

Detailed presentation of some door-to-door services: Barcelona

In the surrounding area of Barcelona some municipalities provide a door-to-door transport service for disabled people who cannot use the regular transportation system even if it is adapted.



© DR

The city of Barcelona, with a population of 1.5 million inhabitants (4.5 million for the whole Metropolitan Area), provides the most comprehensive service in terms of territorial coverage and organization. The municipal “Institut de Persones amb Disminució (Institute for Disabled People)” together with the “Entitat Metropolitana del Transport” finance this service. The operating company is “Transports Ciutat Comtal”, a company with many fields of activity in the domain of transportation.

Two very differentiated kinds of services are provided as door-to-door: the so-called “Routine” services and “Sporadic” services.

“**Routine**” services follow every day the same route and roughly the same users. They are carried out by adapted buses as shown in the picture, with a lift in its rear, to load wheelchairs. One half of the cabin has no seats to set wheelchairs in it.

“**Sporadic**” services change their route every day. They have to be ordered at least 24 hours in advance. According to the demand, the operator decides which customers are derived to adapted taxis (see picture) and which to buses. In that case, it tries to assign them to an existing route or, otherwise, to create a specific route for “Sporadic” services.

This demand shows a quick increase every year, that can be measured by the rate of denials of sporadic services because of the saturation. In peak months like October and November 2003, it reached a 50% of the accepted requests. The overall number of passengers for 2001 was 102,000. Compared to the total population, it yields a rate of 0.07 journeys/inhabitant/year. Other municipalities in the Metropolitan Region also offer some kind of door-to-door transport services. For instance, l’Hospitalet de Llobregat, the second largest town in Catalonia (population of 240,000 inhabitants), provides a service of about 20,000 trips/year. This is a



© DR

higher rate than in Barcelona: 0.085 journeys/inhabitant/year. Badalona, the third largest municipality, offers only “routine” services. Up to 15 more municipalities provide some type of door-to-door service but, the less the population, the less the service provided, not only in quantity, but also in quality.

The main problem up to now is the lack of funding, because the needs increase very quickly. Nevertheless, a issue of organisation of the services is a key one. The origin of all those services is municipal, and the desti-

nations that are covered must usually be in the same municipality. Consequently, intermunicipal or metropolitan journeys cannot often be contemplated, although the demand of intermunicipal trips grows faster than that of inner trips only. This is true both for overall transportation demand, for adapted trips and for door-to-door services.

Therefore, the next challenge to overcome will be the metropolitan organization of door-to-door services, so that all the demand can be satisfied.