



European Day for People with Disabilities: the Swedish city of Borås wins the Access City Award 2015 for disabled-friendly cities

Brussels, 03 December 2014

On the occasion of the European Day for People with Disabilities, the European Commission is pleased to announce that the Swedish city of Borås is the winner of the 2015 Access City Award. The Award recognises Borås's comprehensive and strategic approach to creating an accessible city for all; a good example of local action to help removing the many barriers that people with disabilities still face in their daily life.

On this occasion, Marianne Thyssen, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility underlined: *"People with disabilities should be able to fully participate in society. Job creation and accessibility are top priority for the European Commission and I am personally committed to taking action in these areas. I would like to congratulate Borås for leading the way in making life more accessible for all."*

The Award was handed out during the conference organised each year by the European Commission to celebrate this date, in cooperation with the [European Disability Forum](#). This event brings together people with disabilities, their representative organisations, EU policy makers, service providers, think tanks, trade unions and employers, to discuss the key areas of employment, accessibility and challenges for the future.

The Access City Award is one of the actions foreseen in the [EU disability strategy](#) that aims at making Europe barrier-free. It is organised by the Commission together with the European Disability Forum. The Award aims to encourage cities with at least 50,000 inhabitants to share their experience and to improve accessibility for the benefit of all. Since 2010, 189 EU cities have participated in the 5 editions of the Access City Award.

This year, **Helsinki (Finland)** took the **second prize**. The **third prize** was awarded to **Ljubljana (Slovenia)**.

The European Commission awards special mentions to cities that are pioneers in achieving accessibility in terms of built environment, transport, information and communication technology and public facilities and services. This year, the special mentions are given to:

- **Logroño**, Spain, was awarded a special mention in the field of the built environment and public spaces,
- **Budapest**, Hungary, received a special mention for its work in the field of transportation.
- **Arona**, Spain, and **Luxembourg** got a special mention for public facilities and services.

Background

The Access City Award

The Access City Award was launched in 2010 to raise awareness of disability and promote accessibility initiatives in European cities with more than 50 000 inhabitants. The prize is about ensuring equal access to city life for people with disabilities. The initiative aims to encourage cities to inspire one another to innovate and to share good practice. The Award is part of the EU's wider efforts to create a barrier-free Europe: improved accessibility brings lasting economic and social benefits to cities, especially in the context of demographic ageing.

The Award is given to the city that has demonstrably and sustainably improved accessibility in fundamental aspects of city living, and that has concrete plans for further improvements.

EU policy on accessibility

One in six people in the European Union – around 80 million – have a disability that ranges from mild to severe. Over one third of people aged over 75 have disabilities that restrict them to some extent. These numbers are set to rise as the EU population grows progressively older. Most of these people are

all too often prevented from fully participating in society and contribute to the economy because of physical or other barriers, as well as discrimination.

The EU is party to the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). This Convention is the first international legally binding instrument setting minimum standards for a range of civil, political, social, economic and cultural rights for people with disabilities around the world. It is also the first comprehensive human rights convention to which the EU has become a party ([IP/11/4](#)).

The European Commission published in June the first report on how the EU is giving effect to the UN Convention. The report shows that the ratification of the Convention by the EU has tangible impacts on the ground and gives examples ([MEMO/14/396](#)).

The European Disability Strategy 2010-2020, adopted by the Commission in November 2010 ([IP/10/1505](#)), sets a concrete agenda of actions to implement the UN Convention on the rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Strategy contains actions in the areas of accessibility, participation, equality, employment, education and training, social protection, health and external action. The European Commission services are currently working on a European Accessibility Act. It aims to improve the functioning of the internal market for accessible products and services for the benefit of people with disabilities.

For more information

European Commission – People with disabilities:

- http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/disabilities/index_en.htm
- [Report](#) on the implementation of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) by the European Union
- Information on the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)

Read more about the Access City Award on:

- http://ec.europa.eu/justice/discrimination/disabilities/award/index_en.htm
- http://ec.europa.eu/justice/events/access-city-award-2015/index_en.htm

Website of [DG Employment, Social Affairs & Inclusion](#)

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