



European
Commission

Access•City

Award 2014

European cities responding to
the accessibility needs of ALL citizens



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Foreword



I am delighted to introduce this booklet celebrating the cities recognised in the fourth edition of the Access•City Award — the European prize for making cities more accessible to disabled and older people. The Award has once again produced excellent examples of commitment, enthusiasm and innovation in meeting the accessibility needs of disabled and older people in European cities.

This year's winners and the cities awarded with 'special mentions', Göteborg (Sweden), Grenoble (France), Poznań (Poland), Belfast (United Kingdom), Dresden (Germany), Burgos and Málaga (Spain), show us a wide range of what can be achieved by putting the needs of disabled and older people at the heart of city planning and policy making.

What has impressed me in particular is that in every case, accessibility has been an integral part of the planning and delivery process and not just an afterthought or an add-on.

At the awards ceremony in Brussels I gave my warmest personal congratulations to each of the cities and I would now like to invite the readers of this brochure to learn more about these examples and to use them as a source of information and inspiration. I hope that even more cities will be encouraged to participate and compete with new projects next year.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V. Reding', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Viviane Reding

Vice-President of the European Commission
Commissioner for Justice, Fundamental Rights
and Citizenship

Access•City Award 2014

Introduction

The goal of the Access•City Award is to highlight the importance of developing and implementing policies and practices in our cities that recognise the needs of the large and growing number of people with disabilities and older people.

Europe's ageing populations provide a very clear focus on the economic and social importance of creating environments within which people can live independently and with dignity throughout their lives.

The Access•City Award illustrates the very wide range of initiatives and policies that can help to achieve this goal — from policies on accessible housing to children's play areas and public transport information; every aspect of city life needs to take account of the changing demographics.

By signing the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities⁽¹⁾, the EU and all its Member States have committed themselves to creating a barrier-free Europe. The European Disability Strategy 2010–20⁽²⁾ is a comprehensive framework which commits the Commission to empowering people with disabilities to enjoy their full rights. Accessibility is a priority area that makes goods and services

accessible and promotes the market for assistive devices.

The examples of Universal Design principles among this year's winners and 'special mention' cities highlight the growing awareness that it is not enough to provide a special or separate solution for people with particular access needs. Designing with the interests of the whole population in mind from the earliest planning stages is the most productive and cost-effective approach.

One of the goals of the Award is to show best practices in European cities where inspiring and innovative projects facilitate the everyday life of disabled and older people.

This year's winners and 'special mention' cities were picked after a rigorous selection process from a strong field of entries. They include cities of different sizes, with different topographical challenges and from different economic and social backgrounds. For many of them accessibility has been a long-term policy objective, while others have established work priorities in this area more recently. As in previous years, the common factor that unites all the cities featured here is a strong political commitment within the city and a close working relationship of mutual respect and cooperation between the city authorities and the community of older and disabled people.



⁽¹⁾ http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/disabilities/convention/index_en.htm

⁽²⁾ http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/disabilities/disability-strategy/index_en.htm

GÖTEBORG, Sweden

Winner

Göteborg, 'A City for Everyone', is the second-largest city in Sweden and was founded in 1621.

Göteborg has the largest port in the Nordic region and a wonderful archipelago. The city is also highly regarded as a venue for major sporting, entertainment and cultural events. A former industrial city, Göteborg evolved into a city of creation and innovation and more recently into a city of commerce and education.

Responsibility for accessibility measures in the city rests with each district, company and property owner. The Property Management Committee has overall ownership of the City Council's objective 'A City for Everyone' and has a leadership, coordination and follow-up role to achieve the objective.

The projects highlighted here demonstrate the innovative approaches that have been taken to develop comprehensive and sustainable accessibility in the city.

Accessibility inventory of the city's 3 000 public buildings and spaces

The City of Göteborg has a clear political goal to make Göteborg accessible for everyone.

As part of this commitment, the city's administrations and companies are all required to produce inventories of their public buildings and spaces to measure accessibility.

A comprehensive approach

Every building and space in the City of Göteborg that is regarded as 'public' must be part of the inventory. This includes, for example, pre-schools, schools, housing for older people, museums, libraries, arenas, amusement parks, sport facilities, playgrounds, parks, etc.

The City Council is committed to a 'holistic and comprehensive follow-up regarding accessibility in the city'.

A web-based tool 'The Accessibility database' is used for the inventories. It is based on human rights criteria and has been developed by the Västra Götaland region

“

With the goal of making Göteborg a truly accessible city, it is very important that all the city's administrations and companies produce inventories of their public buildings and spaces. To achieve this, the web-based 'Accessibility database' is a most valuable tool, for both those making the inventory and those seeking information.

Ulf Kamne, Chairman of the Property Management Committee

”



Göteborg archipelago and ramp to reach the water

in collaboration with different interest organisations, including those representing people with disabilities and older people.

The questionnaires in the Accessibility database reflect the interest of people with disabilities, older people, children, people with different religious beliefs and Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender people.

When each inventory is complete, the information is published on the internet. Visitors can look at the information and decide whether or not that public building and/or space is available for them.

The database also gives details of barriers to access that can easily be overcome and sets out the legal requirements for accessibility.

Deploying a city-wide workforce for accessibility

The Property Management Administration has been commissioned by the City Executive Board to manage the process of the City's accessibility work. Their role is to lead, support, follow up and report back to the politicians.

Every administration and company in Göteborg is responsible for ensuring that the inventory of their public buildings and spaces is being carried out.

About 100 officials and inventory workers have been appointed to carry out the ongoing accessibility work. They

meet on a regular basis to share information, development and training initiatives.

Keeping information up to date

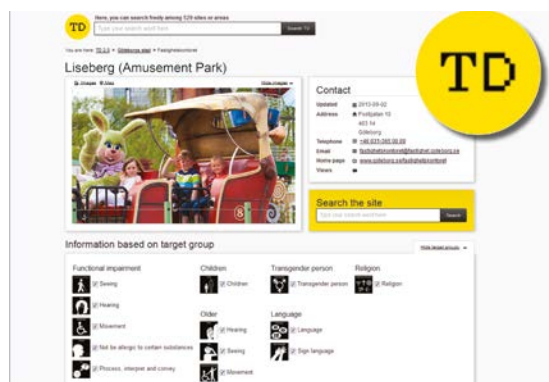
Once a year the database will send out a reminder that the information needs to be updated. If it is not updated, the information on the internet will be closed down and will stay closed until an update has been received.

Funding

The cost of the inventories is met by each of the administrations and organisations in the City as part of their day to day running costs.

“ The assessment in the governing document gives substance and focus to our work with procurement. ”

Helena Segvall, CSR coordinator at the Procurement Department



Göteborg — Accessibility database



Göteborg — blind person using travel instructor

Using procurement to encourage Universal Design

The supreme governing documents for the City explicitly require that procurement must encourage Universal Design that provides accessibility for everyone.

The Procurement Company is wholly owned by the City and is responsible for all central procurement. In 2013 a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) coordinator was appointed to incorporate the requirement for Universal Design into the procurement process as a part of her job.

The requirements cover procurement of all products that will be used in public buildings and spaces. They sometimes also include services. The City's Policy and Guidelines for Procurement state that social and ethical requirements must be included in all procurement activities.

Responsibility for local procurement lies with each City administration and company and the Procurement Company is only there to offer support.

The Universal Design requirements are enforced.

There are no specific results available yet from this policy but evidence will be gathered to guide future procurement policies.

Defining Universal Design

The definition of Universal Design will vary according to the product or service to be procured. In all cases the requirements will be focused on ensuring that the design of the environment, products or techniques enables them to be used by the greatest possible number of people.

Involving disabled and older people

Older people and people with disabilities are involved through advisory boards in developing criteria for Universal Design in areas such as housing for older people.

Funding

The costs of procurement, including any additional costs for meeting Universal Design criteria, are met by each administration or company responsible for the procurement.

Travel Planner and Travel Instructors

The public transport authority in Göteborg and West Sweden has developed a 'Travel Planner' to enable people to research a trip based on their individual accessibility requirements, for example, space for a wheelchair or audible stop notification.

When necessary, people with or without disabilities are offered guidance/assistance to make the journey possible.

'Travel Instructors' help people who are not used to travelling to take the first step and use public transport. They provide support and security from the person's home and throughout the journey.

“ I need a little help to get started. Public transport has changed a lot during the past years. ”

Pia Andersson, traveller with guide dog and Travel Instructor

The public transport authority in Göteborg and West Sweden is responsible for all public transport within the City of Göteborg.

The Special Transport Service is an administration within the City of Göteborg. The administration is responsible for public transport that is designed for people who have difficulties travelling alone in the ordinary public transport system. Travel instructors are employed by the Special Transport Service.

Gathering and verifying accessibility

All bus, tram and boat stops are recorded in a database and whenever refurbishment or rebuilding takes place the information is updated.

There is also a database listing all public transport. This is used for traffic planning and also as a source of information for the Travel Planner.

About 590 000 requests for information are made every day and about 300 000 make use of the Travel Planner.

Travel Instructors: Teaching confidence

The Travel Instructors are employed and trained by the Special Transport Service. There are currently two people working part time as Travel Instructors.

The work with Travel Instructors started in October 2006 and at that time an occupational therapist was employed to organise the work and train the first Travel Instructors.

Over time the organisation has developed its own strategies and competence and gained experience in how different disabilities affect your ability to move and to travel. The Travel Instructors need to have a lot of knowledge about people with disabilities, know the city well and know the public transport system.

The Travel Instructors who are currently employed have received different training, including by the organisation SRF (Visually Impaired Federation). They used special

glasses that simulated different eye conditions to understand the needs of blind and visually impaired people.

They have also tried to travel on public transport using various mobility aids such as wheelchairs, and have learned how to use a wheelchair on the ramps of buses and trams. They have even tried to drive a tram (with a tram driver) to understand the driver's point of view. They are trained to use the ticket machines and the Travel Planner.

When a new Travel Instructor is employed he or she must work beside an experienced Travel Instructor before being allowed to work by themselves with a traveller.

The most important quality for a Travel Instructor is to be sensitive to the traveller and to listen to their requests. They work with travellers to agree on what training is needed and what realistic goals can be set.

There is significant demand for the support of the Travel Instructors. This last year the instructors have seen growing interest from visually impaired people to learn how to travel with or without their guide dogs.

There is no limit to how many journeys the Travel Instructor can assist with, but there must be a realistic goal as regards when the traveller should be able to travel by themselves. The most common approach is for the Travel Instructor to assist with one journey using the Flexiline (a special service that takes passengers nearer to their destination). However, when they assist people to use other forms of public transport they often need to spend more time before the traveller is confident to travel independently.

Since the scheme was introduced in 2007, 239 people have achieved their goals of independent travel.

Funding

The Travel Instructors are funded as part of the Special Transport Service, while the Travel Planner is financed by the taxpayer.

GRENOBLE, France

Second
prize

The city of Grenoble is located in the heart of the Alps, within a metropolitan area of 500 000 inhabitants. It is the city of new technologies, with the CEA, Minatec (innovation campus) and the Science Peninsula district, developed around the eco-district concept. It is also the city of social innovation, with the first local social welfare centre in France, education initiatives such as the *Parler Bambin* programme designed to develop the communication skills of toddlers, and a long tradition of cooperation with local residents on projects of all kinds, including tram lines, new modes of transport (such as car sharing and ropeways), urban development and accessibility.

Development of accessible housing

French national law sets standards for accessible housing so that if a disabled person moves in only minor modifications are needed. The City of Grenoble has set itself an ambitious goal that 10% of housing in each new development will be accessible.

Involving disabled and older people

The accessibility standards for housing have been developed by the cross-government committee on disability which involves organisations of people with disabilities.

At the local level the City has adopted the principal of Universal Design. Each project is studied with the involvement of both representative disability organisations and the end users. Usability is just as important as complying with standards.

Funding

The project manager for each development builds accessibility into the design from the drawing board stage. This means that accessibility is not an add-on but an essential element of the project.

On average, accessibility features are reckoned to account for between 3 and 5% of the cost. This is a tiny amount compared with the extra costs that will be incurred in future years adapting non-accessible housing stock.

“

People with learning disabilities often have problems identifying and understanding things. Thanks to the work carried out in collaboration with the SMTC (the Grenoble public transport company), the users of ESAT (the organisation that supports disabled people getting into employment) are able to travel independently to work and to recognise which bus they need to take because of the sign on the front. The sign identifies the bus route using a letter and colour coding. The system is helpful to everyone.

”

Janine Vincent, Administrator, l'AFIPaeim
(Association for Families of Children with Learning Disabilities)



Grenoble — Innovaccess makes shops accessible

Independent living

The City of Grenoble produces about 150 adapted properties every year and in conjunction with social housing landlords identifies the total stock of housing suitable for disabled and older people. The aim is to be able to meet the high demand for accessible housing in the Grenoble region. The good accessibility encourages many older and disabled people to move to the city.

Master Plan for accessible public transport

The master plan for accessible transport was developed by the transport company of Grenoble (SMTC) and was approved in 2009 by the Board of the company. This agreement set out the steps that would be taken to improve accessibility in the period 2009 to 2012. The plan is currently being reviewed and updated by an independent research organisation.

Involving disabled and older people

The Accessibility Plan for 2009–12 was developed in close cooperation with associations of disabled and older people. About 30 organisations are represented at SMTC's accessibility forum which meets at least three times a year.

Deciding priorities for investment

Investment priorities are decided on the basis of three underlying principles:

- to extend accessibility to all bus routes and encourage use of the general bus network by people with mobility difficulties;
- to improve information on the bus and tram networks to make travel easier for people with vision or hearing loss and those with cognitive or mental health difficulties;
- to confirm the role of the special service for disabled people as an alternative to mainstream transport and as a source of information and advice.

Meeting everyone's needs

The needs of people with different disabilities and different mobility concerns are taken into account, including those with cognitive or psychological problems. Nonetheless, the approach of the SMTC is to look for improvements all the time through ongoing consultation with disability organisations.

The evaluation of the Accessibility Plan is an opportunity to take stock of what has been done and to get together with disabled people and their representative organisations at round table discussions to improve understanding of needs.

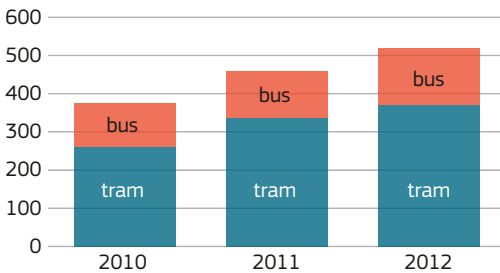
Funding

SMTC's budget comes in part from the transport companies, in part from local transport taxes and in part from the General Council of Isere and the urban community of Grenoble Alpes Métropole.

Public transport usage by disabled people

Annual surveys of the number of disabled people travelling by public transport have shown a growth of 38% in the number of wheelchair users on the bus and tram networks between 2010 and 2012.

The table below, taken from the SEMITAG⁽³⁾ annual survey data, shows the number of wheelchair users on the bus and tram network on an average school day:



'Innovaccess': Access to employment in the city

The aim of the Innovaccess scheme is to promote employment opportunities for disabled people by ensuring that every part of the journey from home to the workplace is accessible. The project brings together private and public sector bodies that normally work on accessibility issues in isolation and without coordination.

A holistic approach to accessibility

The key elements of the scheme include:

- Making businesses more aware of the needs of disabled people and increasing their understanding through direct contact with them.
- Studying local businesses and finding technical solutions to overcome access problems. Solutions are then funded through Agefiph (L'Association de Gestion du Fonds pour l'Insertion Professionnelle des Personnes Handicapées) or Fiphfp (Fonds pour l'insertion des personnes handicapées dans la fonction publique) which provide financial support to get disabled people into employment in the private and public sectors respectively.
- Providing direct support for remedial works needed to make local businesses accessible.

Innovaccess is a 'turnkey' project which could be introduced in any city. It is a tool used to help meet the goal of Universal Design by anticipating the mobility needs of the whole population in order to develop the city of tomorrow.

“ Thanks to Innovaccess, companies understand the needs of disabled people. A deaf person can have on-demand access to a website that provides sign language interpretation at the workplace. That also means that employing a deaf person is no longer a problem. ”

Gérard Plassiard, ARDDS (Association for the rehabilitation and protection of people with hearing loss)

⁽³⁾ <http://www.tag.fr/57-semitag.htm>

POZNAŃ, Poland

Third
prize

The city of Poznań is the fifth largest in Poland with a population of 550 742.

The population includes around 92 000 people with disabilities (15% of the total number of inhabitants).

The natural catchment of the rivers Warta and Cybina is the main factor influencing the functional and spatial structure of the city. About 60% of the potential of the modern city, the medieval Old Town and the 19th century downtown is on the west bank of the river Warta.

The old urban structure and architecture is a major challenge to ensuring access for people with disabilities.

Internet portal dedicated to people with disabilities

Poznań has set up an internet portal dedicated to people with disabilities. The portal contains current information about events in various fields, such as work, education and law, as well as sections dealing with the accessibility of urban space (public buildings, transport, etc.).

The portal was developed by Poznań City Town Hall employees responsible for the social integration of people with disabilities.

The portal is based on the knowledge and experiences of people involved in the city information services, specialists in new communication technologies, integration experts and representatives of non-governmental organisations working with people with various types of disabilities.

“

Poznań in the last 20 years has become a friendlier city for people with disabilities. Once impossible things become possible (e.g. fully accessible city bus transport).

The source of our success is the cooperation of all stakeholders.

The best experts on the accessibility of the city are the people with disabilities, and their voice is decisive.

We still have a lot of work to do towards the full inclusion of people with disabilities in our city, but we are eager to do it.

”

Józef Solecki, Manager of the Integration of People with Disabilities Section in Poznań City Hall

The idea of setting up and implementing the portal came from an analysis of the needs of people with disabilities and their families.

Scope of the Portal

The portal includes addresses of important institutions supporting people with disabilities and information about the activities of non-governmental organisations.

There is a section devoted to the accessibility of urban space, public transport, sports, tourism, etc.

In other sections called 'Events' and 'Info boards', editors post messages and invitations to interesting events for people with disabilities and their families.

There is also a section from the Plenipotentiary of the Mayor of Poznań for People with Disabilities which provides information about current campaigns, projects and programmes, including the Programme 'Direction and tasks of Poznań for the social inclusion of people with disabilities for the years 2012–20'.

Verifying and updating information

The portal is run by three editors, who are supervised by the manager of the Integration of People with Disabilities Section in Poznań City Hall. Before putting information on the portal it has to be verified and accepted by the manager.

To ensure that the portal remains useful, editors systematically carry out updates. These cover a wide range of topics including national and local legislation together with current information from external portals, newspapers, televisions and publications.

All non-governmental organisations, private companies and public institutions can send their latest information and announcements, which are posted on the portal.

Because of the open nature of the portal, individual people with disabilities also have the right to suggest material to update and enrich the portal.

In addition, the portal contains annually updated reports on all actions taken for people with disabilities in Poznań by public and non-public institutions cooperating with the City (cultural institutions, art and sport centres, social welfare centre, NGOs, individual Town Hall departments, etc.).

Involving disabled and older people

The ideas that inspired the portal authors were openness and inclusion. The co-creators include the manager of the Integration of People with Disabilities Section in Poznań City Hall, the editors, the Plenipotentiary of the Mayor of Poznań for People with Disabilities, experts, private companies, public institutions, NGOs and all the residents of the city, including older and disabled people and their families.

Both the official city website and the portal have been adapted in collaboration with the community of people with disabilities.

The portal takes account of the specific communication and information needs of people with different types of disabilities (people with visual impairment, hearing impairment, intellectual disability).

Funding

The portal does not have a separate source of funding. It is part of Poznań City Hall's human and financial resources.

All those involved (editors, integration specialists, etc.) also have other areas of work. Everyone directly responsible for the functioning of the portal is an employee of Poznań City Hall's Integration of People with Disabilities Section.

The portal development (for example, adaptation for the needs of people with a specific type of disability, implementing the modern techniques of communication and information) is also funded by Poznań City Hall human and financial resources.

Specific future plans for the portal development will require external funding.

Outcomes

The portal is very popular: in 2013, there were almost 5 000 unique visitors a month.

Increasing numbers of disabled people are benefitting from the portal in conjunction with the new information and communication technologies.

Future plans

Future plans include:

- designing and implementing an information portal covering access to public places;
- increasing the number of easy-to-read texts for people with intellectual disability and hearing impairments;
- developing and updating Poznań's internet portal for disabled people — new information, facilitating access to the portal for people with different disabilities, etc.;
- incorporating new communication technologies and increasing the level of interactivity (subject to availability of funds);
- exchanging experiences with international partners.



Poznań — accessible tram stop

Training for Poznań City Hall employees and District Councillors

Staff at Poznań City Hall and its Municipal Units have been given training in functional barriers affecting disabled people.

The general objective of the training has been to improve the quality of life of disabled residents of the city of Poznań by implementing a policy of equality and non-discrimination in accessibility to public spaces and services and in developing and improving the work of public institutions.

Training has also been provided for District Councillors.

Objectives and Topics

Specific objectives of the training for employees of the City have included:

- raising the awareness of people responsible for creating local urban space;
- developing a positive attitude among Poznań City Hall employees and District Councillors towards clients with disabilities;
- increasing the competence of Poznań City Hall employees and District Councillors in the field of services for disabled clients;
- extending their competence in communicating with people with disabilities;
- broadening the competence of employees responsible for the creation of urban space;
- acquiring knowledge about the specific needs of people with disabilities.

Training topics have included:

- specific needs of people with different disabilities;
- universal design;
- architectural barriers;
- transport barriers;
- communication barriers.

To date, 354 employees have been trained in 27 sessions comprising 176 hours of training.

In addition, 600 elected District Councillors representing local communities have also been trained in a total of 9 sessions.

The main objectives of their training have been to:

- increase their understanding of the needs of disabled people, particularly in terms of access to public space;
- raise awareness about the importance of considering the needs of people with disabilities in investment projects;
- increase their competence in creating public spaces accessible to people with disabilities;
- increase their understanding of the concept and principles of Universal Design.



Poznań implementing a strategy for the social integration of people with disabilities for 2012–20 not only responds to the needs of people with disability, but primarily really supports disabled residents, their families and non-governmental organisations working on their behalf. Now, active people with disabilities can use the tools and assistance to fulfil needs, and also their dreams. Poznań has taken a huge step forward. As a person with a disability I can fulfil myself professionally and socially, overcoming daily difficulties at the same time.



Training Delivery

Training for the City Hall employees was carried out in partnership with the Friends of Integration Association from Warsaw. This is one of the oldest and most professional nationwide organisations. People with disabilities work in this organisation and participate in all training.

The methodology of the training was innovative in both form and content (contract, communication, interaction with the participants, materials).

Training for District Councillors was delivered by the Plenipotentiary of the Mayor of Poznań for People with Disabilities and manager of the Integration of People with Disabilities Section in Poznań City Hall.

Funding

Training sessions were financed from the resources of Poznań City Hall.

Benefits of Training

Clear benefits have already been seen as a result of the training. These include improved quality of services in the City Hall and increased motivation and positive attitudes towards disabled people.

Long-term effects of the training are already being seen in the decisions and investment plans of District Councils, which contain specific investments and solutions for people with disabilities.



Poznań Integrated Communication Centre — local bus and tram stops, train station, long-distance bus station

BELFAST, UK

**Special
Mention**

for Built Environment and Public Spaces

Belfast is the capital city of Northern Ireland. It is located on the north-east coast of the island of Ireland and is part of the UK.

The city has a population of 280 962, accounting for 15.52 % of Northern Ireland. As a city emerging from conflict and a troubled past it is now recognised as a successful and dynamic city.

Belfast has experienced great change with over €2.4 billion of investment. The scale and quality of the city's transformation has been of international significance.

Musgrave Park Therapy Garden

The aim of this project is to provide a permanent, inclusive, outdoor facility which improves the quality of life, development and wellbeing of children and young people. The Therapy Garden is located within Musgrave Park, in south Belfast. The garden project started in September 2011 and involved a series of themed spaces offering a particular sensory and therapeutic experience.

The idea for the Musgrave Park Therapy Garden came from discussions with a number of school groups. There was a desire from the users to enter the development of a therapy garden in a funding competition 'The People's Millions' which was being run by a local television company (UTV). Although the entry did not receive funding it was shortlisted and the idea of a therapy garden within the park was born.

Involving disabled people

During the development of the Therapy Garden the Council involved a number of local Special Needs Schools and the Children's Respite Centre.

This was done through arranging for the garden designer to work with the schools to create a wish list and through a series of artist workshops via the engagement of a community artist.

“

It's a wonderful resource for the City Council to develop. It's extremely important for our children to play and to develop their play skills and to learn how to come out into the community. Our children need a lot of stimulation and inspiration. It's wonderful for them to come here and get that inspiration.

Noreen Dorman, Teacher, Oakwood Special School

”



Belfast — Musgrave Park Therapy Garden

Meeting a range of disability needs

The Musgrave Park Therapy Garden meets the needs of people with different disabilities in that it provides an inclusive physical learning environment, concentrating on gross motor skills and sensory development through the integration of interaction and visual stimulation and the use of cause and effect equipment, for example sand play equipment, spinning dishes, wobbling springers, a seesaw walkway, sound and visual wall, mirrored spheres, stepped ramps and paths, willow tunnels and hideaways.

The garden also has a social function as a safe and welcoming space for outdoor education and for learning about nature within a shared and inclusive environment through the use of an outdoor classroom area, story circle and bespoke raised planter.

Funding

Belfast City Council saw this project as an opportunity to promote health and wellbeing by providing a shared space to create opportunities for community growth and interaction, as well as providing resources for children with physical disabilities and severe learning difficulties.

The Council was also able to identify opportunities to deliver this project in partnership with other organisations across the city and to secure additional funding from the Public Health Agency and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) which is managed by the Special EU Programmes Body.

The Musgrave Park Therapy Garden was constructed in four phases and at a total cost of €217 000.

The maintenance of the Therapy Garden is included within the overall maintenance budget for Musgrave Park but it is estimated to be in the region of €6 000 per year.

This cost includes staffing for grounds maintenance (grass cutting, clearing leaves, etc.) and inspecting the equipment, (which happens daily). Repairs or replacement of the physical infrastructure of the garden are not included in this cost.

The Musgrave Park Therapy Garden was developed as part of a wider project that also includes a community garden and allotments.

The project was developed as part of Belfast City Council's Growing Communities Strategy which considers growing in its widest sense, and its vision ensures that all people in Belfast will have the opportunity to enjoy improved health and wellbeing through involvement in growing activities throughout their lifetimes and within their local neighbourhoods.

The Council will continue to invest in the park and its facilities to ensure that it maintains the highest standards of excellence.

Feedback from users

Musgrave Park, within which the Therapy Garden is located, has a catchment (based on a 1 000 m radius / 20 minute walk) of 2 400 people.

Due to the specialised nature of the facility it attracts regular user groups from a number of Special Needs Schools and the Children's Respite Centre, thus its sphere of influence stretches well beyond the city limits.

As a setting for people meeting to play, as an educational and training resource for nature and art based workshops and as an outdoor classroom, all within a wider park setting, it attracts regular and casual users.

The feedback to date has been positive and users feel that the Garden is a welcome addition to the park.



Belfast — Musgrave Park Therapy Garden

DRESDEN, Germany

Special Mention

for Information and Communication Technologies

Dresden is the capital of the Free State of Saxony and has a population of around 530 000. The city has a centre for research and science and has seen dynamic economic development and a growing population as a result of immigration and high birth rates.

Dresden has around 13 000 cultural monuments. Special monument protection requirements need careful solutions when accessibility is being considered.

Around 75 % of the urban area is located in the Elbe Valley, with the topography providing easy accessibility.

Other areas are located at high altitudes, and partly on steep slopes on the banks of the Elbe. To visit these regions visitors with disabilities need to use public transport or a private car.

Interactive Map and City Guide

The interactive map and city guide give people with disabilities targeted information.

They show accessible wheelchair pathways and transport stops, accessible toilets and parking, as well as information about the degree of accessibility of public buildings. These data form the basis for decision-making in many of Dresden's specialised offices and constitute an integral part of their work with the public.

The initiative to develop the interactive map and guide was taken by the Urban Planning Office in 1995 but the need for information was also highlighted by the local associations of disabled people.



Reliable and current information on accessibility is important for me as a wheelchair user. The interactive city guide for people with disabilities is a great help for me. Especially in districts that I don't know very well, I prefer to inform myself in advance. I like to know if the respective leisure, cultural or sports site, which I would like to visit is really usable for me.

I use the online city guide for people with disabilities. The information is accurate and I can rely on it, as the data is recorded and maintained by competent people.

Joachim Müller (wheelchair user)





Dresden — accessible public transport

The first city guides were published only as printed books. From 2006 the guide was also available on the internet as a PDF file. The map and city guide became interactive with integration into the 'Themenstadtplan' — an interactive city map — in 2009.

In 1996, after the first printed guide book, the City Council decided to keep the city guide for disabled people up-to-date and committed to publishing a new version about every two years.

Keeping information accurate and up-to-date

Every place or facility mentioned in the city guide and city map is verified through a visit to the site and by the use of standardised checklists.

Up until now, the research has been done by people who are employed through state and European funded programmes that aim to bring unemployed people back into work. The current programme called 'Bürgerarbeit' ends in 2014.

Inaccuracies or other feedback go direct to the City administration via the internet, telephone or mail. The ordinary postal address, central telephone number and direct feedback on the websites of the City of Dresden are used to make contact.

New sites that want to be included in the city guide and map can register via the internet. They are then contacted by the surveyors who will go and check the place.

Involving disabled people

The scheme was developed in close cooperation with the associations of disabled people. Enhancements are always discussed and agreed with these organisations.

Funding

Thanks to the funded employment programmes used for the survey work, the City of Dresden only pays for the technical infrastructure — about €5 000 each year, and the publishing — between €2 000 and €5 000 every two years.

There is also a need for project management support and for input from surveyors.

Because the survey is currently dependent on subsidies, the funding is not secure for the future. At the moment the City administration and associations of disabled people are working to find a solution to support the research work after 2014.

Blind Persons' Information System (BLIS)

Visually impaired passengers and others with significantly reduced mobility can use Dresden's public transport services with support from the BLIS (Blind Persons' Information System). With a small, hand-held transmitter, these passengers can:

- request an audible announcement of the line and destination of a bus/tram on an external speaker;
- inform the driver via the vehicle's on-board computer that they want to get on or off.

The system was introduced by a Czech company. It was already in use in Prague. The software needed to be adapted by the public transport company Dresdner Verkehrsbetriebe AG (DVB) to its Operations Control System. In 2004 DVB started to install the system in buses and trams. Since 2010 all vehicles operated by the company and its subcontractors provide the BLIS.

The public transport provider coordinated the project, further developed and tested the technology and its components and installed the system.



Dresden — Wheelchair user benefitting from online city guide

BURGOS, Spain

**Special
Mention**

for Public Services and Facilities

Burgos is a lively, mid-sized city (180 000 inhabitants), located in the north-central part of Spain in the region of Castilla-León. Burgos is well known because of its cultural, historic and artistic heritage, including 3 sites declared as world heritage sites by UNESCO: Gothic Cathedral; Pilgrim's Way (Camino de Santiago); and Atapuerca pre-historic remains. In recent years, Burgos has developed new public spaces with pedestrian areas.

Burgos has an ageing population (1 out of every 5 inhabitants is over 65). People with disabilities represent 5% of the population.

It's nice to feel part of a common project, to all work together.

Diana, disabled resident, Burgos

The Plan identifies specific actions within the Social Services, Youth and Equal Opportunities Department, but also includes strategic issues affecting other municipal areas and bodies involved in ensuring quality of life and development of people with disabilities.

Deciding priorities

The priorities agreed for the Plan include 10 key action areas comprising:

- prevention and early intervention
- health
- education
- employment
- specialised centres and day care services
- housing
- family support
- leisure, culture and sports
- information, training and research
- participation.

Municipal Plan for people living with disabilities

The Sectoral Municipal Plan for people with disabilities sets out policies for the promotion of access for people with disabilities to programmes and infrastructure and the promotion of an accessibility culture. The Plan is one output from the current City strategy on disability and accessibility.

Its goal is to design and deliver actions that benefit disabled people taking into account all the factors needed to guarantee social inclusion and to improve their quality of life.

Within this framework, since June 2013, the City has been working with the Municipal Council of People Living with Disabilities, the body representing people with physical disabilities, psychological and sensory disorders and mental illnesses. The aim has been to establish a permanent working group to promote measures on full accessibility to eliminate social, cognitive or physical barriers.

Involving disabled and older people

Priorities are decided in close cooperation with disabled people.

The Municipal Council of People Living with Disabilities is the formal channel for the active participation of people with disabilities in the planning, implementation and follow-up of policies on accessibility.

To optimise City resources, local policies are complemented by work carried out by the network of disability associations. This provides people with disabilities and their families with an integrated response, through the services that are delivered by the associations, which have been formalised through agreements and other forms of collaboration.

In exchange, the City supports disability organisations by, for example, free use of premises and support for organising events.

Funding

The Plan brings together the budgets of several municipal departments involved directly or indirectly in the field of disability. Burgos City Council remains committed to the action on disability and to achieving an accessible city, so funding is assured.

In addition, *Social cohesion, accessibility and governance*, is a key action line within the *City of Burgos Strategic Plan*, with a timeframe of 2010–20, in which ‘the involvement of all society and business circles must be promoted in Burgos, in order to develop high-impact social actions that improve and take into account the highest possible standards of accessibility and by doing so generate a better city in which everybody can live without exclusion.’ For this reason the commitment to accessibility is not only municipal but involves every aspect of city life.

Accessibility Guide to employment resources, EQUALBUR

The Accessibility Guide was developed as part of the project ‘*Accessibility for all*’ in the framework of the Equal Community Initiative. Several Associations of Disabled People as well as Burgos City Council participated in producing the Guide.

The Guide aims to contribute to the social and employment integration of people at risk of social exclusion and to combat discrimination and inequality in the labour market.

The Guide gives information to disabled people about access to the City’s employment agencies. To gather the data, visits were made to City employment agencies, both public and private, and a descriptive analysis of the service was made. The Guide includes contact details and information as well as the assessment of any physical or sensory barriers to access.

The Guide is distributed to associations of disabled people in order to help disabled people find and retain employment. It includes information on finding a job, support and assistance available, mediation, assessment and follow-up. More than 4900 disabled people have made use of the services offered in the Guide.



The guide helped me to know which association or other resources to ask for assistance. It also helped me to know my rights and the responsibilities of the City Council.

Beatriz, disabled resident, Burgos



Burgos — sign language used at public events

MÁLAGA, Spain

Special Mention

for Transport and related infrastructures

The city of Málaga is a metropolitan area in a state of constant development. It is located in an area that forms a narrow strip between the mountains and the coast and is crossed by many streams.

Historically it has been home to successive cultures, from the Phoenician times to the present. Many remnants of these cultures are still evident today.

This topography and history explain a number of features in the city such as separation between neighbourhoods, the presence of the beaches, the narrow hilly streets and heavy traffic through the town centre.

But of course, weather is one advantage because Málaga is a city in which you can comfortably live all year round!

Accessible signage and information

The introduction of accessible signage and information at public transport stops and in vehicles has been a priority for the City.

The primary responsibility and driving force in the City for accessibility rests with a department set up expressly for this purpose. The Accessibility Department currently consists of 20 professionals working as consultants and experts in collaboration with other departments of the City and its partners in implementing accessibility in the areas of: Information, Communication, Mobility, Social Participation, Employment and Training, Women and Housing.

Progress with implementation

65% of bus stops are now accessible. The improvements to date (not all yet available at all stops) include:

- diode information panels with voice announcements
- braille information
- pictograms
- geographical information.

100% of buses also have accessible signage and information. On two lines there is also information in the form of pictograms (lines 11 and 15) and work is continuing on the main line C3.

The right to accessible information

The main reason for giving this topic priority is to meet the City's goal of equality and sustainability. In Málaga, people with disabilities travel independently, and it was agreed that they had an absolute right to accessible information.

To achieve this goal, the City has worked at policy level developing standards and guidelines that go beyond the requirements of national legislation.

Málaga has become the driving force and leader of the network 'Cities for Accessibility', currently comprising 91 organisations. The City's Strategic Plan aims to go beyond local boundaries and to improve accessibility at a broader level.

There is also a strong culture of consumer engagement with regular comment and feedback using social media.

There are plans to strengthen current policies in this area by extending quality procedures and adopting international protocols.

Accessibility as an integral part of City planning

The Strategic Plan of the City of Málaga is the framework within which actions are taken to improve the accessibility of the city. The Strategic Plan for Accessibility, first published for the period 2007–11 and now in its second edition 2012–16, is the cross-cutting instrument defining policies, media, modes and measures for applying the criteria of accessibility and Universal Design, and for developing good practices and criteria for Design for All.

The urban design of the downtown area of the city is determined by the Municipal Sustainable Mobility Plan, taking into account the interrelationships between private and public bodies, parking, pedestrians, bicycles, etc., offering a comprehensive view of the area, and combining a global vision of sustainable mobility solutions with practical actions for improvement. The rule governing these tools is the Accessibility Ordinance of the City of Málaga, while several technical guides have also been published to help with implementation.



Málaga — accessible bus stop information

Involving disabled people

The umbrella body of associations of disabled people in Málaga comprises 200 groups representing all types of disabilities; all participate through various citizen movements in the different areas of engagement. Daily dialogue has been established through social networks, especially in the area of Facebook Accessibility. However, there is also a level of more active participation through the organisation 'Málaga Accessible', with 72 members who play a key part in the design of strategies and policies for accessibility and Universal Design.

Twice a year there is a General Assembly, chaired by the Mayor or Councillor, which decides on the main priorities for action. However, throughout the year groups work with different teams of municipal staff to develop the projects that have been agreed. These groups also have an advisory function and work as a control mechanism.

Involving disabled people in finding solutions and new ideas has proved a very good way to achieve an accessible city.

Funding

Funding for these improvements is secured within the City's annual budget allocations. This initiative is seen as a mainstreaming exercise which makes life better for all Málaga citizens.

It is also important to highlight the commitment of the private sector, which has been increasingly significant through the implementation of initiatives such as agreements on training and good practice, as well as on the employment of people with disabilities.

In the last five years, the City has invested over €35 million in a wide range of access improvements, including building dropped kerbs, ramps, pavement upgrades, installation of handrails and balustrades and fitting warning devices for blind people.



Málaga — accessible bus stop information

Participating in the Access•City Award 2015

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 2015!

The fifth edition of the Award will be launched in spring 2014 (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/justice/discrimination/disabilities/award/index_en.htm

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 2014 is not invited to take part again in 2015.

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 EUROPA Access•City Award 2014 website:

http://ec.europa.eu/justice/events/access-city-award-2014/index_en.htm

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 5 **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 2015 will be announced on 3 December 2014. 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 the preparation. If you need any additional information, please contact:

secretariat@accesscityaward.eu



The three trophies
Access•City Award 2014

European Commission

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