

14th session of the Open-ended Working Group on Ageing

Guiding questions for the focus area on “accessibility, infrastructure and habitat (transport, housing and access)”

The right of older persons to adequate housing, including land, property and inheritance:

Slovenia offers affordable rental housing to vulnerable groups, which also includes older persons. An individual or a family who cannot find a housing solution on their own, can apply for a non-profit rental apartment. These are only rented out by public housing operators and through public tenders. Non-profit rent is a rent regulated by law. People in social need can apply for rent subsidies. Priority categories are established within each call for tenders – these include people with disabilities, people with longer working lives, people with certain health conditions, etc.

At national level, the Pension and Disability Insurance Institution has set up a Real Estate Fund for Pension and Disability Insurance. This fund provides only rental housing for older persons. In addition to the State Housing Fund, local housing actors (municipal housing funds, municipalities) also launch public tenders for the allocation of housing, alongside the traditional tenders for the allocation of housing, through which they offer care housing for rent. These are properly adapted and targeted at the older persons.

The biggest problem of accessibility is the lack of public rental fund in general. Only a sufficient amount of fund can successfully address a specific population.

In recent years, Slovenia has also seen the emergence of alternative forms of housing for older persons. Some funds are already building neighbourhoods with units for older people to live together. Cohabitation can also present challenges that need to be addressed in a timely and appropriate manner.

National legal and policy framework (transport and mobility):

1. Basic piece of legislation in the field of transport and mobility is Road Transport Law, (2006; amended several times, last change in March 2024). While basic policy framework presents Transport development strategy of the Republic of Slovenia until 2030, (2017).

2. For providing equal status of older persons in the society it is necessary to constantly follow all the needs, demands and rights of this population in all areas of social life. Therefore, it is crucial to establish a system of strategies, action plans, legislation, measures, and projects. As a prerequisite a special attention must be paid to the role and development of older population within development of the whole society. In the area of transport these challenges are mainly regarding accessibility to means of transport and built environment (bus stations and stops).

We would like to mention here some achievements of Slovenia in last years. In 2021 and 2022 we introduced 52 new sets of passenger trains. All of them are low-floor trains adapted for use of persons with limited mobility (older persons, persons with disabilities etc.)

Numerous local communities organize for older persons transfers on call with cars. This project is called »Prostofer« and is free of charge for its users.

To provide better accessibility of services for people aged 65 and more who are not employed any more (pensioners) in 2019 free of charge transport within intercity road and railway passenger transport was introduced for them on the national level. We are convinced that a key measure

for equal rights of older persons regarding accessibility is free of charge transport for pensioners and other senior citizens who are not employed.

Consequently, also some municipalities decided to offer these passengers free of charge transport within urban passenger transport on their territory.

Since 2017 a project for enabling multimodal mobility of people with different disabilities has been executed. Within its scope a data layer of external environment (transport included) and online environment was prepared and is regularly updated. This way, vulnerable groups can receive information regarding accessibility to external environment.

For sparsely populated areas where the public transport is not well organized, or it does not exist at all we prepare measures for dealing with transport poverty. Transport poverty is a phenomenon when an individual or a household does not have adequate transport to key services or activities for him/her or can hardly afford it.

Measures in this area will be mainly co-financed from the Social climate fund, for which Slovenia has to present the spending plan by 2025. Since older persons are one of target groups for these measures, we are sure that in this manner they will be enabled to equal access to basic services and more decent life.

Data and research:

Ministry for the Environment, Climate and Energy has at its disposal mainly statistical data regarding the number of users of free of charge transportation for older persons. Through the project of multimodal mobility of persons with different disabilities it has access also to data on how certain environment is adapted for this group of people.

Equality and non-discrimination:

Besides different general campaigns to raise awareness in the society to prevent ageism and similar prejudices in the various means of transport there are special signs to remind other passengers to pay respect to people who really need a seat when there is such a crowd that not all the passengers can be seated. Also, the staff of transport companies is trained to help older persons or people with disabilities and provide them services and aid they need.

Remedies and Redress:

In the area of intercity line passenger transportation and city traffic older persons have, like all the other passengers, a right to complaint if they feel that the service was not adequate for them. Besides, in Slovenia is in place the EU legislation, as well as the national legislation regarding adaptation of products and services for persons with disabilities. This way the infrastructure adapted for persons with disabilities is at the same time adapted also for all the other persons with different disabilities.