Cerema

Work group for accessibility officers from inclusive cities (GT-Ravi)

Fifth annual participatory workshops
Metz, 15-16 November 2018

On 15th and 16th November 2018, **Metz hosted the fifth annual participatory workshops organized by the Cerema Working Group for accessibility officers from French inclusive cities** (Groupe technique des Référents accessibilité des villes inclusives - GT-RAVI) coordinated by Cerema. GT-Ravi is a national thematic network, the activities of which are open to all accessibility officers working for French local and regional authorities. Its publications are available for public consultation on cerema.fr. The aim is to facilitate discussions between authorities and Cerema on as-yet unstabilised technical issues, in order to assist the nationwide implementation of public policy relating to accessibility.

At the 2018 workshops, around 30 people representing 14 local authorities [1] and three Cerema departments used the three half-day sessions to discuss their respective practices and thinking, and then produce deliverables relating to current topics prepared and coordinated in advance. All participants had been selected on the basis of their response to a call for contributions issued by Cerema before the summer.

Three workgroups, each led by a tandem of representatives from a local authority and Cerema, worked in parallel on the following topics:
- **New forms of mobility and accessibility**
  Led by: Anne Le Ruyet (Cerema Centre-East) & Eric Plantier-Royon (Villeurbanne)
- **Pedestrian guidance and crossings in large spaces, aprons, shared space, etc.**
  Led by: Céline Debes (Cerema Centre-East) & Brigitte Grasset (Toulouse Métropole)
- **How to communicate relating to the effective accessibility of public buildings?**
  Led by: Cédric Lentillon (Cerema Centre-East) & Virginie Zewe (Ville de Metz)

After the workshops, a plenary session led by **Dominique Gros, mayor of Metz**, **Jean-Luc Bohl, chairman of the Métropole de Metz urban authority** and **Brigitte Thorin, the ministerial delegate for accessibility** reviewed the salient points and main lessons arising out of each of the three workshops and considered possible next steps.

This summary covers the main points discussed during this plenary session. The detailed reports and deliverables of each group are available on-line (in French) for more information on individual topics.

Dominique Gros introduced the meeting by noting Metz's long-standing commitment to accessibility, driven by Dominique Trabucco, who ran the city's Disabilities unit from 1995 until his death in 2015 and was himself a wheelchair user. For the mayor, accessibility considerations should be addressed by all departments, rather than being treated as a separate public policy. As well as people living with disabilities, accessibility issues affect the elderly, tourists, families, etc. A total of €14 million is currently being invested over a nine-year period under the Ad'AP action plan (at 280 "ERP" public buildings and 194 "IOP" publicly-accessible facilities in the city) and the Sd'AP action plan, which covers the whole public transport network. All polling stations are accessible. While recognising that nothing is finished and nothing is perfect, a determined effort is underway. In some cases, the necessary action is very simple, whereas in others, major works are required.

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[1] Ville d'Angers, Communauté urbaine de Dunkerque, Grenoble-Alpes Métropole / Ville de Grenoble, Lorient Agglomération, Ville de Metz, Metz Métropole, Ville de la Roche sur Yon, Ville de Rouen, Ville de Rueil-Malmaison, Ville de Toulouse, Toulouse Métropole, Ville de Villeneuve d'Ascq, Ville de Villeurbanne

For Jean-Luc Bohl too, improving accessibility is an iterative process and it is important not to become complacent: there is still room for progress, particularly in order to address the full spectrum of disabilities. All public policies adopted by local authorities should address accessibility, as serving all citizens is a fundamental principle of their mission. To achieve this goal, training must be provided to employees and elected representatives. The younger generations inspire hope: children are highly attuned to accessibility issues and are the best ambassadors for raising awareness among their parents.

The **workshop devoted to "new forms of mobility"** began by collectively identifying the new forms of mobility and assessing the extent to which they are inclusive. These new forms of mobility include:

- car-pooling, which some local authorities are organising via car-pooling routes. This is a rather inclusive service. Furthermore, feedback exists indicating that (folding) wheelchair users avail of such services, although things are more complicated for electric wheelchair users;
- car-sharing, which can take various forms, from peer-to-peer car hire to the provision of hire cars in city centres. This service was also considered relatively inclusive, and it was pointed out that cars suitable for wheelchair users are available for hire;
- bike-share systems with static docks. This service is not inclusive. However, an initiative in Bordeaux features two improved wheelchair bicycle attachments and a tandem (accessible to accompanied visually impaired users);
- free-floating bicycles and scooters: but are these really new mobility services or rather, new obstacles on accessible pedestrian routes?

Three key topics emerged during the workshop:

1. New mobility services (NMS) are prompting the **emergence of new stakeholders** (non-profits, start-ups, etc.), requiring new forms of contracting with local authorities that can address accessibility and inclusion issues;
2. New mobility services require **better coordinated information for users/passengers,** to enable them to prepare and if necessary adapt their journeys (*Mobility as a service* or MaaS concept);
3. The emergence of NMS has revealed a number of legal vacuums, and is likely to result in **new regulatory developments**.

The group subsequently analysed two examples of comparable initiatives in greater detail: "Happy Syklett" in Lorient, and "Cyclo-pousse" in Villeurbanne. Their strengths, weaknesses and aspects requiring particular attention will be reviewed in the deliverable produced by the workshop for local authorities.

In conclusion, new mobility services were treated as a new vector for social, economic and community development, which collectivities would do well to harness as a potential "last-mile" missing link in the conventional mobility chain, particularly in the context of our ageing population.

The first task for the participants in the workshop focussing on **guidance in open spaces** was to define what constitutes an open space (town squares, building aprons, sea walls, beaches, areas with traffic calming measures, etc.) and above all, define users' needs in such spaces. Travelling from A to B requires answers to the following three questions:

- Where am I? This is the self-location requirement;
- Which direction must I go? This is the orientation requirement;
- How can I get there? This is the guidance requirement.

In order to address these three requirements, the group identified and analysed a number of organisational and technical solutions.

The organisational solutions include:

- **Consulting** users (particularly user associations and non-profits working with people living with disabilities) and other stakeholders with activities liable to impact roads and pathways (including authorities tasked with organising mobility, refuse collection services, retailers, etc.). The tools that enable this consultation process must be refined: tactile paving, test beds with tactile contrasts, thermoformed surfaces, etc. The group noted the benefit of including performance obligations relating to guidance for all users in the specifications for new developments;
- **Monitoring execution** of works, in order to make adjustments, adapt material choices and avoid allowing non-conformities in new developments to "slip through";
- **Gathering feedback** to raise awareness among roads department employees, in a continuous improvement approach. For example, the Dunkerque urban community (CUD) explained how it returned to the site of a development one year after it was commissioned, to assess what was working, what was not, and how the development was ageing.

The following technical solutions were mentioned and analysed:
- **Intuitive tactile guidance**: guidance is included from the design stage, applying the principle that when presented with a choice of surfaces, users prefer to travel on the smoother one;
- **Guidance tactile indicators**: resin, concrete/stone or metal strips. Toulouse Métropole conducted a field trial to compare these three solutions. The group completed a comparative table, which will be included in the deliverable. Metal strips can become detached from the substrate. Resin is relatively difficult to lay. Concrete or stone strips set into the ground appear to be the most durable process.
- **Audible guidance**. As the sounds made by cars and audible traffic lights are two major audio cues facilitating movements by blind and visually impaired people, there is an urgent need to compensate for the reduction in the number of cars in towns and cities, the creation of pedestrian priority areas, the phasing out of traffic light-controlled intersections, etc. Specifically, much of the discussions focussed on the development of shared spaces. There is a need to educate drivers and other users, but also to guide visually-impaired people, children and the elderly. One possible option consists in installing street furniture that makes preferred routes easier to identify. Shared spaces nevertheless remain a very useful tool for enhancing accessibility in streets that had only narrow pavements.
- Olfactory guidance was not discussed during the workshop.

The workshop on the theme **"How to communicate relating to the effective accessibility of public buildings?"** set out to produce a table of criteria for assessing communication initiatives relating to the accessibility of a community's public buildings, as well as information to include in specifications relating to the introduction of new initiatives in this area.

The group began by considering the concept of **effective accessibility**. Notwithstanding the regulatory concept of accessibility[2], **for users** it is important to know, for example, whether or not the building is compliant as a result of concessions. A number of specific points may also be of interest to users: the conditions for entering the building, or any tools that by a variety of means enable the regulatory objective to be achieved or surpassed. The degree of precision is also a topic for debate, as is the quality and dependability of data (and hence the nature of its producers).

As in previous GT-Ravi workshops on the matter of accessibility-oriented GIS, several initiatives by participating authorities were discussed. For example, **Ville de Metz presented a map of the area's public buildings, showing a variety of information of crucial importance of users with impaired mobility**, and in particular the presence of nearby disabled parking spaces, the type of entrance and

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[2] Refer to the C-Conforme application introduced by the Rhône department's development agency (DDT: https://c-conforme.fr/index.html), which identifies and geolocates public buildings for which an accessibility certificate or Ad'AP accessibility planning document has been filed.

the presence or absence of reception staff[3]. This information will in time be enriched as information from the public accessibility register is published on line, and linked, via the urban authority's GIS portal, with information relating to the accessibility of street routes and public transport routes. Ville de Toulouse has also implemented an online map showing the accessibility status of its public buildings (work in progress / accessible / accessible under concession / not accessible). This additional information enriches the opendata[4] system operated by the Toulouse urban authority, which also enables accessibility registers to be published online.

The table produced by the group to analyse initiatives will incorporate several items. The principal areas identified with which to describe public relations initiatives include the objective, the target, the time frame, the source of the information, the resources, the medium, the form and the assessment criteria.

Following on from these three reports, the **ministerial delegate for accessibility** summarised and commented on the insights gained from the 2018 workshops.

Regarding the workshop on new forms of mobility, she noted that the public space is a public asset in which conflicts of use may arise, before going on to ask whether it is not better to have conflicts of use rather than no use at all? The solution is to **find the means of sharing this space more effectively**. This involves **works and adaptations, but also education, promoting civic responsibility, human support and training** relating to mobility, as in the example of the "Be bold, be bus" (Osons le bus) scheme presented by Lorient Agglomération. These new forms of mobility can serve as catalysts, opening up access to employment, leisure and healthcare for all.

Regarding the question of guidance, the answers must go beyond exclusively regulatory measures. New development concepts are emerging, transforming our towns and cities. We need to **assess their impact on mobility for all citizens**, especially the most vulnerable, such as those living with disabilities, **adopting an approach based on consultations** and joint initiatives, **analysing needs in detail before devising new solutions**, and ICT-based solutions in particular. For example, beacons can be used to identify and geolocate the entrance to each public building, and time, develop mobility aids based on pedestrian GPS smartphone applications.

This digitally-assisted accessibility was a focus of the work of the public buildings workshop, naturally prompting the group's discussions to expand in scope to the whole mobility chain. **The French Framework Law on Mobility (Loi d'orientation sur les mobilités - LOM)** that will come into force in 2019 intends to **enable accessible routes between public transport stops and mobility-generating public buildings to be mapped, in a usage-oriented approach** covering the entire mobility chain. This raises the issues of the time required in order to collect the relevant data. It will also be necessary to define an update process to ensure that sufficiently current data is provided. The solution will require a crowdsourcing approach to identify temporary obstacles (as in the Waze model, in which the user community updates the data).

The Delegate concluded by stressing that although most asset managers, including public authorities, have adopted the Ad'AP approach, **many managers of small routinely-used public buildings (e.g. shops and the liberal professions) are yet to do so**. Special support is therefore necessary at this stage. This is the role of the **"Accessibility ambassadors"** - civic service workers who will be recruited and trained by the State and assigned to municipal authorities in two-person field teams that will visit managers of such buildings, to discuss the issues with them, acknowledge their efforts, encourage them to join the scheme and provide any necessary assistance (e.g. simplified Ad'AP, tutorials, etc.).

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[3] See: https://metz.fr/lieux/erp.php
[4] See: https://data.toulouse-metropole.fr