

# Railway accessibility in Łódź

## Background

- Łódzka Kolej Aglomeracyjna (LKA), the regional railway operator in Łódź, Poland, launched a comprehensive accessibility programme in 2014 to address the barriers faced by persons with disabilities when using train services. At the time, many passengers in Poland with mobility, hearing, or visual impairments encountered inaccessible services and limited assistance.
- To tackle this, LKA introduced accessible carriages with level boarding between trains and platforms, as well as features like wheelchair lifts, wide doors, and Braille signage. Hearing-impaired passengers can access online sign language interpreters at ticket desks and onboard every train. LKA also adopted the WCAG standards for its website and digital services.



## Key Activities

- Introduction of step-free, level-access train boarding.
- Provision of wheelchair lifts and wide, accessible train doors.
- By 2021, 14 of the 34 trains in the LKA fleet were equipped with induction loops.
- Seat numbers were enhanced with large print, QR codes, Braille, and NFC tags to support visually impaired passengers.
- On-demand online sign language interpretation during travel.
- WCAG-compliant website and accessible ticketing system.
- A 48-hour advance notice for assistance that is mandated by European Regulation (EC) No. 1371/2007 is not required, setting a higher national standard.
- The company also delivers three hours of annual accessibility training to each staff member and collaborates with national stakeholders, including the Polish Rehabilitation Fund for People with Disabilities (PFRON), to help develop national accessibility guidelines.
- Collaboration with users with disabilities for service design and evaluation.
- Participation in national accessibility policy development via PFRON.



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## Impact

### Accessibility and Inclusion

- 14% of passengers in 2019 were people with reduced mobility.
- Passengers with visual impairments can now travel independently using Braille signage and tactile seat markers.
- Deaf passengers benefit from on-demand online sign language support at all travel stages.
- Inclusive ticketing and information systems reduce barriers for all user groups.
- LKA's efforts have made it the only rail carrier in Poland with full digital and communication accessibility, and other railway companies are now beginning to follow its example.

### Industry Influence

- LKA has set a precedent within the Polish rail sector.
- Other rail companies are now replicating LKA's practices.
- LKA staff are involved in shaping national accessibility training guidelines.

### Organisational Change

- Office buildings are being upgraded with tactile flooring and induction loops.
- Accessibility is embedded across the organisation's infrastructure and culture.

## Challenges & Solutions

### Challenges:

- Inaccessible infrastructure in Poland's wider rail network.
- Limited precedent for accessible design in regional rail.
- Need to train and sensitise staff to diverse needs.
- High costs of accessible infrastructure and modifications.

### Solutions:

LKA leveraged European funding to purchase accessible train carriages. It prioritised universal design and invested in digital and in-person accessibility services. Annual staff training and collaboration with users with disabilities ensured real-world needs were addressed. LKA also proactively influenced national practices, helping to bridge policy gaps.





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## Tips for Similar Projects

- Involve users with disabilities in co-design and evaluation.
- Adopt universal design principles from the outset.
- Go beyond legal minimums to deliver true accessibility.
- Use public and EU funds strategically for infrastructure upgrades.
- Train staff regularly to promote awareness and professionalism.
- Embed accessibility into both physical and digital infrastructure.

## Video

**Video** on Railway Accessibility in Łódź, Poland

### Video Description

Video on LKA's accessibility programme.

## Resources

- **Zero Project Website** with information about the programme.
- Fact sheet & image available to download on this page also.

## Identified Limitations/Weaknesses

While LKA has set an example, full accessibility is not yet available across all trains (e.g. 14 of 34 have induction loops). Broader integration with Poland's national railway network remains a challenge. Continued investment and policy coordination are needed to scale the model nationally.

## Partners

