

NICHES+ POLICY AND RESEARCH RECOMMENDATIONS

WG1: Innovative Concepts to Enhance Accessibility

Introduction to the working group



Urban transport systems need to offer the possibility of independent mobility and provide an accessible environment suitable for everyone. Low-floor trains and buses to improve physical accessibility are becoming common practice in many places. However, other areas which urgently need to be addressed to improve accessibility in urban areas are not yet ranking high on the agenda of cities and operators. This does not only cover the "easy to reach", but also the "easy to use" aspect.

Three innovative concepts have been developed:

- Travel training for public transport
- Neighbourhood accessibility planning
- Tailored traveller information for users with reduced mobility

Links have been established within this working group with additional projects, namely [ASK-IT](#), [UNIACCESS](#), [AENEAS](#), [ECLIPSE](#), [MEDIATE](#), [ACCESS2ALL](#) and [PT ACCESS](#). The MEDIATE project has developed an internet portal [APTIE](#) on 'Accessibility in Public Transport In Europe': <http://www.aptie.eu/site/>.

Research Recommendations

→ RR1.1: Develop better methodologies for cost-benefit analyses of accessibility measures.

Accessibility measures cost money but at the same time offer potential for savings elsewhere and benefits in quality of life. Better methodologies for cost-benefit analyses in the area of accessibility would be beneficial to prioritise effective measures and convince decision makers to implement them. Research should not be exclusively theoretical, but also be combined with pilot schemes, best practice analyses and the promotion of promising measures.

→ RR1.2: Investigate the perception of and motivation for walking and promote tools to influence pedestrian behavior.

Walking is a serious and environmentally-friendly mobility form especially for urban areas on which, however, comparatively little research has been conducted. Research on behavioural aspects should be combined with the development of advice and tools on what encourages people to walk. Comparative studies on successful measures across different EU cities could help to identify suitable measures for different context conditions and cultural backgrounds.

→ RR1.3: Explore the impact of traveller information for users with reduced mobility.

Tailored information to users with reduced mobility can be extremely helpful for the users to find a barrier-free travel chain in public transport (done e.g. BAIM, Germany). So far there exists little understanding regarding the impact of these systems on the users' behaviour. Research in this field, including the evaluation of pilot projects and the dissemination of results could help to fill this gap and promote the concept further.

Policy Recommendations

→ **PR1.1: Establish a European “accessibility focal point” and an “accessibility toolbox” to support practitioners.**

A comprehensive toolbox on accessibility standards should be initiated, funded and supported by the EC. The “accessibility toolbox” could provide access to guidelines and information on physical accessibility of public transport as well as on neighbourhood accessibility planning, soft measures, information services, etc. An accessibility focal point should support practitioners which should be linked to appropriate national initiatives and institutions to develop a wider support network.

→ **PR1.2: Encourage (and later possibly oblige) beneficiaries of EU funding in the transport sector to work towards certain accessibility standards.**

The EU should encourage beneficiaries of EU funding in the transport sector to fulfill certain accessibility standards and link it to the provision of funding. Accessibility has to be seen as a comprehensive concept which includes all modes of transport as well as traveller information. In a second step the EC could oblige beneficiaries to spend a minimum share (e.g. at least 1-3%) of the received funding on accessibility measures to ensure that accessibility measures will be considered.

→ **PR1.3: Create a dedicated “co-ordination office for disability and accessibility issues” in the European Commission**

Disability and accessibility issues in general should become a cross-cutting issue through all DGs of the EC. This could be facilitated by introducing a “horizontal co-ordination office” within the EC whose responsibilities would include accessibility in urban transport. The [UK disability office](#) has been mentioned as an example for such a structure at national level.

Contact information

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NICHES+ is a Coordination Action funded by the European Commission under the 7th Framework Programme for R&D

