform about accessibility. The pre-trip information on public transport tariffs and available tickets is good. Most of information is available on WebPages, there are also helpdesks and printed information. There is only sufficient/poor pre-trip information on customer services offered by public transport operators for people with disabilities (e.g. accompanying service, luggage transport service, etc.). Railways have printed information, phone and also info on web pages. Other operators usually does not inform about accessibility. There is poor pre-trip information on special transport services (services additional to public transport, e.g. hailed shared taxi, etc.). It is mainly announced in the mass media.

According to the interview partner of the main disability organisation there is travel planning information available for passengers in Slovakia, mainly timetables, route planner information via the internet, the phone and from printed product. With regard to the information regarding the accessibility of public transport stations, stops, vehicles and services there are some good examples, but generally operators should be better in providing information about accessibility of public transport stations, stops, vehicles and services. Information on public transport tariffs and tickets is available via telephone, internet, print-products. According to the interviewed disability organisation nowadays there are not many services available from the public transport operators, you can get information personally or via phone.

The representative of the Association of Public Transport Operators in the City the travel planning information, pre-trip information regarding the accessibility of public transport stations, stops, vehicles and services, the pre-trip-information on tariffs and available tickets, customer service offered by public transport operators to people with disabilities are all excellent. Information is available in paper form, by phone, by fax, by internet or personally in the information offices, so information is accessible for all disabled passengers. With regard to special transport services the representative states that they are non-existent.

The representative of the train operators states that all kinds of pre-trip information are excellent and information exists for people with all kinds of disabilities. There are printed time schedules, help over the phone and the internet. www.slovakrail.sk, Tel.: 18 188

The representative of the public transport operator in Zvolen states that pre-trip travel planning information, information regarding the accessibility of public transport stations, stops, vehicles and services, information about tariffs and tickets is good. There are timetables on bus stops in printed information panels. You can get information directly in the information office. Each vehicle has a marked number, destination. Timetables brochures are distributed and one can also get information via phone. Customer services offered to people with disabilities is poor and pre-trip information for special transport services does not exist.

According to the representative from public transport in Bratislava travel planning information is good/sufficient, but the aim is to achieve a better level. There are timetables, route network, printed information on stops, in vehicles, on contact points, internet, wap, media (daily press, radio, and television). The pre-trip information regarding the accessibility of public transport is sufficient to poor there is a lack of low floor buses. Pre-trip information with regard to tariffs and tickets is good or sufficient. The tariff information is printed on selected stops, on each contact point and the internet.

On-trip information

According to the representative of the government the average share of bus stops in urban areas that provide passenger information that is accessible to people with various impairments is not monitored on a national level but in general there are displays and audio announcements in railway stations. In rural areas public transport operators inform their passenger in general about timetables, routes, information about unexpected incidents, prices. Only railways and big regional bus station inform in real time. The situation is also not monitored on a national level where tram stops, underground stations and train stations in rural areas are concerned. However, there is printed information, real time audio announcements and real time displays for train stations in urban areas.

According to the representative of the people with disabilities in Slovakia there is accessible on-trip passenger information at stops and stations for people with motor impairments in city buses, regional buses, long distance trains and trams in the form of timetables, routes and information about unexpected incidents are available in printed panels, no real-time information (without DP Zilina), the assessment is good. However, there is no information on local trains. For people with visual impairments there is only poor or non-existing information available. There is no information in Braille, no real-time information except in Zilina, absence of audio information on incoming vehicles on all modes of public transport. For people with hearing impairments the assessment for the information in all modes of transport is sufficient. There is printed information, timetables, routes, information about incidents, traffic changes, but visual electronic information panels are poor. For people with cognitive/learning impairments the information is poor or non-existing because the form of the information is too difficult.

The situation for the on-trip information that is accessible in public transport vehicles for people with motor impairments is usually only in printed form, no real-time information and therefore only sufficient. The same is true for regional buses. On trams the information is usually only in printed form, some vehicles have electronic audio announcement with real-time information, assessment: sufficient. For people with visual impairments the situation is the same on all modes of transport, there is no information in Braille, a lack of audio announcements, the assessment is that it is poor, only in new vehicles it is sufficient. Also, staff doesn't use the microphone for announcements. For people with hearing disabilities the information on all vehicles of all modes of transport usually only exist as printed information there is a lack of visual information displays. There is no on-trip information in the vehicles for people with cognitive/learning disabilities.

According to the representative of the Association of Public Transport Operators in Cities on-trip-information for at bus stops and stations in urban areas is estimated with 90% there exist timetables, routes, information about expected events, information are mediate through printed information panels, no real-time information, no audio signals. For people with visual impairments the estimation is 0% there are no audio signals, no Braille or embossed letters. For people with hearing impairments and cognitive/learning impairments the situation is the same than for people with motor impairments. About 90% of the bus stops in rural areas provide information that is accessible for people with motor, hearing and cognitive/learning impairments, 0% for people with visual impairments. At tram stations the numbers are 100% for people with motor, hearing and cognitive/learning impairments and 0% for people with visual impairments. Accessible On trip-information in vehicles for city buses is 100% for people with motor, hearing and cognitive/learning impairments and 25% for people with visual impairments. On regional buses the numbers are 100 % for people with motor, hearing and cognitive/learning impairments and 75 % for people with visual impairments. In trams the situation is the same apart from 50% for people with visual impairments.

The representative of the public train operator states that in train stations in rural areas and urban areas there is accessible information for mobility impaired people. Printed train transport rules, lines, timetables, information about unexpected event. For people with visual impairments exists an acoustic information system. Call help desk, information offices. For people with hearing impairments there is a visual information system. Printed train transport rules, lines, timetables, information about unexpected event. For people with cognitive/learning impairments exists audio a visual acoustic system. Printed train transport rules, lines, timetables, information about unexpected event. There is a good level of on trip information for mobility, hearing, visual and cognitive/learning impaired people in local trains. There is an audio visual announcement system, announcement of next stop, on demand staff providing information about: interchanges, route, special services, unexpected events and urgent problems. In long-distance trains there is an excellent level of on-trip information about mobility for people with all disabilities. Trains are equipped with an audio announcement system, announcing the next stop and on demand staff to provide information about interchanges, routes, special services, unexpected events, urgent problems, etc.

2.2.2 Accessibility issues in Ticketing

The representative of the government states that he has no information about the accessibility of vending machines for people with disabilities.

The representative of the people with disabilities also doesn't have information about the accessibility issues in ticketing.

The representative of the train operators states that 0% of the vending machines are accessible for people with disabilities. The purchase of tickets is possible in ticket machines, ticket offices, in the vehicle of via the internet.

The representative of public transport in Bratislava states that 100% of the vending machines are accessible for people with motor impairments, but 0% for people with other disabilities. Tickets can be bought at vending machines, ticket offices, City information offices, kiosks.

The representative of the public transport in Zvolen states that tickets can be about in the vehicle form the driver. It is possible to pay cash or by electronic traffic card. With regard to the accessibility of the ticket vending machines where SAD Zvolen operates (in 53% of Banska Bystrica self government region) there are no vending machines for people with disabilities.

2.2.3 Accessibility of stops and stations

According to the representative of the government with regard to the accessibility of public transport in stops and stations in Slovakia attention is paid to the needs of people with disability in new and modernized stops and stations but the general accessibility is bad. There is a traffic policy stating that the accessibility of stops and stations should be improved but there is problem with funding. Financial sources are sufficient for the operation and maintenance of stops and stations, occasionally also for removal of the barriers. There exists a strategy for better infrastructure of railways (urban trains for Bratislava and Kosice). Removal of barriers at stops and stations is usually connected with their reconstruction. Regarding the accessibility of bus stops and tram stops in urban areas there generally exist installed curb ramps with tactile surfaces, so access to stops exist but there is a lack of barrier free vehicles. In general the accessibility for people with disabilities is not monitored on the national level. The situation for bus stops in rural areas is generally worse than in the cities. With regard to train stops in rural areas the accessibility is bad and there is no staff and/or services. Train stations in urban areas have barrier free interiors - tactile guidance system, seating possibilities, ramps, etc, and also accessible services - toilets, vending machines for tickets and drinks...on new and reconstructed stations in Presov, Poprad, Leopoldov, Levice etc. in urban areas. Old stations are not barrier free.

According to the interview partner of the people with disabilities states that in Slovakia the terrain is diverse. There is lack of barrier free stop/station. With regard to a strategy for the improvement of the accessibility of stops and stations Slovakia makes an effort to provide barrier free stations. The removal of barriers is the responsibility of central localities. Each municipality should have their own strategy. Passengers are informed via press or media.

The accessibility of city buses is poor, there is a vertical difference between platforms and vehicles. The same is true for regional buses and there are no barrier free services at the station. In trams the situation is sufficient for blind and hearing impaired but poor for wheelchair users. On local trains people are not at all satisfied with the accessibility and it is sufficient or poor on long-distance trains. In general the situation for people with visual impairments is poor. There is an absence of tactile navigation systems, Braille, accessories for blind people. For people with hearing impairments the accessibility is usually sufficient, most information is on information panels or in printed form. However there is a lack of digital information displays and an absence of personnel speaking in sign language. People with cognitive/learning disabilities are not at all satisfied.

The representative of the Association of Public Transport Operators in Cities states that they try to fulfil EU quality standards with regard to the accessibility of stops and stations. Improvements spread over the whole public transport system - (no strategy plan for improvements). But there are criteria for the selection of places appointed for improvements. The views of handicapped users are taken into consideration. Users are informed about the current state of public transport accessibility and planned developments of public transport stops and stations via WebPages and media. The accessibility of bus stops in urban areas for people with motor, hearing and cognitive/learning impairments is 100%. There are seating possibilities, enough space on main stops shelter. When the bus stop is in reconstruction there exists a tactile guidance system, ramps. The responsibility lies on the municipality side. Low equipment in stops is due to vandalism. For people with visual impairments there are about 30% accessible stops, mainly in the city centre. Otherwise the same holds true then for people with motor impairments. The situation is similar in bus stops in rural areas and tram stations.

The representative of the public train operator states that the accessibility of stops and stations improves step by step. There is a strategy of improvements. They are spread over the whole system. The main criteria for improvement are the number of passengers. Train stations in rural areas are not accessible for people with motor impairments, but 30% accessible for people with visual impairments which corresponds to a sufficient level of accessibility. For people with hearing and cognitive/learning impairments the accessibility is 80 %, which corresponds to a good level of accessibility. On demand handicapped people can get comprehensive information

from staff. In urban areas the stations are not accessible for people with motor impairments, but the accessibility for people with visual impairments is 30% - a sufficient level of accessibility and for people with hearing impairment and cognitive/learning impairments the accessibility is 99% or excellent and here too handicapped people can get comprehensive information from staff.

2.2.4 Accessibility of vehicles

According to the representative of the government the best level accessibility of vehicles is on EC IC trains, carriages are ready to use for people with disabilities. Also the boarding and alighting of these persons is assured. Accessibility of other vehicles is not the responsibility of the Ministry, responsibility for accessibility of Tram, buses lies with the buyer of public transport services (usually municipality or self government region) side. There is a major problem with regard to investments to the PT services. The buyer can bind operators by contract to operate accessible public transport, but operators are not usually capable to satisfy this kind of services. With regard to strategies regarding the improvement of the accessibility of the vehicles the representative states that the rolling stock used in Slovakia is old, around 50% of rolling stock is 10-20 years old. Old vehicles are usually modernized or reconstructed to the accessible vehicles. There is no national strategy for this process. Except on the railway, there the level of public transport accessibility demands self government of regions and municipalities.

Accessible boarding on city buses and regional buses is only possible on modernized stops and where barrier free vehicles operate there are automatic doors, low-floor, ramps, handrails, high-contrast design, non-slip surfaces, special curb stones. The average share of city buses that provide barrier-free boarding and alighting is minimal (not monitored on national level). The worst situation of accessibility of boarding/alighting is for wheelchair and mobility impaired users. Main barriers: different curb stone heights at stops hinder level boarding, lack of low floor vehicles, lack of audio/visual information offered in real-time. In general accessibility of boarding is not monitored on a national level. In trams there are automatic doors, handrails, non-slip surfaces at each stop. Reconstructed vehicles have also high contrast design and tactile guiding system. In Slovakia trams are only operated in 2 cities: Bratislava and Kosice. Kosice starts with the reconstruction of vehicles. Reconstructed vehicles will have medium barrier free part. Today the average share of trams that provide barrier-free boarding and alighting is minimal (not monitored on national level). The worst situation of accessibility of boarding/alighting is for wheelchair and mobility impaired users. Main barriers: absence of barrier free access to stops, different curb stone heights at stops hinder level boarding, lack of low floor vehicles, lack of audio/visual information offered in real-time. On local trains and long-distance trains there are also small stations reconstructed to barrier free access (automatic doors on station, high platform, ramps, handrails, high-contrast design, non slippery surface), on modernized main corridors. Barrier free carriages operate only on regional trains IC, EC trains. Utilization of barrier free carriages on other lines, have to be booked 5 days in advance. There is a strategy for local trains (in the process of ratification) for the modernization of vehicles which should be barrier free on the Bratislava – Trnava line. Different platform heights at stations hinder level boarding. There is a lack of barrier free carriage.

The accessibility of the interior of the vehicle is not monitored on the national level and should be monitored on the municipality level for all modes of public transport.

The representative of the people with disabilities states that the accessibility of public transport vehicles is poor in Slovakia. Maybe in 2015 there will be barrier free stock of vehicles in Slovakia. Improvements are spread out over the whole public transport system. Some municipalities make a concerned effort to make certain lines accessible. Passengers are not regularly informed about the strategy for use of these vehicles in service.

With regard to accessible boarding/alighting of vehicles people with motor impairments are not at all satisfied in city and regional buses. There are different platform heights at stations that hinder level boarding, an absence of ramps for disabled and a lack of barrier free vehicles. In trams the situation is poor for the same reasons. In local trains is also not at all satisfactory. The situation in long-distance trains ranges from sufficient to poor. For passengers with visual impairments the accessibility is sufficient on all modes of public transport, but there is often an absence of a tactile navigation system, and an audio signal for incoming vehicles is missing. With regard to the situation for people with hearing impairments the representative states that the situation is sufficient for all modes of public transport, but that he is not familiar with the needs of a hearing impaired person with regard to boarding and alighting. For people with cognitive/learning impairments the accessibility of vehicles at boarding and alighting is poor and they are not at all satisfied (there is wide scope of disabilities with cognitive learning impairments, it is difficult to assess the level of satisfaction, but in generally no special attention is paid for the needs of this group of people).

The accessibility of the interior of the vehicles for people with motor impairments is poor for all modes of transport. Slovakia is beginning to change that, old vehicles are not barrier free, but new vehicles are ok. On city buses, regional buses and trams there are 1-2 designated spaces for wheelchair users. In local and long-distance trains designated spaces are only on demand. The accessibility of the interior of the vehicles for people with visual impairments is sufficient or poor on all modes of transport, sufficient for people with hearing impairment and poor for people with cognitive/learning disabilities on all modes of transport. Here there is an absence of easy to understand visual and acoustic announcements, clear and easy to understand guidance system.

The interview partner of the Association of Public Transport Operators in the City states that the accessibility of public transport vehicles is on a low level, there is lack of barrier free vehicles. An effort is made to make public transport more accessible. New vehicles are barrier free, old ones are modernized in order to make the vehicles barrier free. Passengers are informed through web pages and media. With regard to the accessibility of boarding and alighting of city buses only 10 % provide barrier free boarding for people with impairments, the situation changes from city to city. The barriers are different curb stone heights at stops that hinder level boarding. The situation is the same for regional buses.

With regard to the accessibility of the interior of the vehicle only 10% of all city buses are barrier-free for people with disabilities. New barrier free buses are equipped in accordance with EU standards. There are 2 designated spaces for wheelchairs per city bus. The situation is the same for regional buses and trams.

The representative of the public train operator states that there is TSI-Accessibility for mobility impaired people. It is planned to improve the accessibility of the vehicles in the next years. The main criteria are the reparation of modernization of the vehicle. The barrier-free boarding and alighting of vehicles is provided for 49% of people with motor impairments. There is a sufficient level of accessibility, but on some stations there are vertical differences hindering boarding/alighting. For people with visual, hearing and cognitive/learning impairments there is a 70% of good level of accessibility.

In TSI there is a good level of accessibility of the interior of local trains for people with motor impairments. If a failure occurs a repair service is booked immediately. Technical devices are usually in operation during the entire year, except when regular maintenance and inspection is carried out. For people with visual impairments the carriages feature high contrast design, non-slip surface, tactile surfaces, acoustic announcement, rails, hand rails, automatic visual announcement. Immediately after some failure occurred, repair service is booked. Technical devices are usually in operation for the entire year, except when regular maintenance and inspection is carried out. For people with hearing impairments there exists visual announcement. For people with cognitive-learning impairments there is the possibility to ask the staff for additional information. On local trains there is usually 1 seat for a wheelchair user per 100 normal seats. The situation on long-distance trains is similar for all people with impairments. But there are 2 designated seats for wheelchairs in the train no longer than 600m, when train is longer each other designated seat should be 200m away.

The representative of the Public Transport operator in Zvolen states that the accessibility of public transport vehicles is improving. In Banska Bystrica, after the closing Trolley bus, there are new possibilities of improvement which meet passenger needs. Passengers have better accessibility from one point to the other point in the city. Passengers are informed of changes in timetables and their suggestions are taken into account, if at all possible.

Barrier free boarding/alighting on city buses is possible for 5% of people with motor impairments and 100% for people with visual, hearing and cognitive/learning impairments. In regional buses it is possible for 10% of people with all impairments. The driver has to assist with boarding/alighting. Stops vary: some stops are elevated but most of them are at road level.

The representative of the public transport operator in Budapest states that boarding/alighting is possible for people with impairments in 10,7% of the city buses (low-floor vehicles). There is a strategy for the development of tram traffic in Bratislava. But the accessibility of trams stagnates at the moment. The accessibility of the interior of the vehicle in city buses is as follows: each vehicle has a minimum of 6 designated spaces for disabled. Each vehicle has 1 designated space for a blind person assisted by a dog. Each vehicle also has a space designated for a baby carriage. The boarding with a baby carriage is regulated. In trams the situation is the same.

2.2.5 Safety, Reliability and Service

The representative of the Slovakian government doesn't think that there have been any accidents involving people with disabilities in public transport.

The representative of the people with disabilities states that there was an accident involving a man travelling on a train. When he wanted to get off the train he fell and injured his head and died. This accident is being investigated.

All representatives of public transport operators state that there weren't any accidents involving people with disabilities and public transport.

Safety aspects

According to the representative of the government there are no statistics about the average share of vehicles that have safety equipment for wheelchair users or people with other disabilities. This is not monitored on a national level. However, there is accessible information in emergencies. In city buses, trams, long distance trains, bus stations train stations in rural and urban areas there are acoustic announcements and light signals. In regional buses there are mainly acoustic announcements and somewhere light-signals. There are no special plans to evacuate people with disabilities in case of an emergency in any of the public modes of transport.

The representative of the people with disabilities reports that they think riding by public transport is dangerous, also because there is no safety belt for wheelchairs. Wheelchair users are only sufficiently/poor satisfied with the safety equipment in city buses, regional buses, trams, local trains and long-distance trains. There are only safety devices in new vehicles, wheelchair users want to use safety belts. In Slovakia there are no standards regarding the safety of disabled people.

With regard to the general safety equipment for disabled people the satisfaction is sufficient or poor for all modes of public transport, except for long-distance trains where it is sufficient.

There is accessible information in emergencies with lobbying and pressure from blind people for a better level of audio announcement. However, there is no accessible information in emergencies in local trains. In bus stations, train stations in rural and urban areas there is audio announcement and staff in the case of an emergency.

The representative of the people with disabilities is not sure if there are any plans for the evacuation of people with disabilities in the case of an emergency, but thinks that it would be useful to develop that kind of special plans.

The representative of the Association of Public Transport Operators in the city states that there are no statistics about safety equipment in city buses for wheelchair users, percentages differ from city to city, but they are not very high, e.g. in capital city Bratislava there are now only two buses equipped for barrier free entering on wheelchair. But all buses are equipped to comply with European standards (emergency button, technical device to communicate with the driver, etc.). In Bratislava new buses called SOLARIS with hydraulic rock chassis are used. All drivers have to give assistance when the wheelchair users want to use a public transport vehicle.

In trams in Kosice middle low floor barrier free carriages are installed that have general safety equipment for passengers with disabilities.

There is accessible information in emergencies in the form of acoustic announcements, light signals, letterings in all public transport vehicles and in bus stations. However, there are no plans for the evacuation of people with disabilities in the case of an emergency in any modes of public transport.

Reliability and Punctuality

The representative of the Slovak government states that reliability of accessibility of vehicles in stops and stations for all modes of transport is low, from the point of view of a disabled person, apart from long distance trains where it is assessed as medium.

The punctuality of public transport modes is generally high, but not monitored on a national level.

The representative of the people with disability states that the reliability of accessibility of vehicles and stops/stations in all modes of public transport is low. There is an absence of portable ramps for boarding/alighting, and a lack of low floor vehicles. Only in long-distance trains it is medium. In train stations in urban areas the situation is better but there too is often an absence of portable ramps for boarding/alighting, barrier free carriage is available only on demand and has to be booked 5 days in advance. In many stations low platforms are changed to a higher level.

With regard to the punctuality the representative states that he doesn't have any data regarding this information on any modes of public transport.

The representative of the Association of Public Transport in Cities states with regard to the reliability of the accessibility of vehicles and stops and stations that there is high level of density of bus stops. But bus stops are not usually accessible for mobility impaired people because vehicles are not barrier free, and the platform edge is about 15-18cm high. The punctuality is high. Public transport is only delayed in the case of unexpected events.

The representative of the public Train Operator in Slovakia states that punctuality of local trains lies within 20% and for long-distance trains at 15%.

The representative of the operator in Zvolen states that the reliability of accessibility in city and regional buses is moderate. There is a high level of stop density close to housing, a possibility to stop vehicles if needed, without blocking the traffic flow. The punctuality of city and regional buses lies between 2-3% and is well planned in time schedules, but traffic jams can often have an influence on the punctuality of vehicles and cannot be predicted in the time tables.

The representative of the public transport operator in Bratislava states that the reliability of accessibility of vehicles in city buses and trams is high. The punctuality of the city buses is 87% and of trams 98%.

Customer Service

The representative of the Slovak government states that his perception is that there is not a high level of customer services in public transport. There is a lack of services designated for disabled people. Many of the luggage storage facilities in small cities were closed. He has no data about the average share of stations that provide accessible luggage storage for people with disabilities. He states that public transport operators offer assistance at the stations (bus and train stations in urban and rural areas). A driver of conductor (in trains) can give assistance with boarding/alighting.

The representative of the people with disabilities states that the accessibility of customer services are not that good and only offered at main stations. The satisfaction of people with motor, hearing and cognitive/learning impairments regarding the provision of accessible luggage storage at bus and train stations is sufficient (an average share cannot be estimated). For people with visual impairments it is poor. The satisfaction regarding the provision of accessible counters and information desks at bus and train stations for people with motor impairments is poor at old stations, there are no counters and sufficient at new. For people with visual, hearing, cognitive/learning impairments it is poor. When asked if Public Transport Operator offer assistance at the stations the representative stated that at bus and train stations assistance is only sporadic and only on demand, in the form of personal guidance to the vehicle, assistance with boarding/alighting.

The representative of the Association of Public Transport in Cities states that in his opinion the accessibility of customer services is at a high level, at ticket offices and on web sites. However there is no accessible luggage storage at the stations. He also states that operators offer no assistance at bus stations.

The representative of the Public Train operator states that there is a good level of customer services. He doesn't give information about accessibility of luggage storage or counters and information desks. He states that they offer assistance to disabled people at train stations in rural and urban areas.

The representative of the operator in Zvolen states that the level of public transport services and scope of offered services depends on the (absolute or predominant) public transport operator operating in the target area. Higher level of offered services can be found in bigger cities on bus or train stations where actual information is offered by staff or digital information panels, luggage storages and other additional services for passenger.

The representative of the operator in Bratislava states that there no bus stations provide accessible luggage storage or accessible counters and information desks and that there is no assistance by operators at the stations.

Staff Training

The representative of the government doesn't know if there is staff training with respect to special needs of people with disabilities of people working in public transport in Slovakia. He doesn't think that there are training schemes for staff of any of the public transport operators regarding the service for passengers with disabilities.

The representative of the people with disabilities states that he thinks the training of staff with respect to the special needs of people is imperfect and doesn't think that there are any training schemes for operators' staff regarding the service for passengers with disabilities.

The representative of the Association of Public Transport in Cities states that each driver has training with respect to special needs of people with disabilities. However, there are no special training schemes on city and regional buses and trams for staff regarding the service for passengers with disabilities.

The representative of the public train operator in Slovakia states that the training of personal is good, they are trained after they start their job. There are no special training schemes.

The representative of the public transport operator in Zolven states that the training is good and that competition in the field of public transport results in the high demand on services offered by operators. It results in to the high demand on qualified staff. There are however no special training schemes. Staff is trained when they start their job.

The representative of the public transport operator in Bratislava states that there is training of staff with respect to special needs of people with disabilities. And on city buses and trams there is a regular driver training without disabled.

2.3 Alternatives to public transport

The representative of the government states that there are subsidies to buy and operate private cars. Subsidies are available to operate a private car and subsidies for operation of a taxi. These subsidies are financed by Ministry of Work, Social and Family.

The representative of the people with disability confirms the above statement.