

Welcome to the Mediate project

Europe's population is ageing, and already one in every ten European citizens is aged 60 or over. The United Nations estimates that 10% of all people have a disability. Over half the population of older people lives in urban areas, so it is becoming increasingly important for urban transport systems to be accessible. The two year Mediate project aims to establish a common European methodology for measuring accessibility to urban public transport. This will contribute to the provision of inclusive transport systems with better and easier access for all citizens.

Mediate (MEthodology for Describing the Accessibility of Transport in Europe) is supported by the EU under the Seventh Framework Programme. Our main outputs will be:

The identification of a set of common European indicators for describing accessibility
The development of a self-assessment tool for measuring accessibility of urban transport
The establishment of a portal on accessibility in public transport, which will act as a window to good practice, relevant legislation, related projects and research, among other information
The publication of a Good Practice Guide
The creation of an End User Platform representing a broad range of passenger groups

This is the first in a series of 6-monthly e-newsletters. Anyone wishing to receive the newsletter should contact ojung@polis-online.org or register via the website: www.mediate-project.eu



Low floor bus with ramps deployed



Giving travel advice in a staffed London station

Project news

Involving users

User involvement is vital to Mediate. Stakeholders are participating through membership of the following groups, all of which are contributing experience, advice and expertise through dedicated meetings.

- End User Platform: 10 representatives of European and national organisations dealing with disabilities and reduced mobility problems. The Platform is giving users' views on the identification of indicators and the development of the self assessment tool and website, and collecting examples of good practice. It will continue beyond the lifespan of Mediate.
- Working Group: more than 20 European cities across 12 countries represented by local transport authorities or public transport operators. Members are inputting to indicator definition and development of the self assessment tool and website. They will also provide local data to support the validation of indicators, and contribute case studies to the good practice directory
- Expert Group: 5-6 international experts within the field of accessibility to public transport representing different stakeholder groups: end users, operators, designers, manufacturers. The expert group is providing advice and

support, particularly on indicator definition and the development of the self assessment system. This includes reviewing relevant deliverables.

All three user groups will be able to share knowledge and local practice, and will have immediate access to the tools developed within Mediate.

A reference point for information on public transport accessibility

Mediate's reference portal on accessibility in public transport 'APTIE' will be online shortly. The portal aims to provide information on legislation, good practice, research and events related to accessibility in public transport. As a reader of the Mediate newsletter, you will be informed once the website is online. The website will then be improved through a collaborative process. Your feedback would be of great help! Meanwhile, you can visit the Mediate website: www.mediate-project.eu



Snapshot of APTIE portal

First stakeholders meeting

All three stakeholder groups attended a successful Mediate launch conference on 17 March 2009 in Brussels. This included a review of current and previous initiatives for measuring accessibility in public transport, an introduction to the tools to be developed within Mediate and discussion of users' role and expectations. Major comments from participants included that improved accessibility may lead to higher expectations from older and disabled people, and the interchange between different transport modes is as important as the accessibility of each single trip. There was also discussion about the target group of Mediate. It was suggested that the project should systematically consider the different activity barriers faced by transport users, taking account of factors such as age, gender and ethnicity.

The following day saw the first meeting of the Mediate Working Group. Stakeholders and consortium staff discussed a preliminary series of indicators describing accessibility to public transport in Europe. This was a very constructive process which demonstrated the value of engaging with a range of perspectives from different users and countries across Europe. Preliminary indicators have been identified across four major themes: Service Operation and Standards, Policy and Investment, Vehicles and Built Environment, and Information and Training. Stakeholders' input will help inform definition of a refined, common set of indicators that will be used for the Mediate self assessment tool.

Your help is needed....

....to identify examples of best practice. These will help us compile the Good Practice Guide, to be issued in November 2010. Members of all stakeholder groups (Public Transport Providers, End Users and Experts) are invited to send examples of the use of good practice and innovative solutions applied in the last few years. We would also appreciate any supplementary evidence of the impact these measures.

You may like to consider examples under the indicator themes identified at the First Working Group Meeting:

Service Operation and Standards , e.g. ticketing solutions
Policy and Investment , e.g. involving or engaging with customers: regular forums or e-citizens feedback feeding into policy or strategic decision making
Vehicles & Built Environment , e.g. interchanges transferring from one transport mode to another and solutions to enable easy boarding on vehicles
Information and Training , e.g. information before and during journeys.

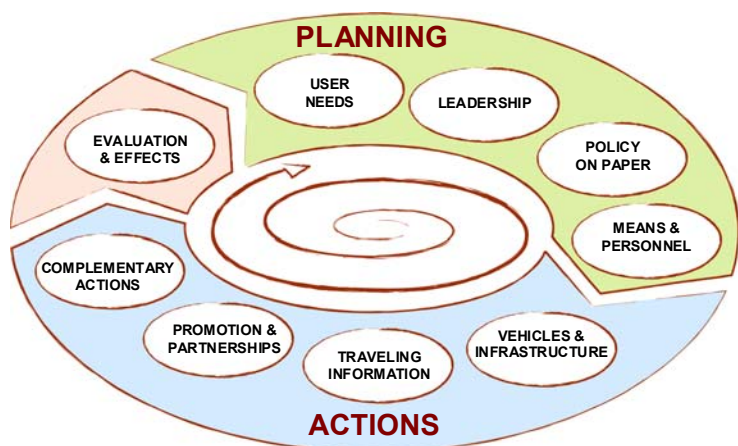
The next newsletter will contain more information on the best practice guidance. Also from September 2009 the APTIE portal (www.aptie.eu) and Mediate website (<http://www.mediate-project.eu/>) will contain further information. For the submission of good practice examples and for further details, contact :

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What's coming up

A major task in the coming months is to develop a refined set of indicators describing accessibility. These indicators will be presented and considered at the second Working Group meeting. This will take place between 16-18 September 2009 in Nuernberg, with full involvement of all user groups. We are delighted that Nuernberg public transport company, VAG BSB, is hosting this meeting, as one of the Working Group members. Participants will also have the opportunity to see Nuernberg's good practice in action, through a technical tour of accessible public transport facilities.



The policy cycle – key to the self-assessment tool

The Mediate indicators will feed into the self assessment tool measuring accessibility of public transport; therefore these two workstreams are highly co-ordinated. Work has begun on setting up the self assessment tool, which will use the Model of Excellence devised by the European Foundation for Quality Management. The aim is to help public transport authorities and operators identify key aspects of improving accessibility and ways to overcome barriers. Once a refined set of indicators has been identified, the key components of the self assessment tool will be finalised. Further progress on the indicators and self assessment tool will be reported in subsequent newsletters.

Spotlight on Good Practice

The Mediate newsletter will regularly feature case studies of good practice from across Europe. This issue's spotlight is on Nuernberg. Wolfgang Legath of the public transport operating company VAG BSB, presented local practices at the Mediate launch conference. Some of the key elements are summarised below.

Nuernberg – Mobility for All

The Nuernberg area is one of Germany's major economic regions with over 2 million inhabitants. The ambition for a public transport system based on **Mobility for All** started in 1972, with the opening of the first section of the underground. Approximately 600,000 people now use the local underground, trams and buses daily. The provider, VAG, is fully owned by the city of Nuernberg with about 2000 employees. In 1989 VAG initiated a study in co-operation with local authorities and financed by the Ministry of Transport. This concluded that more than 20% of the city's 500 000 population was disabled or mobility impaired. VAG's concept is to provide seamless travel to make people with reduced mobility as independent as possible. Dialogue with user groups is at the heart of this process.

Achievements and milestones

- All metro stations are accessible (lifts,tactile guidance strips,etc.)
- Automatic ramps at all new metro vehicles to reduce the gap
- The entire tram and bus fleet is low floor
- All buses have kneeling function, retractable ramps or mobile ramps
- Tram islands were raised up to 20-25 cm and have tactile guidance strips
- Bus stops will be raised step by step up to 15-18 cm



Automatic ramp on Nuernberg's driverless metro

Accessibility Commissioner appointed in 1980

- Acts as liaison person between inter company planning and implementation groups

- Overlooks the planning process at all stages in order to guarantee proper standards
- Holds lectures at schools, nursing homes and public institutions
- Provides group tours for disabled persons
- Co-operates with trainers for the disabled.

Dialogue with user groups

- VAG's Accessibility Commissioner personally assigned to develop and maintain contacts
- Close co-operation with organisations representing blind and visually impaired people, deaf people, and wheelchair users and people with ambulatory disabilities
- Suggestions incorporated into early planning stages
- Training for disabled people by trainers of the home of blinds in co-operation with VAG
- Training for VAG staff by VAG in co-operation with the trainers of the Home of Blind.

Service and information

- Call centre with 24 hour service
- Special internet sites - VAG.de and NuernbergMobil.de
- Special city map for sight-impaired and blind passengers
- Audio/visual announcement of next stations in the rolling stock
- Audio/visual information in major stations, electronic information with automated accustic reading function on demand
- Lift buttons in all elevators in Braille
- Severely disabled passengers ride free of charge.

Intelligent traffic

- Platforms and surrounding areas have guidance pavement strips for blind and sight impaired users
- Lowered curbs for wheelchair users
- Traffic lights equipped with contact sensors.

Planning the future and next steps

- Raise bus stops to 15 - 18 cm step by step
- Improve the electronic information systems for tram stations
- New standards for the automated guided underground.

For more information, contact:
wolfgang.legath@vag.de

Other news

Dissemination activities such as the APTIE portal and newsletter will occur throughout the project. We are also liaising with other relevant projects, including Access2All (Mobility Schemes Ensuring Accessibility of Public Transport for All Users). Mediate and Access2All will collaborate in a variety of ways. The first Access2All workshop will be held in Porto, Portugal, on 29 September 2009.

For more information: <http://www.access-to-all.eu/>



Older person with a walking aid

Mediate partners



(Project coordinator)

