



EUROCITIES – “Barrier-free City for All” Working Group

Minutes of the 16th Working Group Meeting

Place	Lisbon
Time	Friday, 17 March 2017
Participants	see Annex 1
Programme / Agenda	see in the text
Moderator	Barbara Berninger

The meeting took place as part of the Mobility Forum. The members of the working group had the opportunity to take part in the conference entitled “A new mobility paradigm: build a city for all”. More than 100 participants from over 10 countries attended the conference. The conference’s aim was to initiate a discussion of the paradigm shift in European cities. The main topics discussed were the development of responses to climate change, how to deal with urban wasteland, and mobility for all. Lisbon’s deputy mayor underlined in his welcoming address that cities need more know-how and expertise to deal with these current questions. Important topics for Lisbon’s urban development are public transport, park and ride concepts and bicycle use. In addition, Lisbon has launched a programme for the refurbishment of 30 public squares. The deputy mayor stressed that for efficient urban planning and in order to learn how to reach compromises, it was important that the administration’s “way of working” should evolve. Essential in this context is better cooperation between the different administrative departments (horizontal approach). Some members of the BCA working group spoke in working groups at the conference.

1. Internal work of the Working Group

The minutes of the working group’s last meeting in Brussels as well as the agenda for the meeting in Lisbon were confirmed.

1.1. Chair and Vice-Chair

Berlin was unanimously elected as the BCA working group chair for 2017–2018. Toulouse was elected vice-chair for the same period.

2. News from the cities

Prague:

The city of Prague intends to introduce a new parking system for cars in the city. **Karolina Klimova** thanked the members of the working group for making available many interesting examples of similar projects in a range of member cities. Prague is interested in the experiences of other cities in the field of parking management for certain users, like

commuters or local residents as well as the management of delivery traffic. It is envisaged that Prague's citizens will continue to park free of charge.

Gothenburg:

Brigitta Thielen told the working group that her city, as the first in Sweden, has launched a programme for the comprehensive inclusion of people with disabilities. The programme is based on the right to:

- equal and democratic participation
- health care and personal security
- education
- work and housing
- participation in culture and society

Among other things, the city has developed an app that warns users against barriers in the city. Brigitta Thielen shared information material, which is attached to these minutes.

Ljubljana:

Karel Pollak informed the working group about Ljubljana's action plan with regard to a barrier-free city. The focal points here are:

- support for property owners
- public services
- removal of barriers in the city

The aim is to create incentives for private owners to redesign their properties in a barrier-free manner. Karel Pollak suggested that in one of the coming meetings of the working group, the question of how to finance measures for making cities barrier-free should be discussed.

Ljubljana has also launched an internet platform through which citizens can report barriers in public spaces. This platform is managed under the direct authority of the mayor's office. Complaints must be answered within three days. The city creates incentives for the removal of such barriers. About 90% of the barriers reported are removed in a timely manner.

The city's highly visible initiative to provide an obstacle course in central locations to be overcome by citizens in the role of a blind or deaf person or as a wheelchair-user will be continued in 2017.

Lyon Métropole:

Christian Minaudier informed the working group that efforts for a barrier-free city are being made with the use of new technologies, for instance through a voice response system at traffic lights.

Frankfurt:

Friederike Schlegel told the working group that a staff unit "inclusion" has been created within the city administration. The city receives grants covering 50% of the costs incurred in the barrier-free development of its transport infrastructure.

Barcelona:

Laura Trujillo reported the following developments in Barcelona:

The Accessibility Committee (Ponència d'accessibilitat) is made up of representatives from several city departments related to either physical or communicative accessibility. During 2016, the committee met 42 times, gathering 433 participants in several working groups. The following actions/working groups can be highlighted.

- *Museums*. Publication "Accessible exhibitions" (Catalan version), a guidebook on how to remove communication barriers and to facilitate access to cultural content.
- *Shared space-streets*. The working-group has drafted a technical document with a range of solutions implemented throughout the city to be discussed and assessed by citizens with visual impairments.
- *Popular events*. Study on the accessibility and monitoring of accessibility of the theatre spaces and locations during the local festival of La Mercè.
- *Accessible tourism*. Field work to gather accessibility data from 372 tourist spots and 105 museums, galleries and theatres.
- *Accessible shopping*. This working group has gathered data on 52,000 shops and stores to assess their level of accessibility.
- *Scooters on the bus*. Pilot project to allow the access of scooters to buses and the underground.
- *Byelaw on café terraces*. Analysis of 50 individual spaces in different districts.

Toulouse:

Toulouse Métropole is responsible for the barrier-free accessibility of roads and public spaces while the city of Toulouse is responsible for barrier-free access to buildings, and the transport company Tisséo is responsible for barrier-free public transport.

With the help of the project "Metro: Draw me a station", people with a cognitive disability can now use public transport by themselves. The project is part of the Accessibility Road Master Plan (ARMP) and is funded by the Public Transport Accessibility Program (Ad'Ap). Part of the action plan is to raise awareness among the staff of the city administration responsible for the interests of persons with disabilities as well as among Tisséo's staff. Especially the staff of the city's construction supervision units were trained to ensure the correct implementation of the requirements relating to barrier-free accessibility.

Lisbon:

In the course of complex planning processes, e.g. a barrier-free connection between train, underground, bus and tram, taking into account the concerns of persons with disabilities is by now a firm component in the coordination of processes between different departments of the city's administration. This concerns especially the development of guidance systems for the blind. **Pedro Homem de Gouveia** informed the working group that the city administration, in cooperation with the tourism office, has published the "Lisbon for all" tourism guide. He handed out an English version of it to the working group members. An online tool is at the planning stage. Specialist rental services for wheelchairs, scooters and other assistive devices (e.g. bath lifts) are listed in this guide. These assistive devices are also delivered to and picked up from hotels.

Dresden:

Matthias Pfeil informed the working group about the transnational project “a barrier-free Bohemian-Saxon border region”. The programme was jointly launched by the Czech district of Ústí and the Saxon capital. For its implementation, funds from the subsidy programme Interreg Vb are being used. One major aim is the development of a transnational information portal which informs about the accessibility and usability of public buildings and facilities for persons with disabilities. The city of Dresden is highly interested in an exchange of experience with other regions and cities and has requested that this topic be put on next meeting’s agenda.

With the Passenger Transport Act (PBefG), which came into force January 2013, German legislation was widened to include an obligation for authorities and providers to take much greater account of the needs of people with restricted mobility.

The existing standards and technical solutions for buses currently do not guarantee barrier-free access without the use of ramps, even if stations are designed to be barrier-free. To ensure this, a European directive is needed. The city of Dresden has outlined the need for further research and has asked Eurocities for support in the implementation of a corresponding research project. A letter from the city of Dresden expressing this request was received by Eurocities.

Ghent:

Robin Julien reported on the expansion of barrier-free infrastructure as a significant part of the mobility plan “Ghent 2030”. The reduction of noise pollution and the design of public spaces that contribute to a healthy lifestyle are part of the plan’s focus. (Promotion of transport by bike and on foot, improvements to public transport, parking management for privately used cars, traffic calming and traffic safety).

An accessibility officer is employed to co-ordinate the work of ‘Gent accessible for all’. The Department for Population and Welfare is hosting the officer, although it is stressed that the officer works for the whole city administration. The accessibility officer has a background in architecture with a lot of experience working in the public sector. The main aim is to provide technical support alongside the consultants within the Disabled Persons Unit.

Warsaw:

Michael Mazur reported that the city’s potential for cooperation with NGOs in the area of expanding barrier-free infrastructure is currently being evaluated. By now, 100 % of buses and bus stops have barrier-free access. With the support of the ‘Only One Foundation’, Warsaw organises a “Miss Wheelchair” contest. In the meantime, a guide to the “Miss Wheelchair” contest has been published.

Further information on the “Miss Wheelchair” contest is available online under the following link: <http://misswheelchairworld.com/de/6,promotional-materials.html>

Berlin:

Dr. Imke Steinmeyer (Senate Department for the Environment, Transport and Climate Protection) presented Berlin’s efforts to redesign public road spaces as areas of encounter and to take into account the interests of persons with disabilities in the process of this

redesign. Importance is attached to the participation of persons with disabilities in the entire process, beginning at the planning stage. It has been observed in practice, however, that the widest possible consultation processes do not necessarily lead to good solutions and outcomes. Clever project management that reaches compromise solutions in the interests of all is necessary. **Barbara Berninger** added that, in her opinion, Tel Aviv is the capital of participation, and that Ireland is also taking innovative paths. Participation should not be understood as spontaneous input, but as a process that entails the assumption of responsibility. **Hildrun Knuth**, representative of people with disabilities in the district Mitte, informed the working group about the focus of her work and the participation of persons with disabilities.

3. Joint meeting with the Eurocities WG “Safe and active travel”

Subsequently, the working group had for the first time a joint meeting with the EUROCITIES working group “Safe and active travel”. A representative of Madrid’s municipal transport company reported on ways to improve the safety of pedestrians in public spaces. A representative of the OECD’s International Transport Forums informed the two working groups about the international project: “Safer City Streets - the global traffic safety network for liveable cities”. The cities of Bogota, Barcelona, Lyon, London, Paris, New York, Chicago, Lisbon und Copenhagen are taking part in this project. The aim of the project is the development of an international database to facilitate the analysis of risk factors and to facilitate the development of concepts for improving road safety.

4. The next meeting

The next BCA working group meeting will take place from the 16th to the 18th of October in Toulouse as part of the Mobility Forum. According to Barbara Berninger, more time for the work of the BCA working group will be made available then.

Gerd Grenner / Karin Oster