



European  
Commission



# ACCESS CITY AWARD 2019

Examples of best  
practice in making EU  
cities more accessible

#EUACCESSCity



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# Contents

Foreword .....	4
Access City Award 2019 – Easy-to-read version .....	5
Introduction .....	11
<b>Breda, Netherlands</b> – Winner .....	12
<b>Evreux, France</b> – Second Prize .....	16
<b>Gdynia, Poland</b> – Third Prize .....	20
<b>Vigo, Spain</b> – Special Mention for innovative building environment in challenging topography .....	23
<b>Kaposvár, Hungary</b> – Special Mention for continuing improvement.....	26
<b>Viborg, Denmark</b> – Special Prize for accessibility of cultural heritage cities with more than 50 000 inhabitants.....	29
<b>Monteverde, Italy</b> – Special Prize for accessibility of cultural heritage cities with less than 50 000 inhabitants.....	33
Participating in the Access City Awards 2020 .....	37

# Foreword

Marianne Thyssen



 *Commissioner for Employment,  
Social Affairs, Skills & Labour Mobility*

This year, we celebrate the ninth edition of the Access City Awards. Once again, we have seen really impressive achievements by small and large cities across Europe in addressing problems faced by our citizens with disabilities and our elderly people.

Too often, persons with disabilities feel isolated because they cannot access public spaces or transport. However, public places are accessible to everyone in our winning city. In Breda, the Netherlands, digital technology ensures that all citizens can get around using public transport. Meanwhile, tourism is thriving thanks to the city's commitment to inclusion.

This year, I was delighted to see a strong focus on invisible disabilities in Evreux, France, our second prize winner. Gdynia, Poland, our third prize winner, is also doing innovative work to include persons with intellectual disabilities.

This year's winners have shown determination and imagination in overcoming obstacles to accessibility. Our two Special Mention cities

include Kaposvár, Hungary, and Vigo, Spain. Both have shown a clear commitment to delivering accessibility over a long period, despite their challenging terrain.

Especially for this year, we have opened up the awards to recognise the European Year of Cultural Heritage. Our two winning cities, Viborg, Denmark, and Monteverde, Italy, have each shown a high degree of sensitivity in bringing down the access barriers to historic places.

All of these cities are a source of inspiration for the rest of Europe.

# Access City Award 2019



Easy-to-read version

## Who are we?

We are the European Commission and the European Disability Forum.

The **European Commission** suggests laws that could make Europe better.



The **European Disability Forum** works to protect the rights of people with disabilities in Europe.

Often we work together to make things better for people with disabilities in Europe.

For example, every year we work together to make the **Access City Award** happen.



## What is the Access City Award?

The **Access City Award** is a prize we give every year to cities that work hard to be accessible.

A city is accessible when all people can live in it and use all things and services without problems.



Image © Pixabay

For example, a city is accessible when all people can easily:

- get the bus or the metro to go to work.
- use ticket machines to buy a ticket.
- go around the streets or get in public buildings.
- get information that they can understand.

This is important for all people and mostly for people with disabilities and older people.

Often things are not accessible for them. If things are not accessible, they won't be able to take part in the community like all other people. They will be left out.

For example, if buses do not have ramps, people in wheelchairs won't be able to take them to go to work.

So the Access City Award is a chance for cities in Europe to show the work they do to be accessible for all people.

The city that won the Access City Award for 2019 was Breda. **Breda** is a city in the Netherlands.



Image © Pixabay



Image © Pixabay



Image © 123RF



Image © City of Breda

Breda won the Access City Award because it is working hard to make things accessible for people with disabilities.

The next Access City Award will be for 2020.

It is a special one because it will be 10 years since the Access City Award happened for the first time.

It is great that the Access City Award keeps happening all these years to remind cities of how important it is to be accessible to all people.

## Which cities can take part?

Not all cities can take part in the Access City Award.

The cities that can take part in the Access City Award should:

- be in countries that are part of the European Union.

**The European Union** is a group of many countries in Europe that came together to make Europe better.

- have more than 50 000 people living in them.

If a country has less than 2 cities with so many people, 2 or more smaller cities can join together.

If together they have more than 50 000 people, they can take part in the Access City Award too.



Image © Pixabay

The city that won the Access City Award last year cannot take part again this year.

## How can cities take part?

Cities that want to take part in the next Access City Award can apply online when the application period starts. People who run these cities and make important decisions for them should fill a form on the internet.

In this form, they should:

- say why they think their city should win the Access City Award.
- give examples and show how their city works to make things accessible for all people.
- talk about how they plan to continue this good work in the future.



Image © Pixabay



Image © Pixabay

You can find more information on our website here:  
**<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1141>**

There, we will soon say when the application period will start.

When the application period starts, cities can fill the form

and take part in the next Access City Award.

So keep an eye on our website to learn more!

## How do we choose the winner?

After the cities apply for the Access City Award, some groups of people check their applications and choose the winner.

In every country there is a group of people that checks the applications of the cities of this country and choose up to 3 cities as the best examples in this country.

Then another group of people in Europe checks all these cities and chooses which one will win the Access City Award of this year.

People with disabilities and older people are part of these groups.

They check what cities do to make things accessible for the good of their people.



Image © Pixabay

For example, they check if cities have accessible:

- buildings and streets.
- buses and metros.
- ticket machines and cash machines.
- websites and other technology that people use to communicate.
- information that is easy to read and understand for everyone.



Image © Pixabay



Images © Pixabay

Image © Easy-to-read.eu

They see which of the cities does a better job to make these things accessible for all people. This city wins the Access City Award.

## When will we present the winner?

In December 2019, we will have a big meeting in Brussels to talk about the rights of people with disabilities.

In this meeting, we will also say which city wins the Access City Award for 2020.

We will hand over the Access City Award to this city.



Image © European Commission 2018

## More information

If you want to know more you can send us an email at: [\*\*secretariat@accesscityaward.eu\*\*](mailto:secretariat@accesscityaward.eu)



# Introduction

There are more than 80 million Europeans with disabilities and the proportion of older people in our communities is increasing. The Access City Award initiative was launched in 2010, with the aim of highlighting what can be done to address the needs of this significant population.

The Award is open to cities with a population of more than 50 000 and entries are received from all over the European Union. Firstly, all entries are sorted by national juries who decide which of their country's nominated cities deserves to go forward. The shortlisted entries go to a European level jury of accessibility experts. They decide on the winners and on the 'special mention' categories.

The categories that are chosen can vary each year. For the Access City Award 2019, two 'special mentions' were awarded, in addition to the first, second and third placed winners.

In addition, to mark the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, two special awards have been given to cities which have made outstanding efforts to ensure that their cultural heritage is accessible to everyone. For this category, the criteria were changed to allow cities with fewer than 50 000 inhabitants to enter.

These awards highlight that improving access is not only about ramps and level access. There are other barriers too. Many persons with disabilities, not least those whose disabilities are less visible, still face prejudice and ignorance from their fellow citizens, and it is encouraging to see cities successfully addressing these issues too.



# Breda

## The Netherlands

Image © City of Breda



 *The Mayor of Breda opening a newly accessible ice cream parlour*

The city of Breda is the 2019 winner of the Access City Award. Breda was described at the awards ceremony, as ‘a source of inspiration for cities in Europe and beyond’.

Breda has a population of 185 000. The city has a medieval centre, cultural and sporting attractions and is also home to more than 20 000 international students.

### **Accessibility is the norm**

Breda has a four-year plan (2018-2021) to create an environment in which accessibility is the norm. The city is also monitoring accessibility initiatives through Breda Gelijk!, its organisation for persons with disabilities.

Over the past three years, Breda Gelijk! has checked access to over 800 shops and bars. This process has not only improved accessibility but has also raised awareness of accessibility issues among the city’s shopkeepers, restaurateurs and other business owners.

The websites in Breda, both for inhabitants and tourists, have all been approved for accessibility, to ensure that they use a common language and approach. The website developers have taken advice from blind and partially sighted people.



### ‘Breda for Everyone’

The organisation ‘Breda for Everyone’ brings together representatives of the city, tourism and education interests, as well as organisations representing persons with disabilities. This four-pronged approach is unique, but the example is now spreading to other Dutch cities.



Images © City of Breda

○ Access audits of a public space and of a local store

“Breda is a city where people like to meet each other. An encounter can only really be special if that place can be found without obstacles; open and accessible to everyone. That is why I am delighted to see Breda taking significant steps and paying a great deal of attention to the accessibility of the city. Not only in our inner city, but also in our villages and neighbourhoods. And do not forget our own city office. I am proud of all the citizens of Breda, entrepreneurs and organisations that are hard at work every day. That way we keep the city attractive for all Breda residents, regardless of your options or limitations.”

*Paul Depla, Mayor of Breda*



## 'Living without Barriers'

All buses and bus stops are accessible, including digital information and smart phone navigation apps, as well as step free access and disability awareness training for bus drivers.

The new railway station, one of the biggest in the Netherlands, is fully accessible.

Accessible minibuses and electric wheelchairs are also available to help persons with disabilities to get around the city.

A major project, 'Living without Barriers' focuses on accessible environments and transport, in addition to housing and local communities.

Persons with disabilities are involved at every stage of the city's projects and initiatives.

## Tourism and leisure

'Breda for Everyone' aims to turn the city into the number one place for accessible leisure.

Working with the tourist board and the city's marketing team they have launched a new website. It includes reliable information on access to tourism, sports, arts facilities and events.

In the field of sport, the city has signed the 'Special Olympics' pledge for a better and healthier life for persons with intellectual disabilities.

In the arts, a local theatre company runs an annual event to show the talents and potential of actors with intellectual disabilities, while the library is developing products for people with low literacy attainment.

"The entrepreneurs of our city centre know better than anyone that access to business is important for everyone. Working on accessibility must be just as logical as working on, for example, safety and sustainability."



*Jos Koniuszek, entrepreneur*

Images © City of Breda



*A pop-up demo of wheelchair fencing and a chance for persons with disabilities to meet a professional cycle racer*



Image © City of Breda



 *The accessible Breda Barst pop festival*

## A 'UN proof' city

Breda applies the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) and is dedicated to making Breda the best 'UN proof' city.

Politicians and civil servants are working on delivering this agenda across all areas of the city. The next step will be to introduce local legislation

to ensure that the quality and sustainability of all measures is protected by law.

Breda hosts an annual accessibility week, in October, to highlight action to improve accessibility. Each December, an Awareness Day awards a prize to the best accessibility initiative.

Under the slogan 'Breda brings it together', accessibility features in all the city's plans and across all sectors.

"In Breda, people are not talking about us, but speaking with us when it comes to making society inclusive."

*Marcel Brans, experience expert, Breda Gelijk!*



# Evreux

France

Image © City of Evreux



 Since 2014, members of Grenelle du Handicap have taken part in working groups

The city of Evreux has been awarded second prize with a specific mention for its focus on hidden disabilities.

Evreux has a population of 50 537. It has been pursuing a modernisation agenda to increase the city's attractiveness as a local and regional centre.

With its strong commitment to accessibility, Evreux defines itself as a human-scale city that is culturally rich and socially diverse.

## A city for everyone

Since 2014, accessibility has been at the heart of all policies in Evreux. The city is committed to universal accessibility and an inclusive society. This feeds through into the city's master plans, the organisation of improvement works and activities, as well as the allocation of resources.

The Deputy Mayor is in charge of delivering the city's agenda on accessibility, ensuring that both time and budget are given priority.

Underpinning all the initiatives is the 'Grenelle du Handicap', or disability gatherings. These gatherings ensure that the city hears the voices of persons with disabilities and other stakeholders. Each year, almost one hundred people take part in 'Grenelle' gatherings.

## Spotlight on hidden disabilities

Evreux has focused on understanding the needs of those with less visible disabilities. One example has been the installation of panels and guidance in easy-to-read French at the city museum and in the botanical gardens.

“Evreux is a city in which the needs of persons with disabilities – both visible and invisible – have really been taken into account. You only have to walk around the town to appreciate what has been done. The improvement works mean that everyone can come and go without difficulty. Most of the businesses are now accessible and cultural activities, including music, are now within our reach. Life in the city becomes better and better and we know that it is not yet finished...”

“

*François Remy, volunteer, l'Association des Paralysés de France*

In 2017, Evreux created the ‘Han pathiques’ workshops for children, which provide awareness training about hidden disabilities, including mental health issues and cognitive impairments. In 2018, 500 children took part.

The workshops will be rolled out to as many schools as possible.

### Upgrading public buildings

Five structural projects have taken place in Evreux’s city squares and in public gardens. In each case,

disability organisations have been consulted from the outset. The access features that have been created not only make the city accessible, but also more attractive for everyone.

A nine-year programme has been developed to make improvements to 169 buildings. 28 are already completed. Some need only minor modifications, while others will be tackled during major refurbishment projects. The list includes theatres, schools and crèches.



Images © City of Evreux



*Awareness sessions help children and young people understand disability – both visible and invisible*

“We are very pleased to be consulted before accessibility works on roads or public buildings are undertaken. For those of us who are visually impaired, we are delighted to enjoy better accessibility in the streets, with guide rails, audible and tactile warnings, contrasting step edges and audible signals at traffic lights. The audible information on buses is also improving. We are fortunate to have active support from the city through Francine Maragliano, the Deputy Mayor in charge of disability and accessibility.”



*Sylvain Grille, President, local committee member, l'Association Valentin Haüy*

## Transport for all

The transport company is working with city authorities to make public transport more accessible. This means identifying and addressing a wide variety of disability needs, in order to make improvements to buses and bus stops.

It also means providing disability awareness training to drivers and other members of staff, as well as offering an on-demand, door-to-door service to those unable to use mainstream services.

Images © City of Evreux



○ In public buildings induction loops have been installed and staff are trained to understand persons with hearing disabilities



○ Members of the 'Grenelle du Handicap' visit the museum to discuss the introduction of an easy-to-read guide for visitors

## Accessible communication

Another priority for the city is to ensure that all its communications can be widely understood. The city has commissioned writers with disabilities to produce guides in accessible languages for the botanical gardens and the city's museum.



Image © City of Evreux

## Monitoring progress

The Intercommunal Accessibility Commission, whose membership includes persons with disabilities and representative organisations, publishes detailed yearly reports on actions to improve accessibility.

Their analysis comprises both quantitative and qualitative factors, including a breakdown of the number of planned and completed projects. They also evaluate the extent to which persons with disabilities were involved in delivering the projects.

## Future Plans

Evreux has set up a project to develop a single model for more inclusive social housing. The early phase of the project involves asking persons with disabilities about their housing needs.

The city is also working on a multi-year project to open up leisure centres to disabled children. This will include introducing specialist equipment and staff training.

Image © City of Evreux



*A new play area designed with input from an association for children with autism*

# Gdynia

Poland

Image © Agnieszka Wołowicz



 Access to Gdynia beach

The city of Gdynia has been awarded third prize, with a specific mention of its initiatives to include persons with intellectual disabilities.

Gdynia has a population of 246 306. It is a relatively young city, developed when the port was constructed in the 1920s.

The city's focus on intellectual disability stems from a determination to tackle the historic neglect of this issue, both culturally and politically.

## Pioneering social policy

Since 1999, Gdynia has pioneered socially inclusive policies, focusing on meeting the needs of all its citizens.

In 2013, the city adopted accessibility standards. Based on principles of universal design, they comprise of guidelines for

designing public spaces that include the needs of persons with disabilities and older people. The appointment of an accessibility expert, in 2014, has helped to ensure that the standards are implemented correctly.

Through the 'Barrier Free Gdynia' programme, which sets priorities up to 2023, the city has made a long-term commitment to continuous improvement.

## An inclusive city

Gdynia has focused on improving accessibility across all areas of life, including playgrounds, beaches and the marina, as well as sports and cultural facilities.

There is audio commentary for blind spectators at sporting events, while the theatre provides sign language and has facilities to help persons with hearing loss.

Selected films at the multiplex cinema have an audio description, while all outdoor events and festivals are accessible.

All of the city's methods of public transport (buses and trolley buses) are accessible, and bus stops include tactile guidance and colour contrast, as well as wheelchair access. The railway station has also been modernised to meet accessibility standards.

In addition, a door-to-door service is available for those unable to use public transport.



Image © Michal Kowalski

 *Ramped access to the railway station*

## Equal partners

The project planning and implementation process in Gdynia involves persons with disabilities as equal partners.

This approach is backed by law. For example, the Barrier Free Gdynia Act 2000 is a comprehensive programme that supports and empowers persons with disabilities. Guidelines, adopted in 2002, inform the implementation of social policy.

Through the 'Gdynia for All' project, persons with disabilities are working with city officials to evaluate the accessibility of public spaces.

Their suggestions are recorded so they can be used when making further access improvements.



Image © Dorota Patzler

 *An accessible playground*

## Political leadership

The appointment of the Mayor's Plenipotentiary for Persons with Disabilities has been pivotal in creating equal opportunities.

Persons with disabilities now have a higher level of mobility and employment, so are better integrated into society.

These changes are helping persons with intellectual disabilities and other disabilities.

The changes mean that persons with disabilities are now more commonly seen in the city, so awareness and respect from other citizens has increased significantly.

New development paths for children and adults with intellectual disabilities have been created, working with representative organisations, parents and carers. These include occupational therapy and theatre workshops.

Image © City of Gdynia



 *The Gdynia arena is designed to be accessible to all*

## Overcoming stereotypes

Gdynia organises events and exhibitions to challenge negative images of persons with disabilities. The 'Barrier Free Gdynia' competition encourages people to develop new ideas and solutions to accessibility, to meet the needs of persons with disabilities.

There are also campaigns to help young people, from primary school onwards, to understand and challenge intolerant attitudes.

# Vigo

## Spain

Image © City of Vigo



**Special  
Mention**

The city of Vigo was awarded a Special Mention for its innovative approach to accessible architecture, in an area of challenging topography.

Vigo has a population of 296 479. It dates back to the 8th century BC, but today Vigo is a modern city with a large urban infrastructure, surrounded by rural areas.

### **A city without limits**

Vigo is committed to transforming a city with traffic problems into one that is easy to navigate and open to all.

One of the main initiatives to 'humanise' the city has involved addressing the balance between motorists and pedestrians, by making roads narrower while extending pedestrian areas. The use of tactile guidance and warning surfaces has been introduced as the common standard, together with improved signage.

Traffic lights are equipped with a Bluetooth system that is activated at the lights, or by using a mobile app.

The city's buses are all accessible and include audible and visual information, as well as facilities for wheelchair users and persons with limited mobility. Alongside this, there is a free service for persons with disabilities and their companions. For example, the Bono-Taxi company helps persons with disabilities and older people, particularly those living in rural areas.

More than one parking space must be reserved for persons with disabilities out of every 40 non-reserved spaces, and there is no time limit on parking.

The city police ensure that the parking badges for persons with disabilities (Blue Badges) are not abused or misused.

There has been significant investment in making sporting venues accessible throughout the city. Other accessibility features include a sensory garden with an orientation and guidance system to help long cane users navigate it.

### ‘Vigo Vertical’

The city is characterised by steep slopes, which present a real challenge to accessibility.

Standard accessibility solutions do not work because of the gradients.

The project ‘Vigo Vertical’ has given rise to several initiatives to connect the areas divided by the slopes. In 2016, the first urban lift was installed, and a further three are now being introduced. Concentric routes at different levels are now connected by lifts, which enable persons with disabilities and older people to move independently between the levels. This development has reduced the height differences between the areas by between 10 and 20 metres.

Images © City of Vigo



○ Lift connecting Marqués de Valterra Street with Torrecedeira Street



○ Escalator on 2nd Republic Street that joins the Puerta del Sol with the Mount del Castro

“The escalator will make it possible for me to climb from the downtown shopping area to my home.”

“

*Elvira Ferreira, older person, mother and carer of severely disabled person*

### Evaluation and awareness raising

Accessibility is continuously monitored by experts from the Galician Confederation of Persons with Disabilities (Cogami).

In parallel, the town hall offers awareness raising activities and training sessions to show people

what life is like for a wheelchair user, or a person with sight loss, for example. At the end of the session, trainers encourage participants to look out for access problems around the city and to report them to the town hall.

The city works with accessibility experts and, in particular, with the municipal council to represent the disability organisations in the city and address accessibility in Vigo.

An annual 'Mobility Week' is organised in collaboration with the disability and cycling organisations, to demonstrate the importance of universal design in creating a city for everyone.

## Future Plans

The 'Vigo Vertical' programme, based on principles of universal design, will continue to work towards an accessible, friendly and relaxed city for all.

Training in universal design, delivered to technicians working for the city and to designers hired by the city, is a key part of the plan. Accessibility specialists are also included in all planning meetings.

Further improvement work, to ensure that the pedestrian always takes precedence, is also planned. This includes a cycle lane, which will extend throughout the town, to separate cyclists from pedestrians.

Image © City of Vigo



 Lift connecting Pizarro Street with Plaza Peatonal and the playground in the area of San Roque

“The lowering of the kerbs helps to prevent tripping. I use the lift of the Camellias to walk and the escalators of the Puerta del Sol to carry out my everyday business.”

*Eduardo Lema, person with mobility difficulties, working as a carer in a centre for persons with disabilities*



# Kaposvár

Hungary

Image © City of Kaposvár



 Braille information in use in public buildings

Kaposvár has been awarded a Special Mention for its continuing efforts to improve accessibility.

Kaposvár has a population of 62 446 and dates back to 5000 BC. The city is divided by the Kapos, a river with hills rising on both sides. This presents challenges to accessibility. Kaposvár has been improving accessibility in the built environment for more than 28 years.

## 'We believe in each other'

The city's commitment to accessibility is set out in its urban policy programme, 'We believe in each other' (2014–2019). The approach recognises that an accessible city is good for everyone.

Since 2013, the city has had an equal opportunities plan, which is updated regularly. It also has a local equal opportunities forum, involving a range of disability organisations. In addition, the municipality employs an equal opportunities officer.

## Working in partnership

The municipal partnership covers a range of topics, including sport, transport and public services. All these are addressed through joint working between persons with disabilities and the city's experts.

New solutions arise from exchanging ideas and best practices, such as voice activated traffic signals.

In 2017, the city, and organisations representing persons with learning disabilities, agreed to make all state and cultural events accessible to all. This included providing sign language interpretation and easy-to-read printed material.

## Removing barriers

The city is tackling barriers to accessibility in every area of municipal life. In 2010, it achieved its goal to make the city centre accessible.

Bus and rail stations are now accessible and a fleet of 40 low-floor buses have been equipped with audible and visual passenger information systems. Pedestrian crossings are barrier free and traffic junctions feature audible information.

The city's website and the website of the local bus company, including the travel planner function has been made more accessible.

New street signs have been designed with input from persons with visual impairments. There are also programmes underway to increase the number of accessible medical surgeries and schools (with integrated education as the norm).

80 % of the city's cultural and arts facilities are accessible, including new, fully accessible sports and cultural venues. Public buildings now include tactile guidance and braille information. As of 2018, all tourism publications include easy-to-read versions.

Future plans include developing a transport centre that integrates rail, local and intercity buses in one accessible hub.



 Accessible buses benefit everyone



Image © City of Kaposvár

“In recent years Kaposvár has paid special attention to providing equal access to the public services for the inhabitants and tourists alike.”

*J. Hosszú, Somogy, Association of the Blind and Visually Impaired*



“Walking through Kaposvár, we are happy to see most of the accessibility problems solved. The new low-floor buses not only make the life of wheelchair users, and parents with pushchairs, easier but help older people with reduced mobility. Great improvement in local transport: getting on and off the bus is no longer a problem.”

“

*Józsefné Szabó, Association of OAPs for Toponár*

### Promoting disability awareness

As well as all the physical and structural improvements to accessibility, the city has given priority to ensuring that employees in all areas of public service are trained to understand the needs of persons with disabilities.

This includes arranging meetings between public sector employees (including bus drivers) and persons with disabilities to discuss their needs and priorities and to identify possible improvements.

### Nothing about us without us

Kaposvár has a policy to ensure that no decisions affecting persons with disabilities are made without their involvement.

During the development of accessibility measures, the city always includes representatives of disability organisations and a rehabilitation engineer.

“The city has become more and more accessible year by year. We are happy with services of the local Transport Co., as visual equipment and written info are available for us.”

“

*I. Szalkai, Somogy Association of the Deaf and Hearing Impaired*

# Viborg

Denmark

Image © City of Viborg



**Special  
Prize**

To mark the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, Viborg has been given an award in this year's special category, for cities making an outstanding effort to ensure that their cultural heritage is accessible to all.

Viborg has 50 200 inhabitants. It is one of the oldest cities in Denmark, located on the slopes above two lakes with a medieval network of streets and alleys, characterised by steep footpaths and cobblestone paving.

## Working in partnership

Since 2010, the city has worked with four Danish organisations to develop innovative physical measures and communication measures to improve accessibility and to overcome historical and topographical challenges.

## Maintaining cultural authenticity

Key to Viborg's approach to accessibility has been its discreet solutions which improve access while maintaining cultural authenticity.

For instance, the city uses materials that are characteristic of Viborg, such as granite, when adding new pavements, guide strips and ramps. In addition, new signs and city models are made from tombac (a copper-zinc alloy) which is already in use for features, such as benches and bins.

Several public squares, gardens and streets have been transformed with levelled pavements, ramps and guide strips. A new, fully accessible city square has been created from a former car park. City authorities have installed rest points in the steepest alleys.

The city prides itself on solutions that are simple, timeless and logical.

### Introducing modern technology

The app, Spot Viborg, guides visitors through three accessible itineraries in the historic city using GPS tracking, sound and visual aids.

It includes information on facilities, such as accessible toilets and car parks. Visitors can also select a specific attraction in the city and follow their own route to get to it.



Image © City of Viborg

 Access to the Skovgaard Museum Garden

“As users we have been an active part of the genesis of this project which gives us a great satisfaction.

We are pleased that accessibility has been seen in a wider perspective than the mere physical aspects.

The process has been positive. Our proposals have been adopted and further developed thus giving us great value. We are sure that other people will benefit from this also.”

“

*Working Group, City of Accessibility*

## Stakeholder engagement and expertise

The city drew on a wide range of expertise. This included setting up a knowledge panel of representatives from central Danish disability organisations and other associations with accessibility expertise.

Viborg also set up a local working group of disability representatives, including members of, for example, the city's tourist office and trade associations.

## Holistic policies

A Disability Council provides on-going policy advice to the city and ensures that the needs of persons with disabilities are met.

Discussions are divided between 'the city of accessibility' and 'natural accessibility', and involve both the Disability Council and the Municipality. They meet several times a year, as an advisory board, and are involved in all public construction projects.

Image © City of Viborg



 Signs in keeping with the cultural heritage of the city



 *The Latin Garden & Cathedral from a pedestrianised street*

The vision for Viborg is that everyone should be able to live a full and active life with access to cultural, natural and leisure experiences.

Improvement work started in 2009 when the city adopted a disability policy, which was drawn up in consultation with persons with disabilities, older people and other organisations who had an interest in the city's development.

The disability policy extends across all political and management levels. It sets out the values, measures and priorities underpinning the city's commitment. It also includes an accessibility checklist for public spaces and buildings.



 *Nytorv has been transformed from a car park into a fully accessible and flexible city square.*

## Wider benefits

Viborg has been able to introduce new cultural events such as street markets, outdoor cafes and concerts as a result of the accessibility improvements.

## Future plans

Next on the agenda is a new cultural attraction around the cathedral that will link all the main features of the city, widening the accessible network even further.

# Monteverde

Italy

Image © Council of Monteverde



**Special  
Prize**

2018  
EUROPEAN YEAR  
OF CULTURAL  
HERITAGE  
#EuropeForCulture

 Monteverde in its hill setting

Monteverde has received an award in this year's special category for cities making an outstanding effort to ensuring that their cultural heritage is accessible to all. This award marks the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018.

Monteverde is a medieval hill settlement with a population of just 771. It is in the upper Ofanto valley in Campania.

The city centre is characterised by narrow alleys, built in local stone, which connect residential and religious buildings. It is dominated by a castle, founded by the Lombards.

The Council of Monteverde believes that the economic survival of their small town depends on expanding tourism opportunities to meet the needs of the widest possible number of people.

## Celebrating difference

In 2006, the council responded to requests from local associations of persons with disabilities to organise a meeting of 'differently abled people'.

The overwhelming response led to an annual 'Accessible Town' event, which now attracts persons with disabilities from all over Italy, and includes a wide range of activities, music, dance and visual displays.

The aim of the event is to demonstrate how removing barriers to accessibility and participation can unleash the enormous talents and abilities of persons with disabilities.

“Already a beautiful village, full of history and beauty, Monteverde is a small community that has chosen to open up to the world, voting for acceptance and accessibility. It is a precious seed: a seed of hope for the future and for the Renaissance of the South.”

“

*Flavio Pagano, writer and journalist*

### ‘An Accessible Town’

In 2014, the council devised an infrastructure project, using European Regional Development Funds, with the aim of making Monteverde and its tourism resources universally accessible and enjoyable. The project focuses on the cultural, historic and religious heritage of the area, as well as on public services and human needs.

The project is being delivered by the council with the full support of local people. Many schools, and organisations of persons with disabilities, have also been involved in planning and advising on the project. Everything is done with the agreement, and approval, of individuals with disabilities and representative organisations.

Work on the project started in 2016 and should finish in 2019. Priorities include the removal of all architectural barriers to accessibility around the town and to its cultural heritage sites. So far, the



Image © Council of Monteverde



*Tactile guide paths run through the historic centre*

route extends 4.5 kilometres through the medieval streets and connects with the castle.

“For a group like the Wheelchair Thieves, always ‘on the road’, arriving in Monteverde was a unique experience, because in Monteverde welcome is not just a word, it is a way of being and thinking. Monteverde is a great, immense, warm embrace towards the world.”

“

*Paolo Falessi, guitarist and founder of ‘The Wheelchair Thieves’ (a rock band whose members all have disabilities)*



○ One of the annual 'Accessible Town' events



○ Accessible pathway through the countryside

Images © Council of Monteverde

“Compliments and thanks to the administration of Monteverde for their courage, patience and vision of the accessible future that they imagined for their small community. This beautiful village had already won when it made this choice. It seems hardly necessary to remember that we are talking about a business, for accessible tourism, of about 160 billion euro with a strong upward trend. So the investment made by Monteverde will now have to be strengthened by focusing on quality of the reception services, and the infrastructure necessary to reach this wonderful place.”

“

*Mario Barbuto, National President of the Italian Blind and Visually Impaired Union*

Along the route are tactile guide strips and maps, together with audio and Italian sign language guides, to help persons with vision or hearing impairments. Electric wheelchairs will be made available for visitors who are unable to walk the route.

The route extends to the east and to the west, where it connects with a religious pathway to a small church, through a Via Crucis ('Way of the Cross') with stations for blind people. There are 8 000 information points in the city which use fibre optics, and wireless technology, to communicate.

Specialist accommodation is being built too. This will provide 34 accessible bedrooms, dining and additional leisure facilities.

The quality, and usability, of the improvement work is monitored and evaluated by a commission of representatives from disability organisations and other institutions.

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### 'Virtual' accessibility

The council has commissioned the Department of Computer Science, at the University of Salerno, to create innovative systems to bring the areas, which are impossible to make physically accessible, within reach of everyone through virtual reality.

In addition, a 360-degree archive of photos and videos is being developed to show everyone the history of the city and its people.

### Creating a new management model

Monteverde is extending its inclusive philosophy even further, through an agreement with an Italian co-operative organisation, to develop a new model for entrepreneurial management, centred on persons with disabilities.

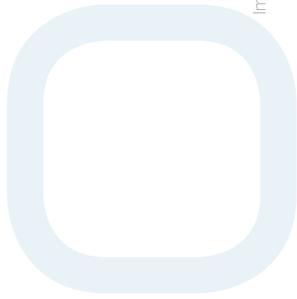


"For many years, our school and the little town of Monteverde have built a close relationship which has enriched us both: the school has received and taught pupils with different disabilities; Monteverde has offered to our students, and to so many other disabled people, the opportunity to learn to live happily and with independence and freedom.

Year by year, we have learned together through education, to combine our strengths to create a place that is accessible to disabled people throughout Europe. Today Monteverde, thanks in part to our efforts, represents a hope for a better world."



*Prof. Gerardo Vespucci, Headmaster of the Istituto Superiore 'A.M. MAFFUCCI'*



# Participating in the Access City Award 2020

The Access City Award is organised by the European Commission together with the European Disability Forum. It encourages cities to share their experience and to improve accessibility for the benefit of all.

Would you like to have your city's projects featured in the next booklet of the Access City Award? Do you want to share your experiences and actions with other cities?

## Take part in the Access City Award 2020!

The tenth edition of the Award will be launched in spring 2019 (date to be confirmed). Applications can be made by completing and submitting the online application form by the deadline.

Detailed information will be available at:  
[ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1141](https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1141)

Participating in the Access City Award is not only an opportunity to gain recognition, but also a unique chance to review the current situation in your city, for your own internal auditing purposes, and to measure progress. Studying the questions in the application form is an excellent way to analyse your accessibility policies and to identify their strengths and weaknesses.

Starting with the tenth Access City Award, winners will receive a financial prize!



## Who can apply?

The applicant must be a government authority of a city of over 50 000 inhabitants in one of the EU Member States. In Member States with fewer than two such cities, urban areas composed of two or more towns may also participate if their combined population exceeds 50 000 inhabitants. As the Access City Award cannot be won by the same city in two consecutive years, the winning city in 2019 is not invited to take part again in 2020. All other cities, including the runners up, the second and third prize winners and the special mention cities, are encouraged to participate again.

As a legacy of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018, there may be an annual special mention for cities that have made their cultural heritage accessible to all.

To help prepare for participation in the competition, the guidance note and the participation rules are available in all official EU languages on the Access City Award website:

[ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1141](https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1141)

## Selection process

- The juries will consider measures taken and planned in the following areas:
- The built environment and public spaces;
- Transport and related infrastructure;
- Information and communication, including new technologies (ICTs);
- Public facilities and services.

The juries will evaluate the applications taking into account the following six criteria:

- Scope of the actions
- Ownership, level of commitment
- Impact
- Quality and sustainability of results
- Involvement of persons with disabilities and relevant partners
- Social innovation.

The selection process is divided into two phases: pre-selection at national level and final selection at European level. The **National Juries** in each country select a maximum of three cities from among the national applicants using the evaluation criteria provided by the European Commission. These national candidates go forward to the second phase of the competition and are assessed by the **European Jury**.

The winner of the Access City Award 2020 will be announced in **late November 2019**. The ceremony is part of the annual European Day of Persons with Disabilities conference in Brussels.

## The Access City Award Secretariat

The Access City Award Secretariat can assist with the preparation of your application. If you need any additional information, please contact:

[secretariat@accesscityaward.eu](mailto:secretariat@accesscityaward.eu)

## Getting in touch with the EU

### In person

All over the European Union there are hundreds of Europe Direct information centres. You can find the address of the centre nearest you at:

[europa.eu/european-union/contact\\_en](https://europa.eu/european-union/contact_en)

### On the phone or by email

Europe Direct is a service that answers your questions about the European Union. You can contact this service:

- by freephone: 00 800 6 7 8 9 10 11 (certain operators may charge for these calls),
- at the following standard number: +32 22999696 or
- by email via: [europa.eu/european-union/contact\\_en](mailto:europa.eu/european-union/contact_en)

## Finding information about the EU

### Online

Information about the European Union in all the official languages of the EU is available on the Europa website at: [europa.eu/european-union/index\\_en](https://europa.eu/european-union/index_en)

### EU publications

You can download or order free and priced EU publications at:

[publications.europa.eu/en/publications](https://publications.europa.eu/en/publications). Multiple copies of free publications may be obtained by contacting Europe Direct or your local information centre (see [europa.eu/european-union/contact\\_en](https://europa.eu/european-union/contact_en)).

### EU law and related documents

For access to legal information from the EU, including all EU law since 1952 in all the official language versions, go to EUR-Lex at: [eur-lex.europa.eu](https://eur-lex.europa.eu)

### Open data from the EU

The EU Open Data Portal ([data.europa.eu/euodp/en](https://data.europa.eu/euodp/en)) provides access to datasets from the EU. Data can be downloaded and reused for free, both for commercial and non-commercial purposes.

The annual Access City Award recognises European cities for their efforts to make themselves more accessible for persons with disabilities and the elderly. This brochure celebrates the achievements of the 2019 winners, runner-ups, and special mentions – Breda (the Netherlands), Evreux (France), Gdynia (Poland), Vigo (Spain), Kaposvár (Hungary). The Award highlights the concrete steps each city has taken to improve the accessibility of their cities. These steps include accessible metros and trams, navigation apps, ‘eco zones’ with limited traffic and awareness events. As part of the European Year of Cultural Heritage, Viborg (Denmark) and Monteverde (Italy) were awarded as special winners for making their cultural heritage accessible to all.

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