



Access•City

Award 2016

Examples of best practice for making
EU cities more accessible



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Foreword



I am delighted to lend my voice of support to the Access City Award - the European Prize for making cities more accessible to people with disabilities and older citizens.

This 6th edition of the Award once again showcases the excellent efforts of cities across the continent to become better places to live for ALL people. With more than 250 participants since 2010, this Award continues to recognise those cities that are leading lights in dismantling barriers across Europe today. Accessibility is a priority area for the European Commission and the award scheme helps to bring to the fore examples of innovative thinking and best practice which can inspire other cities, perhaps facing similar challenges.

Milan is this year's winner for its consistent accessibility efforts. Milan has also committed to projects to promote the employment of people with disabilities and to support independent living. Kaposvár in Hungary, Toulouse in France, Vaasa in Finland and finally, to Wiesbaden

in Germany were also awarded for their work to improve accessibility in everyday life for all their residents – regardless of age or disability.

The European Union is fully committed to protecting and promoting the rights of all citizens – not least of people with disabilities. Accessibility policy is at the heart of this. In December 2015, the European Commission proposed the European Accessibility Act, an essential piece of legislation, with the potential to improve the inclusion of persons with disabilities in society by ensuring their access to important goods and services across the EU.

At the award ceremony in Brussels on the occasion of the European Day of Persons with Disabilities I gave my warmest personal congratulations to each of the cities and I hope that readers of this brochure will be inspired to encourage their cities to participate at the next edition and make their best to improve accessibility.

Marianne Thyssen

Commissioner for Employment & Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility

Access•City Award 2016

Introduction

The Access City Award scheme was launched in 2010 to promote accessibility in the urban environment for Europe's growing population of older people and people with disabilities.

Every year since then the Award has seen entries from cities all over Europe, each with a passion and commitment to improve accessibility for its citizens and visitors.

This year's award brought forward another exceptional set of initiatives from cities across Europe and a high level of commitment at both political and operational levels to improving the lives of older and disabled citizens.

This year two new categories of "Special Mention" have been added: the first under the "Smart City" banner recognises the growing use of technology to enhance the lives of older and disabled people. The second "Access to Work," rewards efforts undertaken by cities to ensure that public employment services, as well as initiatives by the private sector, facilitate the access to work and they make information on jobs accessible to people with disabilities. The European Jury, in this edition, decided to give one more special mention to an EU city for its efforts and continuous commitment towards improving accessibility.



Milan, Italy

Winner

The 2016 Access City Award winner is Milan, the main city in northern Italy and the country's economic and financial capital with a population just under 1.5 million.

It is an historic city, founded in the 4th century and with much of its central area still featuring narrow streets paved with cobbles. Milan is also Italy's most important railway hub.

A culture of accessibility

In 2011, Milan adopted the principles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and made a commitment to develop a new culture of accessibility and a strategic integrated approach to delivering the concept of a "city for all".

From that time, specific access provisions on the removal of barriers have been included as a priority in the rolling three year programme of public works with budget provisions to meet them.

In 2014, the guidelines for the adoption of a plan for eliminating barriers were adopted to give the city a strategic tool for planning, scheduling and monitoring accessibility initiatives in public spaces and buildings, social integration, safety and quality of life.



Museo del novocento in the
Piazza del Duomo



Wheelchair access to the Central Station

The main goals of the plan include mapping all the areas in which interventions are needed, defining what needs to be done, by whom and what it will cost. There is also IT support to monitor and evaluate each measure and to get immediate feedback on how effective it has been.

In recent years, the commitment to accessibility has been given added impetus by planning for the Expo 2015 which brought an estimated 200 000 disabled people to the city.

Mainstreaming disability

A working group has been created with representatives of all the city's departments, co-ordinated by the Technical Department. It works to a programme designed in collaboration with the associations of people with disabilities who support the City Council in defining all the actions needed to mainstream disability in every area of the city's work.



UN Special Envoy for Disability & Accessibility Lenin Voltaire Moreno Garcés, visits Expo 2015.

Architectural barrier mapping

In recent years, there have been many initiatives to improve access and work continues to identify all architectural and sensory barriers so that they can be eliminated in accordance with the highest standards and on the basis of universal design principles. The scope of these requirements includes all buildings open to the public as well as commercial, cultural, sporting, recreational and entertainment venues. There is even a project to eliminate architectural barriers from cemeteries.



It all went so well. Everyone was very helpful. It was so easy to get information. My daughter found everything we needed to know on the internet and we decided to visit.

Disabled American tourist visiting Expo 2015



An accessible transport network

The city's Transport and Mobility Agencies started in 2011 to map the public transport network and to agree priorities and accessibility standards with organisations of disabled people. Azienda Trasporti Milanesi (ATM) which manages public transport in the region, uses a "Full Handicap Compliance" (FHC) indicator to measure the accessibility of lines and routes. Currently the more modern subway lines are fully accessible and work is in hand to improve those built in the 1960s.

Data on the accessibility of all public transport infrastructure (stations, stops etc.) is available on the ATM website. There is also a dedicated phone line offering advice and assistance.

"Accessible Milan"

The city's website is fully compliant with international accessibility guidelines. The "Accessible Milan" section of the website describes specific mobility services and 10 accessible tourist routes. For each route there are details on pedestrian paths, public transport, monuments and other points of interest.



A visitor with a learning disability enjoys a city gallery

Promoting independent living

Since 2011 the “ProgettaMi” service, provided by associations of disabled people and funded by the city, has been promoting independent living for people with disabilities. In 2014 this was further enhanced by the service “No Barriere alla Comunicazione” which provides deaf people with a wide range of support services including sign language interpretation. In addition there is a scheme to promote training and internships to help disabled people get into the workplace.

“Nothing about us without us”

The city is committed to full engagement with disabled people in deciding on plans and priorities. Since 2011, the Welfare Strategic Plan has been developed on the basis of an ongoing dialogue with disability stakeholders.

In 2014 a permanent forum on disability was established to support the city on all policies that affect disabled people. The forum has thematic working groups which start with a needs analysis of the issues affecting a particular group — for example people with autism or hearing impairment.

Wiesbaden, Germany

**Second
prize**

Second place in the 2016 Access City Awards goes to the city of Wiesbaden, capital of the German Federal State of Hessen with a population of 280 000.

Wiesbaden developed in the 19th century into a world renowned spa town and retains many historic buildings. It is now a prominent conference centre and one of the most popular residential locations in the Rhine-Main region.

Unrestricted access

A key objective for the city is to ensure that everybody has unrestricted access to the city centre and to its open spaces, parks and playgrounds.

There is also a commitment that all events held in public places must be accessible to people with disabilities and that both newly built and renovated municipal buildings with public access are fully accessible.

Introducing an action plan

Working in cooperation with Wiesbaden's disability organisations, an action plan was introduced in 2013 based on the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities.

The plan includes projects, funded by the city, to promote public awareness and to support people with disabilities across a wide area of need, from providing mobile ramps to offering audio versions of tax assessments.



Wheelchair dancing



A tactile map of the city



“We’re joining in”

Detailed information on accessibility in 226 public buildings is available on the website www.wiesbaden-barrierefrei.de and buildings certified as accessible can be identified by a sticker at the entrance with the slogan “Wir Machen mit” (“We’re joining in”). The sticker (pictured) also features a QR code which provides additional access information.

An annual grant of €500 000 is provided for accessibility improvement work in municipal buildings.

Private investors in new buildings are offered advice on accessible design through the Social Works Office and the Planning Department.

Accessible street space

Features such as tactile guide strips and dropped kerbs are being progressively introduced and all new light controlled crossing points have audible signals.

Accessible public lavatories are also a priority with 14 now available in the city.

Since 2010 the city has also focussed on installing equipment in playgrounds that meets the needs of disabled children.

Getting around

All the city’s 230 buses are accessible. Features include low floors, tactile and colour contrasted grab handles and audible and visual next stop announcements. Work is also in progress to ensure that the city’s bus stops are accessible. To date, some 150, mainly in the city centre, have been upgraded with high contrast LED signs and speech to text facilities. The location of parking spaces for disabled motorists are agreed with

wheelchair users and the Accessible Wiesbaden app (Wiesbaden-barrierefrei) offers GPS navigation to accessible parking spaces.

Recognising the demographic trends in the city, Wiesbaden has also created a network of advice centres on independent living in old age.

Communication

Wiesbaden believes that good communication is at the heart of increasing disabled people's participation in city life.

As well as the website and app, the city produces a folding city map called "Where is Wiesbaden accessible?"

Leaflets are also available to tell disabled people about accessibility at major events and about sports opportunities.



As members of the Working Group of the Wiesbaden Organisations for the Disabled and Interest Groups for the Disabled (Arbeitskreis der Wiesbadener Behindertenorganisationen und Interessengemeinschaften Behinderter - AK), we are absolutely delighted about the prize that the state capital of Wiesbaden has won in Brussels.

In accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities 2013 slogan "Nothing about us without us", we, as persons with disability in Wiesbaden, are particularly pleased to see the participation / development of ideas and demonstrated willingness to make a barrier-free city. The objective – getting there, getting inside, getting along – is always our focus.



Christel Egenolf (wheelchair user)
Barbara Knobloch (long cane user)
Roland Kaiser (guide dog user)



Disability training for staff in City Hall

Working together

Once a year there is a meeting of the interdepartmental working group Accessible Wiesbaden.

The purpose of the group is to exchange information, develop standards and agree on training activities.

Since 2011 every decision made by the City Parliament has had to take account of issues of accessibility and demographic change. All parliamentary documents are submitted to the Disability Work Co-ordination Unit, the chair of the working group for disability organisations and associations representing the interests of disabled people.

Disabled people are also involved in planning public space and are represented on political committees. At an annual meeting with the Committee for Social Affairs and Health, accessibility activities are agreed and their implementation is monitored.

Starting in 2016 there will be a programme of visits to city districts accompanied by disabled people to highlight problems and identify priorities for action.

Toulouse, France

Special mention as a “Smart City”

Third
Prize

The city of Toulouse, in the heart of south-west France is the country's fourth largest metropolitan area with a population of some 720 000.

With a history going back more than 2000 years, Toulouse has its roots in Roman times but today is at the forefront of technology as the European aerospace centre.

Toulouse has been awarded both third prize in the Access City Award 2016 and a Special Mention as a “Smart City”.

Accessibility at the heart of planning

Underpinning all the work to improve accessibility is a strong political commitment to exceed minimum requirements (set out in the French Law of 2005) and to demonstrate best practice.

The city's achievements and commitment have been recognised at national level for its good practice in delivering accessibility.

“A better life at home”

Under the banner of “A better life at home” (“Vivre mieux chez soi”), the city has focussed on the lives of those residents who are struggling to cope with staying in their own homes because of age or disability.

Funding is made available both to improve access outside the property (ramps, level access etc.) and inside (toilet access, grab rails etc.).

One example is a group of 27 new accessible properties available for disabled and older people.



Accessible information point
at the town hall

The accessible metro system

Analysing access needs

The city's Access Plan for Streets and Public Spaces defines problem areas and identifies what is necessary to overcome barriers to access. The plan includes the pedestrian environment, public transport stops and parking spaces for disabled people.

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.



Toulouse is a big city where it is possible to move about in complete safety, whether to get to work, go to a sporting or cultural event or just to go about one's daily life. There are complementary public transport and on demand services, audible bus information, a safe metro system, audible signals at traffic lights and tactile warning strips in strategic locations. All these come together to make Toulouse a city that is accessible for everyone.

Jean Michel Ramos-Martins
(pictured)



A fully accessible transport network

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 of city centre parking places reserved for disabled people. While the law requires that one place in 50 is accessible, Toulouse has provided 3% of all parking places dedicated to disabled people free of charge and for an unlimited stay.



“

The ASMTH disabled sports association that I represent, has long faced problems – including accessibility - at sporting events in many cities: That experience allows me say today that Toulouse has done great work. There is more work to be done to meet other needs and to develop innovative solutions for certain types of disability, but I have confidence in the people involved to continue after consultation with associations representing people with disabilities, to deliver a socially inclusive society that meets everyone's needs.

Yves Tassot (pictured)

”



Working with disabled people

Since 2008, a commission on accessibility for disabled people has been in operation. Its membership comprises five elected representatives and 15 organisations of disabled people.

Its role is to identify priorities for improved accessibility and to monitor progress in delivering them. Their annual report provides an assessment of both achievements and gaps.

In addition, the public transport operator Tisséo has set up a Commission on Accessibility of the Urban Transport Network. This comprises 50 associations of people with disabilities and meets twice a year to discuss a range of topics focussed on problems faced by disabled travellers, such as helping blind people to locate tram doors and agreeing what is the best material for step nosings at the top of stairs in the metro.



Using public transport in a wheelchair, visiting museums, strolling along the banks of the Garonne, Rudy Choron and his brother Julien from the website “Handilol” dedicated to promoting accessible travel, have very much enjoyed their stay in Toulouse and the warm welcome from the tourist office.

They hope to be back soon!



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.

Sign language interpretation of information, including videos, is available on the website. There is also information about repairs that affect audible signals or accessible parking places so that disabled people can plan their journeys accordingly.

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.

Examples include the development of adaptable housing that can evolve to meet individual needs. At the heart of the housing area will be a “living lab” offering welcome, help and information to vulnerable older people. This project will be complete in 2017 at a cost of some 8 million euros. The project is being developed in collaboration with the Technical University of Blagnac. 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.



Vaasa, Finland

Special Mention:

Commitment to improving the working environment

The city of Vaasa, a seaside town on the west coast of Finland, has received a special mention for its commitment to improving the working environment for older and disabled people.

Vaasa is a multicultural student town. About one fifth of its 67 000 residents are aged over 65. The city is also home to nearly 2000 residents who use disability services and for whom accessibility is an absolute necessity.

Commitment to equality

Vaasa City Council is committed to creating an environment in which older and disabled people can live on equal terms with other citizens.

Vaasa's Disability Council has representatives from organisations of disabled people and from the city's various committees.

Accessibility is systematically included in all the city's activities. Three year rolling Accessibility Plans are developed and implemented. All branches of the city's administration are obliged to make budget provision for the agreed actions in the plan.

Stricter standards are applied in the city centre and around health facilities and residences for older and disabled people.

Independent mobility

Public transport in Vaasa is all fully accessible and there is close co-operation between public transport organisations and the Council for Disabled and Older People to provide feedback on customer satisfaction.

There is also a door to door service for disabled and older people based on individual needs. Staff training in accessibility is an integral part of all training provision.



We are investing in getting customers involved in the development of our city and in the planning of its facilities and services.



Tiina Mäki, Ombudsman for issues concerning disabled people & accessibility



The city centre market in Vaasa

Clear and inclusive administration

City Council budget meetings and City Board decisions are signed and read aloud to help people with vision and hearing impairments to participate in city life. The city is running a pilot for the Clear Administrative Language campaign and the website has recently been renewed to make it easier to follow and to understand.

The main library has computers and internet access for visitors with guidance freely available for those who need it. Courses can also be arranged for groups with particular needs.

The city has appointed an ombudsman responsible for disability and accessibility who works closely with associations of disabled and older people. The City Board has also requested all branches of the administration to name a person responsible for accessibility issues.

Every year there is an award nominated by the Disability Council for an opinion former who supports accessibility.

Employment for all

The city currently employs 16 people with either intellectual or physical disabilities and an access survey of offices is currently underway to help place employees in suitable offices. There is also a plan to give summer jobs to disabled young people in 2016. Vaasa participated in European Job Shadow Day in 2015 which helped to raise awareness and influence workplace attitudes about disabled people.

Among recent initiatives to open up employment opportunities for disabled people has been a scheme to improve accessibility to post office and passport points.

“

The pictures on the locker doors at the Swimming Centre (shown) help my daughter to remember which one has her clothes in it.

Maria Backman, mother of an intellectually disabled girl

”



Raising awareness

The city works hard to raise awareness of accessibility issues and to influence people's perceptions of disability. All staff in the city are given accessibility training and the city provides advice and guidance on access improvements to owners of buildings around the city including cafés and restaurants.

An “Accessible Place of Business” sticker (shown in picture) encourages service providers to win the annual competition for accessible services.

“

My dream job is working in a factory. My Job Shadow Day was a lot of fun and I learned a lot of new things at Wärtsilä.

Marcus Tolkki (who has a learning disability)

”

Kaposvár, Hungary

Special Mention: Commitment to improving access

The city of Kaposvár in the south-west of Hungary is awarded a Special Mention for its commitment to improving access for older and disabled people.

The city, which has a population of 65 000 has been inhabited since 5000 BC and its development started in the 11th century. The city is divided by the river Kapos.



A view of the accessible city centre area

A tradition of acceptance and integration

Social acceptance and integration of disabled people is a long-standing tradition in Kaposvár dating back to 1897. The goal of integration is written into the Articles of Association of the city's educational institutions.

"We believe in each other"

This is the title given to the urban policy programme for the city for the years 2014 – 2019 and signals a clear commitment to making access improvements that will benefit the whole community.

In 2013, the city's General Assembly approved the Equal Opportunity Action Plan which analyses the current problems facing disabled and other disadvantaged groups and addresses their needs.

“

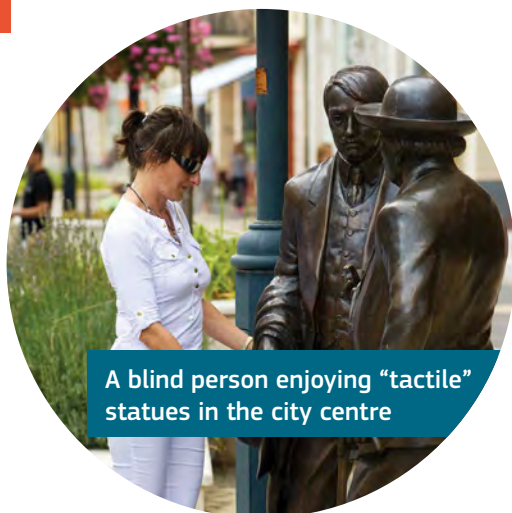
In recent years Kaposvár has paid special attention to providing equal access to public services for inhabitants and tourists alike.

János Hosszú

”



Low floor buses with ramps benefit travellers with baby buggies as well as disabled and older people



A blind person enjoying “tactile” statues in the city centre

The plan is updated and revised on an annual basis and a local Equal Opportunity Forum has been set up, chaired by the deputy Chief Executive of the city, to take forward the actions identified. The city also employs an equal opportunities officer.

Putting commitments into practice

Crossings are already barrier free and some traffic junctions are equipped with audible information to help blind pedestrians.

The development of the Kaposvár Transport Centre (planned for the period 2016 – 2020) will have the greatest impact on accessibility in the city. It will integrate rail, local and intercity bus transport with a new fully accessible public transport hub.

Accessible IT is also a priority with a barrier free home page on the city's website (www.kaposvar.hu). Work is in progress to increase the number of medical buildings which are barrier free and every educational institution has an Equal Opportunities Plan.

“

The city has become more and more accessible year by year. We are happy with services of the local transport company as visual equipment and written information is available for us.

Iván Szalkai

”

80% of the city's arts and cultural facilities are accessible and newly renovated public buildings include tactile guidance and other features.

In 2014 special attention was focussed on raising awareness and understanding of people with disabilities. This included arranging meetings between public sector workers – for example those employed in public transport – to meet disabled people and listen to their concerns and ideas for improvement.

Civil servants working in the Mayor's office have also taken part in training organised by the Association for Visually Impaired People.



A meeting of disabled people in the city

Participating in the Access•City Award 2017

The Access City Award is organised by the European Commission together with the European Disability Forum. It encourages cities to share their experience and to improve accessibility for the benefit of all.

Would you like to have your city's projects featured in the next booklet of the Access City Award? Do you want to share your experiences and actions with other cities?

Take part in the Access City Award 2017!

The seventh edition of the Award will be launched in spring 2016 (date to be confirmed). Applications can be made by completing and submitting the online application form by the deadline set. Detailed information will be available at:

<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1141&langId=en>

Participating in the Access City Award is not only an opportunity to gain recognition, but also a unique chance to review the current situation in your city for your own internal auditing purposes and to measure progress. Studying the questions in the application form is an excellent way to analyse your accessibility policies and to identify their strengths and weaknesses.

Who can apply?

The applicant must be a government authority of a city of over 50 000 inhabitants in one of the EU Member States. In Member States with fewer than two such cities, urban areas composed of two or more towns may also participate if their combined population exceeds 50 000 inhabitants. As the Access City Award cannot be won by the same city in two consecutive years, the winning city in 2016 is not invited to take part again in 2017. All other cities, including the runners up, the second and third prize winners and the special mention cities, are encouraged to participate again.

To help prepare for participation in the competition, the guidance note and the participation rules are available in all official EU languages on the Access City Award website:

http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=88&eventsId=1023&-furtherEvents=yes_21

Selection process

The juries will consider measures taken and planned in the following areas:

- The built environment and public spaces
- Transport and related infrastructure
- Information and communication, including new technologies (ICTs)
- Public facilities and services.

The juries will evaluate the applications taking into account the following five criteria:

1. Scope of the actions
2. Ownership, level of commitment
3. Impact
4. Quality and sustainability of results
5. Involvement of people with disabilities and relevant partners.

The selection process is divided into two phases: pre-selection at national level and final selection at European level. The **National Juries** in each country select a maximum of three cities from among the national applicants using the evaluation criteria provided by the European Commission. These national candidates go forward to the second phase of the competition and are assessed by the **European Jury**.

The winner of the Access City Award 2017 will be announced on 29-30 November 2016. The ceremony is part of the annual European Day of People with Disabilities Conference in Brussels.

The Access City Award Secretariat

The Access City Award Secretariat can assist with applications. If you need any additional information, please contact:
secretariat@accesscityaward.eu



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