



CIVITAS Challenge Cities Deployment Plans 2023- 2024 – Komotini

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1 Komotini Deployment plan

1.1 Komotini's Context and Background

1.1.1 Problem statement

Komotini is a compact city of around 6 km², built around a Roman-era fortress and featuring a small, dense medieval centre. Its flat terrain, small footprint, and the presence of an independent living training facility for people with disabilities have supported significant progress in recent years toward making the city more accessible. These efforts have been recognised nationally and at European level, including a Special Mention in the 2021 Access City Awards.

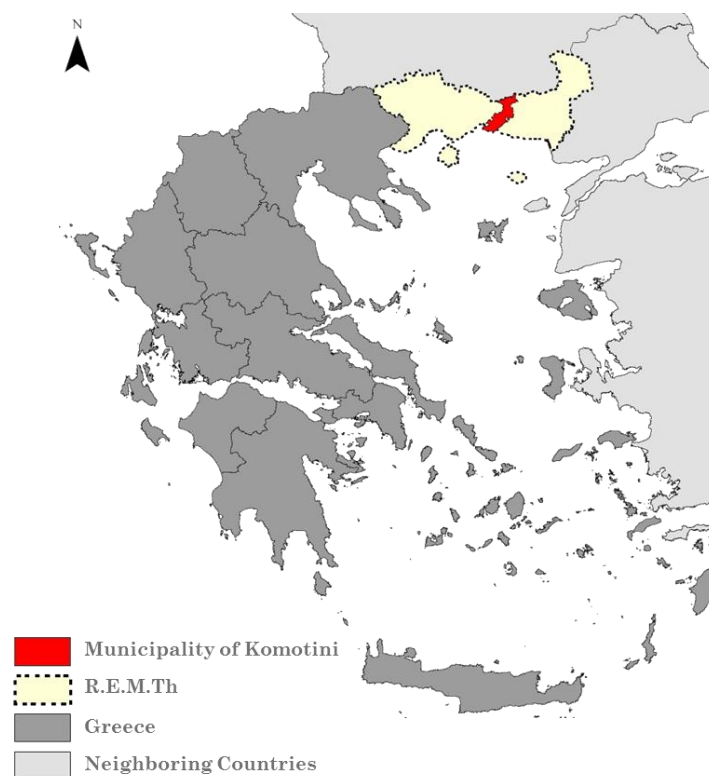


Figure 1: Map of Greece and Komotini

The municipality is committed to further improving accessibility in both road and building infrastructure, ensuring that universal design principles guide future urban development. This ambition is embedded in its Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (approved in 2023) and the city's urban development strategy for 2023–2027, backed by approximately €30 million from EU and national funds. Both strategies place accessibility at the forefront, alongside environmental sustainability, digital transformation, and the enhancement of Komotini's cultural identity.

The main challenge lies in implementing these policies within a historic city centre that is protected for its heritage value but constrained by narrow streets and limited public space. Balancing the preservation of cultural assets with the creation of barrier-free, inclusive environments demands innovative solutions. The municipality seeks to involve its most underrepresented citizens—particularly people with disabilities—in co-deciding the design of

public space and mobility infrastructure. This participatory approach is seen not only as a path to social inclusion but also as a driver of economic vitality, strengthening Komotini’s reputation as an accessible and welcoming city.

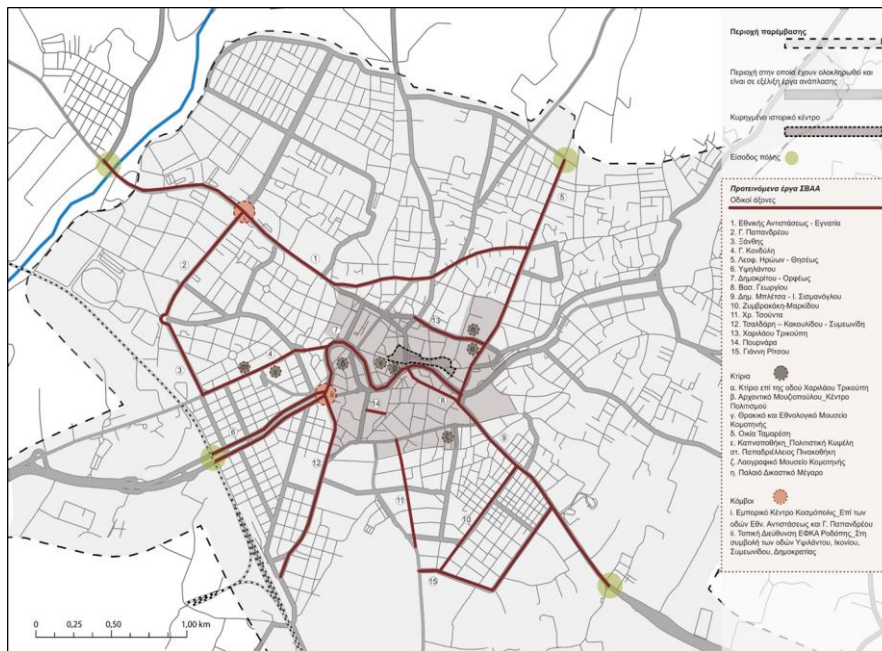


Figure 2: Komotini – Challenge area

The area of the challenge covers virtually the entire urban footprint, with a particular focus on the medieval core. Here, space limitations, historic street patterns, and competing demands for mobility and public use make it essential to adopt integrated, inclusive planning. By prioritising universal accessibility and social cohesion, Komotini aims to deliver a high-quality urban environment that benefits all residents while preserving its unique historical and cultural character.



Figure 3: Komotini – Bird’s-eye view of part of the challenge area

1.1.2 Previous Attempts to solve the challenge

Over the past two decades, Komotini has implemented a series of multi-phase programmes aimed at improving accessibility and social inclusion, many of them supported by EU funding. While these efforts have delivered tangible improvements, challenges remain—particularly in the historic city centre, where heritage constraints, spatial limitations, and private property conditions hinder progress.

The first major intervention was the Urban II Community Initiative Programme (2000–2006, €12.4 million). This programme focused on urban regeneration, improved public facilities, and measures to enhance economic competitiveness while integrating the most vulnerable groups in Komotini’s multicultural population. Key investments included upgrading the bus network, creating a social centre, and establishing a halfway house for persons with disabilities. While the focus was primarily on buildings and infrastructure, some pilot projects introduced new technologies to the public administration.

Subsequent phases (2007–2020, €20 million) built on this foundation, expanding accessible infrastructure and strengthening social support structures. Funded through EU, national, and municipal sources, these interventions included the development of a bike lane network, accessible open spaces, and the adaptation of public buildings and schools. Social structures co-funded by the municipality and operated by local NGOs were also created, such as a community centre, halfway house, and activity centre run by and for persons with disabilities. Additional initiatives included after-school programmes for children with intellectual disabilities, as well as smart city applications to support accessibility.

The results of these combined efforts were significant. The bus and train stations, local buses, taxis, and designated parking spaces are now accessible. Approximately 20 kilometres of accessible walkways have been created. Ninety percent of schools (73 buildings) are accessible, with all schools equipped with accessible toilets. Public theatres, the city hospital, and urban medical centres are also accessible. Of the city’s 60 playgrounds, 47 have been adapted for children with disabilities. Training programmes have reached 444 persons with disabilities and 5,300 students, building awareness and capacity.

Despite these achievements, the historic city centre remains a challenge. Many public buildings and retail premises are inaccessible due to strict preservation requirements from the Ministry of Culture. Private buildings and shops also face accessibility barriers, often linked to funding constraints and the physical limitations of the built fabric. These persistent issues underline the need for innovative solutions that can reconcile heritage protection with the principles of universal design.



Figure 4: Komotini – Narrow street with accessibility barriers in the city centre



Figure 5: Komotini – Pedestrianised area with accessibility barriers due to HoReCa terraces

1.1.3 Legal framework

In Komotini, accessibility improvements are shaped by a combination of European, national, and local regulations. At the European level, Greece aligns with the principles of the European Accessibility Act and related directives, which set requirements for accessibility in products, services, and the built environment, with a focus on equal participation for persons with

disabilities. These principles are embedded in national law, including the Greek legal framework on accessibility in public buildings, public space design, and transport infrastructure.

Locally, Komotini's Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP), approved in 2023, integrates these obligations into its vision of improving functionality, accessibility, and environmental performance across the urban area. The municipal urban development strategy for 2023–2027 further commits to universal accessibility in public spaces and facilities, supported by EU and national funding programmes.

However, the historic city centre is also subject to strict preservation rules under the Ministry of Culture. These regulations protect the built heritage but impose constraints on structural alterations, including the installation of ramps, lifts, or other permanent accessibility features on listed buildings and streetscapes. As a result, many public buildings, shops, and private premises in the core remain inaccessible, with limited scope for modification.

Private property accessibility is not directly mandated unless undergoing major renovation, meaning that commercial premises often rely on voluntary compliance or targeted subsidy schemes. Funding for accessibility upgrades in private buildings is limited, and spatial constraints in narrow medieval streets further complicate solutions.

The current framework therefore provides a clear legal basis for accessibility improvements in public infrastructure, but balancing heritage protection with universal design remains a key challenge. Greater integration between cultural heritage regulation, municipal planning, and accessibility policy will be necessary to achieve inclusive access across Komotini's entire urban area.

1.1.4 Financial Framework

Komotini can build on a diverse mix of funding sources to implement its accessibility and inclusion objectives. At the core is the Regional Operational Program for Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, which channels European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund Plus (ESF+) resources into urban development, social inclusion, and accessibility projects. National programmes dedicated to social integration and universal accessibility provide additional avenues for targeted interventions, while the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) offers opportunities to finance infrastructure upgrades and technology adoption. Municipal budget allocations will serve as co-financing for projects, ensuring local ownership and flexibility in implementation.

Co-financing from non-public actors will also be key. The municipality can encourage private sector contributions by offering incentives for accessibility improvements in commercial properties, supporting both compliance and customer inclusivity. Local NGOs, such as Perpató, which manage community-based facilities and services for persons with disabilities, are eligible for ESF+ support to expand their reach and capacity.

To complement these mechanisms, Komotini can pursue European urban innovation funds and pilot schemes under programmes such as URBACT or the Urban Innovative Actions (UIA) initiative. These can support experimental or transferable solutions, particularly in the historical city centre where spatial constraints require innovative approaches.

1.1.5 Political Support

For Komotini to advance its goal of becoming Greece's first fully accessible city, securing firm political commitment will be essential. This was developed during the CIVITAS Replication and Deployment programme with explicit backing from the Mayor, the Vice Mayor for Urban Planning, and the Municipal Council, as well as close alignment across departments. While the municipality has experience in coordinating interdepartmental initiatives, such as the SUMP and social inclusion projects, formalising this commitment through an updated participatory urban planning framework focused on accessibility will be a key step. Stronger political endorsement would ensure that accessibility priorities are embedded in decision-making, resourced adequately, and aligned with other strategic initiatives, including planned upgrades in the historical city centre and upcoming funding opportunities.

1.1.6 Desired outcomes

Addressing Komotini's accessibility challenge would position the city as the first fully accessible urban centre in Greece, where persons with disabilities can navigate public spaces with complete autonomy and dignity. The transformation would rest on four core goals: achieving universal accessibility across public infrastructure, mobility systems, and private-sector facilities; embedding inclusive urban planning processes that actively involve underrepresented and vulnerable groups; harmonising accessibility upgrades with heritage preservation in the protected historical centre; and leveraging these advances to drive socioeconomic growth, attracting tourism, investment, and talent.

The solution would directly address the needs of persons with disabilities by removing physical and institutional barriers to movement, participation, and access to services. However, the benefits would extend far beyond this group. Elderly residents, families with young children, and those with temporary mobility impairments would all experience improved ease of movement and safety. Local businesses would be better equipped to serve a wider customer base, while the municipal administration would gain a coherent, cost-effective framework for coordinating urban development within heritage and legal constraints.

To achieve these outcomes, the city must overcome persistent pain points: narrow streets and protected buildings that limit structural modifications; strict heritage regulations and funding constraints; a lack of incentives for private property accessibility upgrades; and the need for a cultural shift towards inclusive planning practices.

The impact would be broad and lasting. Persons with disabilities would gain independence and equality of participation; the municipality would enhance its reputation and unlock new funding opportunities; the local economy and tourism sector would see increased activity from accessible tourism; universities would benefit from real-world learning opportunities; NGOs would strengthen their role in co-creation and advocacy; and cultural authorities could demonstrate how accessibility and heritage preservation can coexist.

1.2 Deployment Plan Ideation

1.2.1 Brainstorming outcomes

The site visits and initial sessions of the co-creation workshop in Komotini helped to frame the city's accessibility challenge within its broader social and institutional context. Participants stressed that solutions should go beyond physical interventions to establish participatory

planning mechanisms and user-centred design practices, ensuring that accessibility becomes embedded in decision-making rather than treated as an afterthought.

The discussions also emphasised the value of fostering trust and cooperation between citizens, local authorities, and other stakeholders. Creating spaces for collaboration was seen as essential for aligning municipal policies with the real needs of residents, particularly those most affected by barriers in the urban environment. Awareness-raising and capacity-building were therefore identified as key steps to strengthen partnerships, enhance civic engagement, and promote a culture of inclusion.

These reflections laid the groundwork for the brainstorming phase, during which participants identified two complementary solutions to address Komotini’s challenge. The first, *Inclusive Urban Planning Processes*, aims to establish participatory structures and integrate user perspectives into planning. The second, *Step by Step, Hand by Hand*, focuses on raising awareness, coordinating stakeholders’ actions, and empowering both citizens and the local administration to drive accessibility forward.

Brainstorming Outcomes

Solution	Needs addressed	Expected outcomes	Timeline (long/ mid/ short-term)
Inclusive Urban Planning Processes	Reduce Democratic Deficit Tackle Social Exclusion	Participatory Decision-Making Structures User-Centred Design Solutions	Short to mid term
Step by Step, Hand by Hand	Raise awareness about accessibility Coordinate stakeholders’ actions Align urban Policies and Real Needs Build Trust and Engagement	Capacity Building for Local Administration and Stakeholders Stronger Local Partnerships Civic Empowerment and Social Inclusion	Short to mid term

Table 1: Komotini – Brainstorming outcomes

The solution “**Step by Step, Hand by Hand**” was selected during the co-creation workshop for further development. At the same time, participants agreed to incorporate key elements of the “Inclusive Urban Planning Processes” concept, ensuring that the final approach combined awareness-raising and stakeholder coordination with participatory planning principles. The following deployment conditions were identified for this integrated solution:

Deployment conditions for the “Step by Step, Hand by Hand” solution

Condition	Reasoning
<p>Staff availability and capacity</p>	<p><i>Do you have internal expertise available to deploy the solution? Do you have people with capacity to take up the deployment among their responsibilities?</i></p> <p>Komotini has internal expertise and experience, particularly through the departments of Urban Planning, Technical Works, and Social Policy. These teams have already coordinated multi-departmental and co-funded programs (e.g., Urban II, SUMP, social inclusion projects). However, the human resources are limited in size, and deploying this solution may require dedicated staff or reallocating responsibilities, especially for participatory planning facilitation and monitoring. Additional support from the Municipal Development Agency “K. Karatheodori” and collaboration with the University of Komotini can help bridge knowledge or capacity gaps.</p>
<p>Implementation timeline</p>	<p><i>Are there time constraints to deploy the solution? Is there another intervention in sight with which you could align the implementation?</i></p> <p>There are no hard legal deadlines, but time sensitivity exists due to upcoming EU and national funding cycles (e.g., through the Just Transition Fund, ERDF, or new URBACT calls). The inclusive planning process can be aligned with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The next SUMP update • Planned infrastructure upgrades in the historical centre • Election cycle <p>Aligning with these initiatives ensures coherence, avoids duplication, and may improve funding eligibility.</p>
<p>Organisational structure</p>	<p><i>Which teams in your organisation need to cooperate to deploy the solution? Do you have organisational structures in place for such cooperation? Do you need to set up a new framework?</i></p> <p>Most structures are already in place. Komotini has experience with interdepartmental cooperation, having done so for its SUMP and social inclusion projects. The Urban Planning vice mayor already oversees a coordinating body, and the S.M.ALL URBACT Local Group provides a tested model for stakeholder cooperation. However, a formal participatory planning framework—such as an accessibility council or citizen design panel—would need to be institutionalized and scaled, especially if it’s to operate city-wide and be sustained long-term.</p>
<p>Financial framework</p>	<p><i>Where would the money to deploy the solution come from?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The municipality has previously used EU structural funds (Urban II, ERDF, ESF), and can continue to do so. The upcoming 2021–2027 EU

	<p>programming period and national Recovery and Resilience Facility may provide opportunities. Funding can also come from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National grants for accessibility • Municipal budget (for small-scale participatory projects) • Partnerships with local institutions (e.g., the University, Chamber of Commerce) • Private co-financing for business accessibility could be explored through local incentive schemes. However, a multi-source financing strategy will be necessary, as inclusive processes and physical interventions have ongoing costs.
<p>Legislative/regulatory framework</p>	<p><i>Do you have legal power to implement the solution? Who’s consent do you need to do your intervention? What regulations must you abide by?</i></p> <p>The municipality has legal authority over urban planning and public space interventions within its administrative boundaries. However, in the historical city centre, interventions must comply with Ministry of Culture regulations, especially regarding protected buildings and street patterns. Consent will be needed from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ministry of Culture (for modifications in heritage zones) • Ministry of Interior affairs – Decentralised government (alignment with national strategies) • Ministry of Environment (alignment with national environmental protection laws and regulations) • Department of forestry (in case of removing or replacing trees) • Private owners (for private building access upgrades) <p>A legal assessment and clear coordination protocol with relevant state authorities will be required to streamline approvals.</p>
<p>Communication</p>	<p><i>Do you have internal expertise and capacity to successfully communicate about the solution implementation? Who do you have to target your communication to?</i></p> <p>The municipality has basic internal capacity (communication office), and has previously run awareness campaigns (e.g., social inclusion, recycling). However, inclusive urban planning requires:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing two-way communication (not just announcements) • Targeting a diverse audience: PWDs, elderly, children, businesses, minority groups, media • Use of accessible formats (e.g., sign language, easy-to-read documents) • Appoint a dedicated communication expert to coordinate and follow up • Collaboration with NGOs like Perpato and university media departments can improve outreach. Investing in training or dedicated communications support would strengthen this pillar.

<p>Other factors</p>	<p><i>Any other factors to keep in mind?</i></p> <p>Urban Density and Space Constraints: The historic core’s tight spatial layout makes physical interventions difficult; creative and flexible design solutions (e.g., modular ramps, smart signage) are required.</p> <p>Climate Resilience: Any intervention should align with climate adaptation goals, ensuring green and accessible infrastructure go hand-in-hand (e.g., shaded walkways, permeable paving).</p> <p>Scalability and Replicability: Komotini’s model could influence national policy. Thus, it’s important to document methods, develop open tools, and share outcomes widely.</p>
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Table 2: Komotini – Deployment conditions

1.2.2 Decision-making process

The implementation of “*Step by Step, Hand by Hand*” in Komotini requires a series of interrelated decisions that combine political commitment, resource allocation, and new governance mechanisms. These decisions extend from reinforcing the municipality’s strategic commitment to accessibility to introducing participatory frameworks capable of embedding inclusivity into everyday planning practices.

Key Decisions for Implementation

To operationalise the programme, the municipality must take several steps:

- Renew its political commitment by reintroducing and adopting an updated participatory urban planning framework with a strong focus on accessibility.
- Prioritise infrastructure upgrades in the historic city centre, balancing accessibility needs with spatial limitations and preservation requirements.
- Allocate financial, human, and spatial resources in line with inclusive planning goals, ensuring that accessibility is not sidelined in broader development agendas.

Decision-Makers and Authority

The responsibility for these decisions lies with several actors:

- The Mayor and Municipal Council, who provide political direction and formal approval.
- The Vice Mayor for Urban Planning and Infrastructure, as coordinator
- The Technical and Urban Planning Departments, which will translate decisions into actionable measures.

Existing Processes Supporting Decision-Making

Komotini already benefits from processes that can support implementation:

- The municipal masterplan for the city centre provides a framework for guiding development priorities.

- The participatory practices used during the elaboration of the Sustainable Urban Mobility Plan (SUMP) offer a foundation for engaging citizens in shaping accessibility interventions.

New Processes to Be Established

To ensure the effective delivery of the programme, additional mechanisms must be introduced:

- An *Accessibility and Inclusion Council*, bringing together citizens, experts, and municipal representatives to guide accessibility policies.
- A dedicated *Accessibility Office* within the municipality to provide technical support, ensure continuity, and monitor policy and measures implementation.
- Regular community-led design workshops to institutionalise citizen participation and integrate lived experience into planning decisions.

Together, these measures will create a structured and participatory decision-making framework.

1.2.3 Stakeholder mapping

Implementing this solution requires collaboration among a wide network of stakeholders. Internally, departments such as the Mayor’s Office, Technical Works, Urban Planning, and Social Policy will be central to the process. Externally, organizations like the Perpato and other NGOs, which specialize in training and supporting people with disabilities, must be involved for their lived experience and expertise. Karatheodori, the municipal development agency, can help with financial coordination and project management.

Academic partners from the local university will provide valuable input in fields such as urban planning, sociology, and rehabilitation sciences. The Local Chamber of Commerce should be engaged to promote accessible business environments. Police and transport providers must also participate to align accessibility improvements with traffic and enforcement measures. Additionally, consent and technical guidance will be required from the Ministry of Culture, particularly for interventions in the heritage-protected city centre.

These stakeholders offer a variety of expertise—from design and planning to social care and community engagement—making their collaboration vital to the project’s success.

Stakeholders

<p>Internal Stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mayor’s Office • Technical Works, Urban Planning, Social Policy Departments • K. Karathodori SA
<p>External Stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perpato NGO & Other associations for disabled people: expertise in independent living and disability rights. • University of Komotini: departments of social workers, physical education. • Local Chambers (of Commerce, hotels) & tourism agents: to mobilize private sector on accessible shops.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Road Police & Transport Company: for mobility and enforcement coordination. • Ministry of Culture: for approvals in the historical centre. • Managing Authority: to secure funding and alignment with regional and national policies • Association of elderly people • S.M.ALL ULG: civil society group to guide co-creation efforts
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Table 3: Komotini – Stakeholder mapping

1.2.4 Communication and stakeholder involvement

Public communication will be central to securing community buy-in and fostering active participation in the “Step by Step, Hand by Hand” initiative. Key audiences include persons with disabilities, elderly residents, families with children, and business owners in the historic centre. To reach these groups effectively, communication must be both broad and inclusive, making use of accessible formats such as text-to-speech tools, easy-read materials, and translations into minority languages.

To ensure meaningful stakeholder involvement, the municipality can draw on its experience with the Urbact Local Group (ULG) and establish a dedicated “citizens’ forum” for inclusive urban design. This platform would provide space for information exchange, discussion, and co-creation. Complementary information sessions and co-design workshops, organised in community venues or online, will further broaden outreach. Involving students, NGOs, and neighbourhood representatives in these activities will help ensure that a wide diversity of voices is heard and represented.

Who Needs to Be Informed

- Persons with disabilities, elderly residents, and parents of children with mobility issues.
- Business owners in the historic centre.
- Construction, engineering, and planning professionals.
- The general public, whose awareness and support are essential for long-term success.

Communication Tools

- Public information sessions and co-design workshops in community spaces.
- Digital platforms designed with accessibility features (text-to-speech, large print PDFs, multilingual content).
- Visual communication tools and models to illustrate proposed changes.
- Local media partnerships and student outreach supported by academic experts.
- Pilot projects (e.g., installation of accessible benches) as visible demonstrations of change.

Involvement Processes

- Launch of a citizens’ forum on inclusive design.

- Adoption of a shared manifesto to formalise commitment.
- Organisation of Living Labs and an accessibility festival during EUROPEANMOBILITYWEEK.
- Adaptation of the ULG model to create thematic participatory groups (e.g., on public buildings, mobility, or cultural/heritage access).

1.2.5 Financial framework

Komotini can draw on a mix of existing financial mechanisms and co-financing opportunities to implement the “*Step by Step, Hand by Hand*” initiative.

Existing Mechanisms

- Regional Operational Program of Eastern Macedonia & Thrace (ERDF, ESF+).
- National Social Integration and Accessibility Programs.
- Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF).
- Municipal budget allocations for co-financing.

Co-Financing Opportunities

- Private sector contributions, particularly through incentives for accessibility improvements.
- NGO-led programmes eligible for ESF+ support, such as Perpató.
- EU innovation funds, including *Urbact* and *UIA*.

Komotini can rely on a combination of existing financial mechanisms to support the implementation. These include the Regional Operational Program for Eastern Macedonia and Thrace, which offers European Regional Development and Social Funds, and national programs aimed at social inclusion and accessibility. The Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) is another important potential funding stream.

Co-financing will be essential. The private sector can play an active role by investing in accessible infrastructure and services - especially if the municipality offers incentives - while NGOs may seek European Social Fund support to expand educational and support services. At the same time, EU-level innovation programmes such as *Urbact* and *UIA* provide valuable opportunities to pilot new approaches and scale up successful practices.

1.2.6 Barriers

Several barriers were identified during the co-creation process. Chief among them is the challenge of retrofitting the historical city centre due to the legal and spatial constraints imposed by preservation laws. Another obstacle is the limited capacity within the municipal administration to manage complex, interdisciplinary projects at scale. Accessibility of private properties remains a concern, especially as many small businesses lack the funds to make necessary adjustments. Finally, some business owners may resist changes due to perceived costs or inconvenience.

1.2.7 Risks

The implementation of the solution may face a number of risks that could hinder progress. Anticipating these challenges makes it possible to define mitigation measures and ensure smoother delivery. The table below outlines the key risks identified and the corresponding measures to address them.

Risks and mitigation measures

Risk	Mitigation measure(s)
Ministry of Culture blocks or delays approvals	Early consultations; include Ministry representatives in planning team
Stakeholder fatigue or resistance to participatory process	Schedule clear milestones; show early wins to build trust Give them some power over the financial planning of the interventions (i.e. X% of the budget to participatory projects)
Budget gaps or funding delays	Apply to multiple funding sources; phase the implementation Include representatives from managing authority
Low engagement from persons with disabilities	Partner with NGOs and community leaders for outreach
Misalignment with transport or tourism strategies	Ensure cross-sector integration during planning phase Include representatives from managing authority
Election Cycle delays	Rally multi-partisan support by including members from all municipal parties

Table 4: Komotini – Risks and mitigation measures

1.3 Actionable steps

The co-creation workshop in Komotini produced a series of concrete steps to advance the “*Step by Step, Hand by Hand*” initiative. These steps transform the ideas generated during the workshop into a structured roadmap for implementation, clarifying responsibilities, the stakeholders to involve, and identifying potential funding sources. The table below summarises the agreed pathway for rolling out the initiative:

Actionable steps

Step	Description of step and responsible department / organisation	External stakeholders involved	Financing
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1	Set up Accessibility and inclusion Council (Vice Mayor for Urban Planning / coordinator)	Perpato, University, Chambers	Municipal budget
2	Map accessibility barriers in city centre (Urban Planning Dept.)	Technical Chamber, NGOs, citizens	Green Fund
3	Co-create urban design solutions (living labs, festival, paralympic days) (K.Karatheodori sa)	Perpato, university,	ESF+
4	Draft intervention priorities & seek Culture Ministry pre-approval	Technical Chamber Ministry of Culture	Municipal budget
5	Phase rollout of small interventions (ramps, signage, tactile maps) (department of technical works)	NGOs, Technical Chamber	Municipal budget- ERDF
6	Environmental simulator / real word testing of solutions (department of technical works)	Perpato, university	ERDF
7	Dedicated office for accessibility (K. Karathrodori SA)	Perpato, NGOs	ESF+
8	Launch communications campaign (Mayor's Office & Comms team)	NGOs, university, schools	Municipal budget- ERDF

Table 5: Komotini – Actionable steps

1.3.1 Complementary actions

During the workshop, several additional ideas were proposed to complement the main intervention. One suggestion was the installation of portable accessibility aids, such as ramps and tactile strips, in selected areas to provide quick and visible improvements. Another was to train municipal staff in accessibility best practices, a low-cost measure that would strengthen internal capacity.

Participants also highlighted the potential of an “accessibility seal” programme or competition to recognise businesses that comply with accessibility standards and encourage others to follow suit. Finally, the creation of a public-facing map of accessible facilities — developed, for example, with the involvement of local students — was seen as a way to raise awareness while fostering civic pride.

1.4 Conclusion

Komotini's participation in the CIVITAS Replication and Deployment Programme has highlighted the city's strong potential to become a national leader in inclusive urban accessibility. The exchanges and co-creation workshops allowed the municipality to critically reflect on existing practices, test new approaches, and strengthen partnerships with local stakeholders. Despite the spatial and legal constraints of the historic centre, Komotini has demonstrated both the institutional capacity and the civic commitment to embed accessibility as a core principle of its urban transformation.

The support of Champion Cities and expert partners proved particularly valuable in shaping Komotini's approach. San Cristóbal de La Laguna offered inspiration on how to institutionalise accessibility through permanent governance structures, directly informing Komotini's plan to establish its own Accessibility and Inclusion Council. Saint-Quentin showed how accessibility can be advanced even within a heritage setting, combining technical improvements with efforts to shift social attitudes, an approach highly relevant for Komotini's historic core. CEREMA provided practical tools for mapping barriers, prioritising interventions, and balancing cultural preservation with universal design, while ENAT demonstrated the synergies between accessibility and tourism, highlighting how inclusive mobility can also serve as a driver of local development.

For Komotini, the programme confirmed the importance of blending short-term, visible improvements with a phased strategy for long-term transformation. The "Step by Step, Hand by Hand" approach reflects this balance, combining quick wins with structural reforms that build trust, empower citizens, and align local policies with real needs. By institutionalising co-creation, strengthening partnerships, and embedding universal design into planning frameworks, Komotini is laying the groundwork for a truly democratic and human-centred urban future.

Ultimately, this deployment plan positions Komotini not only to improve accessibility for its own residents, but also to serve as a model for other Greek cities. Through its participation in the programme, the municipality has gained confidence, tools, and international recognition that will help sustain momentum. By continuing to refine its approach and maintain strong stakeholder engagement, Komotini can ensure that accessibility becomes an enduring pillar of its identity — both as a rights-based obligation and as a driver of social inclusion and economic vitality.