Council of Ministers

IMPROVING ACCESSIBILITY OF TRANSPORT
Implementation at the National Level of Measures to Improve Accessibility

Conclusions and Recommendations

This document will be examined under item 4 “Points for approval: Improving Accessibility of Transport” of the draft Agenda for the Ljubljana Council of Ministers.

Ministers are asked to take note of the information provided and agree the Recommendations.
IMPLEMENTATION AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL OF MEASURES TO
IMPROVE ACCESSIBILITY

CONCLUSIONS

1. Introduction

At their 2001 Council in Lisbon, Ministers agreed a set of recommendations designed to improve accessibility throughout the transport system and asked Deputies to review progress on implementing these recommendations¹. At the same time, Ministers more specifically recommended that guidelines on implementation at the national level for measures to improve the accessibility of transport should be prepared.²

This report responds to these mandates, setting out a general framework for the successful and sustainable delivery of transport policies and services that are accessible to disabled and older people and well as to the community as a whole.

Within this framework, this report:

− highlights best practice in national-level initiatives to implement accessibility improvements in the transport system as well as efforts to encourage effective implementation of measures in local and regional areas;

− identifies and assesses barriers to implementation – such as those of an institutional, financial, or policy nature;

− proposes ways in which these implementation barriers can be overcome – more specifically, what national governments can do to facilitate accessibility improvements.

¹ Consolidated Resolution No 2001/3 on Accessible Transport
CEMT/CM(2001)15/FINAL/CORR1

² Conclusions and Recommendations on Transport and the Ageing of the Population,
CEMT/CM(2001)14/FINAL
2. **Current policy context across countries**

Growing awareness of the importance of mobility for disabled people is increasingly both the result of, and a contributor to, wider socio-economic policies that seek to ensure equality for all people, notably those who are older and disabled. In this context, transport policy does not stand alone: to be truly effective, it must form part of broader policies and legislation in areas such as land use, health, education and social policy.

Although the basis for the development of national accessibility policies is increasingly likely to involve legislation – in a growing number of cases, disability rights legislation – it will probably also include other initiatives, such as non-statutory guidelines and advice, consultation and financial assistance from the state; and government-funded research and development.

In addition, recognising that consultation with disability organisations at all levels of government is indispensable, many countries have established national advisory or consultative committees with duties and rights based on national legislation.

3. **Challenges to implementing policies to improve accessibility**

It has often proved difficult for governments to ensure that their policies to improve accessibility are effectively implemented. National policies to improve accessibility are not developed and applied in a vacuum; they require the active involvement of actors at local and regional levels of government, the engagement of disability organisations, the support of industries and businesses that have to implement the policies, and, in many cases, the availability of adequate finance. This necessary consultation and coordination is both a facilitator of and barrier to policy implementation.

In addition, accessibility remains in many countries in the margins of transport policy, considered downstream from strategic decision-making for the transport sector. As a result, financial resources necessary for accessibility improvements to transport infrastructure and vehicles are too often considered late in the decision-making process.

Though voluntary co-ordination and compliance with legislation is preferred to the use of draconian enforcement measures, there is an argument for government having the power to enforce compliance, should the need arise.

And without political commitment and engagement at national level, the necessary improvements to accessibility of transport vehicles and infrastructure cannot take place.
4. **Recommendations for better implementation of national policies to improve access to transport**

A number of the recommendations below have been previously agreed by Ministers of Transport. They are re-iterated here as elements essential to effective implementation of national policies to improve accessibility. It is recommended to:

- Accept that effective legislation on accessible transport must be based on a thorough understanding – emerging from research and consultation -- of the needs of disabled people. The involvement of disabled people in this process is essential, as is effective consultation at national government level with representative organisations of disabled people.

- Recognise that anti-discrimination legislation is a mainstream policy instrument and that access to transport services is a key component of that policy, essential to achieving full integration for disabled people.

- Ensure that there is effective co-ordination between all parties involved – national and local government, disabled persons and the transport industry. Successful implementation of policies depends on this, on appropriate financial measures, and on continuing political commitment.

- Develop regulations and guidance that are sufficiently specific to provide manufacturers, operators and local authorities with the information they need to design and implement accessible services, but, do so in a way that leaves room for innovative solutions.

- Use effective means (e.g., financial incentives and sanctions) of ensuring that there is compliance with legislation and regulations.

- Monitor and evaluate the results of improved, accessible transport services to better inform future actions.

- Recognise that the benefits of accessible transport will only be obtained if the surrounding environment is also fully accessible.
With a view to improving national implementation of policies for transport accessibility and to monitoring progress toward that goal both nationally and within ECMT,

**Ministers are asked to:**

- Recall the following previous Ministerial commitments:
  
  - Consolidated Resolution No 2001/3 on Accessible Transport CEMT/CM(2001)15/FINAL/CORR1;
  
  - Conclusions and Recommendations on Transport and the Ageing of the Population, CEMT/CM(2001)14/FINAL;
  

- Note the findings of this report;

- Ensure that an effective mechanism is established on a national level to enable disabled people to be consulted and involved in the development and implementation of transport policies that affect them;

- Verify that systems and structures at a national level are in place to allow all actors-- governments, transport providers, and industry -- to work together and to the same agenda to implement national policies for better accessibility;

- Consider where legislation is needed (at European, national and/or regional levels) to ensure that the transport needs of disabled people are recognised and delivered as an integral part of transport policy;

- Carry out regular monitoring of progress toward implementation of legislation and policies in this field and evaluate whether they are making a positive impact on the mobility of disabled people;

- Agree to disseminate the recommendations contained in this report to all relevant stakeholders in their countries, and to monitor progress made against them on a regular basis;

- Agree that ECMT follows up with Member countries on implementation of policies to improve accessibility along the lines of these recommendations and reports back in due time.