



Access•City

Award 2017

Examples of best practice in making
EU cities more accessible



Social Europe

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Foreword



The cities which participated in the 7th edition of the now well-established Access City Award have all shown a high level of commitment to improving the accessibility of all aspects of urban life for disabled and older citizens.

The European Commission is committed to equality of opportunities for persons with disabilities and works towards a more social and inclusive Europe for all. Accessibility policy plays a key role in removing the barriers people with disabilities still face in their daily lives. Accessibility thrives when there is the political will to make it happen and when policy makers actively engage in dialogue with experts, people with disabilities, companies and service providers. I therefore would like to congratulate all EU cities which participated in the Access City Award 2017 for leading the way in making life more accessible.

This publication is an occasion to share the good work and innovative practices developed by the cities featured here. Their initiatives provide a variety of ideas for policy makers and practical projects to make our EU cities better places to live in for our growing populations of disabled and older people. Making cities accessible will, in the end, benefit all people.

The efforts made by these very diverse cities are truly inspiring and I hope they will provide guidance and encouragement to all cities across Europe. Whatever the difficulties you face as a city, there is always a viable path leading to accessibility.

Marianne Thyssen

Commissioner for Employment,
Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility

Access•City Award 2017

Who are we?



We are the **European Commission** and the **European Disability Forum**

What is the Access City Award?



The Access City Award is an exciting prize.

It is for cities in Europe that are making it easy for everyone to live there.



Some cities are working hard to make it easy for older people and people with disabilities to live there.



The Access City Award is for cities which want to make buildings, parks, transport and many other public areas more accessible for people with disabilities and the elderly.



Information, the internet, phones and other ways to communicate can also become easier if cities plan well.



The Access City Award is a chance for cities to:

- Show how they are making their cities easy to live in
- See what they should improve more and become better for their citizens.

Why is the Access City Award important?



There are more older people and people with disabilities in Europe.

It can be hard for them to live in towns and cities.

For example, it can be hard to use transport, shops and services.



It is important to make cities easy for everyone to live in!

Chester, United Kingdom

Winner

The 2017 Access City Award Winner is the city of Chester.

Located in the North West of the United Kingdom, Chester is the largest and most populated city within the area of Cheshire West and Chester. The region has a population of 329,000 of whom some 18 per cent have a disability and 21 per cent are aged over sixty five.

Chester is an historic city famous for its 3.2 km City Walls which form the most complete circuit of Roman, Saxon and Medieval walls in the UK. It is also well known for the Rows, unique elevated walkways above the four main streets.

Chester has gone well beyond legal minimum requirements for accessibility to ensure that the city can be enjoyed by as many people as possible.



Access to the City Walls

“ Improved accessibility brings not only reassurance and the necessary support to those who struggle with accessibility, but lasting economic and social benefits to the city and we will continue to place accessibility at the heart of everything we deliver. ”

Cllr Angela Claydon
Lord Mayor of Chester



“ 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

Bringing history within reach

As an Ancient Monument, access to the City Walls has had to be tackled with great care and sensitivity. Ramps and level access have been introduced over many years and are now at 11 locations. At other points where complete access is not possible for heritage reasons, access has nonetheless been improved as far as possible, for example to give access to ambulant disabled people and those with vision impairment. Improvements here have included tactile paving and additional handrails.

All sections of the elevated Rows have been made accessible with a combination of ramps, level access routes, a lift and an escalator. Access points are widely advertised on panels around the city and in the city centre access leaflet.

To enable disabled people needing specialist facilities to enjoy the city for longer, four Changing Places units have been provided. These are larger than standard accessible toilets and include equipment such as hoists, an adjustable height changing bed, washbasin and shower.

“ The new Changing Places facilities mean that we can now spend a whole day in Chester city centre. Without these facilities we would either have to return home or back to the day centre to use the toilets there. The Changing Places facilities also help to encourage people from other areas to visit the city. ”

Jan Hutcheson
Physical and learning disability



Access to the upper level shopping in the Rows

Getting around the city

In addition to all of its 129 public transport buses being fully accessible, Chester provides a dial-a-ride scheme operating eight wheelchair accessible vehicles to provide door to door transport to those who cannot access mainstream services. All the buses serving the Park and Ride facility into the city are also accessible.

The Council policy requires all of its 192 licensed taxis to be wheelchair accessible and to include additional features such as induction loops and colour contrasted grab handles. Taxis can be picked up from 20 ranks, hailed on the street or pre-booked.

To help disabled people get around the shops, the city provides a large number of designated parking spaces and operates a Shopmobility scheme which enables older and disabled people to hire a wheelchair or scooter to help them access the shopping areas. The scheme is available seven days a week and also provides “Ability Angels” who will act as companions to assist those who need help with their shopping.



Participating in city life

Almost all existing municipal buildings in Chester have been adapted to make them accessible and all new public services and facilities are designed to be accessible from the outset. These include the city’s Forum customer service centre and 12 libraries across the city which are fitted with iConnect video kiosks to enable people to speak face to face with council customer service staff. British Sign Language interpreters are available on request and material can be provided in large print, Braille or audio formats.

Accessible information

The city’s website aims to comply with international accessibility standards and is close to meeting its goal of “Double A” standard as a minimum.

All Council information is available in alternative formats.

The local offer On-line Directory of Services provides a wide range of information, including details on accessibility, public transport and car parking. Since 2011 DisabledGo (a leading organisation run by and for disabled people which carries out access surveys) has been commissioned by the city to produce and maintain on-line access information about over 1000 venues. The region’s award winning iTravelSmart app provides up to date travel information, interactive maps and transport timetables. It assists people with and without disabilities to find job opportunities and make journeys easier to access.



It is important that disabled people and their representative organisations have a mechanism to provide input into the design and delivery of developments and public services and facilities. The Corporate Disability Access Forum works with developers and designers to ensure that the needs of disabled people are considered and that, wherever possible, minimum standards are exceeded.

Graham Garnett
Senior Access Officer,
Cheshire West and Chester Council

Accessibility at the heart of city planning

The One City Plan is a 15 year strategy which guides the future regeneration of Chester. The Plan puts accessibility high on the agenda. A dedicated Access Officer works across the council and its private sector partners on all aspects of access improvement and disabled people and their organisations have a strong voice in all developments through the Corporate Disability Access Forum. This post has been in place since the 1990s.

Examples of new inclusive developments include the Storyhouse, a new cultural centre for Chester which will feature an inclusive theatre, cinema, library and food outlets under one roof in the heart of the city centre. The Northgate scheme, a major mixed use development of retail leisure and cultural facilities will include the city's first hotel with a room fitted with ceiling track hoists as well as a Changing Places facility.

The city's innovative approach to engagement with disabled people at the heart of planning new developments was recognised by Government in the Accessible Britain Challenge Awards 2015.



I became more severely disabled in the last couple of years. The Shopmobility scheme enables me to visit Chester city centre three to four times per week to do my shopping and meet up with friends. I've regained my independence and I'm able to interact with people again. Without Shopmobility I'd feel very isolated. I can even access the City Walls and Rows which I never thought I'd be able to do again.

Evelyn Morris
Shopmobility customer

Rotterdam, The Netherlands

Second
prize

Second place in the 2017 Access City Awards goes to the city of Rotterdam. Rotterdam is the Netherlands' second largest city and principal sea port with a population of 610,000, about 30,000 of whom have indicated that they have a disability.

It is a relatively young city, having been extensively rebuilt after the last war. Rotterdam sees itself as a city "made for and by its inhabitants."

Creating barrier free public spaces

Guidelines for the outdoor space were drawn up in 2014 to improve accessibility and were created jointly through dialogues between the municipality and stakeholders. These include height differences of no more than 2 cm in walking routes, unevenness no greater than 3 cm, clearance of at least 180 cm and at least one accessible parking space out of every 200 within 50 m of the main entrance of public buildings.

Also in 2014, the Standard for road design was modified to reflect accessibility requirements. Whenever major works are planned, accessibility experts are involved to ensure that the proposal meets the needs and wishes of disabled people.

Access problems can be reported by phone, Internet or using an app called Better Outdoors. Under the "rapid repair" scheme, the city will put right within 24 hours urgent complaints that affect access.



A blind couple walking
in the Museumpark



Shopping in the market at Delfshaven



Hoek van Holland:
most accessible
beach in the Netherlands

“

I use the “Better Outdoors” app constantly! It’s easy to use on your mobile phone and they really repair everything very quickly.

Nel
Senior citizen

”

Since 2007, Rotterdam has had the most accessible beach in the Netherlands with free beach wheelchairs and walking aids, accessible toilets and a wheelchair friendly path to the high water mark.

In 2016, the city published a vision document for games, sports, exercise and meeting places in which accessibility and an inclusive society play a central role.

Moving around the city

Rotterdam has a large public transport network. Under Dutch law, 80 per cent of all public transport stops must be accessible to wheelchair users by 2019. Rotterdam had already exceeded this figure by 2015 and by 2018 almost all stops will be accessible.

Public transport stops also feature audio information for people with vision impairments as well as audio tours of busy places.

There is also a policy that discarded bicycles are removed to keep pedestrian walkways clear.

The new central railway station, which was opened in 2015, was designed and built with input from accessibility experts.

Throughout the city a neighbourhood bus service, run by volunteers, provides a service for everyone aged 55 and over to promote senior citizen participation in mainstream society. By 2017 all these buses will be wheelchair accessible.

“

The way Transport on Demand is being constructed is all about the people it concerns. We're asked about our experience, demands and wishes. We matter, you can feel that in everything.

Leah
Mother of a user of
Transport on Demand

”



Home modifications, domestic help and more are available under the Municipal Support Act

Those citizens unable to use public transport can use an on-demand taxi service provided by accessible people carriers. There are currently around 21,000 regular users.

Creating an inclusive society

To help those in need of support, fourteen advisory kiosks and front line care teams enable people to understand what support they are entitled to receive from the municipality and to organise the help they need including, for example, providing mobility scooters or installing doorstep ramps.

There is also significant investment in making sports and leisure facilities accessible to disabled people both as participants and as spectators. These include facilities for blind people to enjoy both football (at the Feynoord soccer club) and tennis. There is also an inclusive play area at the Maritime Museum and a mobility scooter route in the Botanical Gardens.

Information for all

A new demand driven website is being developed in close co-operation with the people of Rotterdam and will be ready in 2017. For those who cannot access the internet, including many older people, information and advice is also available by phone and face to face in city shops and at advice kiosks.

Neighbourhood guides are produced in hard copy with practical tips on issues such as travel and housing and information about activities in the city. Volunteers are being trained to help with a wide range of information about assistance, care and activities.

Municipal sports consultants provide information about sports options to enable disabled people to participate in activities of their choosing.

“ The outdoor space is from and for everyone. ”

Arja

Member of F2. Awareness Wide Council



A commitment to co-creation

The city of Rotterdam is firmly committed to the concept of co-creation with its citizens, including those with disabilities, at the centre of decision making on the city's plans and developments.

Accessibility (both physical and social) and inclusivity are high on the political agenda of the city and are embedded in policy and implementation at all levels. Rotterdam listens to its inhabitants through a variety of

channels as well as using a large network of expert advisers through schemes such as the Wide Council and Neighbourhood Rules which enable people to determine priorities at local level.

Regular monitoring of satisfaction levels indicates that disabled and older people in the city are increasingly content both with physical improvements and with the way in which they are being involved in decision making.

Jūrmala, Latvia

Third
Prize

Third place in the 2017 Access City Awards goes to Jūrmala in Latvia.

Jūrmala is the largest spa town on the shores of the Baltic States with 25 km of white sand beaches, extensive pine forests and a border with the Lielupe River.

With a population of some 573,000, Jūrmala leads the WHO Healthy City movement in Latvia offering therapy, social and medical rehabilitation as well as tourism.

Seaside accessibility

Accessibility for all is a key goal for Jūrmala. An 850 m accessible trail links the city with the seaside and accessible changing facilities and ramped access are provided at the popular beaches.

Jūrmala has purchased tricycles intended for use by older people and those with difficulty balancing. The city also provides tandem bikes for blind people and beach table tennis with audible table tennis balls.

Reclining chairs and special wheelchairs for swimming in the sea are also available and specially trained assistants are on hand to help with swimming if needed.

Mobility for all

After extensive reconstruction in 2015, there are now 10 train stations in Jūrmala which are accessible to wheelchair users.

All the buses are also accessible and feature low floors, ramps, colour contrasted bus numbers and interior layout and space for wheelchair users and for those travelling with baby



Special wheelchair
for swimming



buggies. Older people and those with disabilities can use public transport free.

For those unable to use public transport a door to door transport service is available with assistance to help those who need it to travel alone or with a companion.

There is also a fuel purchase benefit to provide financial assistance to disabled drivers with cars adapted to their needs.

“

The tactile paving and the audible traffic lights installed by the City Council makes access to the visually impaired centre so much easier for our visitors. The Blind Society members, most of whom are senior citizens, can now enjoy activities we offer here and the company of friends more often. This lets them lead a more active and fulfilling life. Jūrmala has progressed a lot in terms of accessibility during the last several years.

”

Boriss Zuševics
Chairman, Jūrmala branch of Latvian
Society of the Blind



Activities for senior citizens on the beach

Accessible technology

Jūrmala has redesigned its city website to make it accessible to people with vision impairments. Information can also be accessed through the Visitor Centre and all of the city's libraries.

There is also an app available which gives information about accessible sites and destinations for people with disabilities and those with young children. The municipality also funds a project to help older people use computers, smartphones and tablets.

Promoting independent living

A key goal for the city is to support disabled people into employment and independent living. A specialised workshop service provides accessible working environments and helps people to develop their functional and social skills.

Financial assistance is also available to adapt housing so that wheelchair users can live independently and a care service provides support through a range of functions including delivery of food, medicines, firewood and cooking.

In addition Jūrmala provides a wide range of sporting and other activities for both children and adults with disabilities as well as for senior citizens.

City funded programmes aimed at promoting inclusion range from wheelchair dance classes to art programmes for visually impaired people.

Extending accessibility goals

One of the main aims of Jūrmala's "Health Promotion Plan 2013 - 2020" is to develop, support and maintain an accessible and safe environment within the city.

All accessibility requirements and priorities are agreed between the municipality and organisations representing disabled and older people. Access experts are brought in to check that vital features such as ramp gradients, doorway widths and bathroom access are installed correctly.

In 2017, the city plans to carry out an audit to determine the level of





Tactile information signs
at the Raina Priedes

accessibility for every citizen is Jūrmala and to continue to work with disabled and older people to meet their needs in every aspect of city life as well as opening up further opportunities for accessible tourism.

On the agenda for future development in the Plan are better access to schools and other educational buildings; improved beach access by means of footbridges; wheelchair access to all public spaces in the city; equipment to provide access to all city council institutions and tactile information signs at cultural and tourist destinations.

“

Thanks to continued support from the Jūrmala City Council we are able to carry out projects aimed at making our city a place where everyone feels included. With the help of local funding in 2016 we inspected and adapted the route from the outskirts of Jūrmala to the city centre and printed a map of all public places and tourist attractions that are accessible for all, including people with disabilities, senior citizens and young families with strollers.

”

Regīna Simšone
Chairperson
Foundation “Jūrmala for People”

Lugo, Spain

Special mention as a Smart City

Lugo in North West Spain has been awarded a Special Mention as a Smart City.

Dating back to Roman times, Lugo is the oldest Roman city in Galicia. The Roman Wall in Lugo is the only one in the world that is still complete. It was declared a World Heritage Site in 2000.

The old town has preserved its medieval layout with narrow streets, most of which are pedestrianised. Lugo has a population of 98,134.

Modern communications in an ancient city

The municipal website of the city of Lugo has already achieved double “A” status under the guidelines of the WAI (Web Accessibility Initiative) and the city is committed to ensuring that all its website contents achieve triple “A” level.

Features include ReadSpeaker, which provides one click text to speech access to the web contents for blind people without the need to download any software and a Mailbox providing a means for people with hearing impairments to join in consultations (with a sign language interpreter if required).

An on-line accessibility guide to the city, which includes information about Lugo as an accessible tourist destination is receiving more than 200,000 visits annually.

In addition the city provides tourist signposting and accessible maps (including Braille plaques) and subtitled videos for those with hearing impairments. There is also a specific map for people with vision impairment and since 2013 the main historic monuments in the city appear in relief and are also listed in Braille.

Information with pictograms to assist people on the autism spectrum is also

The improvement in accessibility in the city of Lugo has been the result of 20 years of action plans and projects which have been possible thanks to the combined work of the organisations of disabled people and the commitment of successive local governments since 1996.

Fernanda Arrojo

Representative of people with disabilities in the Municipal Accessibility Office



Lift access to the Roman wall

provided in swimming pools, provincial government facilities and in the Provincial Museum.

Access all areas

All public buildings, schools, sports centres and social services facilities are accessible.

One particular feature is the “Smart” House (Casa da Domótica), a five storey building available for organisations of people with disabilities to rent.

Sign language interpreters are available and grants are provided to help disability organisations to develop new activities.

Getting around Lugo

Lugo is a comfortable city to get around as a pedestrian thanks to major efforts by the city to improve accessibility of the streets, squares and public spaces.

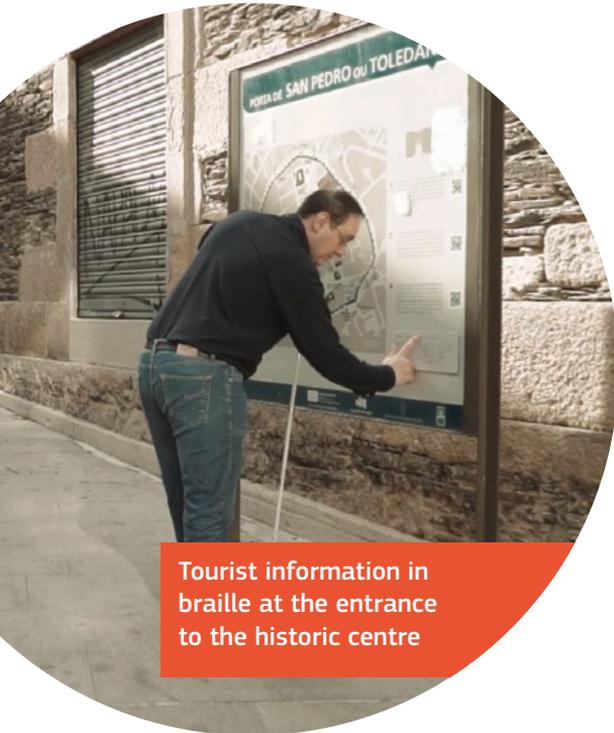
100 per cent of the buses in the city and surrounding rural area are accessible and older and disabled people have a 50 per cent reduction in fares.

Bus stops in the old town feature real time information boards indicating when the next bus is due.

Renovation of the railway station in 2015 has included new lifts and enlargement of the platforms to improve access to the trains. The station also provides an “Attendo” service (giving personal support to people with disabilities who need it). Similarly, the renewal works at the bus station in 2015 have included the removal of barriers, installation of electronic information boards and signposting.

A small number of accessible taxis and ample parking spaces for disabled people are also available.





Tourist information in braille at the entrance to the historic centre



Plaza Mayor and the Town Hall

Inclusive planning

At the heart of Lugo's success in creating a smart and accessible environment is close collaboration between the city and organisations representing disabled people. The Municipal Accessibility Cabinet comprises the Mayor's office, representatives of the municipal areas of the city and associations of disabled people.

This body meets every three months to evaluate new developments and to ensure that accessibility features are implemented in accordance with the law and best practice.

“

We can walk through the city without obstacles, access public buildings and museums, people with hearing difficulties can listen to the municipal website...

We hope that in the coming years we will continue working on a city that's accessible to all.

”

Matilde Fernández
Wheelchair user

Skellefteå, Sweden

Special Mention for its commitment to improving the working environment

Skellefteå, a coastal city in northern Sweden with a population of 72,000, has been awarded a Special Mention for its commitment to improving the working environment.

A former industrial town depending on the timber and mining industries, Skellefteå has now developed a thriving new focus on innovation and identifies itself with the slogan “make room for ideas”.

With its long, cold winters bringing the challenge of snow and ice, Skellefteå prides itself on opening up the city to everyone whatever their abilities or backgrounds.

Opening up opportunities for employment

Access to work is one of the top political priorities for Skellefteå. A group of officials from different departments in the city work together to address the needs of those who are far from the labour market such as young people with disabilities.

The combination of political commitment and the allocation of resources ensures tailor made placements, internships and adjustments which together facilitate employment for some 250 people with disabilities across the city.

For example, young disabled people are given priority for summer internships within the municipality and the City Board supports full-time employment in the municipality for 20 people with a special school background.

“ We feel that the municipal management appreciate our unique knowledge and utilise our experience to create a more accessible city. ”

Mats Rönnblom
Member of the
organisation of
visually impaired people



Delivering groceries, keeping the environment clean...the municipal janitor's team does it all

“

My new colleagues have helped me to find the tools I needed to challenge myself and to focus on my strengths, what I'm good at instead of my weaknesses.

”

Josefine Stenlund
who has Asperger's syndrome

These and other priorities are set out in the Accessibility and Participation Strategy for 2015 – 2025 which has top level political buy in from the city. The Plan focusses on three areas of increased accessibility, raising levels of awareness and better opportunities for education and employment. These strategic goals are mainstreamed through all major city policies.

A Communal Policy on Accessible Public Spaces is being developed. It provides guiding principles and layouts to assist city planners. The aim is to ensure that there is consistency and coherence in design in features such as pedestrian crossings and bus stops.

“

Having a real job that pays a real salary means the world to me. It shows that the city believes in me – which I have done myself all along.

”

Sara Brännstrom
who has a learning disability is
working in a school canteen



Creating a city for everyone

All public buildings in Skellefteå meet Swedish national accessibility laws and standards. There is a municipal access expert who works with developers from the earliest stages of construction and systematic monitoring and inspection of building plans makes sure that high levels of accessibility are maintained.

This approach not only ensures access for wheelchair users, people with low vision and those with cognitive impairment but also increases safety and usability for the public as a whole.

This inclusive policy extends to playgrounds which are systematically being upgraded and improved to ensure that they can be used by all children, regardless of their abilities.



Tactile paths throughout the city make orientation easier for visually impaired people

Access to nature and leisure activities are also a priority with facilities on hand to enable people to participate in skiing, skating, cycling and other activities.

Accessible housing is also vital and a 2015 inventory of apartments and other buildings led to an action plan for further access improvements.

Transport: the key to independence

The city of Skellefteå recognises that access to public transport is one of the most important aspects of independence.

All the city's buses are fully accessible with kneeling mechanisms, ramps, text screens and voice synthesis. Bus drivers have all received disability awareness training.

The municipality is currently encouraging anyone entitled to use paratransit to use public transport free of charge.

Access to information

The city's website is fully accessible in accordance with international standards. It includes integrated voice synthesis, sign language and easy read sections.

A digital inventory/database is under construction which will provide information on access to sports, cultural and other activities.

Since 2014, the city and the local power company have worked together to provide SMS information on current construction sites and obstacles in the city's public space. This is particularly valuable to people with vision impairment who often cannot access web based information.



Wheelchair football every Tuesday night gives more people access to sport.

Alessandria, Italy

Special Mention for its commitment to accessibility in challenging financial circumstances

Alessandria is a city of some 94,000 inhabitants located in the Piemonte region of Italy.

The city lies between the rivers Tanaro and Bormida and access is provided via its four bridges to the historical city centre.

The city has been awarded a Special Mention for its commitment to accessibility in challenging financial circumstances.

Facing a tough economic challenge

Such is the city's commitment to accessibility that, despite being declared bankrupt in 2012, the

municipality turned to the private sector and to local associations and institutions to ensure continuity of their plans to improve accessibility.

Now that the acute phase of the financial crisis has passed, the city has included in its budget for 2015 – 2017 two specific items of expenditure: to sustain and support accessibility and disability awareness programmes and to finance the activities of the city's Disability Manager.

The work of monitoring the needs of disabled people and planning ways to address them is carried out by the office of the Disability Manager in partnership with some 40 associations of people with disabilities.



The network, coordinated by innovative professionals such as the Disability Manager and the European project expert, is extremely important to join forces and create a widespread culture of thinking for everyone, starting from needs, where associations, organisations, institutions, universities, volunteers and investors work together.

Paola Testa

Disability manager of the Municipality of Alessandria





“

Projects of “Sport for all” are crucial to breaking down barriers and pushing the limits. Each one is different but with equal rights.

”

Francesco Margaria
Prosthesis wearer

A city for all

This historic city is between two rivers and there are four bridges providing access to and from the centre both for vehicles and pedestrians.

The city is implementing an action plan which identifies key issues of accessibility in the urban environment and sets out a timetable and agenda to tackle them. Initiatives include a new bridge over the river Tanaro with a separate pedestrian facility (opened in October 2016), refurbishment of the Palace of Sport and Italy Park areas to bring in play equipment useable by all children including those with physical, sensory or intellectual impairments and six lanes of “Sport for All” facilities at the city Athletics Track.

Promoting awareness

The municipality is working hard to change the culture of the city in terms of

attitudes towards disability and disabled people.

Initiatives include “mass awareness raising” through targeted projects such as networking with associations of disabled people in the city to encourage joint participation in proposals and calls for tender, promoting the importance of sport for all (through adapted sports courses) and the publication of a brochure to help families of people with disabilities through the legal bureaucracy to get the help they need.

There are also activities in schools to increase the awareness of children and young people including a “solidarity” race with sports demonstrations by disabled athletes and a “virtual fines” scheme engaging teenagers in detecting traffic violations that impede access for disabled people (such as thoughtless parking).



Simulating disability issues in schools

Communications made easy

The city is implementing a “Plan for Accessible Communication”. This involves restyling the municipal website to adopt a universal language with symbols, photographs and tactile pictograms. It also includes a “computers made easy” course for people aged over 65 and for those with disabilities who need help with new technology.

Also planned is an event in 2017 (Abilitando) which will include demonstrations of new technology to help overcome disability as well as workshops and conferences on entering the world of work and education for disabled people.



Sport for All in action



Demonstrating a free downloadable app to help children with autism communicate with teachers, parents and friends

Promoting mobility

Improving access to the city's transport system is also a priority. The railway station has been equipped with six lifts and an underpass with a tactile map and tactile guide strips.

In addition to introducing accessible buses, the city is also putting in place a call centre for users with disabilities and is installing displays and next stop communicator systems.

Training for local taxi drivers is managed by the disability organisations, in association with the municipality.

Funchal, Portugal

Special Mention for its commitment to accessibility in a difficult geographic context

Funchal, capital of the island of Madeira, has been awarded a Special Mention for its commitment to accessibility in a difficult geographical context.

Located between the sea and the steep mountains behind, Funchal, with its population of some 111,000 has many challenges in providing an accessible environment both for its residents and for the island's many tourists for whom Funchal is the epicentre of cultural life in Madeira.

Eliminating barriers

The city is developing strategic plans to eliminate barriers to access and create a "city for all". The first stage of the systematic approach is a mapping exercise of all the areas in need of improvement.

This will be followed by identification of the improvements that are needed and then a budget will be set.

There is strong emphasis throughout this process on engaging with disabled people in the affected areas to ensure that their needs are fully understood.



The Audioplage system

“

I no longer need to travel almost 51 km to go to the only beach in Madeira where I could swim. Now I can swim closer to home, like any other citizen, whenever I want.

”

Hernani Silva



The Portuguese Association of Disabled Persons participating in the Carnival Festival

Promoting accessible tourism

Praia Formosa is the first beach in Portugal adapted specifically to the needs of visually impaired people, with a device called Audioplage that allows blind people to swim independently and in safety.

The Ponta Gorda Swimming Complex has regularly won awards since 2010 as an “Accessible beach, beach for all”.

The swimming pool has a hydraulic chair to help people in and out of the water, accessible toilets, changing facilities, restaurants and other services.



The famous island basket cars

There is also a plan to adapt the famous Madeira island basket cars, two seater structures made of wicker and wood and controlled by two attendants so that they can be used by disabled people.



The Ponta Garda Bathing Complex

The Tourism website has an area dedicated to accessible tourism with information about accessible routes in the city and where to find suitable accommodation and other facilities.

The future needs and demands for accessible tourism are being studied and will form the basis for an accessible tourism strategy which will be put in place over the next few years.

Inclusive facilities and services

The city is introducing an innovative concept of public service called the “Citizen Shop” bringing all services and facilities together in one building while also integrating all on-line services onto a single platform to make access easier both for residents and for visitors.

The city’s Inclusive Employment Club provides information, guidance and support on education and employment to the public as a whole but with a special emphasis on disabled people. In parallel, there is a service providing support to ensure that the capacities of young people and adults with disabilities can be developed to the fullest extent help them manage daily tasks and live independently where possible. A number of workers with disabilities are employed in Funchal City Hall.

The city is also committed to providing technical support to help disabled citizens to use information technology.

The Institute of Cities and Villages with Mobility in Portugal, has awarded a certificate of accessibility to Funchal, within the scope of a national level pilot project on Accessible Tourist Itineraries of Portugal.

Meeting the needs of older citizens

In several parishes of Funchal there are Community Centres, which offer various recreational, leisure and training activities to older people. In addition, since 2007, the city of Funchal has a Senior University,

aimed especially at people aged over 50. The goal is to improve people’s lives, reinforcing their role in society.

Getting around the city

There are different types of public transport in different areas of the city to suit the steep terrain.

The local bus fleet, which is run by a public/private partnership, includes a special transport fleet with four wheelchair accessible minibuses. In addition, the fleet of four electric, environmentally friendly minibuses are also wheelchair accessible.

The main bus fleet includes 20 low floor vehicles with kneeling systems and space for wheelchair users.

There are also 10 lift equipped buses operating in the higher areas of the city and 21 accessible taxis.



Participating in the Access•City Award 2018

Who can take part in the Access City Award?



The Access City Award is for cities where more than 50,000 people live.



If your country has less than 2 cities like this
2 or more towns can join together to take part.



Your city must be in a country that is part of the European Union.



The European Union is a group of countries that work to make Europe better.

The city that won the Access City Award last year cannot take part this time.

But other cities from last year can take part.

How to apply for the Access City Award



You have to apply for the Access City Award.

To apply means to:

- say that you want to win the award
- say why you should win



You have to be a government organisation to apply.

This means an organisation that runs the city and makes big decisions about it.



We will tell you the date when you can apply. It will be in spring 2017.



You have to fill in a form on the internet to apply.

There will be information about the form on this website:

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



There will be more information and rules on this website:

[http://ec.europa.eu/socialmain.p?langId=en&catId=88&eventsId=1023&furtherEvents=yes 21jsp?langId=en&catId=88&eventsId=1023&furtherEvents=yes 21](http://ec.europa.eu/socialmain.p?langId=en&catId=88&eventsId=1023&furtherEvents=yes%21jsp?langId=en&catId=88&eventsId=1023&furtherEvents=yes%21)

How will the winner be chosen?



Some groups of people will choose who wins the Access City Award.

There is a group of older people and people with disabilities in each country.



They will look at what cities are doing to make things easier, like:

- Buildings and public places like parks
- Transport
- Information, the internet, phones and other ways to communicate
- Other public services like health services, sports places and shopping centres





The groups will choose up to 3 cities in their countries that are doing well.

Then another group will look at all the cities that have been chosen in Europe.

They will choose the winner.

When will people find out the winner?



We will tell people who the winner is at a big meeting on 4 and 5 December 2017.

The meeting will be about making life better for people with disabilities in Europe.

For more information or help



Please email: secretariat@accesscityaward.eu

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