



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

PRESS RELEASE

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Disabilities: Access City Award 2016 for accessible-friendly cities goes to Milan!

On the occasion of the European Day for People with Disabilities, the European Commission is pleased to announce that Milan is the winner of the 2016 Access City Award. Wiesbaden, Toulouse, Vaasa and Kapsovár were also awarded for their efforts to improve accessibility for people with disabilities and the elderly.

Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne Thyssen, commented: *"Today I reward Milan for its long-term commitment to accessibility. I personally encourage that cities learn from the good practices of Milan and the other winners across the European Union to improve the active inclusion of disabled and older people"*

The award ceremony took place in the framework of the [European Day of Persons with Disabilities 2015 conference](#), started yesterday in Brussels and which this year focuses on children and young people with disability. Under the title "Growing together in a barrier-free Europe", the event includes presentations and discussions about this group and inclusive education - a way to ensure equal participation in work and society. The intention is to promote examples of good practices of inclusive education and active participation in the society and the labour market at national and EU level.

Milan: In addition to its excellent and consistent accessibility efforts, Milan has also committed to projects to promote the employment of people with disabilities and for supporting independent living. Its building standards not only support the accessibility and usability but they also promote Universal Design standards. Milan is the winner of the EU Access City Award 2016, not only for the impressive steps to improve accessibility made in the past, but also for its ambitious plans for the future to advance on accessibility.

Wiesbaden: The capital of the German federal state of Hessen receives the **second place** as recognition for their efforts to create a city which is accessible to all its citizens for example by setting ambitious objectives to ensure the accessibility to the city centre and its open spaces, parks and playgrounds. Over 200 of the city public buildings are fully accessible and they are designated with stickers bearing the slogan "Wir machen mit" – We're joining in – at the entrance to each building.

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Toulouse: The city, the fourth largest urban area in France wins **third prize** in the competition for its work to meet its population's needs with sustainable solutions through a democratic and participative approach. The city is committed to improving the life of its disabled citizens, be it in the field of transport where the metro, trams and buses are 100% accessible or in the cultural sector where operas are performed with audio-description and programmes are available in large print or braille.

Toulouse gained also the inaugural **special mention for being a "Smart City"** for making a commitment to the city's disabled and older population through the means of technology and creating a task force for that purpose. The City's has accessible websites with information about accessibility, containing for example information about which pedestrian crossings have audio guidance for the visually impaired as well as the location of disabled parking spaces.

Vaasa: This Finnish city is awarded a special mention for its **commitment to improving the working environment** of its older and disabled populations. As a concrete example, the city took part in European Job Shadow Day, an initiative designed to give people with disabilities the opportunity to get a close-up look at the world of work.

Kaposvár: Situated in the South-West of Hungary, the city has made a commitment to improving accessibility and is working to that end. The city's newly renovated public buildings boast tactile layouts and tactile paving plus Braille inscriptions to assist the blind and visually impaired. Efforts are on the way to improve also existing buildings 90% of the city's sights and 80% of the cultural institutions are barrier-free. For these ongoing achievements Kaposvár is awarded with a **special mention for commitment to improvement**.

Background

The Access City Award is one of the actions foreseen in the [EU disability strategy](#) that aims at making Europe barrier-free. 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, more than 250 EU cities have participated in the 6 editions of the Access City Award, which is awarded on the occasion of the Day of Persons with Disabilities conference.

For more information

[News item on DG Employment website](#)

[People with disabilities and European Disability Strategy 2010-2020](#)

[More about the Access City Award](#)

[United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)

[European Day of Persons with Disabilities](#)

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