

pt access

Public Transport Systems'
Accessibility for People
with Disabilities in Europe



- Investigation of the accessibility of public transport in Europe
- Analysis of good practice examples for accessible public transport and their related costs and benefits
- Correlation of accessible public transport and social inclusion

PROJECT:

One specific area, for which there is still lack of EU level data, is the accessibility of public transport for people with disabilities and the impact this has on the employment and social integration prospects of people with disabilities.

The European-funded project PTaccess investigated this area:

Within the project a comprehensive survey of the state of accessibility of public transport in Europe was compiled, good practices in making public transport accessible were analysed and the understanding of the transport-related contexts of social exclusion of disabled people was deepened.

PTaccess was structured into 3 research areas:

1. Investigation of the accessibility of public transport in Europe
2. Analysis of good practice examples for accessible public transport and their related costs and benefits
3. Correlation of accessible public transport and social inclusion

ACCESSIBILITY OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN EUROPE

In order to get a detailed view of the accessibility of public transport in Europe, PTaccess conducted interviews in 25 European Member states. Representatives from all relevant stakeholders (public transport operators, disability organisations, and governmental authorities) were interviewed regarding various accessibility issues in public transport.

The results of the interviews showed that no comparable statistical data on disability issues can be obtained, as the definition of „disabled people“ varies a lot amongst the European countries: e.g. from Malta we got the information that about 2% of the inhabitants are disabled whereas the results from France showed that 40% of the inhabitants are disabled.

The safety of public transport is perceived very differently by people with disabilities in the countries of the

European Union: In 10 countries (Cyprus, Estonia, Spain, Italy, Luxembourg, Latvia, Malta, Portugal, Slovakia, and Sweden) people with disabilities think that travelling by certain modes of public transport is dangerous.

In all European countries, stops and stations are much more accessible in urban areas than in city outskirts and in rural areas. In most countries accessibility issues are only taken into account, when stops and stations are newly constructed and when existing stops are refurbished. The results showed that the existing stops and stations are not sufficiently accessible for people with disabilities.

All detailed results from the interviews can be found on the PTaccess website www.ptaccess.eu

There you can download the comprehensive report, which summarises all the results from the interviews, and you can download the single country reports, if you are interested in the results of one specific country.

GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES FOR ACCESSIBLE PUBLIC TRANSPORT AND THEIR RELATED COSTS AND BENEFITS

The task of work package 2 was the analysis of good practices and related costs and benefits in the field of accessible public transport in Europe.

In the first part we analysed the diverse approaches in Europe to make public transport accessible. Stakeholder interviews with national experts and a comprehensive desktop search formed the basis for a collection of European good practice examples for accessible public transport. The good practice examples cover the areas of engineering / technology approach, financial support measure, organisational / operational support and awareness rising.

The result of this collection is a comprehensive report of 73 good practice examples, in which each example is briefly described and classified. This “Report on good Practice Examples of accessible Public Transport” is available for download from www.ptaccess.eu.

In the second part of this work package we did a closer look to the costs and benefits of accessibility measures in public transport.

The results of that work including the application of the assessment tool are presented in the report on “Good Practice of accessible Public Transport and the related Costs and Benefits”. Here it is explained why the evaluation of accessibility measures is still at an early stage. We developed an assessment tool for measures to improve public transport systems’ accessibility. This is focussed on three components influenced by the specific measures: Opportunities, Behaviour and Satisfaction. Beside a qualitative analysis, indicators are developed to support the evaluation process including monetary and

non-monetary effects. An evaluation tableau summarises all important information. Example applications are shown for information services, infrastructure measures, mobility training and the replacement of special services. Finally, implications for future evaluation processes and recommendations for further EU policy are given. The table below shows such an example application of the OBS evaluation.

The full report on “Good Practice of accessible Public Transport and the related Costs and Benefits” will also be downloadable at www.ptaccess.eu.

Tableau OBS Evaluation: Opportunities – Behaviour - Satisfaction	
Berlin label “barrier free”	
1. Short description of the project	
label for the identification of accessible facilities to make clear – among others - the state of the city’s transport accessibility and raise the awareness of the need for accessible services and buildings	
2. Short description of the methodology used for evaluation	
very complex to evaluate, not possible to evaluate with data collected yet, extra collection of data (by surveying) necessary with users and providers of labelled institutions/ stations	
3. Short verbal evaluation of the project	
Central strengths: boost awareness, comprehensive approach across sectors to label accessibility, easy to introduce in other countries and cities (as already planned)	
Central weaknesses: accessibility criteria differ from sector to sector and are therefore not easy to remind, unclear implementation strategy (dissemination depends on current financial and personal resources)	
Verbal overall evaluation: strengths overbalance weaknesses as weaknesses are avoidable with adequate planning and stable financial and personal resources	
4. OBS Evaluation	
Opportunities	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● no change in transport/ spatial supply and objective opportunities; enhanced perceived and guaranteed accessibility at labelled institutions ● costs for spatial and transport supply [Euros]: investment and running costs for staff and material (rental, technology, advertisement), costs for rides to visit and assess locations to be labelled, costs for fabrication/ printing of the label, at destinations aiming to get labelled: costs for meeting the requirements for getting the label, ● low environmental costs (use of resources for rides and fabrication of the label) 	
Behaviour	
Transport system perspective	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● transport performance [tkm/ pkm] – rising (pt), falling (imt), utilisation of public transport - rising, additional public transport users lead to additional revenue/ secondary employment effects at the public transport operator ● positive environmental effects (less car rides due to increased awareness and usage of accessible public transport with less car trips), most notably less air pollutant emissions [t] and GHG emissions [t], ● increasing traffic safety [lower number and severity of injuries] 	
Spatial system perspective	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● rising utilisation of spatial supply (labelled shops, schools, health services, etc.) by PRM ● for labelled destinations rising: economic indicators (e.g. profit) [Euros], utilisation of destinations, employment effects at destinations 	
Individual behaviour	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● rising numbers of realised activities/ satisfied needs [number, type], realised trips [number, distance, time, trip purpose] 	
Satisfaction	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● number and kinds of satisfied needs – supposed to rise but depending on what kind of institution is labelled ● indicators of subjective quality of life [Points], participation [Points] – supposed to increase due to increased enhanced and guaranteed accessibility 	
Net present value costs: implementation costs 500,000 Euros; running costs: 200,000 Euros per year (only staff and material)	
Net present value benefits: not possible to evaluate quantitatively, yet no collection of necessary data	
Ratio – te_{basic}: (for a meaningful result necessary to be enhanced depending on data available) number of (additional) users of labelled stations, shops etc. (YET UNKNOWN) implementation/ running costs in Euros (500,000 Euros p.a./ 200,000 Euros p.a.)	

CORRELATION BETWEEN SOCIAL INCLUSION AND ACCESSIBLE TRANSPORT

The aim of work package 3 was to examine the correlation between accessible public transport and social inclusion. In the first part of this work package we conducted a review of literature, projects and initiatives that examine the impacts of measures that have been introduced to improve public transport accessibility for disabled people and whether these have led to greater social inclusion and employment. The review is valuable in terms of identifying what existing evidence is available and drawing this information together in one report.

The first section of the literature review report examined the policies, research evidence and projects at an EU level.

The report also provides a review of policy, research evidence and project and initiatives that has been carried out for each EU member. The review has shown variations in the extent to which member states are producing policies, researching and implementing initiatives to eradicate social exclusion and discrimination: some member states provide comprehensive policies in relation to disability, employment and social inclusion whereas other member states provide minimal legislation in this area.

The full literature review can be downloaded at www.ptaccess.eu.



As part of work package 3 we conducted interviews with representatives within public authorities responsible for social affairs in five EU member countries (Estonia (EE), Finland (FI), Germany (DE), Spain (ES) and the United Kingdom (GB)). Targeted questions were asked during the telephone interviews to get a comprehensive overview of the correlation between accessible public transport systems for people with disabilities and its impact on their access to employment opportunities and social inclusion.

Six main barriers were identified by interviewees as deterring disabled and mobility impaired people from finding and maintaining employment:

- Education, skills and attitudes of the individual (DE, ES, FI, GB);
- Attitudes of employers (DE, FI, GB);
- Attitudes of transport providers (DE, EE, GB);
- Access in general (DE, EE, ES);
- Response of Agencies (FI); and
- Policies (ES).

The importance of having the right education and skills was emphasised by most interviewees. One response highlighted that education is absolutely necessary, with no real career opportunities available without it.

Not all countries agreed that public transport is a barrier for disabled and mobility impaired people. However, they all agreed that rural areas pose more difficulties in accessing employment opportunities than urban areas where public transport is more accessible.

When asked if unemployment/social welfare services work together with public transport operators to improve transport accessibility for disabled and mobility impaired people, none of the interviewees were aware of any such co-ordination. However, two of the countries felt that this would be a good idea.

Most respondents felt there is a need for more diligent enforcement of existing laws and regulations before there would be a requirement for more legislation and regulations.

In summary, the findings show that there is a need for a change of attitudes. Once this has been achieved, other barriers can be addressed. A change of attitude can be achieved through enforcement of current legislation and regulation as well as collaborative work between social welfare services and public transport operators in order to improve public transport accessibility.

The full report on these interviews is available for download from www.ptaccess.eu.



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PARTNERS IN PTACCESS

The partners who have worked in PTaccess are

- Austrian Mobility Research (Austria)
- Independent Living Institute (Sweden)
- Dresden University of Technology –
Chair of Transport Ecology (Germany)
- JMP (UK)

Furthermore more than 25 subcontractors were involved into the project, which acted as national contact persons and gave first hand information for all the EC Member states.



SIXTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME

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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