



Mobility as a Right: Building Fair, Accessible and Sustainable Mobility Systems for Everyone

**Lessons and policy recommendations
from the GOLIA project**

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The GOLIA project aims to transform mobility systems by recognising Mobility as a Right. This vision goes beyond the traditional conception of transport as a mere service, placing it within a legal, social, environmental and political framework based on:

- Equity (horizontal and vertical)
- Universal accessibility (physical, digital, economic)
- Sustainability (environmental, health, social)

MaaR is defined as the guarantor of access to essential resources: employment, education, health, culture and civic participation. Mobility systems must be safe, inclusive, affordable and non-discriminatory. This white paper analyses: the legal foundations of MaaR (EU, national, local), the social, economic, ecological and political implications, and the conditions for integrating MaaR into governance and planning frameworks (SUMP, SOMI). More detailed analysis and description of all results can be found in GOLIA project deliverable D1.3 Mobility as a Right - legal definition (which from this point of the document on will be called simply “the report”).

➤ ***Mobility must be regarded as a modern fundamental right, a prerequisite for the exercise of all other social rights.***

Conceptual and legal foundations of MaaR

The pillars of MaaR

1 Equity

Firstly, equity, understood as a fair and appropriate distribution of mobility resources, considering the specific needs of vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, women, low-income households, rural residents and migrants, etc. Unlike equality, which ensures reception of the same treatment by all groups of society, equity aims to correct structural disadvantages by offering targeted measures needed by different social groups to ensure genuine accessibility.



- Fair redistribution of the benefits and constraints of mobility.
- Targeted measures for vulnerable groups: people with disabilities, women, older people, young people, migrants, rural residents...
- Need for social pricing, minimum service levels, and adapted services.

2 Accessibility



Second, accessibility, which encompasses not only physical infrastructure (lifts, ramps, adapted pavements), but also information, digital accessibility, affordable fares and the availability of alternative solutions for non-digital users. This principle is strongly supported by European legislation, notably Directive 2019/882 on accessibility.

- Removal of physical, economic, cognitive and digital barriers.
- Compliance with the European Act (2019/882): interfaces, ticketing, signage, information.
- Obligation to provide non-digital alternatives.

3 Sustainability



Finally, sustainability, understood as the transition to low-emission mobility, supported by multimodality, integrated urban planning and reduced car dependency, in line with the European Union's climate objectives.

- Reduction of externalities: CO₂, pollution, congestion, noise, accidents.
- Alignment with the Green Deal, Fit for 55, carbon neutrality by 2050.

➤ **Legal recognition of MaaR obliges Member States to guarantee accessible infrastructure, a minimum service level, fair fares and anti-discrimination measures.**

Legal status of MaaR

From a legal perspective, **mobility is not explicitly recognised as an autonomous right in the European treaties or in the national constitutions examined.** However, it is linked to fundamental rights such as freedom of movement, equality, dignity and the inclusion of people with disabilities.

The recognition of the right to mobility would have major **legal implications.** For Member States, this would entail a positive obligation to ensure the physical, economic and digital accessibility of the mobility system, as well as its continuity and non-discriminatory nature. For citizens, this would open the possibility of invoking this right before national courts in the event of barriers, discrimination or service disruptions. For transport operators, this would result in strengthened obligations regarding assistance, accessibility, information and service quality. As further explained by the full report, this right must be balanced against other freedoms, notably the right to strike or the right to safety, which requires judicial arbitration based on the principle of proportionality.

MaaR also has far-reaching social, environmental, economic and political implications. From a social perspective, it appears to be a powerful lever for reducing inequalities and promoting the inclusion of vulnerable groups. The barriers faced by women, the people with disabilities, rural residents, young people, older people, those on low incomes or those unfamiliar with digital technologies justify specific measures: social pricing, accessible infrastructure, safety policies, non-digital services, anti-harassment campaigns, the development of active mobility, etc. From an **environmental perspective**, MaaR helps to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve public health by steering policies towards active mobility, public transport. The report also highlights that every euro invested generates a return of four to six euros. Finally, from a **political perspective**, the effective implementation of MaaR requires coordinated governance between the EU, Member States, regions and cities, based on transparency, open data, the regulation of digital platforms and citizen participation.

>Legal recognition of MaaR obliges Member States to guarantee accessible infrastructure, a minimum service level, fair fares and anti-discrimination measures.

Multi-level analysis of mobility policies

European level

The main legal and policy instruments currently governing equitable and sustainable mobility at European level form a coherent framework designed to ensure accessibility, the continuity of public services, digital interoperability and social justice. The TEN-T Regulation (2024/1679) imposes stringent requirements regarding universal accessibility, connectivity for isolated areas and the development of integrated multimodality, thereby helping to reduce territorial divides. Regulation 1370/2007, for its part, provides a framework for public transport services by defining service obligations, compensation conditions and the guarantees of continuity necessary to ensure reliable mobility for all. Directive 2019/882 (European Accessibility Act) reinforces these requirements by establishing standards for physical, digital and informational accessibility, applicable to ticketing systems, digital interfaces and passenger information systems. At the same time, the revision of the ITS Directive (2023/2661) makes the provision of dynamic data mandatory, ensures the interoperability of digital services and promotes real-time access to information, which is essential for a fluid and inclusive mobility system. Finally, the Social Climate Fund (2026–2032) supports vulnerable households by funding measures to tackle energy poverty and transport insecurity, emphasising that affordability is a central pillar of MaaR. In addition to these instruments are the European Union's policy guidelines, which mandate the widespread adoption of zero-emission city buses by 2035, strengthen the fight against transport poverty, and explicitly integrate gender, safety and social inclusion considerations into all mobility policies.

➤ *The European Union regards accessibility, women's safety and territorial cohesion as political imperatives rather than mere options.*

Local level

The analysis conducted at local level, notably in the cities of Antwerp (Belgium), Florence (Italy) and Pilsen (the Czech Republic), illustrates how the principles of MaaR are put into practice. Antwerp is rolling out a highly advanced combined mobility strategy, with its 'Hoppin points' and a low-emission zone policy combined with social support measures. Florence has exemplary restricted traffic zones and is investing heavily in active mobility and the accessibility of public spaces. Pilsen stands out for the extensive modernisation of its networks, advanced integration of technologies and payment systems, and a socially inclusive pricing policy. These case studies show that the implementation of MaaR depends on a combination of political will, appropriate regulation, public investment, universal accessibility and citizen engagement.

BELGIUM

Belgium coordinates its mobility policies across federal, regional and local levels. The country is moving towards explicit recognition of the right to mobility and is deploying powerful levers: low-emission zones, multimodal hubs, social pricing and the Act of 8 May 2024 on the digital and physical accessibility of services.



Pilot city: Antwerp

Strength

- 'Hoppin' multimodal hubs (train, tram, bus, bike- and micromobility sharing, carpooling)
- Ambitious LEZ reducing emissions in the city centre
- A well-structured and safe cycling network
- Flemish governance focused on universal accessibility

ITALY

Italy links mobility and inclusion through the principles of dignity and equality. Regions have broad autonomy to organise transport provision, with a guaranteed minimum service level and National Recovery and Resilience Plan investments (>€20 billion) in electrification, rail and sustainable urban mobility.



Pilot city: Florence

Strengths

- Historic limited traffic zone protecting the heritage centre
- Modern tramway linking the centre and the outskirts
- Safety measures for pedestrians and cyclists in tourist areas
- Regional fare integration (Tuscany)

CZECH REPUBLIC

The Czech Republic is adopting a pragmatic approach: modernisation of TEN-T and ERTMS (European Rail Traffic Management Systems) corridors, strengthening of public services and extensive fare reductions for young people, senior citizens and people with reduced mobility, to reduce regional disparities.



Pilot city: Pilsen

Strengths

- Multimodality: tram – trolleybus – bus
- Digital ticketing & open data
- Universal accessibility (rolling stock and stops)
- Roll-out of safe cycle routes

Social, economic, environmental and political impacts

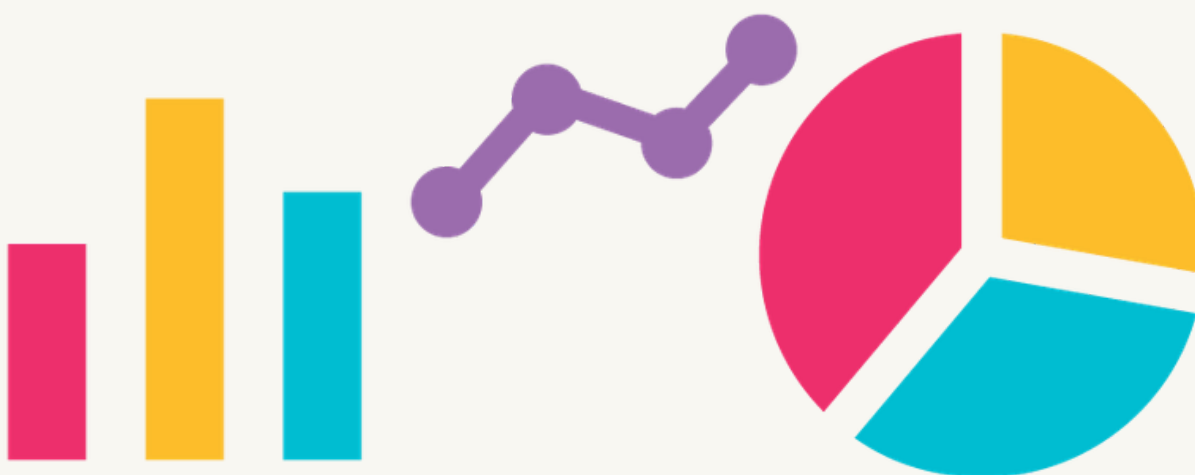
The social, economic, environmental and political impacts of MaaR concept are profound and fundamental to all public transport policies.

1 Social

On a social level, MaaR aims to reduce the structural inequalities affecting regions and populations by directly tackling transport poverty, forced car dependency and the isolation of rural areas. By recognising mobility as a fundamental right, it becomes possible to better integrate the needs of vulnerable groups: people with reduced mobility, women facing increased risks of insecurity, people in precarious situations, or those struggling with digital tools. This approach thus enables the creation of truly inclusive mobility systems, designed to guarantee everyone equitable access to society's essential resources.

2 Economic

From an economic perspective, MaaR highlights the disproportionate burden that transport costs place on low-income households. In many contexts, mobility is a household's second or third largest fixed expense, creating a barrier to inclusion for those unable to afford their daily journeys. The analysis shows that public investment in sustainable mobility is not only socially justified but also cost-effective: every euro invested yields an estimated return of between 4 and 6 euros through reductions in accidents, pollution-related illnesses and congestion. This economic dimension helps to demonstrate that MaaR is not a mere cost, but a strategic social investment.



3 Environmental

From an environmental and public health perspective, MaaR acts as a lever to accelerate the transition towards more sustainable forms of mobility that at the same time benefit public health. By promoting walking, cycling, public transport and multimodal solutions, it helps to reduce pollutant emissions, and sedentary lifestyles, impacting positively cardio-respiratory diseases and traffic-related nuisances. This transition directly addresses European objectives, including a 90% reduction in transport emissions by 2050. Thus, MaaR strengthens the link between social justice and the ecological transition, reminding us that environmental protection can only be fully effective if it is accessible to all.

➤ MaaR redefines the role of national and local authorities: they no longer 'provide' mobility but have to guarantee its effectiveness.

4 Governance

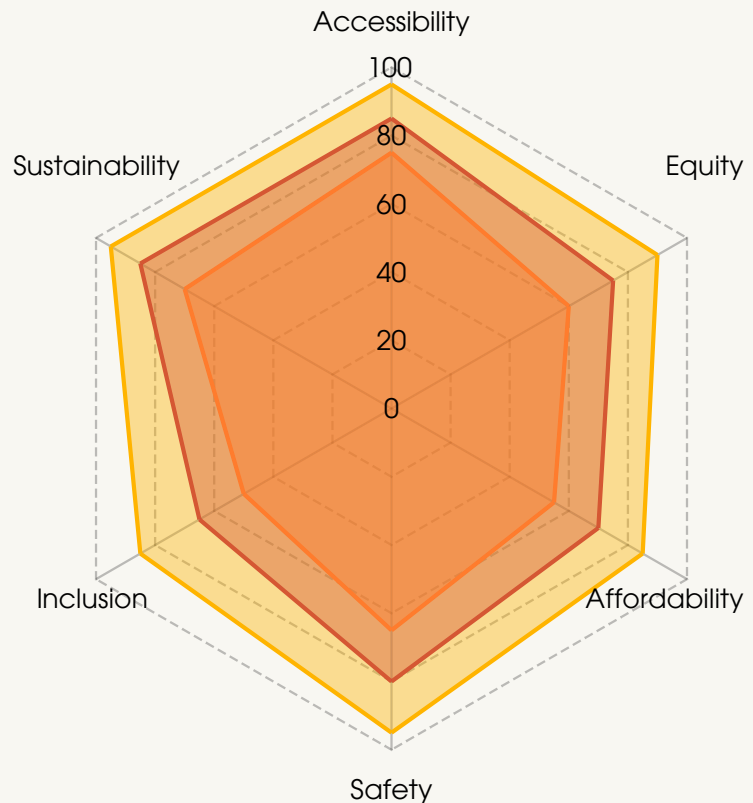
Finally, the political implications of MaaR are particularly significant. Its recognition transforms the responsibilities of the Member States and local authorities: guaranteeing a minimum service, ensuring service continuity even during strikes, maintaining stable funding for rural areas, and enabling effective judicial review in the event of failure. Citizens can thus legally challenge service failures when they compromise access to fundamental social rights. This development strengthens public accountability and contributes to a more democratic and transparent governance of mobility. In this sense, MaaR becomes a genuine political tool for structuring mobility systems around principles of equity, social justice and territorial cohesion.



Social Optimum Mobility Index (SOMI)

Finally, the report proposes a catalogue of legal determinants intended to inform the future Social Optimum Mobility Index (SOMI).

These determinants are divided into “core” (mandatory — data interoperability, accessible information, universal design, guaranteed minimum service, safety of vulnerable users) and “aspirational” (affordability, perceived safety, inclusion of hard-to-reach groups, cultural accessibility). They will enable the effectiveness of MaaS to be measured across regions using comparable indicators such as ten-minute accessibility, night-time coverage or perceived safety levels.



➤ ***The report demonstrates that mobility is much more than simply getting from A to B: it is a fundamental right, a prerequisite for social justice and democratic resilience, and a key tool for ecological and societal transition.***

Conclusions

The report concludes by setting out policy recommendations at European, national and local levels, that outline a coherent strategy for putting the concept of Mobility as a Right (MaaR) into practice at all levels of governance.

European Union

The European Union is urged to explicitly incorporate MaaR into its strategies and to make its funding more conditional on requirements for equity and accessibility.

At the European level, it is recommended that this right be explicitly enshrined in the Union's major strategies – or even in the Charter of Fundamental Rights – to give it strong symbolic and legal recognition.



The EU should also make its funding – particularly that linked to the green transition or infrastructure – conditional upon compliance with strict criteria regarding accessibility, territorial equity and social inclusion.

Furthermore, harmonisation of the collection and processing of data relating to accessibility, gender, safety and digitalisation appears necessary to ensure comparable and rigorous monitoring of progress made in Member States.

Member States

Member States are encouraged to legally recognise the right to mobility and to guarantee the continuity, accessibility and affordability of services, whilst strengthening their regulatory authorities.



At national level, the recommendations aim to strengthen public obligations regarding mobility by establishing a mandatory minimum service, a national social fare system and independent regulatory authorities capable of overseeing operators and ensuring user protection, like the ART in Italy.

States are also encouraged to incorporate the Right to Mobility (MaaR) into their Constitutions or framework laws, to make this right fully enforceable.

Cities

Local authorities are called upon to incorporate the right to mobility into their sustainable urban mobility plans, to develop minimum standards for accessibility, safety, multimodality and inclusion, and to implement participatory processes.



At local level, the priority is to develop truly inclusive Sustainable Urban Mobility Plans (SUMP), based on universal accessibility, the creation of multimodal hubs, the provision of non-digital solutions to avoid digital exclusion, structured citizen participation and the use of public indicators such as the SOMI (Social Optimum Mobility Index).

Finally, GOLIA proposes several operational tools to facilitate this transition: “MaaR-proof” contractual clauses imposed on operators, annual accessibility audits, indicators dedicated to equity, gender, safety and accessibility, as well as the establishment of inclusive multimodal hubs, inspired by examples from Antwerp, Florence or Pilsen.

➤ Adopting MaaR enables the alignment of the green transition, social justice and democratic governance. It is a fundamental political choice for the decades to come. MaaR elevates mobility from a service to a right, obliging governments and operators to guarantee accessible, inclusive, sustainable and equitable mobility — an essential pillar of Europe’s ecological and social transition.

