



The Lecco Declaration¹

Moving faster forward towards Accessible and Inclusive Public Transport for All

Freedom of movement is a universal human right.² The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities states that governments should facilitate the personal mobility of persons with disabilities in the manner and at the time of their choice, at an affordable cost.³ To enjoy personal mobility with the greatest possible independence ensures equity for all citizens.⁴ Furthermore, it enhances freedom of choice and is a prerequisite for social and economic participation and inclusion.

Public transport is one of the most sustainable and safe modes of transport, bringing benefits to society as a whole. It is a vector of social cohesion, accessibility, climate change, health policy and many others. Public transport contributes to the economic development of regions and cities, creates employment, and connects places and people. Up to 2020, the sector counted almost 60 billion passenger journeys per year in Europe, with numbers on the rise.

As urban mobility is a driver of wealth creation and social development of cities, everyone should be able to benefit from public transport. Facilitating mobility involves reducing barriers of different nature and designing transportation systems that are accessible, safe, affordable and offer choices for all. The challenge is not to respond to the needs or rights of a specific group but to consider how to provide services in a manner that ensures access to those economic and social opportunities for all citizens, regardless of their condition and their financial means.

The 2020 European Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy identifies key actions for making new mobility solutions affordable, accessible, and safe for all passengers, including those with individual access needs arising from a disability. It states that *“it is crucial that mobility is available and affordable for all, that rural and remote regions are better connected, accessible for persons with reduced mobility and persons with disabilities [...]*. The

¹ The Lecco Declaration is an initiative of three international networks that work together in the TRIPS Project consortium for the sake of making public transport in Europe and worldwide accessible and inclusive.

The Declaration is available on the website of AAATE and can be endorsed by organisations and individuals. <http://aaate.net>

² United Nations Declaration on Human Rights (1948). Article 13.

³ United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006). Article 20.

⁴ United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006). Article 9 and Article 20.





*European Pillar of Social Rights is the European compass to make sure that the green and digital transitions are socially fair and just.*⁵

Developments in digital technologies further change the landscape, with new possibilities, influencing human-machine interactions. Few sectors have developed and applied as many new technologies as public transport. These include the deployment of electric mobility, autonomous vehicles, connectivity, and digitalisation of the sector. To build more inclusive and participative societies as well as ensure a suitable passenger experience within the transport networks, it is important that these opportunities can also be enjoyed by passengers with different access needs.

Representatives of the Association for the Advancement of Assistive Technology in Europe (AAATE), the European Network on Independent Living (ENIL) and the International Association of Public Transport (UITP) met on 12 July 2022 in Lecco in Italy to discuss ways to more rapidly make progress in fostering accessible and safe public transport for all, building on the advancements in universal design and accessible technologies.

With this declaration, they hope to reinvigorate the commitment of all stakeholders, including policy makers and transport providers, towards accessibility.

Further action should be inspired by the following principles, reflecting values the sector should uphold.

All stakeholders, whether representing organisations or themselves, are invited to sign this declaration and to act according to these principles, supported by specific Memorandums of Understandings and Action Plans at European, national or local levels.

1. Making public transport in European countries fully accessible and barrier-free (both physical and digital infrastructure) should be a key priority for sustainable urban mobility.
2. Accessible mobility should be understood as a way to enable all passengers to access the transport system independently, through adapted urban and transport infrastructure, digital services and equipment or through the use of human assistance,
3. The passenger experience should be a key criterion when developing and deploying accessible mobility policies.

⁵ European Commission. [Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy – putting European transport on track for the future \(2020\)](#)





4. The opportunities provided by technology, including assistive technology, to overcome barriers should drive innovation in the transportation sector, enhancing accessibility and inclusion while safeguarding privacy and avoiding new barriers.
5. Cooperation and dialogue between all stakeholders and representative organisations should be promoted to ensure an accessible public transport network. They should be involved from an early stage of planning throughout the development and implementation process.
6. New urban mobility projects should respect all relevant EU legislation that supports a fully accessible system and be designed according to universal design principles.
7. Physical and digital accessibility and inclusive transportation training should be an integral part of training for transport professionals tailored and related to their specific roles.
8. Good practices should be shared, and technology transfer in the field of accessible transportation between countries should be encouraged to support replication.

Lecco, 12 July 2022

