

Pfronstetten-Aichelau, October 21, 2025

**Handicap Seminar 2025: Where expertise meets active inclusion**

***When mobility becomes a prerequisite for genuine participation, expertise, technology, and spaces for exchange are needed.***

*The Handicap Seminar has been considered one of the most important platforms for barrier-free driver training for years – it premiered in southern Germany in 2025. For three days, the Next Mobility Campus at the Aichelau Mobility Park became a hub for professional networking, hands-on experience and personal encounters.*



*The first disability seminar in southern Germany was held in cooperation with Paravan and the Bielefeld Traffic Institute. Speakers included Oliver Urban (Bielefeld Traffic Institute), Ralf Buhmann (Head of Paravan Driving School), Sven Tengeler and Ulrich Wibbeke (Managing Directors of the Bielefeld Traffic Institute) and Luca Arnold (Paravan GmbH). Photo: Paravan*

This practical training format, organised in cooperation between the Bielefeld Traffic Institute, the Federal Association of Driving Instructor Associations (BVF) and the PARAVAN driving school, offered a special opportunity for driving instructors, examiners, experts and other professionals in accordance with §53 (1) FahrIG. The focus was on how to support people with physical disabilities in obtaining a driving licence in a more targeted, safer and more individualised manner, thus helping them to achieve greater independence, with sound technical knowledge and expertise, and a genuine focus on the individual.

**Experience for yourself what mobility means**

What is it like to experience mobility made possible by technology? On the second day of the disability seminar, this question was answered in an impressive way through personal stories and real driving experiences, offering a change of perspective at eye level.

The focus was on three Paravan customers who spoke openly about their personal mobility journeys. Lothar, who switched from an electromechanical system to electronic foot steering, described the change as challenging, yet also as real progress: 'It wasn't easy to get used to, but today I wouldn't want to be without the system.' Leopold, who drives with a four-way joystick, has covered around 30,000 kilometres since completing his driving licence training. "I got into the driving school car and knew: this is going to be good," he recalls. Wolfram, who switched to right-hand rotary steering and a left-hand gas-brake slider at an early stage,

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took a proactive approach to mobility. 'I wanted to be prepared. It was clear to me that I needed someone who could offer everything from a single source, from the wheelchair to the vehicle.'

After the exchange, participants had the opportunity to experience for themselves what mobility can mean. Participants had the opportunity to test vehicles with Space Drive and joystick or foot steering for themselves, which was a pivotal moment for many. The technical side met the personal perspective and theory met real practice.

Ralf Buhmann, head of the Paravan driving school in Aichelau and co-organiser, believes that such formats are an essential part of training: 'There have been few offerings in this area in the south so far. This makes events like this all the more important as a platform for exchange, knowledge transfer and practical experience,' emphasises the driving instructor. 'Anyone who trains people with disabilities has a responsibility. This requires more than just technology – namely experience, empathy and continuous training.' Oliver Urban, head driving instructor and seminar leader at the Bielefeld Traffic Institute, also draws a clear conclusion: 'The seminar at Paravan was very impressive for us as co-organisers. Seeing how innovative vehicle conversions enable mobility and independence for physically disabled people is a valuable and enriching experience, both professionally and personally.'

**Practical and interdisciplinary – the seminar program**

The diverse seminar programme demonstrated just how complex and promising the topic of accessible mobility is. Spread across over ten content blocks, the topic was examined from legal, technical, medical and practical perspectives, always with the aim of combining theory with everyday life.

Topics covered included the application and approval procedures for driving lessons and vehicle conversions, presented by Paravan mobility consultant Daniel Weber and driving instructor Ulf Jörgensen, and the medical requirements for driving aptitude, which were classified from a traffic medicine perspective by Dr Matthias Ponfik, chief physician at the Rummelsberg Paraplegic Centre of the Sana Clinics. Carsten Seidler from the Paravan driving school in Heidelberg also gave a practical demonstration of how driving school vehicles can be adapted to meet individual needs. The training also covered assessments by testing organisations (Christian Fischer, TÜV) and insurance and liability questions for third-party vehicles (Uwe Gerhards, Westphalia Driving Instructors Association). A special highlight was the exclusive tour of the PARAVAN mobility factory. Participants were able to see and experience how innovative vehicle solutions are created here, from the digital Space Drive System and hand controls to highly complex wheelchair systems.

A recurring theme in many of the contributions was: 'Barrier-free mobility is not a marginal technical issue – it is a central building block for participation and social justice.'

**Conclusion: Exchange as a pathfinder for inclusion**

The Handicap Seminar 2025 showed how vital professional dialogue, experiential knowledge and interdisciplinary collaboration are in shaping inclusion in road traffic. The launch at the Next Mobility Campus sent a strong message about the need for greater understanding, competence and participation through mobility. The conclusion was that it was a strong start for future events of this kind because mobility is a human right.



*Professional input in an inspiring environment: driving instructors, examiners, and experts deepen their knowledge of mobility for people with disabilities. Photo: Paravan*





*Where mobility is made possible: In the PARAVAN mobility manufacturing workshop, experts and participants discuss individual adaptations and technical challenges. Photo: Paravan*



*Mobility changes lives: The testimonials from Lothar, Wolfram, and Leopold were emotional highlights of the seminar—and provided important inspiration for daily work with people with disabilities. Photo: Bielefeld Traffic Institute*



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*Working together for greater mobility: The Handicap Seminar 2025 brought together people who are taking responsibility—for greater participation, greater understanding, and greater movement in the best sense of the word. Photo: Paravan*

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**About Paravan GmbH:**

PARAVAN GmbH is the global market leader in customized vehicle solutions for the disabled people. About 160 employees at the Pfrontstetten Aichelau and Heidelberg sites develop and produce customized vehicle conversions, electric wheelchairs and even specialized driver training. PARAVAN pursues a holistic approach with its "one-stop shop" concept. The technological highlight is Space Drive, an intelligent digital control system based on the drive-by-wire principle. Thanks to the active redundancy of the servo motors, it is completely fail-safe and the first to be approved for road use. This innovation enables severely disabled people, some of whom have no arms or legs, to drive independently and safely. It is not possible for these drivers to simply take control of the steering wheel. Over the past 20 years, Space Drive has been proven on more than one billion kilometers of roads worldwide and is used by numerous industrial customers for test vehicles in the field of autonomous driving. The system is available as a retrofit kit with an open interface for all known vehicle types. [www.paravan.com](http://www.paravan.com)