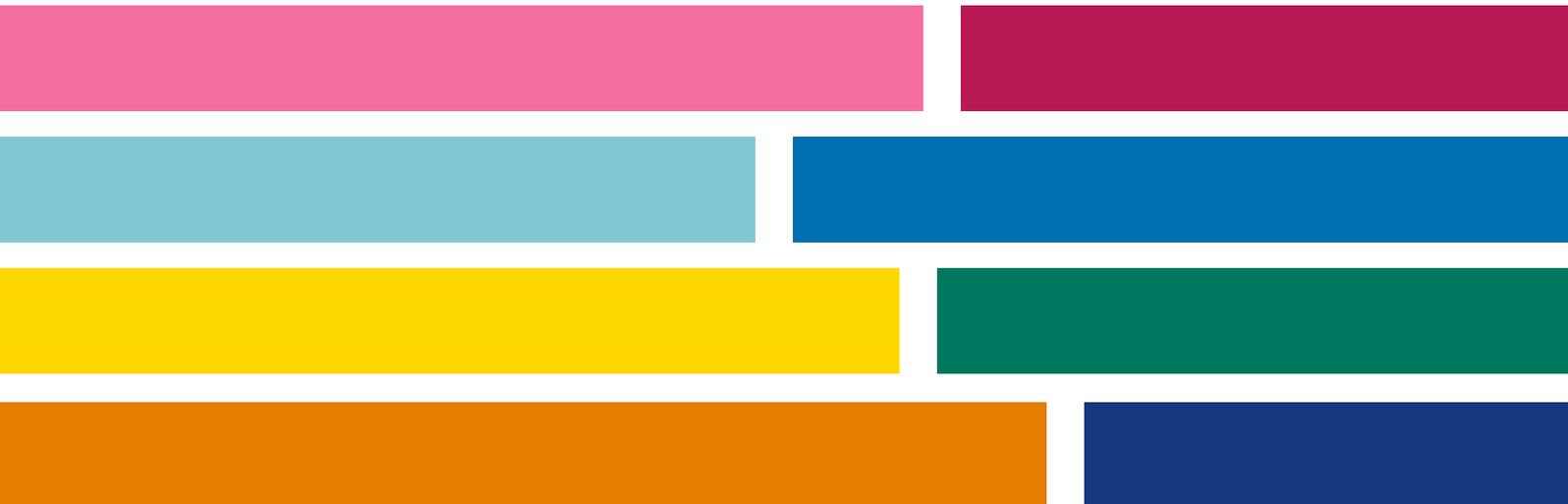




Barrier-free city for all

10th anniversary report



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Introduction

Accessibility is an essential feature for our cities and this is constantly being developed. Cities are reacting to changes in society and demographics. Urban infrastructure and public spaces are changing to guarantee simple, intuitive, and comfortable use for all. This also means that special solutions for people with disabilities will become unnecessary and future generations will be able to live in a city for everyone, regardless of age, gender, abilities or cultural background.

With the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), cities are also committed to continuously improve residents' and visitors' inclusion and social participation.

The following assumptions can be made:

- 10 % of the population is entirely dependent on barrier-free accessibility
- 40% need barrier-free accessibility as a necessary support, but
- 100% value barrier-free accessibility as an improvement in comfort

This report documents the results of the Eurocities 'Barrier-free City for All' working group between 2010 and 2020, and collects the insights from thirteen cities into the following issues:

- Political vision on accessibility
- Administrative structure regarding accessibility
- Biggest success stories
- Biggest challenges in the field of accessibility

The Eurocities ‘Barrier-free City for All’ Working Group

The ‘Barrier-free City for All’ Working Group (WG BCA) was launched in 2010 on the initiative of Berlin. Through direct exchanges between cities, they discuss their respective progress and challenges in improving accessibility, compare urban accessibility strategies at European level and develop priorities and standardised design principles on the ‘barrier-free city’ in cooperation with the European Commission.

The measures to implement the [UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(CRPD\)](#) and to implement the [EU’s ‘Disability Strategy’](#) at urban level also play a key role.

The following cities are currently represented in the working group, which is chaired by [Berlin](#):

Barcelona	Gothenburg	Nantes	Warsaw
Bologna	Grand Lyon	Paris	City for All Foundation (Russian Federation)
Chemnitz	Helsinki	Prague	
Dresden	Lisbon	Toulouse	
Frankfurt/Main	Ljubljana	Turku	
Ghent	Munich	Vienna	



The working group is affiliated with the Eurocities **Mobility Forum**.

Outside experts from academia, research and associations are invited to the meetings (including those from the [Cerema/National Science Centre for the Environment and Mobility of the French Republic](#); [International Union of Architects](#)).

Overview of the WG Barrier-free City for All activities

Since its launch in 2010, the main objective of the WG was to see and treat accessibility in urban areas as an interdisciplinary challenge and integral task.

During the past 10 years, 20 international working meetings/conferences have been held on the following topics:

- Public space and buildings
- Mobility/public transport
- Standardisation
- Protection of historical monuments and accessibility
- Accessible cultural offerings/museums
- Tourism for all
- Education and training (including in the areas of architecture, urban and transport planning)
- Living

The results of the international meetings are documented on the Berlin Senate Department for the Environment, Transport and Climate Protection's [homepage](#).

'Barrier-free City for All' Working Group's kick-off meeting on 10-12 March 2010 in Berlin

The three-day kick-off meeting was opened by State Secretary Hella Dunger-Löper. Event participants included advocates for people with disabilities, urban planners, and universities from a total of twenty European cities.

While the first day initially offered the opportunity to get to know each other, introduce the working group and its possible subject areas, the second day saw the presentation of specific projects from Berlin. Solutions for **designing public places** and **access to public buildings** were presented as part of a visit in the city.

Recommendations for the European Commission's 'European Accessibility Act'

In 2012, recommendations for the [European Commission's 'European Accessibility Act'](#) were developed under the direction of the Eurocities 'Barrier-free City for All' Working Group (WG-BCA) (see document [here](#)). EU Commission experts have been invited to the WG meetings on multiple occasions.

The work on the recommendations was possible thanks to a WG meeting explicitly on the **European Standardisation Mandate 420 'Accessibility in the built environment' and Mandate 473 'To include Accessibility following Design for All in relevant standardisation activities'**¹. Experts from the European Committee for Standardisation [CEN/CENELEC](#) discussed standardised minimum

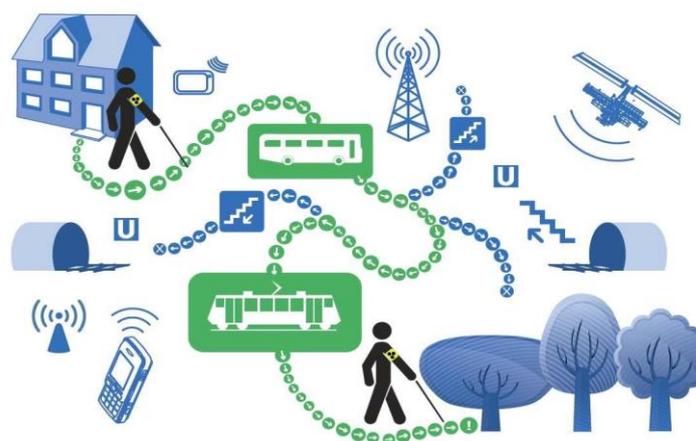
¹ The standardisation mandate from the European Commission, M/420, addressed to CEN, CENELEC and ETSI supports disability policies and concerns European accessibility requirements for public procurement in the built environment. The work under this mandate is structured in two phases: Phase I of the mandate required the establishment of an inventory and feasibility of European and international accessibility standards in the built environment and feasibility studies to explore missing areas. Stakeholders and public in general had the chance to make contributions during a public consultation process of 2 months to the Joint Report produced by Project Team A and Project Team B and followed up by CEN/BT WG 207 "Accessibility in built environment". Phase II of the mandate will lead to the development of a European Standard at the level of common functional accessibility requirements of the built environment as well as TRs on technical performance criteria and conformity assessment. One of the expected outcomes of M/420 would be a European standard on accessibility of the built environment, having ISO 21542 as a base document.

requirements with WG-BCA representatives, which have succeeded in cities, and have even taken into account local features. An example of this is when participants agreed that in Helsinki, due to climatic conditions, the tactile design of guidance systems in public spaces must meet different criteria than is necessary in Lisbon, for example. **All participants advocate a system of guidelines, standards, and manuals.**

The WG-BCA's expertise was incorporated into the standardisation process as part of public consultation events².

Barrier-free mobility

Numerous WG meetings dealt with barrier-free mobility. Cities including Barcelona, London, Paris, Prague, Vienna and the metropolitan regions of Lyon and Toulouse presented examples of concepts and solutions for accessibility in railway stations, access to buses and trains and proven traffic information systems. Different orientation and traffic information systems were presented at the 4th meeting in June 2011 in Vienna. Different technical systems are currently still in use for navigation systems for blind people. Uniform standards could reduce the costs for marketable solutions here in the future.



Quelle (Kiers, FH-JOANNEUM GmbH, Studiengang EVU)

Accessible tourism

The ways in which accessibility can become a hallmark in city tourism were discussed with tourism marketing experts.

City tourism has acted as a driver for tourism throughout Europe over the last few years. People with disabilities and elderly guests already depend on reliable information when planning their travel. And it is exactly this that shows how necessary functioning service and travel chains are, from arrival, the stay and tourism activities through to departure. All this can only run smoothly if each individual area is intertwined and coordinated. **Participants agreed that all travellers, the entire population, and the**

² <https://www.cencenelec.eu/news/events>

economy will benefit from the further development of accessible city tourism in the sense of a 'Design for All'.

Accessibility in the protection of historical monuments

Another important topic in the working group meetings was the special challenges of **accessibility in listed buildings** and urban spaces.

Solutions and problems were presented based on numerous **examples from Barcelona, Berlin Dresden and Warsaw**.

For the accessible design of historical monuments and historic districts, it is important to find solutions that are workable and compatible with the protection of historical monuments together with those affected, administrative representatives and planners.

All experts agreed that **accessible access to historic buildings and individual parts of buildings can be achieved through compromise**.

Accessibility in education and training

Cities and municipalities are reliant on well-qualified architects and planners in planning processes. Representatives from the cities of Barcelona, Berlin, Dresden, Frankfurt, Helsinki, Munich, Prague, Toulouse, Turku, Paris and Vienna discussed the options for **improving the training of architects and planners in Europe** with the International Union of Architects (UIA).

Professor em. Hubert Froyen presented the [UIA Work Programme 'Architecture for all'](#) as representative of the International Union of Architects (UIA). In his introductory speech, he presented the principles and success factors for comprehensively and methodically training architects and planners.

In discussions it became clear that, in addition to the teaching of planning law requirements, specific experience with the concerns of people with disabilities is particularly important for teaching students to creatively and elegantly implement the 'Design for all' principles.

Many cities have comprehensive basic principles and manuals for barrier-free construction. One of the challenges for the future will be to impart this expertise to young planners and to sensitise them to 'Design for all'.

Accessible cultural offerings/museums

Using Alicante as an example, Antonio Espinosa Ruiz, director of the Villajoyosa Museum in Alicante, gave a lecture on the current challenges facing museums when it comes to accessibility for people with disabilities. Here, **new media and technologies offer the possibility to develop accessible exhibition concepts**.

The [Museum4punkt0](#) project, a union of different cultural institutions in Germany, presented examples of application scenarios for modern technologies, such as virtual reality, augmented reality and 3D modelling. In cooperation with the [Culture without Barriers Foundation](#), a cultural festival is held in Warsaw each year with special offerings for blind people, people with hearing impairments or learning difficulties. Urban guidelines provide detailed information for planning and implementing inclusive cultural events.



Accessible exhibition at the German Historical Museum in Berlin. Photo: DHM/Thomas Bruns

Eurocities conference: Breaking down barriers – working together for a better Europe



Opening of the conference at Lisbon's historic town hall. Photo: Manuel Levita

Together with Lisbon and Berlin, and sponsored by the European Commission, Eurocities organised a conference on ‘Accessibility’ in Lisbon on 18 and 19 June 2015.

Discussions were held with over 100 participants from all over Europe at Lisbon’s historic town hall. In his opening speech, João Carlos Alfonso, Deputy Mayor of Lisbon put emphasis on social rights:

‘Accessibility is a **human right** and the removal of barriers is a joint contribution for a better Europe’

The event dealt with the role of cities on the path to an accessible Europe and the consequences for employment, social inclusion, and active ageing. Progress to date on to the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in the European Union and the European Disability Strategy 2010-2020 was discussed.

Berlin, Ljubljana, Lisbon, Oslo and Paris presented their concepts for accessibility. The Deputy Mayor of Paris, Bernard Jomier, stressed the need for mainstreaming, shared responsibility, and a common understanding of the concerns of people with disabilities at all levels of decision-making.

The two-day conference ended with a panel discussion with representatives from the EU Commission and politicians from the cities. The following people appeared on the panel: Eļina Celmina, Representative of the Latvian EU Presidency; Sofia Lourenço, European Commission; João Carlos Alfonso, Deputy Mayor of Lisbon; Thomas Fabian, Deputy Mayor of Leipzig, Lisa Trickett, Member of Birmingham City Council and Anna Lisa Boni, Eurocities Secretary General.

The two-day conference was broadcast live.



Breaking down barriers - [Part 1](#)



Breaking down barriers - [Part 2](#)

Barrier-free City for All and Urban Ageing working groups joint collaboration

At the **joint mutual learning visit of the Eurocities Working Groups on Barrier-free City for All and Urban Ageing** on 12-14 June 2019 in **Ljubljana**, urban concepts and solutions for the **improved participation of elderly people** were presented and evaluated. The mutual learning visit was part of a wider Eurocities project funded by the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation (EaSI) to promote social inclusion at local level. Ljubljana showcased best practice in public space, public transport and living. These best practices were complemented by examples from Bologna and Berlin and joint solutions were discussed in individual workshops.

Finally, recommendations for a city suitable for senior citizens were developed.

The 'Guidelines for an age-friendly and accessible city' are [published here](#) and can be downloaded [here](#).

The video of the mutual learning visit is [available here](#).



Copyright: Eurocities

Building on the Eurocities Barrier-free City for All and Urban Ageing working groups joint meeting, interdisciplinary cooperation is used to successfully implement the individual goals of the [United](#)

[Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities \(UN CPRD\)](#) at urban level. The WG-BCA's future work will also focus on the future [European Commission Disability Strategy](#), the implementation of the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#) and the [European Pillar of Social Rights](#).

Berlin

Political vision on accessibility

An inclusive society is one of the guiding ideas of Berlin’s Senate. Continued expansion of barrier-free access in Berlin is therefore a high priority and appropriate strategies, objectives and measures are formulated in the Berlin Senate’s government policy guidelines. This concerns public infrastructure – from pedestrian crossings to the development of a modern local public transport service through to cultural institutions, hotel and catering businesses and the retail trade.



© visitBerlin, photo: Andi Weiland/Gesellschaftsbilder.de

This objective was defined legally with the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). All senate departments in Berlin are currently drawing up an extensive action plan for the implementation of the UNCRPD. This makes an important contribution to improving inclusion and the self-determined participation of people with disabilities in social life. While barrier-free access was previously aimed at the needs of people with disabilities, today the corresponding planning processes are based on the principles of design for all.

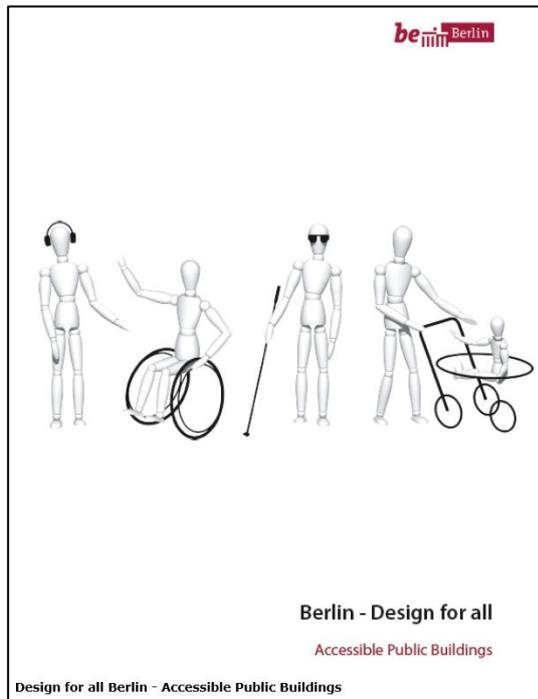
A paradigm shift becomes clear. The ‘deficit approach’ is replaced by the ‘diversity approach’ and the needs of all are taken into consideration by design for all.

However, the intention is not only to develop Berlin in line with a design for all approach but at the same time to make it more mobile, safe and climate friendly. In a growing metropolis such as Berlin, this can only succeed if all means of transport – i.e. bus, rail, cycle, car, pedestrian traffic – are considered with their strengths and a barrier-free infrastructure is ensured.

In the past, the Senate Department for the Environment, Transport and Climate Protection has initiated bills and projects so that these objectives are achieved and residents and visitors can reach their destination conveniently, safely, reliably and in the most environmentally and city-compatible way possible, regardless of whether they have their own means of transport or their physical limitations.

Administrative structure regarding accessibility

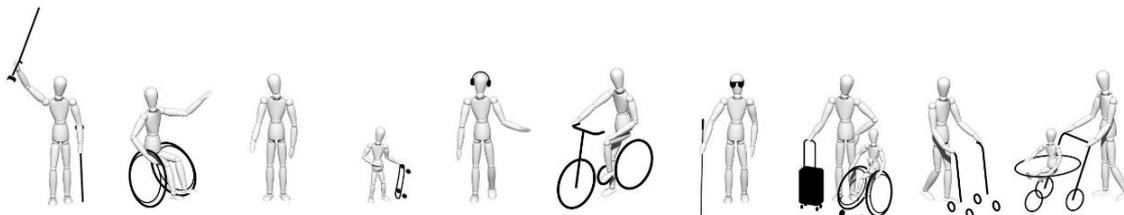
The administration of the State of Berlin is divided into state and district administrations. All senate departments legally require workgroups for the needs of people with disabilities. These are the barrier-free transport and barrier-free buildings workgroups of the Senate Department for the Environment,



Transport and Climate Protection, and the Senate Department for Urban Development and Housing. These workgroups are made up of representatives from administration, the associations concerned and companies. They hold monthly meetings in which they work up solutions for specific problems and challenges in the city. The **'barrier-free buildings coordination office'** in the Senate Department for Urban Development and Housing is the place to go for all barrier-free access issues in the built environment. It is an important partner for public and private developers, institutions, architects and engineers. To ensure that buildings and public open spaces are designed to be used by all from an early stage in the planning process, the barrier-free buildings coordination office created ground-breaking planning principles with its **'Berlin – Design for all – publicly accessible buildings'** and **'public space'** manuals.

The coordination office also intends to open an advisory centre in cooperation with Berlin's Chamber of Architects. As a federal state, Berlin has the right to enact its own laws and ordinances on barrier-free buildings. This particularly applies to the accessibility and design of buildings and to public roads and open spaces.

Primarily, barrier-free access ensures that people with disability have equal participation in public and social life. The principles of barrier-free access were therefore explicitly included in the State's Equality Act. Furthermore, it also defines the tasks and rights of the full-time state and district representatives for people with disability. The state representative for people with disabilities must be involved in good time in all laws, ordinances and other important projects dealing with issues concerning the integration of people with disabilities, before a resolution is passed.



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Grafikdesign, Idee: Burkhard Lüdtkke, Illustration: Robert Niemann

Our biggest success stories

The Berlin Mobility Act

The Berlin Mobility Act came into force in the summer of 2018. It is a one-off in Germany and was created by a unique procedure involving mobility associations, the districts, the competent senate departments, and representatives of the Berlin parliamentary fraction. The Mobility Act consists of several components and takes into consideration all means of transport as integral parts of a functioning public transport system. The legally defined subareas will be created gradually.



Put together, they enable forward-thinking mobility: The first three components describe general, cross-transport mode objectives as well as local public transport and cycle traffic. The 'pedestrian traffic' section followed at the end of 2019 and the 'new mobility' section in 2020. Berlin will give pedestrian traffic in the city a completely new status, to ensure noticeable improvements for the most vulnerable road users. Specifically, it involves more barrier-free access and a higher quality of stay in the city, more safety on school routes and longer green phases at traffic lights.

The objective of the Mobility Act is to enable all – young and old, people with and without disabilities – to be mobile, safely and with self-determination.

The outer districts and metropolitan region of Berlin-Brandenburg will be better connected with buses, rail transport and cycle traffic and new neighbourhoods should also be able to be reached conveniently and barrier-free without a car.

With this Mobility Act, Berlin is setting nationwide standards.

Berlin's underground railway system has 173 stations, of which 127 (73 %) are currently accessible by lift or ramps. Of these, 123 stations (71 %) have an additional guide system for blind and partially sighted people. 90 % of all stations in the urban railway network have barrier-free access.

Berlin Toilets

A new toilet concept is being implemented in Berlin by the Senate Department for the Environment, Transport and Climate Protection by replacing the old city toilets with the new 'Berlin Toilets'. Representatives of people with disabilities and senior citizens were involved in their creation. 193 new, modern, accessible, unisex toilets will be located throughout the city by the end of 2020. All citizens had the opportunity to inspect the new 'Berlin Toilet' before it went into mass production. Representatives of people with disabilities and senior citizens took advantage of this opportunity and

made suggestions for improving the accessibility, most of which could be implemented. The creation of a large network of accessible public toilets allows all those whose mobility depends on the availability of sanitary facilities to extend their sphere of action in public spaces. This often benefits persons with disabilities or elderly people, making it easier for them to participate in public life. With the new toilet concept, the supply of public toilets in the State of Berlin will be gradually improved in a sustainable and appropriate way. A total of 366 toilet facilities will be available throughout the city by the end of 2022 once the improved supply has been implemented.

Barrier-free access to nature

An explicitly inclusive measure is being implemented in Schöneberger Südgelände nature park. It is planned to make it a place for barrier-free access to nature, as part of a pilot project. In 2020, the outdoor exhibition ‘Trailblazing nature’ opened in 2017 will be developed by adding appropriate elements and measures to make it inclusive and barrier-free, particularly to people who are partially sighted.

Barrier-free housing

The availability of barrier-free and affordable housing is becoming increasingly important. Therefore, with the Ordinance on Building Requirements for Barrier-Free Housing (Barrier-free Housing Ordinance), which came into force on 01/01/2020, all barrier-free housing requirements are formulated as a logical function chain from the road space across the plot and into the barrier-free apartment. Accordingly, from 1 January 2020, half the apartments created by new builds, renovation or change in use of buildings must provide barrier-free use. In 2019, the ‘barrier-free building’ coordination office worked on another project with students of the TU Berlin. The results were presented in the joint exhibition on the topic of ‘barrier-free micro-living’. With this type of project, the coordination office is also actively trying to sensitise students and staff of the university to ‘design for all’. One of the greatest challenges of the future will be to convey the topic of barrier-free access to young architects. If young people are well trained in barrier-free access they can contribute their knowledge in the architect firms in which they work. Even the smallest contact with this topic helps to extend knowledge and creates an awareness, which is required for communication with investors and developers.



In 2013, Berlin's extensive barrier-free city measures were acknowledged when it received the **Access City Award** from the European Commission. The reason for the awarding of the prize stated: **‘Berlin is receiving this award due to its strategic and inclusive political measures to promote barrier-free access, which extend to all aspects of life in the city and are firmly anchored in the political and budget planning of the city.’**

Our biggest challenges in the field of accessibility

By introducing state-of-the-art technology, barrier-free access and climate-friendly mobility continue to be improved for the residents and visitors of the city. For example, the introduction of the ‘two senses principle’ for passenger information within the network of the Berliner Verkehrsbetriebe (BVG) should make a decisive contribution to achieving this objective. The Berlin transport companies (Berliner Verkehrsbetriebe - BVG) are therefore currently trying out the following alternatives:

- External announcements of destination and line number through the vehicle’s loudspeakers, for example, in the form of a so-called ‘spoken shower’
- An acoustic information option at the stop, integrated in the Dynamic Passenger Information System (Dynamische Fahrgastinformationssystem - DAISY) as a ‘speaking stop’
- App-based solution with which passengers can trigger or receive the relevant information by means of their smartphone

Berlin-wide implementation of one of these systems is planned for 2021, following the trial phase and its evaluation.

Berlin is also breaking new ground in barrier-free pedestrian navigation. It is planned to introduce multi-modal pedestrian routing with the current local transport plan, based on the results of the ‘m4guide – barrier-free navigation in Berlin’ research project funded by the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Energy (BMWi). Aimed at the needs of people with motor function and sensory impairments, the routing system is to be integrated in the travel info app of the Berlin-Brandenburg transport association and the transport companies. This system will enable passengers with mobility limitations to navigate themselves independently through voice output via TalkBack and VoiceOver.

In implementing the standards set by the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the objective of Berlin’s local transport plan is to achieve full barrier-free access within local public transport by 1 January 2022. This means that any newbuild or extensive modernisation of underground or urban rail, regional and mainline railway stations, design of new bus and tram stops and extensive construction projects on existing stops must be built so that they can be reached and used by people with disabilities and without needing the help of third parties.

The public administration relies on well trained experts to create a city that is fit for the future and sustainable. In Berlin, we work continuously on including the principles of barrier-free access in line with ‘design for all’ in the respective curricula of the state’s own universities, especially in the urban and regional planning, transport planning and architecture faculties.



Barcelona

Political vision on accessibility

For more than 40 years, the city of Barcelona has had a strong commitment to people with disabilities and has persevered in removing barriers to inclusion, be they physical, communicative or other more intangible ones. In the very beginning, accessibility was a response to the struggle and demands of citizens and organisations; nowadays, it is the **basis to guarantee the rights of people with disabilities, promoting personal autonomy and independent living.**

Barcelona's work on accessibility and inclusion relies on the following principles:

- **Accessibility** - we need spaces, facilities, activities and services that consider access and active participation of diverse people on an equal basis.
- **Cross-cutting approach** - support and advice provided to all areas, so that they can meet the needs of everyone.
- **Equality of rights** - under the paradigm of the UNCRPD, public policies must be designed on the basis that people with disabilities or functional diversities are subjects of law, thus overcoming visions solely focused on care and protection.
- **Personal autonomy** - with the aim of ensuring a full incorporation into the community, public policies must have freedom in decision-making and independence to the greatest extent possible.
- **Research and knowledge** - on how the needs and realities of people with disabilities are applied to new projects and proposals for the future.
- **Participation** - collaborative work with persons and organisations is essential, as well as easing the relation between political representatives, NGO, companies, universities and experts.

Administrative structure regarding accessibility

The **Municipal Institute of People with Disabilities (IMPD)** is an autonomous body of the Barcelona City Council, whose mission is to promote activities and services accessible to people with disabilities. IMPD's governing board is composed of 50% elected politicians and 50% people with disabilities, elected by citizens with disabilities every four years. With a **staff of 70 workers**, the IMPD strategy consists of mainstreaming accessibility and inclusion throughout the city administration. The work methodology consists of a double assignment: officers responsible for 'disabilities' are assigned to districts, at the same level as other topics like culture, commerce or sports; at the same time, strategic topics or projects for the whole city are assigned to officers, so that they can contribute in different dimensions, territories and topics.

The IMPD also provides special services for people with disabilities: Early Detection and Care for Children aged 0-6 years old; door-to-door special transport for persons with reduced mobility with more than 348,000 annual trips; a Labour Inclusion Service that manages improvement of the skills of job-seekers and searches for job offers; and an Independent Living Programme to provide personal

assistance. There is also an Information Office specialised in issues of interest to citizens with disabilities.

The quality and suitability of the solutions is guaranteed by people with disabilities taking part in the city's ordinary **participation** forums and also, in recent years, in measures for co-creating public policies, such as the Citizen Agreement for an Inclusive Barcelona, where 4 working groups have been set up to discuss one topic (housing, family support, inclusive leisure and accessibility) with 67 organisations and 131 attendees.

Our biggest success stories

The efforts have allowed us to build a **public transport network** with universal access to all buses and 92% of accessible underground stations accessible (due to be fully accessible in 2024). People with disabilities can activate the acoustic signs of the 76% of **traffic lights** with a device, which is also used to locate ticket machines navigable by voice and, for 2 years now, it has also helped them in some public buildings. Access to **leisure areas** is also ensured: enjoying the **beach** is possible thanks to accessible paths and a free bathing support service throughout the summer. The city has introduced accessible elements to 47 **playing areas** and has a development plan to have a 'playable city for all'.

The programme '**Sports include**' offers a range of inclusive activities and facilities for different profiles of citizens, from children to elder people, as well as adapted sports for people with disabilities. The programme also boasts training and advice for professionals and other support services to ease the access to sports (changing room, support instructors, borrowing materials). Access to **culture facilities** is getting higher as the activities and services become more accessible, with ICT rooms in libraries, tactile models in museums and accessible shows in theatres and culture festivals. Both the city festival and major popular culture festivals include regular accessibility measures for the audience, inclusive activities open to all diversities and, in recent years, inclusive arts and performances to highlight capabilities in a positive way.

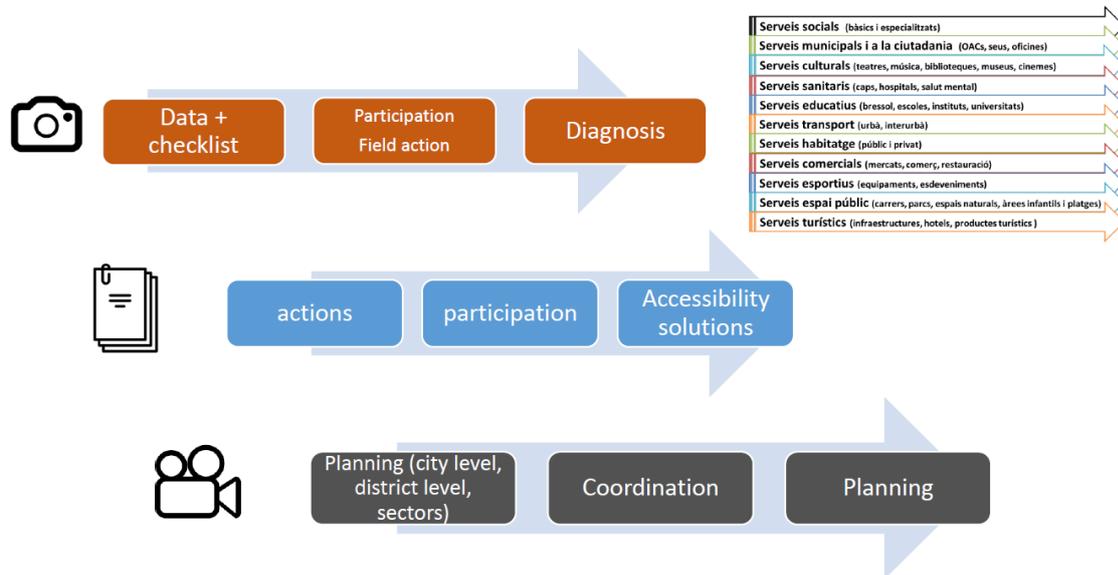
Finally, the city has made a step forward with the **independent living programme** that provides personal assistance, avoids institutionalisation and boosts empowerment and participation. Other pioneer projects of **social innovation** like the rooftop gardens are aimed at the empowerment of people with disabilities.

Our biggest challenges in the field of accessibility

We need to encourage more sectors of the community to build a **more inclusive, resilient and friendlier city**. By means of the project CASBA ('Friendly Shops Without Barriers'), the city administration will work with university, shopkeepers, and retailers' organisations to raise awareness and to tackle the need of training on accessibility.

No doubt a big effort will be made to **increase labour inclusion**, with a range of initiatives in collaboration with a network work inclusion NGO, support to staff with disabilities and to self-employment start-ups and special calls for public vacancies specific for people with learning difficulties.

Local rule for the elaboration of the Accessibility Masterplan



Last but not least, the implementation of the **Accessibility Plan** during the next decade will broaden the meaning of accessibility, which is currently too focused on architectural barriers, to include communicative accessibility and inclusion by default. In the coming years we will rise to the challenges of the post-COVID context and will have to fight eventual setbacks in the labour scope or new barriers to access public space and public services.



Dresden

Political vision on accessibility

Accessibility has been of particular importance in Dresden for many years. As early as 1996, the city council adopted the ‘**Guideline for the Disabled Design of the City of Dresden**’.

In 2004, the Guidelines for Inclusion were approved by the city council.

One of the five guidelines names ‘Dresden - City without Barriers’ as a vision with the following key objectives:

- Public buildings and facilities accessible to all
- Public spaces and public infrastructure that can be used by everyone
- Barrier-free local public transport
- Universal and clear and up-to-date warning, guidance, information and communication systems

In 2011, the Council of the City of Dresden decided to develop an **action plan to implement the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities**. This action plan was drawn up by the administration. Representatives and associations of people with disabilities were involved before the Action Plan was approved on July 11, 2013 by the city council. Dresden was one of the first German cities with a municipal UN Action Plan. It included seven fields of action:

- Education
- Mobility and accessibility
- Barrier-free dwelling
- Work and employment
- Culture, sports and leisure
- Health and care
- Barrier-free communication and information, participation in political and public life and awareness raising

Each field of action is headlined by a vision, which is specified by key objectives. In the field of mobility and accessibility, for example, the vision is: ‘The design of the transport infrastructure, the means of transport, the information, communication and routing systems, any strategies and concepts including the provision of services are fundamentally aimed at enabling unrestricted mobility for citizens with disabilities. Unrestricted mobility aims at the entire chain of routes from the origin to the destination.’

Tangible measures for implementation have been decided in every City Budget Plan since then to come closer to the vision in the fields of action and to implement the key objectives.

An update of the UN Action Plan was drawn up jointly by the administration and the representations of people with disabilities and so was decided by the city council on 22 June 2017. The second update of the UN Action Plan is currently being worked on.

Administrative structure regarding accessibility

Since the reunification of Germany in 1990, an administrative structure has developed in Dresden that enables the goal of accessibility to be considered in all activities of the city's administration. At the same time, a constructive and trusting cooperation with representatives of people with disabilities has emerged, which is also reflected in administrative structures.

The decision-making body is the **Advisory Board for People with Disabilities**, which is one of 18 city council committees. All templates and information from the city administration relevant to people with disabilities are advised in this committee.

Below the political level, the city administration works in a coordinated and planned manner within the framework of municipal regulations (such as the Design Manual of the City of Dresden, the **Technical Guidelines for Planning and Building Roads and Bridges**) and if needed working groups together with representatives of the people with disabilities' associations and external experts. The Implementation of City of Dresden's UN Action Plan in the management strategy is the overarching goal.

The representatives of people with disabilities are involved at an early stage in all planning for Dresden. The **'Barrier-free Planning and Building' working group** for example meets once a month to coordinate conceptual planning, construction measures for public spaces and building construction projects. Projects, measures and ideas to improve public transport are coordinated in the **'Public Transport for All' working group**, in which not only the representatives of the people with disabilities' associations and the city administration are represented, but also the transport companies are involved.

All relevant investments by Dresden are fundamentally linked to the condition of accessibility. More and more municipal financial grants for culture and art are also linked to the precondition that they can be experienced by everyone.

Our biggest success stories

Public Transport



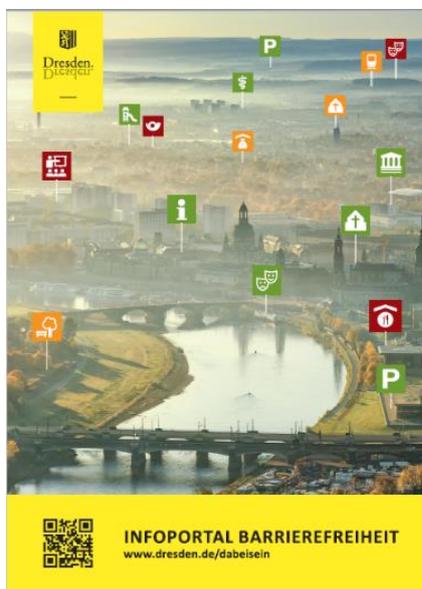
Copyright: DVB AG

All public transport vehicles in Dresden (S-Bahn, Tram, Bus and Elbe Ferries), except one funicular, are accessible for wheelchair users. The majority of stops allows access via the mobile ramps of the vehicles. An investment programme for bus stops has been set up by the city.

Most of the buses and all tram vehicles are equipped with BLIS –an audio information system for blind and partially sighted people that provides remote control announcements of line number and direction outside the vehicle on request, opens all the vehicle doors, and repeats the stop announcement inside the vehicle and some interactions with the driver.

Information Portal on Accessibility

The Information Portal on Accessibility was developed between 2017 and 2019 as part of a cross-border cooperation project together with the Czech district of Ústí. It provides comprehensive information on accessibility and usability of facilities:



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www.dresden.de/joinin

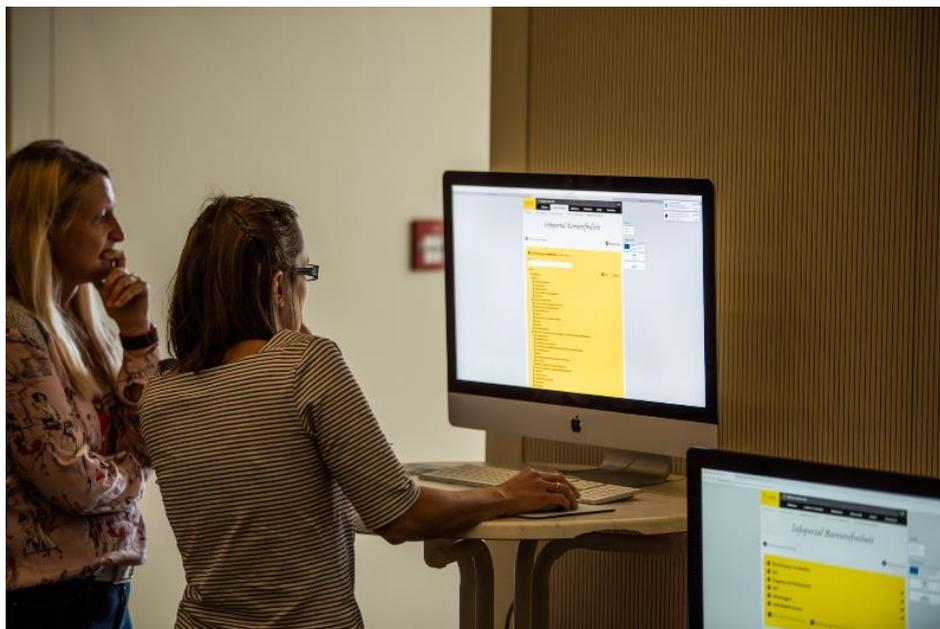
By mid-2020, more than 5,000 facilities have been registered. All areas of public life are covered, including tourist destinations, leisure destinations, doctors, authorities, educational institutions, and sports facilities. Information is provided in German, Czech and English.

Compared to other internet information on accessibility, the Dresden Information Portal is unique and outstanding in terms of functionality, reliability and extent of information.

It is characterised by the following features:

- All data entries are checked on-site by an independent service provider.
- Dresden guarantees continuous data maintenance. Every year at least 20% of all facilities will be checked at regular intervals.

- The information provides detailed information about the usability for people with mobility or hearing impairments. Individual needs can be pre-set while using extensive search functions.
- Most of the data entries provide quite a few photos that describe the situation on site.
- Operators of facilities or organisers of any events can integrate the information on accessibility directly into their own web pages.
- All data is available as open data for use on other websites or applications.



Copyright: Thomas Schlorke

Implementation of the Saxon Grant ‘Accessible Buildings – favourite places for everyone’

In 2014, Dresden started a finance programme to dismantle existing barriers, in particular in the cultural, leisure, education and health sectors. The catering sector is expressly included. An example is a stair lift in a cinema.

Each project can be subsidised with up to 25,000 euro without any co-payment of the applicants. Dresden is operating the programme, which is financed by the Free State of Saxony.

More than 100 projects with an amount of 1.7 million euro were realised up until the end of 2019.

Municipal grant for barrier free communication

The city has been providing around 100,000 euros a year for accessible communication since the beginning of 2018 to ensure the participation of people with disabilities. The money is used for instance to provide hearing loops, speech-to-text reporters or sign language interpreters for municipal events and participation processes but also to create accessible documents and to maintain the Information Portal on Accessibility.

Accessible Audio Navigation System

The Accessible Audio Navigation System combines the BlindFind smartphone app, developed by visorApps for iOS and Android, with visorBoxes installed throughout a building – for example in the town hall. It not only lets visitors who are blind or partially sighted request helpful audio information

on how to get their bearings and navigate inside a building, but also assists them in locating important landmarks such as offices, bathrooms, lifts or stairs. This helps individuals who are blind or partially sighted to explore public buildings independently.

Barrier-free websites law and easy-to-read communication

Dresden's City Administration is finishing the implementation of the Saxon barrier-free websites law based on European Guideline 2016/2102 and easy-to-read communication for digital and non-digital publications of the city.

Our biggest challenges in the field of accessibility

Especially challenging beside various specific difficulties of each project are generally the following issues:

- Financing of (infrastructure) measures
- Human resources for planning and implementing measures
- Maintaining the existing infrastructure
- Conflicts of use and space requirements in public space and limited space availability in the existing streets
- Accessibility in existing (private) buildings with public use
- Availability of affordable and accessible dwellings



Copyright: City of Dresden



Ghent

Political vision on accessibility

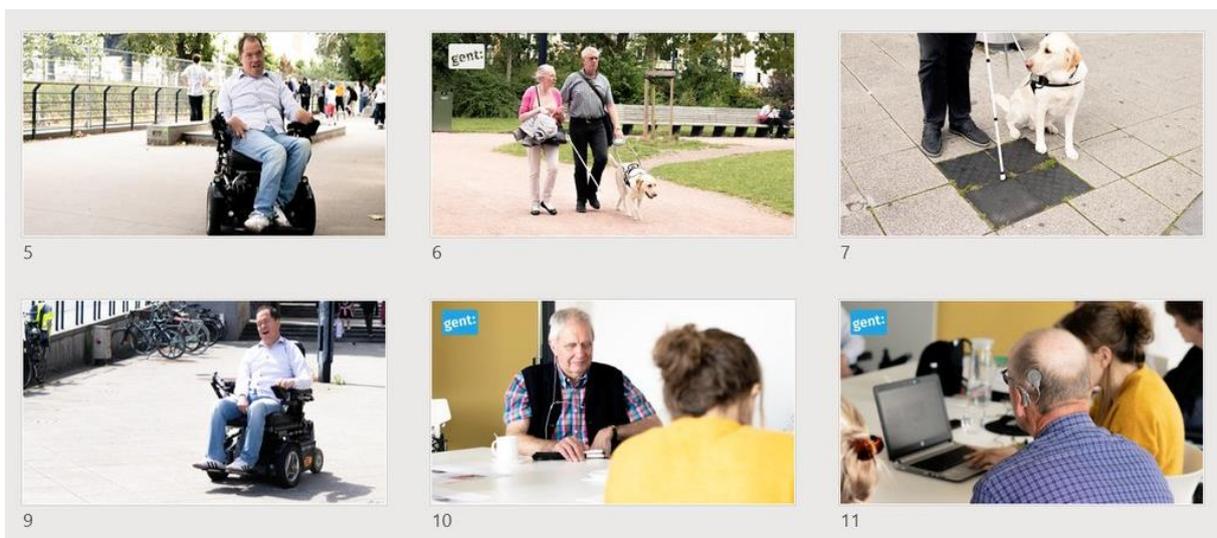
The job of accessibility officer was introduced in 2010 as part of the political coalition agreement after the municipal council elections of 2008. The first few years were dedicated to putting accessibility on the agenda of the municipal services, i.e. taking part in important meetings, collaborations with the University of Ghent, set up an advisory board on accessibility, etc. Its importance was confirmed after the next elections by implementing some actions in the new city agreement. Accessibility is now part of the equal opportunities approach. An architect builds the bridge between the disability approach and the built environment and digital services.





Administrative structure regarding accessibility

Bart Vermandere is one of the few accessibility officers on the local level in Flanders (Ghent was the first, Bruges has now one, too) with a particular focus on Universal Design. At the time, the province offered similar services but has since stopped and the Flemish Government is offering services to architects and local governments. The accessibility officer team in Ghent is now part of the equal opportunities section with links to anti-discrimination, participation but with a specific horizontal role with all city departments. The accessibility officer team is working on creating a new network of city colleagues specialised in accessibility to bring them together and support them with regards to expertise and sharing common experiences. Besides this internal network, the team is working more closely with experienced experts (citizens with disabilities).



Our biggest success stories

The signing of a local charter on accessibility (with recommendations in an action plan published every two years on different levels) and a campaign with a focus on taking steps together in the future is another measure.³

Ghent signs an accessibility charter and launches action plan with 19 concrete measures, making infrastructure, communication, and services more accessible

December 3, 2019.

Ghent has been working on an integrally accessible city for some time. In 2010, Ghent was the first local government to appoint an accessibility officer to track progress regarding the ambitious goal that every resident and visitor can make easy use of communication, buildings, public transport, squares and parks. This applies to people who are visually impaired or deaf as well as to non-native speakers or people with low literacy, seniors, parents with a buggy, wheelchair users, and so on. A second accessibility officer will be appointed in 2020 to fulfil the commitments in the charter.



Our biggest challenges in the field of accessibility

Renew the old historic city centre with cobblestones and medieval pavement and implement Universal Design in architectural competitions for new city-buildings:

³ <https://stad.gent/nl/over-gent-en-het-stadsbestuur/nieuws-evenementen/stad-gent-ondertekent-charter-toegankelijkheid-en-lanceert-actieplan> (in Dutch)

“Making a city physically accessible is a long process in historic Ghent with its many protected monuments and narrow streets.

Within a few years, I hope to look back at the completed projects with the nice thought that on December 3, 2019, we established the principle to take accessibility into account from the start.”⁴

Bart Vermanderem, accessibility officer

The world heritage middle-aged castle in the city centre will have an elevator to the roof top and a brand-new entrance pavilion. Nowadays there is already an audio-tour with sign-language video on iPad.



⁴ Original text in dutch: <https://stad.gent/nl/over-gent-en-het-stadsbestuur/nieuws-evenementen/stad-gent-ondertekent-charter-toegankelijkheid-en-lanceert-actieplan>



On the left, the 150cm design that has been used for years to designate the space that a wheelchair user needs to manoeuvre comfortably.

In times of Corona, this sizing has received an extra dimension for everyone.

On the right an accessible skatepark, and a [video](#) of the opening.

Below, face masks with see-through windows, good for making non-verbal communication easier. Important for the deaf and hard of hearing. We already ordered 5000 of them.





Göteborgs
Stad

Gothenburg

Political vision on accessibility

Gothenburg is a city of innovation, creativity, and sustainability. Thanks to a long-term strategy, the city has become a hub of collaboration for city, businesses, and academia with Johanneberg and Lindholmen science parks.

The topography in Gothenburg is marked by rocky outcrops, clay soil and rising sea levels which represents a major challenge for planning the new areas. The historical Gothenburg is also a challenge making the city usable and accessible to everyone.



Gothenburg has the vision of becoming one of Europe's most humane and attractive cities to visit and to live and work in. As far as possible everybody should be able to use ordinary transport, service functions and facilities. The city's long-term aim is to be accessible for all.

Administrative structure regarding accessibility

The city's budget, plans, programmes, guidelines, and policies are to promote the disability perspective and universal design.

Work on **accessibility issues is taking place broadly and systematically in the city's administrations and companies**, in the housing sector, in the region and in collaboration with representatives from commerce and industry as well as the disability organisations.

The Property Management Committee assumes city wide assignments to promote and develop the accessibility work. This means coordinating projects, doing follow-ups, and achieving the city's objective to create *A City for Everyone*. The responsibility for accessibility rests with each city district, company, or property owner.

The **Disability Database** is used to make systematic inventories that result in activity plans, actions and produce statistics. It also **provides citizens and tourists with information about accessibility**.

Our biggest success stories

As a recognition of the city's efforts and ambitions, **Gothenburg was awarded the Access City Award** by the European Commission in 2014, for exceptional good work with addressing accessibility issues.

Accessibility is also about inclusion. The projects highlighted here demonstrate the innovative approaches that have been taken to develop comprehensive and sustainable accessibility in the City since the 2014 award.

Accessibility-app – ‘GotEventTillgänglighet’

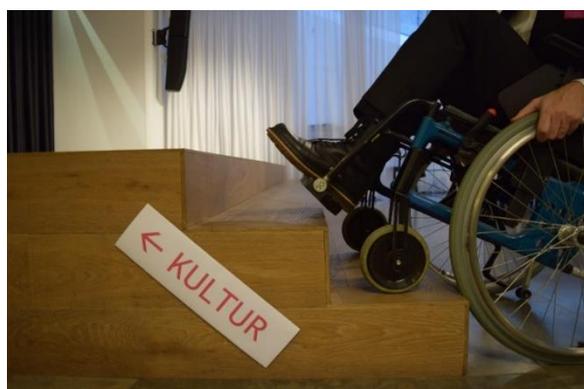


Accessibility-app – ‘GotEventTillgänglighet’ makes the city arenas more accessible. The app provides live visual interpretation during events, sign language interpretation of arena sound, hearing loop for sound amplification, information on how to get to the arena and how to get assistance on-site. Thanks to the app, the vision or hearing disabled can enjoy flexible seating instead of designated areas. The app enables a better event experience for all.

FunkTek

The Museum of Gothenburg was not always accessible to all. This changed through the FunkTek-project. The museum hired people with various disabilities to examine and analyse the existing exhibitions to create a better museum. The way of creating, planning and building exhibitions changed. The mission was not to find more special solutions, but solutions that work for everyone.

The Insight Arena



The Insight Arena was a unique pop-up studio in 2019 that gave a better understanding of what it might be like to live with a physical, mental, or intellectual disability. Participants could attend lectures, try the ‘elderly suit’, find out what it is like to get around in a wheelchair, what it feels like to have cataracts or try to study in a classroom when you have concentration problems. An innovative measure to give essential knowledge in an engaging, effective, and thought-provoking way.

The *Anmäl hinder* mobile application

Gothenburg launched the new mobile app ‘Anmäl hinder’ at the beginning of March 2017. This means that for the last two years people have had a much easier way to report obstacles for accessibility in public areas. This is a great way for the city of Gothenburg to let citizens be a part of creating a city for all, and of all the reports since 2006, about 70 percent of those came in through the app during 2017 and 2018.

The results are a success, and the app has also been rewarded the Swedish national price for innovation, ‘Guldlänken 2018’, for the open source solution to a nationwide problem. Two other communes have already copied the app and launched it for their citizens.

The Anmäl hinder app is currently put forward as a good example, by the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR) and Nordregio, a leading research centre for regional development and planning established by the Nordic Council of Ministers.

Accessible tourism

The Global Destination Sustainability index has identified Gothenburg as the world’s most sustainable destination. According to the American Future Today Institute, Gothenburg is one of the smartest cities in the world. This is a confirmation that Gothenburg has become a more accessible city today compared to 10 years ago. A city where tourism is considered a catalyst for sustainable growth and great quality of life.

Our biggest challenges in the field of accessibility

The biggest challenges for Gothenburg consist of making accessibility and universal design a natural part of the urban development and making proper decisions in every project through the sustainability dimensions.



Ljubljana

Political vision on accessibility

In last decade Ljubljana has made tremendous progress in various fields. The courage of the local community leadership, especially the mayor, Zoran Jankovič, who has been leading the city since 2006, as well as a clear vision for the transformation of the capital of Slovenia into a friendly and accessible city to all, have significantly improved the accessibility of the city to people with disabilities.



For implementing the first city action plan, which outlined systematic work in this area, Ljubljana received the **charter 'City tailor-made for people with disabilities'** of the Association of Disabled Workers of Slovenia in 2009, and less than a decade later, in 2018, for many solutions already implemented and plans for the further regulation on the topic, the prestigious silver award on the European Commission's **'Access City Award'** competition for cities accessible to people with disabilities and the elderly.

By implementing the measures that we collect every two years in action plans, we significantly complement the successful story of green Ljubljana, in accordance with its sustainable orientation, in the direction of a universal and friendly and accessible city.

Administrative structure regarding accessibility

Ljubljana incorporates the topic of **accessibility into all strategic and implementation documents at the municipal level**, with the Department of Health and Social Care responsible for coordinating preparation of the respective Action Plans for improving the accessibility of the city. Before being adopted by the city, the action plans are also discussed at a mayor's special advisory body, The **Council for the Elimination of Architectural and Communication Barriers, shorter - SOAKO**. SOAKO is primarily a contact point for the representatives of different groups of people with disabilities with the mayor and city administration. SOAKO is also a forum where accessibility issues are discussed directly with the individual officials conducting work on the field. In addition to people with disabilities and representatives of the architectural profession, SOAKO is also made up of representatives of Municipal Wardens and the Inspectorate, Ljubljana Passenger Transport, the Ljubljana Tourism Institute and the

City Administration Departments for Health and Social Care, for Urban Planning and for Commercial Activities and Traffic. SOAKO otherwise has no executive powers, and the conclusions it adopts at its meetings are primarily of a recommendatory nature, but it nevertheless represents an effective tool both for the direct implementation of actions on the ground, as for redesigning relevant policies in the city.

Our biggest success stories

The biggest success story is the awareness of decision-makers, and especially the city administration, that one of the preconditions for achieving equal opportunities for citizens and visitors to the city is the accessibility of the built environment and services for people with disabilities.

The sensitivity and awareness of experts and operatives at the city level regarding the field of accessibility has led over the years to major, and most importantly – constant, changes in the city. **The biggest improvement during last ten years has been done on the tactile path instalments**, which were before very scarce and at present represent a significant part of accessibility measures in the city.



Our biggest challenges in the field of accessibility.

In the future, **the biggest challenge in the field of accessibility will be how to speed up the accessibility of private spaces in public use**, such as inns, shops and other privately owned buildings and premises. The latter are slowly adapting, regardless of legal requirements.



Milan

Political vision on accessibility

Accessibility is not only the absence of architectural barriers, but it is the guarantee of a more straightforward city for all. It is not just a matter of eliminating, but of designing in a new way, to make Milan an increasingly welcoming, international, and tailor-made city. Those are the challenges that mayor Beppe Sala has indicated for accessibility policies. It is, therefore, not just a question of eliminating the architectural barriers, which still exist, but of thinking about the needs of citizens, for example, the elderly or families with small children and strollers. An accessible city is a more beautiful, comfortable, simple city for everyone: the rules are there, and in Milan, there is also a deep political awareness.

“I would like all Milanese people to experience the lack of accessibility not as a discourtesy towards a disabled person but as an outrage against themselves, an offense against all citizens.”

Lisa Noja, delegate of the Mayor of Milan for accessibility policies

- Milan has adopted the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, undertaking to develop a global strategy to improve accessibility. (2011)
- Milan has approved the Welfare Development Plan 2012-2015 aimed to ensure citizenship rights without discrimination, promote a new accessibility culture and the active participation of persons with disabilities and their representative organisation. (2011-2015)
- Milan has approved the **Local Plan to eliminate Architectural Barriers (PEBA)**, the strategic plan to promote accessibility to the built environment and public spaces and transportation, social inclusion, and quality of life. (2018) The commitment of Milan is continuously growing: after investing 35 million euros (between 2013 and 2017) in the removal of architectural barriers, for the current three-year period (2018/2020), just under an additional 50 million euros.

Administrative structure regarding accessibility

The Facility Management Department (Public Works and Technical Coordination Area) coordinated the implementation of the PEBA and a permanent working group has been set up in order to monitor the level of PEBA implementation on a regular basis, issue reports to provide updated information on

the accessibility of public spaces and transportation and share the best practices among the different divisions of Milan. Many directorates of Milan, each for their competences, take part in this working group and it deals with the topic of accessibility and disability, in particular: the Home Management, the Education Directorate, the Social Policy Directorate, the Civic Services, Participation, and Sports Department, the Mobility, Environment, Energy Department, Urban Planning Department, Information Systems and Digital Agenda Department and Revenue and Evasion Control Department.

Besides, since 2016 the mayor has appointed Lisa Noja, now a Member of the Italian Parliament, to the role of elaboration, promotion, verification, and conception of the initiatives of the City of Milan, relating to accessibility and the relationship with stakeholders.

Milan can also count on the advice and cooperation of its investee companies. Agenzia Mobilità Ambiente e Territorio SRL (AMAT) and Azienda Trasporti Milanesi SPA (ATM) collaborate, for example, on the theme of accessibility of public spaces and local public transport.

Our biggest success stories

In December 2015, **Milan won the City Access Award**, the award that the European Union gives to the city that has put in place best practices in terms of accessibility. It was a significant recognition that rewards what has been done and the commitments made for the future.

The city won thanks to a global strategy that includes transportation and infrastructures, city planning, school, built environment and public spaces, public services, green and city park, marketing and tourism, culture, sport and facilities, EXPO Milano 2015.

But Milan won mainly thanks to the goals it set itself:

- Promoting and improving reception, welcome, and accessibility for persons with disabilities and for reduced mobility people (people with special needs generally speaking) to Expo and the city.
- Activating, enhancing and making permanent and structured the coordination and co-operation between Milan and disability stakeholders, taking advantage of their specific and in-depth competences, paying attention to different disabilities and needs and strengthening co-designing processes to make urban spaces fully accessible according to universal design principles and with respect to all aspects of the designing and construction process (from architectural works and appliances, to color choices).
- Identifying and sharing priorities and objectives to address projects and interventions that will be defined/presented/carried out by Milan as well as together with other partners.

The themes of participation and involvement had a lot of space. There was a Permanent Disability Table (Councillor for social policies, Disabled people services director, Chairman of the council social policies, Local health authority, Representative organisation of PWD, Service Providers) and the anti-barriers for Expo Task Force (City of Milan (different Departments and InHouse Ltd.), Lombardia Region, Local health authority, Representative organisation of PWD, Hospitals, University, Associations, Enterprises).

On the other hand, the city has set-up a group of experts in universal design representing the main local associations in the Disability field and including an architect of the Lombardy Paralympic Committee.

In addition, in 2019, together with Fondazione Cariplo and Ledha (the most important umbrella organisation active in Lombardia in the field of Disabled People's Rights), the City of Milan had promoted the creation of C.R.A.B.A. (**Regional Center for accessibility and environmental well-being**). C.R.A.B.A. provides information and technical advice to public administrations, private entities and citizens on accessibility and universal design matters.

A **working group on accessible tourism** has been also set up, in which the City as well as the local Chamber of Commerce and the representatives of the main Milanese players in the tourism sector take part.

Our biggest challenges in the field of accessibility

The International Olympic Committee has assigned the organisation of the 2026 edition of the Winter Olympics and Paralympics to Milan and Cortina. The **Olympic Games** will be an opportunity to improve the accessibility of the cities involved and local means of transport, as happened with Expo 2015. The **Paralympics, in particular, are an essential opportunity also to improve accessibility sports facilities** where not only the athletes who will participate in the games of Milan-Cortina 2026 can grow and train, but all people with disabilities who love sports.

The Paralympics are also an incredible opportunity for growth, not only economic but also social and cultural, to affirm, through sport, a culture of inclusion and solidarity and to pay attention to the rights of people with disabilities in our country. The total accessibility of public transport and a complete mapping of the accessibility of public spaces in Milan would be two excellent goals for us to achieve.



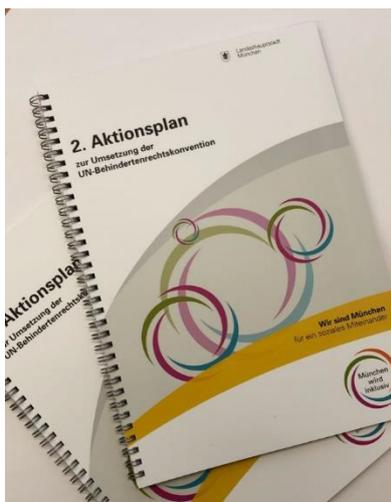
Munich

Political vision on accessibility

Accessibility has played an important role in Munich for a long time. Unfortunately, Munich was not able to be continuously represented in the working group. After some organisational clarifications, we are very pleased to now take part again on a regular basis and to benefit from the exchange of the various major cities.

Since the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) and its implementation into German law, a change in awareness can be recognised both in the city administration and in the entire urban society. The rights of persons with disabilities increasingly acquire importance, even though the implementation has not succeeded yet in all areas. A dedicated specialist unit, the **Coordination Office for the Implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities** (Koordinierungsbüro zur Umsetzung der UN-Behindertenrechtskonvention) provides support and advice, for instance regarding the barrier-free design of city offices. This coordination office complements the successful decades of representation of interests and guidance by the honorary Commissioner for Matters relating to Persons with Disabilities (ehrenamtlicher Behindertenbeauftragter) and the Advisory Council for Matters relating to Persons with Disabilities (Behindertenbeirat) of Munich.

In the future, the city council will be informed every two years about the status of the implementation of the UN CRPD.

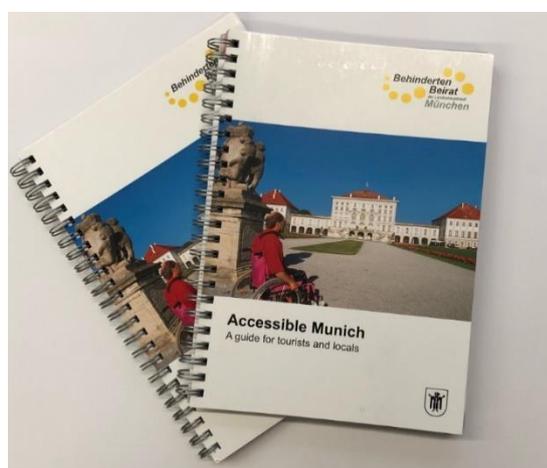


Due to the municipal election in 2020, the inclusion and participation of people with disabilities was strengthened once more. The current city council has particularly considered inclusion in many parts of their coalition agreement. Inclusion is the idea guiding action in each political sphere of activity. For this purpose, the dismantling of constructional barriers is needed as well as the tearing down of barriers in structures and attitudes. By way of example, cultural offers in municipal facilities should become barrier-free and fully accessible (without thresholds). Concepts should be developed on how people with mobility restrictions can also drive with a car in car-free zones or ideas for alternative offers should be developed.

Administrative structure regarding accessibility

A lot has changed in the last 10 years in Munich. Here are just a few examples:

- Multi-day event on the topic ‘**Promotion of accessible tourism**’ in 2012 with 36 experts from 22 different major cities
- [Munich Culture Guide in German Easy Language](#)
- Tourism brochure in [German](#) and [English](#)
- Standards for secured crossings regarding the road area
- Guideline for inclusive playground and open space design
- Guideline for the inclusion-oriented construction of school sports facilities
- Standards for the expansion of barrier-free bus stops as well as the resolution of the Munich City Council in 2011 to accordingly convert, step by step, 54 bus stops
- Reorganisation of the Municipal Consultative Group for Accessible Planning and Construction (Städtischer Beraterkreis für barrierefreies Planen und Bauen)
- Concept for the inclusive design of the new district of Freiham



Also, regarding the construction of new schools, accessibility has been an inherent part of the planning for several years. Within the framework of this planning, as well as of many other projects of Munich, the Municipal Consultative Group for Accessible Planning and Construction is included to consider the aspect of accessibility from the beginning. Moreover, the Munich City Council has already decided on two action plans for the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities with a total of 81 measures to improve the living conditions of persons with disabilities in Munich

(<https://www.muenchen-wird-inklusive.de>).

Our biggest success stories

In 2014, Munich city council decided on an analysis regarding the inclusive design of an emerging district in the West of Munich. In two construction phases, a district is emerging there in which approximately 25,000 people will live. The guiding principle for this district of ‘Freiham’ is to create spaces to live in which people are recognised in their diversity and have, in the long run, the opportunity for an independent, autonomous way of life. The concept deals with all areas of life, e.g. housing, mobility, local supply, recreation, and education. The Advisory Council for Matters relating to Persons with Disabilities and the Municipal Consultative Group for Accessible Planning and Construction could, in close coordination with planners and the city administration, make an impact on many subprojects. These include, for instance, a big landscape park, an education and sports campus, many pathway connections. A district management should be established as an inclusion guide (Inklusionslotse). Provision is also made for an inclusive hotel. The measures of the past years and in the future should establish ‘Freiham’ as an inclusive district.

Our biggest challenges in the field of accessibility.

A great challenge of the years to come will be to tackle the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic. Persons with disabilities are particularly affected. They often belong to the at-risk group. Moreover, regarding the use of digital solutions, it becomes very evident that there is a great need for action in terms of accessibility. Against the backdrop of the financial impact on the municipalities, it will be one of the greatest challenges to further promote inclusion and accessibility in all areas.



Prague

Political vision on accessibility

- It is strongly aided by a nationwide legal regulation, which declares accessibility to be a public interest and describes its scope (in force since 2010).
- The regulation mentioned above is compulsory for newly constructed or reconstructed structures only – existing non-accessible built environment is redesigned on a case by case basis.
- There is a **master plan on accessibility of public transport in Prague** (effective 2014-2025) – it deals primarily with the public transport system but covers a much wider range of topics related to accessibility (regulations, administration procedures etc.); its progress is ensured by Department of Transport of Prague city hall and controlled by a city board focused on accessibility and walkability.

Administrative structure regarding accessibility

Prague's public administration deals with an accessibility in two main fields – one related to transport (that is, whatever happens in physical public space with an emphasis on open space), the other focusing on social affairs (human rights, employment, housing, education etc.).

On the city level, 'transport' topics are addressed by Department of Transport of Prague city hall , Transport Development Unit (1 operative full-time, 1 operative part-time accessibility/part time walkability); there are no staff especially dedicated only to accessibility in the city district's administration bodies.

A state administration in 22 administration districts of Prague (operating as a part of 22 city district administration bodies) is responsible for fulfilling legal requirements regarding accessibility, wherever the Construction Act is concerned.

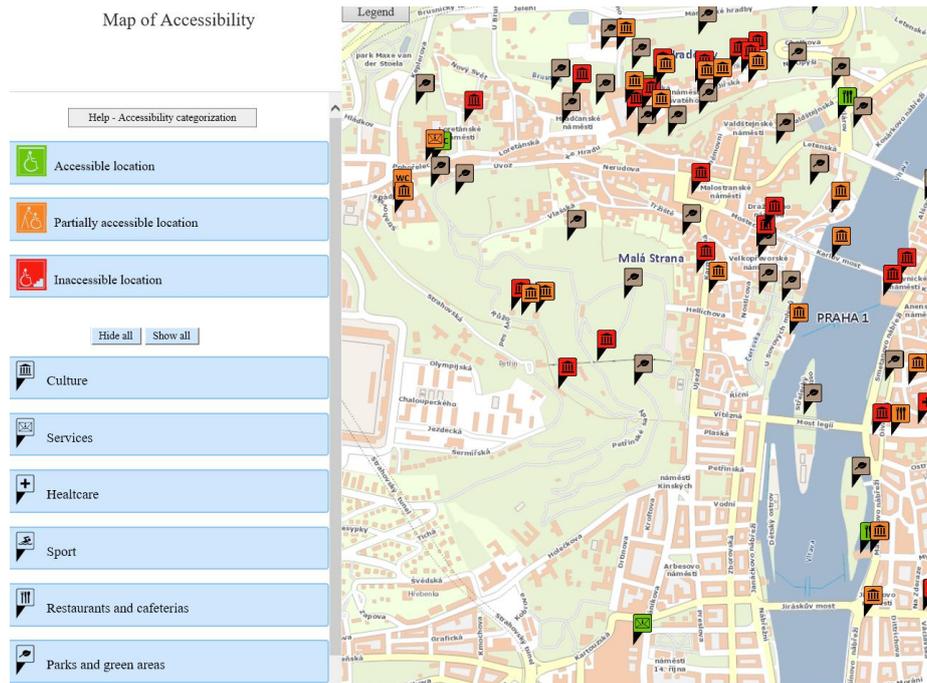
On the city level, 'social affairs' topics are addressed by several departments, the same as on a city district's level (there are 57 city districts in Prague).

Since 2014, the Walkability and Accessibility city board has been operating – 9 members (representatives of city administration, public transport agency, road-maintenance agency, city planning agency and other external experts) and more than 10 associates (mainly representatives of non-profit non-governmental organisations working in the field of accessibility) meet once a month to discuss matters in hand; its suggestions and recommendations are passed on to a deputy mayor for transport; the board agenda is administrated by Department of Transport.



Our biggest success stories

- A cooperation between public administration and NGO's involved works well
- Public Transport Accessibility Master Plan is carried out successfully in most respects
- The cause of accessibility was adopted by politicians across a political scene and apparently stays so
- Pro-accessibility measures are guaranteed a financial budget every year
- Measures to be done in the built environment are consulted with Department of Transport more often now
- City planning and technical designers learn to apply the principles of accessibility correctly
- Since 2015 there is an **on-line map with information on accessibility of public services in Prague** <http://www.pragueaccessibilitymap.eu/>



Our biggest challenges in the field of accessibility

- Public Transport Accessibility Master Plan fails in making accessible some of the underground stations due to huge technical difficulties
- Sometimes, legitimate accessibility requirements on the built city environment are turned down due to cultural heritage protection
- Among the public accessibility is still perceived as something ‘nice to have’ meant for a very small target group
- Quite often, requirements concerning accessibility for blind people are hard to meet due to modern trends in urbanism
- Accessibility requirements sometimes clash with relevant and rightful requirements of other users of public space
- In contrast to dealing with physical accessibility, accessibility in other areas of daily life is still developing (accessibility of IT, culture events, accessibility in communication etc.).



Toulouse

Political vision on accessibility

The city of Toulouse and the metropolis of Toulouse (37 municipalities) have a very inclusive policy of accessibility in all areas: culture, education, sport, transport, public spaces, buildings etc.

Becoming a ‘**Smart City**’, Toulouse is using information technology to enhance independent mobility. Real time information about the next bus, tram or metro is available in visual and audible forms at bus stops, and SMS messaging to provide information and screen readable internet pages with access to bus and tram timetables are all available, together with information on whether lifts are working etc.

Since 2014, within the framework of the **Smart City programme**, independent living has been a top priority with three strategic themes: societal, environmental and economic, leading to seven work streams.

At the heart of the housing area will be a ‘living lab’, offering welcome, help and information to vulnerable older people. The hope is to address the problem of ageing by finding ways to support individuals to continue to live independently with the help of innovative technology.

Administrative structure regarding accessibility

All departments work together. Accessibility referents are appointed within each authority and in the various departments in order to liaise on accessibility policies.

Actor	Toulouse Métropole	City of Toulouse	Tisséo Ingénierie	Tisséo Collectivités
Functions	Management of Roads & Public Space	Management of public buildings, public built environment, social and educative actions	Study, engineering & construction of new infrastructures	Transport Operator Management of public transport
Consultation and validation by elected representatives, associations (seniors, disabled persons etc.) and technicians	Working group (monthly meeting)		Commission Urban Network Accessibility	
	Inter-Municipal Commission on Accessibility of Roads & Public Spaces & Transport & Built Environment of the metropolis			

Our biggest success stories

- The **city's Access Plan for Streets and Public Spaces** defines problem areas and identifies what is needed to overcome barriers to access. The plan includes the pedestrian environment, public transport stops and parking spaces for people with disabilities
- The 2015 Accessibility Plan is based on an analysis of 1,250 km of roads and streets made in 2014. Changes identified range from major overhaul of inaccessible areas to minor refurbishment to remove remaining obstacles
- Since the end of 2014, access to the core public transport network has been complete and other services are becoming increasingly accessible
- All metro, tram and bus services have retractable ramps and audible and visual information. 80% of bus stops are already accessible and a budget is in place to complete the work
- A clear indication of the political commitment to accessible public transport is the creation of a controller level post responsible for ensuring that the needs of disabled travellers are met at times of disruption on any of the lines or services
- Training of transport staff has brought about a significant cultural shift in awareness and attitudes and regular engagement with representatives of people with disabilities is helping to ensure that all the links in the chain of city-wide accessibility are in place
- To reinforce this commitment, Toulouse has also significantly increased the number parking places in the city centre reserved for people with disabilities. While the law requires that one place in 50 is accessible, Toulouse has provided 3% of all parking places dedicated to people with disabilities free of charge and for an unlimited stay
- Daily work with all associations of people with disabilities in all areas
- Cross-functional work between all departments and policies
- The creation of a document to support accessibility policies: the accessibility charter for public spaces, the recommendation book for the accessibility of buildings, ephemeral events
- The Metro in pictures, Draw me a station
- Raising awareness amongst city officials through various meeting with disabled citizens stressing the importance of tackling the challenge of accessibility and services and public spaces for all.
- Ongoing renovation of the Musée des Augustins, with accessibility improvement works for a total cost of more than 3 million euros
- Elaboration of reference documents, setting guidelines in terms of accessibility and comfort for users (**buildings** - **roads and public space** - events – housing).
- The creation of a fully accessible transport network with unique wayfinding signage in Europe
- Pedestrianisation of the city centre and neighbourhood centres by improving accessibility and user comfort
- Another success is that of having been able to impose accessibility and user comfort as guiding principle in construction and renovation works. Accessibility is thus put at the centre of the reflections and decision making and becomes the entry point for any renovation.
- Within 10 years, Toulouse, which was considered a city with limited accessibility, has managed to be part of the top 3 barrier free cities in Europe.



Toulouse - Avenue Jean-Jaurés - Pedestrianisation of the city centre and neighbourhood centres by improving accessibility and user comfort

Our biggest challenges in the field of accessibility

Several major challenges have emerged in Toulouse:

- Better management, securitisation and signalisation of construction sites. Better coordination with technicians and construction work companies.
- Behavioural changes of construction workers, garbage collectors and citizens regarding parking on sidewalks, placement of waste bins.
- Development of a mobile application for disabled citizens to plan their commute and visualise their route in advance and according to their disability.
- Greater accessibility to work/employment opportunities for disabled citizens.
- Update and improvement of the reference document setting guidelines for housing constructions and renovations.
- Improve communication towards blind persons (public spaces; online).



Uppsala

Political vision on accessibility

Everyone shall have the possibility to lead an active life.

People with disabilities shall experience security, liberty, and accessibility. Uppsala shall also be a city for the elderly.

Everyone shall have the right to decide over their own lives and day to day routines.

Uppsala is also part of the [WHO Age friendly cities network](#) and has as a result created a new steering document with guidelines on how the council should work and what areas need to be improved to comply with the WHO Policy Framework on Active Ageing in 2002.

WHO defines Active ageing policy as ‘optimising opportunities for health, participation and security to enhance quality of life as people age.’ The active ageing approach is grounded in the UN-recognised principles of independence, participation, dignity, care and self-fulfilment. It acknowledges the importance of gender, earlier life experiences, and culture on how individuals age. It considers the biological, psychological, behavioural, economic, social, and environmental factors that operate over the course of a person’s life to determine health and well-being in later years.

Uppsala has several different steering documents to assure accessibility, including Äldrevänlig kommun (Age friendly city) and Program för full delaktighet för personer med funktionsnedsättning (loosely translated as full participation programme for people with disabilities).

Furthermore, the aim of the city is that social support, healthcare, and social care shall be of good quality and tailored to the needs and conditions of individuals.

Modern aids and digital technology shall be used to raise the levels of independence and thereby the experience of safety, liberty, and accessibility for residents with disabilities and their relatives.

The resources of the individual will be taken into account. Early and preventive measures are prioritised to prevent socioeconomic gaps. Groups with greater needs shall be taken into extra consideration and the protection for vulnerable children shall be strengthened.

The geriatric care will be safe for the city’s elderly and their relatives. There shall be the freedom of choice when it comes to care providers while at the same time safeguarding the quality of care. Quality of care shall be in focus, both in the care provided by the city and other providers. By making public housing more accessible, there will be a reduced need for specialised housing.

Administrative structure regarding accessibility

As part of the administrative structure, Uppsala has a User Ombudsman who works with all the city's operations and companies, and has an independent role in the organisation. The ombudsman works closely with the user and interest organisations and follows up on the city's strategic work in the area of disability. There is no demarcation for specific target groups, all disabilities are included in the assignment and all levels of the organisation are up to date.

The assignment can be divided into three main areas:

- Strengthen empowerment and influence for people with disabilities.
- Creating knowledge in the city about the life situation of those of our citizens who have a disability.
- Work strategically towards politics and the outside world.

The User Ombudsman will report annually to the city council.

The city also has an Elderly Ombudsman who works to ensure that people over 65 years of age living in Uppsala have good living conditions and guards their interests and rights. The Elderly Ombudsman is located at the elderly administration, which supports the Elderly Committee by providing the basis for decisions. The goal of elder care is to ensure that the services of the elderly are of a high quality and that the elderly receive the care they need. The responsibility covers areas such as preventative and open interventions, interventions in ordinary living such as home care, home health care, short-term care and care homes.

The residents of Uppsala can apply for many kinds of aid. Through the respective departments, a person can apply for home care, special housing, paratransit, mobility aids or personal assistance. The process of application can differ, but the focus is always on the need of the individual.

The city, in consultation with the visually impaired national association, has developed type drawings regarding traffic lanes in specific traffic environments to facilitate project managers in changing and new construction of public space. When it comes to accessibility in public housing, there are staff who have delved into this in the review process of the building process.

Our biggest success stories

Alongside the work that the council does with new policy documents like those mentioned previously, the council also has several good examples of accessibility projects. In connection with the renovation of the Carolina Rediviva (the University Library) an integrated ramp was built for the entrance, which blends into the facade.



Other examples include playgrounds adapted for children with functional variation, such as the wooden canoe that can be reached by wheelchair (Vasaparken) and a hilly nature park that made wheelchair accessible in an innovative way (Lina Sandell's Park).



Furthermore, Uppsala has recently been accepted as part of a Vinnova project (Vinnova is Sweden's innovation agency). The city hopes that the outcome of this project will result in a better understanding of the current physical accessibility of Uppsala as well as inspire new working methods and policies and to be part of the continuing success story. The project is called Equal living environment: Urban building for reduced segregation and increased availability. The project is carried out in collaboration between the Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm, Architecture, Uppsala, Functional Law Uppsala County and HSO Uppsala. It works in three thematic tracks: model & method, practice & everyday life, and process & communication, all of which run throughout the project.



The project focuses on the early stages of urban planning and creating the conditions to better integrate accessibility challenges in connection with community service. In this broad field, the project is focused on social sustainability with a focus on social and spatial segregation in relation to disability, where universal design will be the focus of accessibility challenges at system level for community service. Equality and equal accessibility have a major impact on the quality of everyday life, but can also be linked to issues of human rights.

The project develops spatial analyses of how system effects arise from what is often treated as local accessibility challenges. Through increased knowledge of how urban construction affects opportunities to gain access to various functions, planning can be carried out more evenly and inclusively. The methods are open to include a wide range of aspects that affect accessibility, even if the project's specific focus is functional impairment. The project's results – method, theory and process – constitute services within the framework of the concept of social system services.

The purpose of the tracks is to enable the project to address important issues in depth as well as to integrate these with each other in order to develop methods with scientific and theoretical robustness that can be used in practice, as well as the fact that they are developed in active dialogue between different stakeholders. Every year Uppsala measures the satisfaction of the people receiving aid. Uppsala usually shows a high number of satisfied residents, especially when it comes to areas such as paratransit and geriatric care.

Our biggest challenges in the field of accessibility

One of the biggest challenges is to find financing for the projects needed and to find solutions that works for if not everyone then at least as many people as possible, while at the same time leaving room for the solutions needed to cater for those with special needs. To find the physical space required is sometimes also a challenge, for example when the council needs to make a guidance route. The guidance route itself can be a hindrance to someone else (for example in a wheelchair) and the installation also requires additional space on both sides for smooth surfaces. Everyone wants to make as much money as possible on land and house construction, which means that the areas for public spaces are in short supply.

Another challenge is finding compromises that makes everyone happy. Some requests regarding accessibility can be difficult to fulfil, for example in the Swedish winter months when snow clearing might not always happen at the desired time or the council has prioritised streets differently than the users.



Warsaw

Political vision on accessibility

The principles of universal design based on the OZN Convention on Rights have been implemented within the new Warsaw Strategy 2030, which will have a long-term impact on the spatial and social development of the city.



In 2018, the Mayor of Warsaw announced the ambition 'to create a more friendly and accessible city for all', and the [Access City Award 2020](#) received in November 2019 has enhanced even stronger demonstration that the work within accessibility is important and it needs to be continued.

Warsaw established a Plan of Action in favour of Persons with Disabilities 2010-2020 in the framework of the implementation of the plan, and actions to increase accessibility have been implemented consistently since 2010.

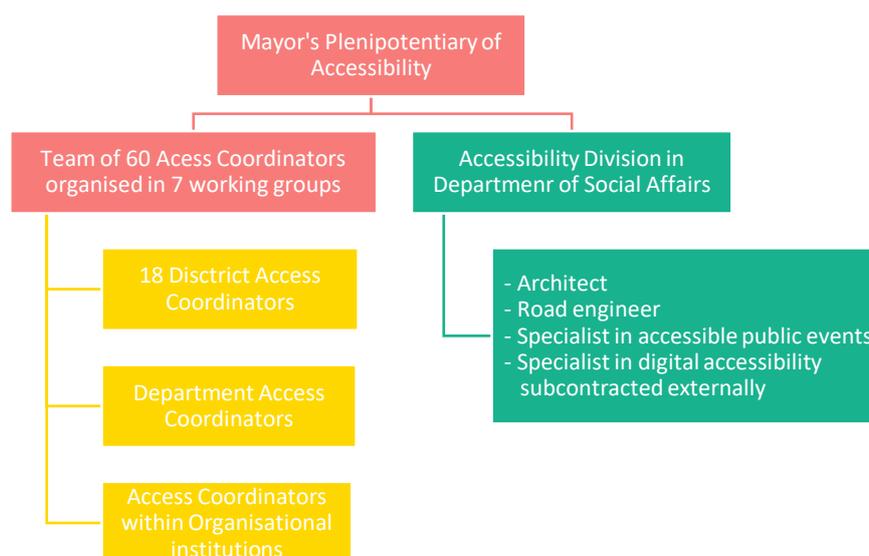
Administrative structure regarding accessibility

In recent years, Warsaw has undergone major changes that would not have been possible without the keen involvement of its residents, the acquisition of substantial European Union resources, and work performed by the city's officials.

In 2016, the **Mayor's Plenipotentiary for Accessibility** was appointed to supervise and implement all accessibility actions performed on the general level, to define accessibility standards and monitor the implementation of standards within the city. The Mayor's Plenipotentiary for Accessibility supervises the Access Team and Access Division.

For the **Access Team**, at least one coordinator for each administrative district, department and organisational institution was appointed to supervise accessibility on the local level; currently, there are **60 Access Coordinators**. The structure of the Access Team is currently being further developed.

The Access Division was formed in 2017 to support the Plenipotentiary for Accessibility in their responsibilities and to provide expertise. The Access Division consists of a road engineer, an architect, and a public event specialist. The expertise in digital accessibility is under development, although the administrative structure and responsibilities have been established.



The Access Team Coordinators developed tools to enhance the compliance with Accessibility Standards, to implement it within procurement procedures and to carry out access audits.

There are 4 areas of expertise that have been set up: inbuilt environment & public spaces, internet websites & mobile applications, documents, and public events. In 2017, the Accessibility Standards were defined, and they have become a greater impulse to implement accessibility more thoroughly.

The administrative structure regarding accessibility is being further expanded in relation to the new regulations. In July 2019, central government issued an act regarding ensuring accessibility for persons with special needs as a direct response to the Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities.

Our biggest success stories

Receiving the **2020 Access City Award** is viewed as the biggest success, crowning the long-term efforts to increase the social, administrative, and spatial level of accessibility. The involvement of people with disabilities and their accessibility needs in its endeavour to make the city more accessible, Warsaw was able to make a substantial overall improvement to the city's ease of access in a short space of time. The process that ensured the award is far from being completed and despite the constant challenges, it is expected that further measures are implemented swiftly.

Based on a survey 'Scale and structure of the phenomenon of disability in Warsaw' from 2018, it has been estimated that Persons with Disability live in every fifth household (21.9%); 12% of the population (about 210,000 people) living in Warsaw have disabilities. Among all household representatives, almost every second person (47%) considers Warsaw to be a friendly city for Persons with Disability.



(Photo: The new Vistula boulevards)

Provision of accessible public spaces - to eliminate architectural barriers, to construct without barriers.

Since 2017, all-new road, public spaces, building investments/renovations must comply with '**Accessibility Standards for Warsaw**'. In 2018, total expenditure on new investments on roads and pavements spent by road manager Public Roads Authority was 175 million PLN. Since 2013, thanks to the **Warsaw Program Eliminating Barriers** worth 8.6 million, the barriers have been removed in individual locations. Since the 2017 consultancy of projects, access audits have been provided.

Provision of accessible public transport - to exchange rolling stock, to construct new and repair existing bus/tram/metro stops according to Accessibility Standards.

A survey carried in 2019 revealed that among 4213 bus/tram stops, 87% are accessible, 8% partially accessible, 5% inaccessible. All 34 metro stations are accessible, further 6 will be completed by 2023.

The rolling stock: 100% of buses, metro trains, and fast city trains (SKM) and 59% of trams are accessible. The purchase of the next 273 trams has been launched, bringing the number to over 70%.

One easy contact with City administrative - The Warsaw 19115 City Contact Centre.

'The Warsaw 19115 City Contact Centre'⁵ is available 24/7 providing information to citizens in various channels: via telephone, text messages, email and online sign language translator. The project also includes an internet Web self-service portal and a mobile app. The service provides a channel to submit a letter, report a fault or a problem with accessibility.

From 2017 to 2019 the number of Persons with Disabilities employed by Warsaw increased from 187 to 268. Among Access Team of Coordinators and Accessibility Division members have various disabilities: hearing, vision impairments, speaking difficulties, motor limitations (wheelchair users).

Our biggest challenges in the field of accessibility

For almost 10 years, Warsaw has been working to increase the city's accessibility level. The effects are noticeable, but further measures to increase awareness among contractors and designers need to be continued.

The obligation to provide accessibility for all has been introduced into the mainstream of the city's activities. In July 2019, central government issued an act regarding ensuring accessibility for persons with special needs, imposing an obligation to ensure accessibility. The implementation of this act is the most current and important challenge. The local governments' implementation of this act requires expansion of the administrative structure and an increase in the workforce concerning improving the accessibility in three main spheres: architectural accessibility – all of the government buildings have to comply with minimum accessibility requirements (stated in the act) until September 2021, digital accessibility – providing accessibility on the WCAG 2.1 is compulsory until September 2021, and information-communication accessibility.

⁵ Warsaw 19115 is a modern system of communication with residents, the first project on such a large scale in Poland. The project consists of a centralised contact centre of the City Hall and various communal services. Its aim is streamlining and simplifying the communication between residents and the government of Warsaw. A dedicated team of 70 consultants is available to residents every day. They receive calls and distribute them to appropriate services. Warsaw 19115 service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Warsaw 19115 offers several different channels: the 19115 call centre, www.warszawa19115.pl portal, mobile app, e-mail, fax, chat.



Vienna

Political vision on accessibility

Vienna aims to follow the policy of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, to enable persons with disabilities to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of life. According to the Convention, measures are taken continuously to ensure that persons with disabilities have equal access to the physical environment, to transportation, to information and communications, including information and communications technologies and systems, and to other facilities and services open or provided to the public.

To protect the rights of people with disabilities on federal state level, laws such as the Vienna Equal Opportunities Act and the Vienna Anti-Discrimination Act, were passed.

Accessibility in the built environment is regulated by accessibility standards in the building code of Vienna. Since 1988, there has been a consistent focus on kerb ramps or flush kerbs of sidewalks. Since 1991 the accessibility of residential and public buildings has been specified in building regulations. In the urban development plan from 1994 the barrier-free city was formulated as a goal.

Today Vienna follows the **Smart City Wien Strategy**. In Vienna's interpretation, a Smart City is one that never loses sight of the 'human scale'; a city that places the focus on the needs of local people in their diverse communities and lifestyles while opening up equal personal development opportunities for all. It is this socially sensitive and target group-oriented approach that makes the Smart City Wien Strategy special.

For example, the political vision in mobility and transport is that everyone in Smart City Wien has access to flexible, safe, barrier-free mobility options, regardless of their income, gender, ethnicity, age and physical abilities. The transfer between the different modes of transport is seamless, barrier free, and hence much more convenient – not least for the elderly and other people with limited mobility.

The political vision in healthcare is that active & assisted living (AAL), digital technologies and mobile services allow elderly people to continue living an independent life in their own home for as long as they wish to. This is further supported by barrier-free, age-appropriate design of housing and the living environment and opportunities for social interaction and physical exercise in the local neighbourhood.

Moreover, the Urban Development Plan of Vienna also stresses the inclusion of people with disabilities: *'The dynamically evolving urban society as a whole is to come into focus with a strong emphasis on inclusiveness and diversity irrespective of origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religious beliefs, worldviews, health, ability or disability, age or economic status. An anti-discriminatory and potential-oriented attitude towards urban development is hence of the utmost importance and*

ensures that upward mobility and personal realisation become an option for all inhabitants of Vienna.'
(STEP 2025)

Administrative structure regarding accessibility

Accessibility is a diverse subject and includes many areas of daily life. Vienna aims to consider and implement accessibility in many ways and several bodies on different levels deal with the implementation of accessibility in the city.

For example, the Monitoring Body monitors the compliance with the human rights of people with disabilities within the Vienna State Administration. The basis for its work is the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The **Anti-Discrimination Office** also stands up for the rights of people with disabilities. According to the Vienna Anti-Discrimination Act, the Anti-Discrimination Office is responsible for all persons who feel discriminated against in a matter regulated by the federal state of Vienna or the city of Vienna. In addition, in 1986, following the Vienna Equal Opportunities Act, a body was established that represents the interests of people with disabilities. This body advises the Vienna State Government on matters that affect people with disabilities.

The **Executive Group for Construction and Technology of Vienna** takes measures at a cross-city and strategic level regarding accessibility in the built environment. The **Competence centre for Barrier-Free Planning, Building and Living in Vienna** deals with accessibility at an operational level. The officers are official experts in accessibility for Vienna and advise residents and architects. Furthermore, many other municipal departments implement accessibility in their area of responsibility. Close cooperation within the city, such as with the building inspection, as well as with external stakeholders such as organisations of people with disabilities is essential for the successful implementation of accessibility.

Our biggest success stories

A success story of Vienna is the **concept of adaptive housing**. In Vienna, adaptive housing is a legal requirement of the building regulations. Every new-build residential building is planned in compliance with these requirements. The aim is to allow the use of dwellings for all people throughout their lifecycle and in response to the changing needs of the residents. Especially in an ageing society it is important to make it possible to 'age in place' and not to force residents to move due to adverse circumstances. Specifically, that means that the public spaces of the residential buildings are planned in compliance with the general requirements of accessibility. The dwelling, especially the bathroom and toilet, follows the concept of easy adaptations when needed. A typical adaptation would be to remove a dividing wall between toilet and bathroom, or to remove a wall between toilet and a storage room. The aim is to allow adaptations that can be done easily and quickly without high costs.

Moreover, Vienna offers subsidies for people with disabilities and elderly people to make their home accessible. A typical example is the replacement of a bathtub with a threshold-free shower.



Another success story is the public space in the **new built district Seestadt Aspern**. The aim of the mobility concept is that 40 per cent of trips at Seestadt will be made by public transport, 40 per cent by bike or on foot, and only 20 per cent by car, moped or motorbike. Seestadt is also a city of short distances. The local shopping concept is designed to allow shopping on foot or by bike. Moreover, Vienna attaches a great importance to the design of the public spaces: **Seestadt is full of attractive pedestrian zones with plenty of space for strolling and wide cycle paths**. All this is possible because most of the parking is off-street, in communal underground garages – which leaves lots of room above ground for pedestrians like for example persons using a wheeled mobility device or parents with strollers. The footpaths are not only designed wide and free of obstructions and steps, the surface is also even and firm, so that shoes or wheels do not sink in.

Our biggest challenges in the field of accessibility.

The many historical buildings are, among other things, what makes Vienna unique and charming. At the same time, this existing structure is a great challenge when it comes to adapting these buildings to the state of the art. The barrier-free adaptation of historical buildings is often accompanied by complex measures and high costs.