

PROJECT

Accessible Nature and Culture: Sustainable Tourism (IN-HERITAGE)

In the context of the Cross-border Cooperation Programme Interreg Greece-Cyprus 2014-2020

INTERNAL REPORT

Report on the study visit to Ljubljana

Document type	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Report	<input type="checkbox"/> Software	<input type="checkbox"/> Other
Classification	<input type="checkbox"/> Public	<input type="checkbox"/> Confidential	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Internal
Status	<input type="checkbox"/> Draft	<input type="checkbox"/> Revised draft	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Final
Date of issue	30.06.2023		
Project Work Package	WP6. Actions outside the cross-border area		
Project Deliverable	D6.3.1: International study visits		
Abstract	<p>This document is an internal project document, made available by Beneficiary 3 (National Confederation of Disabled Persons, Greece), as a debriefing on the study visit conducted by staff members of the Project's Beneficiaries to Ljubljana city, which has collected a total of 4 accolades in the Access City Award competition: in 2018 it won the 2nd prize, in 2015 and in 2023 it won the 3rd prize and in 2012 it was distinguished with a Special Mention.</p>		

The project is co-financed by the European Union (ERDF)
and the National Resources of Greece and Cyprus

PROJECT BENEFICIARY RESPONSIBLE



NATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF DISABLED PEOPLE, GREECE

Headquarters: 236, Eleutheriou Venizelou Avenue, PC 163 41, Ilioupoli, Greece

Tel.: +30 210 99 49 837

Email: esaea@otenet.gr

Website: www.esaea.gr

Table of Contents

Preface	4
1. Goal and objectives of the study visits	5
2. Access City Award European competition	7
2.1 Distinctions of the City of Luxembourg in the competition.....	7
2.2 The city of Ljubljana	8
2.3 Multiple rewards as a result of a multi-year effort	9
2.4 A rich cultural experience for every visitor	11
2.5 Safe travel around the city	11
2.6 Innovative mobile app	11
2.7 Active involvement of persons with disabilities	12
2.8 Commitment to the Declaration of Diversity	12
3. Visit by the project team	14
3.1 Visit's team (participants)	14
3.2 Travel planning	14
3.3 Organization of meetings with host bodies	16
3.4 Meeting at the "Association of Paraplegics of the Ljubljana Province" ..	17
3.5 Guided tours of important attractions – good practices in the city	17
Highlights overview.....	22
Ecozone in the city center.....	22
The built environment	23
City public transport.....	24
Public green spaces and Playgrounds.....	25
In summary	26

Preface

The National Confederation of Disabled Persons - Greece, hereinafter referred to as "ESAMEA" for short, as Beneficiary of the Project "Accessible nature and culture-Sustainable Tourism" with the acronym "IN-HERITAGE", which is implemented in the context of the Cross-Border Cooperation Program Interreg Greece-Cyprus 2014- 2020 and is co-financed by the European Union (ERDF) and by National Resources of Greece and Cyprus, following a *call for expressions of interest for the conclusion of a service contract* (ADAM 22PROC010570773 2022-05-18, Ref. No. 739/18.05.2022), commissioned the Association of Companies "EUROPRACTIS-INFALIA" to provide support services for the implementation of specific actions of the IN-HERITAGE Project.

In the context of the Contract with the Association of Companies "EUROPRACTIS-INFALIA", hereinafter referred to as "the Contractor" for short, ESAMEA assigned the Contractor the implementation of Deliverable "*D6.3.1: International study visits*" of the IN-HERITAGE Project, which concerned the organization and conduct of two study visits with the aim of the transfer of executives of the Project Beneficiaries abroad to exchange knowledge and implementation experiences with institutions and organizations that have successfully implemented similar projects in the past and which are able to present good practices in the fields of "inclusion of people with disabilities" and "accessible tourism", and in particular visits to two European cities which have been distinguished in this regard in the European Access City Awards competition.

Further to the Contract, the Contractor initially undertook to investigate and accordingly propose possible host destinations for the study visits and then, in consultation with ESAMEA and the other Project Beneficiaries (the three municipalities from Greece and Cyprus), to specify the two cities and the local bodies to be visited. The cities that were finally chosen by the Project Beneficiaries were Ljubljana in Slovenia and the city of Luxembourg. Subsequently, the Contractor fully undertook to plan the visits, complete all communications necessary to schedule them, and coordinate all persons and bodies involved for the successful conduct of the requested study visits.

After the completion of the study visits, the Contractor undertook to prepare and deliver for each visit the relevant report ("Report of the study visit") in which the objective and plan of the visit are presented, along with brief minutes, the results/conclusions of the visit, photographic material, etc. This report concerns the study visit that was successfully completed in the city of Ljubljana between 07.06.2023 and 09.06.2023, with the participation of executives from all four Beneficiaries of the IN-HERITAGE Project.

1. Goal and objectives of the study visits

The goal of the educational study visits of the IN-HERITAGE Project is to offer the participants from Greece and Cyprus, members of the ESAMEA and of the municipalities of Rethymno, Ayia Napa and Sotiras, the opportunity to visit places, infrastructures and services that are recognised as good examples of “accessible tourism” and to delve into the study of specific issues related to its development at the local level (e.g. definitions, design principles, processes, techniques and methods, etc.). In addition, the encouragement and support of new collaborations with the host organizations is another indirect purpose of the project’s study visits.

The Project’s study visits were intended to provide a platform for dialogue on issues of tourism and accessibility/inclusion for people with disabilities, which constitute a common area of interest, contributing to the exchange of ideas and practices, as well as the promotion of new systems and policies. The study visits aim to promote the information and training of the participants, who in turn will contribute to the promotion of accessible tourism, as a concept and approach to tourism development, but also as an opportunity for local and social development and cohesion, in their homelands.

During each study visit, a key objective has been to present to the members of the visiting team the history, experience and good practices developed in each host organization. An important element for the success of each study visit was of course the visit to places where good accessibility practices have been implemented by the host bodies as well as the participation in demonstrations of conventional services and/or digital systems operated by the local authorities to serve disabled visitors and more generally for the management of accessible tourism. Also subject to discussion have been any funding tools exploited and strategies developed by the organization under study in order to help realize their visions for tourism development based on the accessibility of disabled people, as well as any supportive or negative elements in the existing institutional context in their countries. Furthermore, the study visits sought to exchange views on effective practices applied in the context of accessible tourism to cultivate and develop appropriate attitudes and behaviours among citizens, businesses, etc., that ensure the development of inclusive tourism experiences for everyone (e.g., campaigns, special committees, special type seminars or others).

In summary, the program of each study visit was designed with the main objective of providing the opportunity for demonstration (demo), discussion, exchange of

The project is co-financed by the European Union (ERDF)
and the National Resources of Greece and Cyprus

views/experiences and mutual learning on issues of common interest at European level for "accessible tourism".

In light of the above, for the planning and organization of the study visits of the Project, ESAMEA focused on the transfer of members of the Project Beneficiaries to two cities abroad that have recently been distinguished in the European Access City Award competition, for the exchange of knowledge and experience with the local authorities and the organizations that have contributed to this achievement.

2. Access City Award European competition

The Access City Award competition was created by the European Commission to reward cities that have prioritized accessibility for people with disabilities and older people and more generally for their work in trying to achieve a more accessible environment in all areas of life, creating inclusive cities, open to all.

The Access City award is part of the Union's wider efforts to create a Europe without barriers and to improve the lives of people with disabilities: the [Disability Strategy 2010-2020](#), in the logic of the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Disability](#).

Specifically, the Access City Award was established in 2010 by the European Commission to promote and recognize cities that take initiatives to improve accessibility in the urban environment, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), citizen services, transport, tourism infrastructure and other sectors. The Access City Award has a very wide range of initiatives and policies covered: from accessible housing policies, to play spaces, workplaces and public transport, every aspect of city life should take demographic changes into account.

The competition, organized by the European Commission in collaboration with the [European Disability Forum](#), is open to European Union cities with more than 50,000 inhabitants. Over the past five years, more than 200 cities have submitted nominations for the award. Cities awarded with the first 3 prizes receive a financial prize.

2.1 Distinctions of the City of Luxembourg in the competition

In **2015**, the winning city was Boras (Sweden). Helsinki (Finland) took the second prize and the third prize was awarded to **Ljubljana** (Slovenia). Logrono (Spain) was awarded a special mention in the category of built environment and public spaces, Budapest (Hungary) received a special mention for its work in the field of transport. Arona (Spain) and Luxembourg received a special mention for public facilities and services.

In **2018**, the city of Lyon in France was awarded the first prize. At the award ceremony, Lyon was praised for its public buses which are 100% accessible and for access to culture for all which is also ensured, thanks to the inclusion of accessible equipment in the libraries, such as reading machines, audio book readers and magnifying screens. The city has also developed digital tools for

people with disabilities and in terms of work inclusion, and 7.8% of civil servants are people with disabilities (a percentage significantly higher than the minimum quota of 6% required by French law). The European Commission also awarded the city of **Ljubljana**, Slovenia and the city of Luxembourg with second and third place respectively. **Ljubljana** has integrated accessibility into its overall policy, appointing a special advisory committee with elderly and disabled people to directly participate in the city's policy-making. Luxembourg city has put a lot of effort into raising awareness among citizens to avoid disability stigma and building a highly inclusive city where everyone feels comfortable. Finally, the city of Viborg in Denmark received a special mention for reconciling its historical heritage and hilly landscape with an accessible infrastructure. In 2017, 26 cities across the European Union participated in the competition.

Finally, in **2023**, the Swedish city of Skellefteå received the Access City Award in recognition of its long-term commitment and innovative approach to improving adaptation for people with disabilities. Accessibility is included in all of Skellefteå's plans, ensuring that public spaces such as playgrounds and streets are equipped with touch signs and floor heating to ensure that snow and ice are not a hindrance. The city's central park and nearby river area have trails and maps, seating and an outdoor lift. An SMS service for the blind and visually impaired provides information on road construction and potential obstructions across the city. The public bus is also fully accessible thanks to low floors, ramps, text displays and audio announcements. Out of 43 candidates for the Access City Award 2023, 22 cities were pre-selected by national experts. The Spanish city of Córdoba and the Slovenian capital **Ljubljana** were awarded second and third place. Three other cities received special mention for their efforts to become more accessible: Hamburg (Germany), for its built environment; Grenoble (France), for its transport network and Mérida (Spain), for technologies and communications.

2.2 The city of Ljubljana

The capital and largest city in Slovenia (293.218 inhabitants), Ljubljana, is the cultural heart of the country, and has a rich historical heritage. It is the country's cultural, educational, economic, political and administrative center. During antiquity, a Roman city called Emona stood in the area. Ljubljana itself was first mentioned in the first half of the 12th century. Situated at the middle of a trade route between the northern Adriatic Sea and the Danube region, it was the historical capital of Carniola, one of the Slovene-inhabited parts of the Habsburg monarchy. Ljubljana was the *European Green Capital* in 2016.

2.3 Multiple rewards as a result of a multi-year effort

The city of Ljubljana has applied as candidate for many years in the Access City competition and in 2018 received its highest award so far, the 2nd prize ([video](#)). Furthermore, two times, in 2015 and in 2023, it received the 3rd prize, while in 2012 it was distinguished with a “Special Mention”.

Ljubljana has been praised several times for being a friendly city for persons with disabilities. One can access almost every part of the city with a wheelchair. The city is covered in cycling paths, which means there is no need to hop on and off the pavements. Apart from the hills in the city, the city is very flat, and anyone can easily visit the suburbs. The old city centre is slightly inconvenient due to the paved streets, yet it is possible to move in a slower pace. The riverbanks offer many wonderful and accessible opportunities for walks. The city is well equipped with several public toilets for disabled persons, as well as public transportation, with almost all buses bearing wheelchair access ramps. Several protected buildings and historical sites have been rendered accessible.

Nowadays, accessibility is integrated into the city's overall policy and work, with a special Mayoral advisory body focusing on the topic. The elderly and people with disabilities are directly involved in the city's policymaking and the city has nowadays a combined plan for accessibility and sustainability. The slogan of the city is: “Let's live together and respect all the differences”.

For its broad approach to accessibility encompassing the whole population Ljubljana has won the silver prize at the European Commission competition Access City Award 2018.

“It is already our third recognition in this competition (in 2012 we received a special mention and in 2015 a bronze prize) further strengthening Ljubljana's position at the very top of European cities in the area of accessibility for people with disabilities.

For a number of years, the City of Ljubljana has been conducting activities ensuring accessibility for people with disabilities. Our activities extend over many areas, from education, sports, culture, social security and health to transport infrastructure, as ensuring accessibility is one of our priority tasks.

Among other things the expert jury wrote in its justification of this year's award that Ljubljana held the title European Green Capital in 2016 and that accessibility in our city is integrated in the general city policy and work with a special city advisory body dedicated to this field, namely, the Council for the Elimination of Architectural and Communication Barriers. And so, the elderly and the disabled people can directly participate in the creation of city policies.

They have added that circumstances in the field of accessibility have greatly improved in the past years and underscored that Ljubljana has a joint approach for improving accessibility and sustainability. Among other things they have highlighted that non-profit apartments adapted to people with disabilities are provided, the website www.ljubljana.si is fully tailored to people with disabilities (according to the standard of the World Wide Web Consortium it meets the conformance level AA), in schools and kindergartens measures for the inclusion of children with disabilities are implemented, and teachers participate in trainings to attain appropriate qualifications. Ljubljana has also made protected buildings and historical heritage fully accessible. And the green and accessible city centre has a positive influence on the general quality of life and social inclusion of all residents."

The competition in 2018 included 26 cities from around Europe with four cities making it into the final selection: in addition to Ljubljana, Lyon, which got the 1st prize, and Luxembourg and Viborg.

More recently, on Friday, 25 November 2022, the European Day of Persons with Disabilities, Ljubljana received the Access City Award 2023 bronze recognition from the European Commission in Brussels.

"We received the recognition for our broad approach to accessibility that includes the entire population of our city.

This is already the fourth award at the mentioned competition (we received a special commendation in 2012, a bronze award in 2015 and a silver award in 2018), with which Ljubljana consolidates its position at the very top of European cities in the field of accessibility. Ensuring accessibility is one of the priorities of the City of Ljubljana, which is why for many years, we have been carrying out activities that cover numerous areas, from education, sports, culture, social welfare and health to transport infrastructure.

With the recognition, we also received 80,000 euros in prize money, which we will use for additional measures to further improve accessibility in Ljubljana.

At this year's competition, 43 cities from all over Europe participated, six of them made it to the final selection, in addition to Ljubljana, Cordoba, Grenoble, Hamburg, Merida and Skellefteå."

"Ljubljana is a city in which diverse people live together in mutual respect. We create the conditions necessary for all to live full and quality lives. Accessibility for all is one of the most important issues that we always have to consider as we redevelop the city. If the city is accessible to the most vulnerable groups, it is accessible and friendly to all."

Zoran Jankovičlin Brännström, Mayor of the City of Ljubljana

2.4 A rich cultural experience for every visitor

The old heart of Ljubljana features barrier-free access for pedestrians to the streets, squares and bridges across the river Ljubljanica. A total of 13 footbridges have been built or renovated to be more accessible. And out of the 13 free-of-charge public toilets, 10 are accessible to everyone. Butchers' Bridge (Ljubljana's 'love bridge') has free accessible boarding facilities for river boats, and Ljubljana Castle can be visited via an accessible cable car. A tactile model of the castle for visually impaired persons is displayed in the courtyard, making it easier for them to experience its architecture. To ensure that everyone can enjoy Ljubljana's extensive green areas, the city has invested in accessible urban gardens. This includes installing more than 3 000 benches. Several public playgrounds have also been upgraded to make them more accessible.

2.5 Safe travel around the city

In Ljubljana's city centre, areas exclusively for pedestrians and cyclists have been extended and improved with evenly laid paving, tactile ground markings, dropped kerbs and ramps. More than 80 % of pedestrian crossings provide audible signals, and 2 % of parking spaces are reserved for persons with disabilities. Free electric vehicles, including wheelchair-accessible cars, are available for citizens throughout the city. All city buses have low floors, and 96 % of them are equipped with video and audio announcements. Travel on city and intercity public transport is also free for residents with disabilities and their personal assistants, as well as for older people. Persons with disabilities can safely use public transport in Ljubljana thanks to measures like special ID cards, which they can use to quickly request assistance from drivers on city buses.

2.6 Innovative mobile app

Since 2018, visitors to Ljubljana can download the free 'Ljubljana by Wheelchair' mobile app to access information for wheelchair users. The app shows information about accessible areas in the city and makes it easier for persons with disabilities to get around. Smart digital solutions (including an accessible web portal for the Citizens' Initiatives Service) help to provide easier and faster access to information, as well as opportunities to participate, for everyone.

2.7 Active involvement of persons with disabilities

Ljubljana recently released a Strategic Accessibility Plan that involves both private and public actors and includes clear measures to make the city more accessible by 2025. Persons with disabilities are directly included in city policymaking through SOAKO and SVSO, mayoral advisory bodies. SOAKO is made up of persons with disabilities, representatives from organisations for persons with disabilities, architects and municipal officials. The advisory body implements initiatives to remove and prevent architectural and communication barriers for persons with disabilities. It also proposes practical solutions to the relevant bodies within the city's administration. As well as policymaking, persons with disabilities are also included in the practical implementation of policies. This includes testing accessible solutions in public spaces, such as tactile ground markings, test rides on city buses, and test reading of easy-to-read information. In this way, persons with disabilities are valuable partners in making the city open and accessible to all. Ljubljana regularly consults persons with disabilities as part of decision-making, in order to better understand the specific services and actions that can support their integration, autonomy and independent living.

2.8 Commitment to the Declaration of Diversity

In the beginning of December 2018, the City of Ljubljana signed *the Declaration of Diversity* the aim of which is to encourage public and private organisations to implement and develop diversity policy within organisations. The Declaration was created within the framework of the European project I.D.E.A.S., and so far, in addition to the City of Ljubljana, 101 Slovenian organisations have signed it (governmental and nongovernmental, public and private).

Its signatories are committed to applying following principles:

- Developing an organisational culture based on equal opportunities, mutual respect, accepting and integrating diverse employees.
- Creating a diverse and inclusive work environment.
- Abiding by and broadening the principles of diversity at all levels within an organisation.
- Recognising the diversity of clients.
- Creating diversity policy.
- Disseminating and communicating our commitment to the Declaration and the results of the diversity policy to all our stakeholders.

The project is co-financed by the European Union (ERDF)
and the National Resources of Greece and Cyprus

These principles have been included in the work of City of Ljubljana for many years, especially in municipal strategies and action plans. The head of the Department for Health and Social Security Tilka Klančar who signed the Declaration on behalf of the City of Ljubljana mentioned the LGBT-Friendly Certificate as an example of good practice and added: *“Ljubljana is, also thanks to Mayor Zoran Jankovič, an open city where everybody can find a place for themselves. It is a city where we respect diversity and live together. We are aware that diversity makes us unique, and the ability to live together while respecting diversity enriches us and opens up new experiences.”*

3. Visit by the project team

Following the final selection of Ljubljana as one of the two destinations for the Project's study visits, the Contractor, in accordance with the requirements of the Contract, undertook, on behalf of the Contracting Authority (ESAmE), to organize the travel of the members of the study team (the composition of the group was undertaken by the Beneficiaries themselves) in the city of Ljubljana.

3.1 Visit's team (participants)

The following people participated in the Luxembourg visit group:

- From the lead partner, the Municipality of Rethymno, Mr. Vasilios Myriokefalitakis, advisor to the mayor and responsible for the project IN-HERITAGE in the Municipality.
- From the National Confederation of Disabled People (ESAmE), Mr. **Vasilios Koutsianos**, Secretary General, who as a wheelchair user traveled with a personal companion/assistant.
- From the Municipality of Agia Napa, Mr. **Constantinos Constantinou**, Secretary Officer of the Municipality of Agia Napa.
- From the Municipality of Sotiras, Mr. **Konstantinos Petrou**, staff member of the Municipality's European Programs Office.

As coordinator of the mission, Mr. **Alexandros Mourouzis**, Accessibility Expert, associate of ESAmE and communication manager of the IN-HERITAGE Project.

3.2 Travel planning

In consultation with the Beneficiaries, the following travel plan was finalized:

Monday, 5/6/2023: Departure for Athens (from Thessaloniki for the Coordinator, from Chania for the member from the Municipality of Rethymno and from Larnaca for the members from the Municipalities of Agia Napa and Sotiras)

- LCA: 07:35-09:20, Aegean Airlines A3 0911
- CHQ: 09:30-10:20, Aegean Airlines A3 0333
- SKG: 11:20-12:15, Aegean Airlines A3 0111

Monday, 5/6/2023: Introductory meeting in Athens (10.30-13.00)
Monday, 5/6/2023: Departure for Luxemburg (the whole team together) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 14:20-18:15, Swiss LX 1831 and LX 0758 (through Zurich)
Monday 5 to Wednesday 7/6/2023: Study visit in Luxemburg
Τετάρτη, 7/6/2023: Departure from Ljubljana (the whole team together) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 14:55-18:15, Swiss LX 0755 and LX 2276 (through Zurich)
Wednesday 7 to Friday 9/6/2023: Study visit in Ljubljana
Friday, 9/6/2023: Return from Ljubljana <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ATH (19:00-21:45), Aegean Airlines A3 0969 (the whole team together)• CHA (22:35-23:25), Aegean Airlines A3 0344 (the member from the Municipality of Rethymno)• SKG (23:10-00:05), Aegean Airlines A3 0136 (the coordinator)• LCA (23:35-01:10), Aegean Airlines A3 0910 (the members from the Municipalities of Agia Napa and Sotiras)

Regarding the accommodation for the members of the visiting team, the Contractor undertook the bookings in the following hotels:

- **IBIS LUXEMBOURG AEROPORT** (Route De Treves, L-2632 Luxembourg, Tel: +352 43 88 01)
- **M Hotel Ljubljana** (Derceva Ulica 4, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia. Tel: +386-01-5137000).

In accordance with the requirements of the Contract, for each study visit the Contractor made communications with potential host agencies in order to determine meetings with their executives.

As a result of these communications, the following meeting was organized.

The project is co-financed by the European Union (ERDF)
and the National Resources of Greece and Cyprus

3.3 Organization of meetings with host bodies

The meeting with officials of the Municipality of Ljubljana took place on Thursday, June 8 at 10:30, at the City Hall of Ljubljana. Among others, Alenka Žagar (Senior Advisor, City Administration, Department for Health and Social Care) and Dejan Ristić (City's Tourist Office) participated.



Figure 1. Meeting at the Ljubljana City Hall (Thursday, 8 June 2023)

Also, a guided tour of the premises of the town hall was organized by the municipal officials.

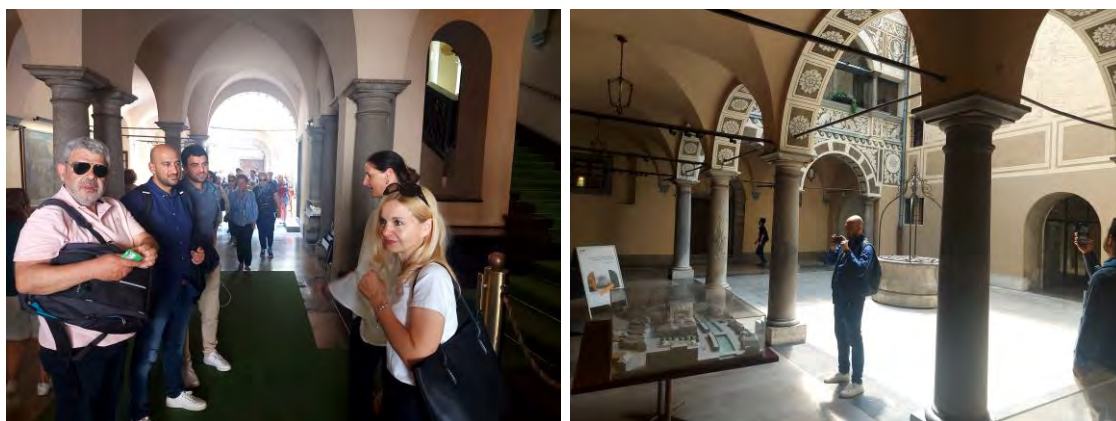


Figure 2. Tour of the city of Luxembourg by officials of the Municipality

3.4 Meeting at the "Association of Paraplegics of the Ljubljana Province"

In addition, a meeting was organized with Ms. Mirjam Kanalec (author of "Accessible Ljubljana", president of the Association of Paraplegics of the Ljubljana Province and vice-president of the European Spinal Cord Injury Federation), and officials of the Association of Paraplegics of the Ljubljana Province, on Friday June 9 at 10:30, at the headquarters of the Association (Društvo paraplegikov ljubljanske spružine, Address: Dunajska cesta 188, Ljubljana).

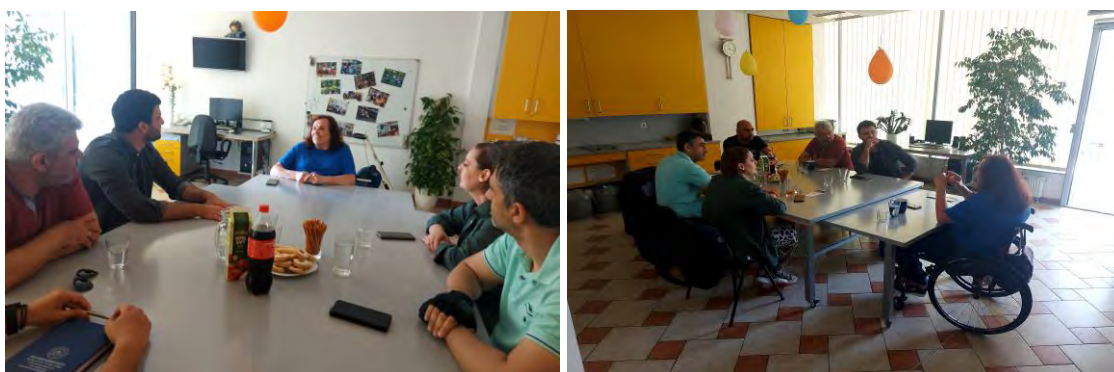


Figure 3. Meeting with Mirjam Kanalec at the "Association of Paraplegics of the Ljubljana Province" (Friday, June 9, 2023)

3.5 Guided tours of important attractions – good practices in the city

Finally, a tour was organized by the Contractor to important attractions of the city that present good accessibility practices, such as:

Ljubljana Old Town (TripAdvisor #1). Ljubljana Old Town is the historic old centre of Ljubljana. It is the most attractive and picturesque part of Ljubljana with all the most important tourist attractions like the Triple Bridge, Preseren Square, Ljubljanica River Canal, Ljubljana Cathedral, Franciscan Church, and many others. The Prešernov trg Square, the heart of the historic Ljubljana, has developed from a medieval crossroads from the former entrance to the walled city. Bars and cafes in the lively Petkovšek Embankment are a great place for a pleasant break. Since the 12th century, the Mestni trg square has been one of the centres of the medieval city. Later, medieval buildings were replaced by Baroque palaces, including the Town Hall. The Stari trg square continues to the Gornji trg square, which runs to the foot of the Castle Hill.



The Triple Bridge (TripAdvisor #3). The central of the three bridges forming the Triple Bridge has stood in its place since 1842, when it replaced an old, strategically important medieval wooden bridge connecting the north-western European lands with south-eastern Europe and the Balkans. Between 1929 and 1932, the side bridges, intended for pedestrians, were added to the original stone bridge to a design by the architect Jože Plečnik, who thus created a unique architectural gem of Ljubljana. On the right bank of the river, the Bridge is enhanced by a small flower shop connected to the Ljubljana Central Market colonnade, and on the left bank by a kiosk. It has a key position on the crossing of Plečnik's two urban axes, the river axis and the axis running between the Rožnik and castle hills. In 1992, the Triple Bridge was thoroughly renovated.



Prešeren Square (TripAdvisor #4). Ljubljana is probably one of the few cities in the world whose central town square is adorned with a statue of a poet rather than some political or military hero. The poet, France Prešeren (1800–1849), who wrote mostly in Slovenian and is best known for his sonnets, was one of Europe's great Romantic poets. The square's Prešeren Monument, designed by the architect Maks Fabiani and the sculptor Ivan Zajc, was unveiled in the autumn of 1905. It depicts the greatest Slovenian poet and the muse of poetry holding spring of laurel above his head. The poet's statue is symbolically faced by the statue of Julija Primic, his great love, mounted on the facade of a building located across the square, in the Wolfova ulica street.



The square's Prešeren Monument, designed by the architect Maks Fabiani and the sculptor Ivan Zajc, was unveiled in the autumn of 1905. It depicts the greatest Slovenian poet and the muse of poetry holding spring of laurel above his head. The poet's statue is symbolically faced by the statue of Julija Primic, his great love, mounted on the facade of a building located across the square, in the Wolfova ulica street.

Tivoli Park (TripAdvisor #5). Just like New York City has Central Park, Ljubljana has Tivoli Park. And it's not just a place for jogging and sitting on benches while feeding squirrels. It's a place to go when you need to calm your mind, recharge and decompress. It's so versatile, with many spots to visit and activities to enjoy. The Jakopič promenade, originally designed by Plečnik, is a wide promenade that offers a spectacular



view of the Tivoli Mansion at the end of the promenade. Rožnik is the place to go when you need to boost up your heart rate, do a bit of hiking, but don't feel like leaving the city. It's an immensely popular spot during warm spring months, also due to the fact that there's a restaurant on top serving typical Slovenian food. Tivoli also offers many other typical sporting areas such as tennis courts, swimming pool, gym and so on.

Cathedral of St. Nicholas (TripAdvisor #6). The current cathedral (and the two bell towers) date back to the 18th century, but a church already stood on this site in the 13th century. The cathedral is dedicated to St. Nicolas, protector against floods and patron saint of the fishermen and boatmen who have long come to the market to sell their catch. The current cathedral was designed by Andrea Pozzo in 1701. Its interiors are famous for frescoes, depicting miraculous moments in the life of St. Nicholas, the patron saint of all seafaring people and it is particularly rich in Baroque sculpture. The interior is majestic with pink marble, stucco, gilding and Baroque frescoes, as well as a fine choir, an imposing organ and a beautiful high altar. The cathedral is accessible to persons with movement disabilities and to the blind and partially sighted (e.g., designated evacuation path for the blind and partially sighted).



The Ljubljana Castle (TripAdvisor #8).

Ljubljana Castle, standing on a hill above the city for about 900 years, is Ljubljana's main attraction with numerous internationally recognized sustainability certifications. The castle's Outlook Tower and ramparts offer some of the most beautiful views of the city, while the castle houses a museum exhibition on Slovenian history, a puppet museum, and a number of historical rooms such as the Chapel of St George, the Prison, and a video presentation room called Virtual Castle.



Ljubljana Castle, which can quickly be reached by funicular railway, also provides space for art exhibitions, houses a café, a nightclub, a wine bar, and two restaurants, and serves as a venue for cultural events, family entertainment, dance evenings, and open-air film screenings held under the title of Film under the Stars in the summer. The castle is accessible to persons with mobility disabilities (Designated parking space for persons with movement disabilities; Designated path from the car park/public transport to the building; Designated entrance for persons with movement disabilities; Designated sanitary facilities accessible to persons with movement disabilities; Adequate access to the building for persons with movement disabilities -hallways, staircase, lift, etc.; Accessible event space for persons with movement disabilities; Accessible information desk/cash register for persons with movement disabilities), accessible to people with vision disabilities (tactile sculptures, replicas, etc.) , and accessible to the deaf and hard of hearing (the information desk/cash register has a hearing loop).

The project is co-financed by the European Union (ERDF)
and the National Resources of Greece and Cyprus

The Dragon Bridge (TripAdvisor #9). Just north of the market, crossing the Ljubljanica River out of Old Town, is Dragon's Bridge, designed by Jurij Zaninovich and completed in 1901 to mark the birthday of Austro-Hungarian Emperor Franz-Josef 1. In July 1919, the bridge was renamed in reference to the fabulously sculpted dragons adorning the bridge. Most prominent of these are the four dragon statues standing on pedestals at its four corners. Smaller dragon sculptures decorate the beautiful Art Nouveau balustrades. This bridge is in honour of Jason who was the founder of Ljubljana, apparently with his Argonauts they killed a dragon, hence a legend was born. Definitely the most ornate bridge crossing the river.



Odprta Kuhna (TripAdvisor #12). The locals call it the Open Kitchen, is a fabulous outdoor street food market every Friday in the summer in Ljubljana (during the warmer months), located near the central market. There is a buzz of activity during sunny days, with numerous cuisines on offer, great atmosphere and music. Very popular with locals and tourists alike.



Franciscan Church of the Annunciation. This Baroque style church that dominates the square in old town (Preseren square), truly adds to the beauty of the area. Its façade was once red-coloured, however over time has become pink, locally known as the pink church. The Church of the Annunciation was designed as a single-nave basilica in the early Baroque style with two side aisles that housed the chapels. The two bell towers were erected only in 1719. From the enormous pipe organ and the frescoes that adorn much of the interior surface to the beautiful flooring and striking altar, this is going to rank among the most beautiful cathedrals ever visited.



Vodnik Square - Central Market. Vodnik Square spans the area from the Dragon Bridge across Pogačar Square to the Triple Bridge. It is named after Valentin Vodnik, a Slovene priest of historical importance and there is a towering monument with a statue in the square to commemorate him. The square is also the location of Ljubljana outdoor Central Market and with the array of cafes and restaurants nearby. The marketplace runs along the

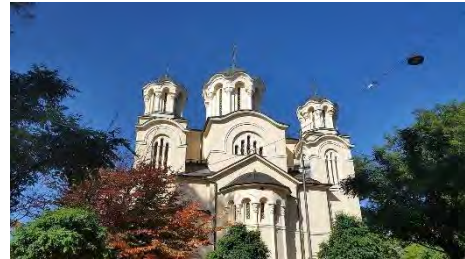


The project is co-financed by the European Union (ERDF)
and the National Resources of Greece and Cyprus

Ljubljanica River and has interesting architectural features viewable from across or on the river, with pillars and archways. Alongside the river stands one covered section which is a basically a row of bars with a fish market downstairs below. Further from the river's edge is another area specialising in bread, cakes, cheese, olive oil, honey, cooked meats etc.



Saints Cyril and Methodius Orthodox Church. This is the main Orthodox church in Ljubljana, a beautiful place for a moment of reflection, close to the National Gallery and Modern Art Museum. It was built in the 1930 in the architectural style of Serbo-Byzantine Revival. Much of the exterior is painted in a cream, but the most prominent features are the five domes topped with golden crosses. The paintings inside are new and nicely done.



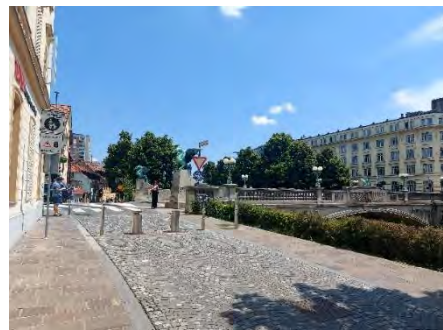
Town Hall (Magistrat). The Town Hall of Ljubljana, also known as the Magistrate or Rotovž, highlighted by its clock tower and pillared loggia, is located in the very center of the city, in front of the square decorated with the Three Rivers Fountain. The original building was built in the Gothic style in 1484. It acquired its present Baroque appearance in the 18th century. Even though this building functions as an administrated seat, one may enter it, but only the courtyard, to see artifacts and a map of late 17th century Ljubljana.



Highlights overview

Ecozone in the city center

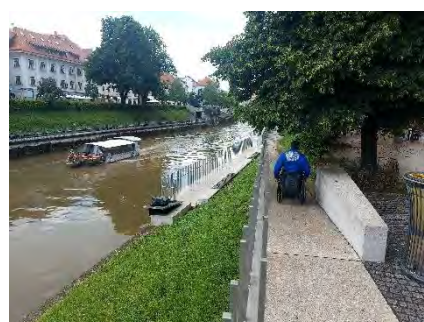
The city centre, including the old city area, has been completely renovated in the last decade. There is a restricted traffic regime in the *eco zone* of 10 hectares created by the renovation and private motor vehicles are prohibited. Public space in the city centre is today shared mainly by pedestrians and cyclists, and through various preventive and awareness-raising activities the City constantly strives for their safe and friendly coexistence. At the periphery of the pedestrian zone, instruction signs say “Cyclists, respect the right of way of pedestrians!”, which remind cyclists to slow down. Occurrences in these areas are closely monitored by municipal wardens.



Congress Square, once a car park, is now a key urban space and venue for numerous open-air events. Public toilets adapted for people with disabilities in the underground car park below Congress Square are accessible by lift. Following a complete overhaul, private motor traffic was prohibited on Slovenska cesta, once the city's main thoroughfare, and the area is now dedicated to pedestrians, cyclists and public transport.



The renovated public space in the eco zone is accessible obstacle-free, steps have been eliminated or road kerbs lowered and the paving is laid evenly and with filled gaps between paving units.



There are multiple accessible public toilets adapted for the mobility impaired available free of charge at seven locations in the eco zone.

For ease of mobility and orientation for the blind and visually impaired, public areas in the city centre are equipped with tactile guide paving (with longitudinal ribs), and floor warning tactile markings (with studs) are installed at traffic intersections and pedestrian crossings and more widely across the city.

The project is co-financed by the European Union (ERDF)
and the National Resources of Greece and Cyprus

13 new bridges and renovated footbridges across the River Ljubljanica, which goes through the city, significantly shorten today distances in the city centre. The banks of the river feature many public social spaces, while there is access to the river in several places. Below the Butcher's Bridge, people with disabilities have access to public Eurokey toilets and managed access to boats on the Ljubljanica River.



The built environment

Access to public institutions (such as libraries or museums) is satisfactory except for Parliament, which is difficult to access because the lift is too small. Road infrastructure is also a problem; the pavements are still not all adapted and rebuilt. However, the situation has improved significantly compared to that of decades ago. This progress is very noticeable as Ljubljana moves in the right direction concerning architectural barriers.



Ensuring the accessibility of public monument – protected buildings in the Old Town is a special but not insurmountable challenge. City Hall, also called Magistrat or Rotovž, which was built in the late 15th century, is the seat of the City of Ljubljana. Its premises are fully accessible to wheelchair users, as a lift is installed in the inner atrium, which is accessible by a lifting platform.

Ljubljana Castle, which is linked to the Old Town by a funicular railway, is the central and most visited tourist site in the city. From the funicular's upper station on Castle Hill, a lift offers unobstructed access to the castle courtyard, where there is a touch model of Ljubljana Castle with annotations in braille. Over 5 million passengers travelled to Ljubljana Castle by the funicular in just over 15 years of operation.



In many public buildings, such as cultural institutions, sports facilities, health centres, pharmacies, kindergartens and schools, adaptations have been made over the years for unobstructed access, such as reserved parking spaces, lifts and ramps. All newly constructed public buildings are obstacle-free.



City public transport

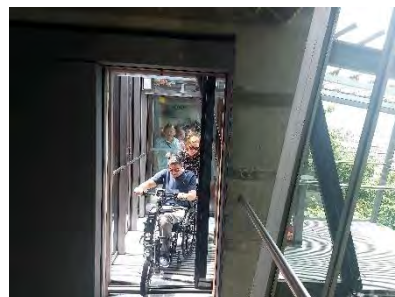
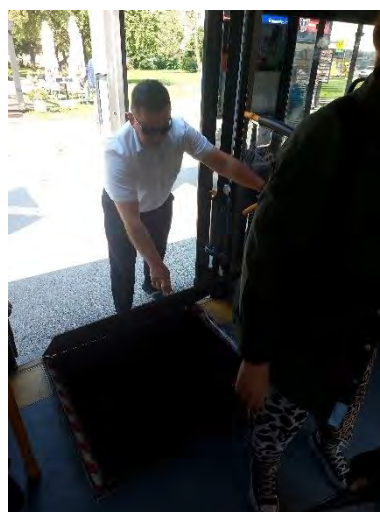
The City public transport has greatly updated its lines around Ljubljana with new buses equipped with ramps.

Motor vehicles are banned in the city centre area, which is why the City has introduced the option of free transport by Cavalier electric vehicles. The Cavalier fleet has six vehicles, three open and three closed. Open Cavalier vehicles are used in the warmer months, and closed vehicles operate all year round. Closed vehicles also have a low entry platform and sliding doors to facilitate wheelchair entry and exit. Cavaliers run all year round, from 6am to 10pm in the pedestrian zone. You can phone to be picked up or flag one down in the street. 1.2 million passengers have taken a Cavalier in the city centre in the last eight years.

The Urban train also runs from Ljubljana city centre up to the castle, powered by electricity just like the Cavaliers. The Urban has a fixed city-centre route taking in major city sights. The train is also accessible to wheelchairs via a ramp.

To ease their mobility around the city, wheelchair users are able to borrow an electric attachment free of charge. This innovative offer is provided by the City's tourism institute, the first tourist information centre in Europe to do so.

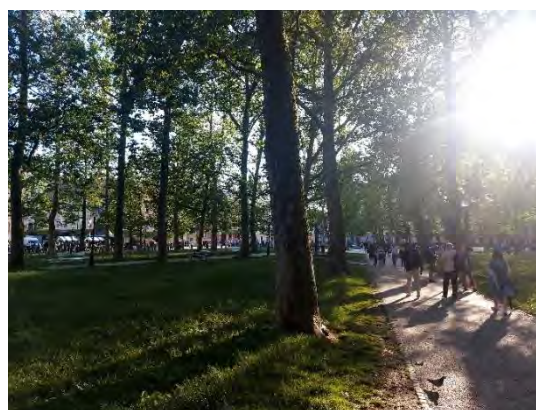
Outside the eco zone, urban public transport is available on buses with modern equipment and access. Environmentally-friendly low-floor buses are linked to a satellite tracking system, have an electronic payment system, air conditioning, internal and external displays, digital information screens with video announcements of bus arrivals at stops, audible announcements and are equipped for people with disabilities. 218 city buses transport up to 200,000 passengers a day, the most in winter. The busiest stops have screens showing the numbers and routes of buses arriving at the stop and the time until they arrive. At several stops, we plan to introduce audible information about bus arrivals. Under the terms of a city ordinance, those with disabilities and their companions are entitled to free public transport. Wheelchair users are offered a Demand-Responsive Transport service that provides buses with ramps on desired routes



at an agreed time. To feel safer on city buses, people with disabilities and the elderly can also arrange to have a special ID card to quickly alert us when they need help during a journey. For travel by organised groups, it is possible to hire a bus from the public transport company with modern equipment and a lifting platform, which can be used by a wheelchair user to enter the bus.

Public green spaces and Playgrounds

Ljubljana is a green city. Nearly three-quarters of land within the city boundary is green space. More and more green spaces are being created from degraded urban areas and in recent years 100 hectares of green space have been created. There are now over 830 urban allotments in eight renovated areas. In the newly landscaped area, allotments are also being created to encourage people to grow vegetables for



their own needs and to increase self-sufficiency. The City rents out the allotments to interested citizens annually. In one of these new areas, the possibility to cultivate land will be especially adapted for those with restricted mobility. In managing spaces, special attention is paid to the youngest – in this way, several children's playgrounds are renovated or newly created in public areas each year.

In Ljubljana, there are 220 public children's playgrounds managed by the City. The accessible-to-all playgrounds that the City manages, are the ten largest and most visited ones that children from all over the city and elsewhere come to. All of them are suitable for children of all ages and accessible to people with disabilities, and the children's playground in Šmartinski park is also equipped with signs for the blind and partially sighted. For outdoor recreation and exercise, the City has created and regularly maintains four trim trails with exercise stations, numerous trim islands, outdoor fitness facilities and street training islands. The green and outdoor recreational areas that the City cares for are largely accessible to all, have no steps at the entrances, have hardened foundations, and the exercise equipment includes pieces that can be used safely by those with impaired mobility. At the Phenological Observatory in Tivoli Park, information is also accessible by the blind and partially sighted.

The Path of Remembrance and Comradeship, a mainly flat and well-established 35km recreational trail that encircles Ljubljana, combines a dedication to a healthy lifestyle and the preservation of historical memory as it follows the line of a barbed-wire military prison around the city during World War II.

In summary

- Renovated the city center for pedestrians, with evenly laid paving, tactile ground markings, dropped kerbs and ramps.
- Bucher's bridge (Ljubljana's love bridge) now has accessible boarding for riverboats.
- The Castle can be easily visited by an accessible cable car. Tactile model of the Castle for the blind can be found at the courtyard.
- Accessible open gardens with over 3000 benches.
- Public playgrounds have been more accessible.
- Free electric vehicles including wheelchair accessible cars are at the disposal of citizens throughout the city.
- All city buses are low floor and 96% are equipped with video and audio announcements.
- More the 80% of the pedestrian crossings provide audible signals.
- 2% of the parking spaces are reserved for persons with disabilities.
- Ljubljana mobile app for wheelchair users.
- Accessibility strategic plan (for 2025).

