



EMTA Study into Older People and Public Transport: Challenges and Chances of an Aging Society

Objectives

- To undertake a European wide research project to determine whether Passenger Transport Executives and operators understand the impact/risk factors that an increasingly older population may have on public transport infrastructures.
- To evaluate current support systems in place to cater for the public transport needs of older people.

Methodology

- Consultation via questionnaire and field visits with a range of European cities and Passenger transport Executives to gain an understanding of whether the current and anticipated public transport needs of older people are understood.

Findings

- It is anticipated that significant demographic shifts will occur across Europe over coming decades with an expected doubling in the population aged 65 and over by 2050.
- Car usage is on the rise, particularly among older women, so increasing use of the car can be expected.
- Many older citizens will find it difficult or impossible to continue to drive due to health reasons, increasing fuel costs and growing social inequalities.
- In particular, older single people will have to re-think car ownership. Public transport will therefore play an increasingly important role to ensure independent living and social inclusion.
- Currently, it is difficult to define **who is an older person** and identify common requirements and needs across Europe.
- The coming decades will see the **ageing of generations accustomed to car use** and travel-intensive lifestyles, with expectations of this continuing.
- **Public transport will become crucial** to maintain quality of life and active participation in society.
- Public transport systems should be adapted to the **needs and expectations** of older people as well as **attracting more older passengers** by familiarising them with services, with emphasis on **service quality, punctuality and cleanliness** as well as accessibility.
- Passenger Transport Authorities need to know the needs and expectations of older people at a local level, so more efforts in **research and consultation** are necessary to support better planning of services.
- The **image of public transport** among older people needs to be improved. Many older people seem to be unaware of the opportunities that public transport can offer them. Focused **marketing approaches** would attract more senior passengers. Consideration of how to **familiarize older people with public transport** by **travel training, promotional events** or **personal marketing campaigns** should be considered
- Fear of **accidents and harassment**, and misbehaviour of **staff (drivers)** are important issues among older people, and often prevent them from using public transport. Consideration should be given to implementing better training programmes for drivers.
- **Approachable staff** and **ease of use** of transport facilities (**pre and on journey information, vehicle and infrastructure**) are of significant importance to older people.