

PROJECT ELEVATOR NEWSLETTER

2 | November 2016

ATHENS, Greece – This is the newsletter of the project ELEVATOR, through which we inform you bi-annually about the project's progress. This issue is devoted to the second international project meeting which took place in Athens, Greece in October 2016.

PROJECT IN BRIEF

Aim:

- Enhance the quality, efficiency and relevance of education for accessible tourism
- Improve the access to education in accessible tourism for individual learners
- Raise the awareness about accessible tourism

Activities and outputs:

- Comparative analyses of tools and conditions for education in accessible tourism
- Learning material for tourist guides
- Accessible tourism pocket guide
- Transnational project meetings and workshops with target groups
- Final transnational project conference

Target groups:

- SMEs operating in tourism, tourist destinations management and staff, tourist guides, educational institutions, policy makers etc.

Partnership:

- Kazuist (Czech Republic)
- ENAT (Belgium, Greece)
- TANDEM (Italy)
- PREMIKI (Slovenia)

Period of implementation:

- 9/2015-8/2018

PROJECT UPDATES

ELEVATOR is a project of partner cooperation, exchange of experience, good practice and mutual learning in the field of adult education in accessible tourism.

Within the partnership 3 new tools have been created to support adult education and vocational training in accessible tourism:

- **Comparative analysis of Accessible tourism training** - this output intends to inform discussions with end-users, especially Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the tourism sector, on how to promote education in accessible tourism at national and European levels, and how to integrate this topic into the current or new curricula or educational/training strategies. The first part of the analysis presents an overview of existing educational programmes and tools for accessible tourism in partner countries of the ELEVATOR project, Czech Republic, Greece, Italy and Slovenia, SWOT analyses of conditions for education in accessible tourism in partners' countries, both in formal and informal education and good practice examples from ENAT members' countries.
- **Open Educational Resource for Tourist Guides** - this will be informational material enabling individual learners to improve their skills regarding how to guide people with specific access needs. Surveys have been carried out of tourist guides' training needs in all partner countries, to find out the kinds of access needs and problems they most often come across and how they solve them.
- **Accessible Tourism Pocket Guide** - this output will provide the answers to the most frequent questions about accessible tourism. Here, managers working in the tourism industry will find key information and evidence about the value of accessible tourism. To answer these questions, discussion meetings (focus groups) have been held with the target group in all partner countries.

The conclusions of all previously completed surveys and analyses were presented within the second transnational meeting and workshop held in Athens, Greece, 5-7 October 2016. A brief summary of the presented information is also included in this issue of the newsletter.



ELEVATOR project team on transnational project meeting in Athens, Greece

SHARING OF EXPERIENCE AND GOOD PRACTICE

Within the 2nd transnational meeting a workshop was held focusing on **Education of policy and strategy makers in accessible tourism**. Here the conclusions of the **Comparative Analysis of Accessible Tourism Training** and key findings of the surveys carried out in the partners' countries were presented.

Comparative Analysis of Accessible Tourism Training

- Accessible tourism training is not widely available in EU Member States.
- The majority of courses are directed to frontline staff, addressing introductory-level customer service skills, while strategic and managerial training is scarce.
- Training tends to focus on the needs of people with disabilities, with less emphasis given to the wider range of visitors who benefit from “good access” and customer service.
- It is essential to promote an understanding of all the beneficiaries of “accessibility” before it is possible to persuade businesses to take up training.

Tourist Guides Research

- Professional Tourist Guides act as the “ambassadors” of the region or destination in many respects. Their experience shows that many visitors have particular access requirements when attending guided tours but relatively few are trained to support their clients’ access needs.
- Their formal education does not cover disability awareness or accessibility issues. However, some training is offered by the European tourist guides’ associations (FEG) and these courses can provide useful input for local and national training and learning, which the ELEVATOR project can apply and take further.



Workshop with Greek representatives of tourism sector

Focus group

Interviews took place with a range of tourism professionals in each country, producing a “Top Ten” list of barriers and questions. These include issues such as understanding access needs, customers’ information requirements, web and marketing, design of accessible products and offers, promotion and choice of suitable channels, continuous training requirements, models for cooperation with the Destination Management Organisations, competitive advantages of AT and demonstrating the business case.

Interesting information on accessible tourism were given also by the external Greek participants /experts from: FEG - European Federation of Tourist Guides, SETE -the Association of Hellenic Tourism Enterprises, Association of Hellenic Tourism Enterprises, Amphitrite Social Enterprise, DEPAN Municipalities Network and the Athens Licensed Tourist Guides Association.

Efi Kalamboukidou, President of FEG, gave a presentation, describing the activities and future focus and plans of FEG. Additionally she gave some information about the situation in Greece and she also spoke about the training and certification programme which FEG is carrying out in collaboration with ENAT (T-Guide), in order to train professional tourist guides in guiding visitors with intellectual disabilities.



FEG offers a range of short courses for its members, including:

- Sharing Best Practice (6-days)
- Training the Trainers (7-days)
- Handling Difficult People (1-day)
- Guiding people with special needs (half- day)
- T-GUIDE - Guiding people with learning Difficulties (1-day) - from the beginning of 2016, the T-Guide course has been offered in Austria, Czech Republic and the UK and several guides have already received their certificates, jointly accredited by FEG and ENAT. See: <http://www.t-guide.eu/?i=t->

STUDY VISIT TO THE ACROPOLIS MUSEUM

Project team visited the Acropolis Museum and had a 1,5 hours guided tour of the museum by Dimitria Papadopoulou, a Greek official tourist guide, regarding the accessibility solutions in place. Mrs. Papadopoulou explained how visitors with various access requirements are accommodated and guided at the venue.

The **Acropolis Museum** is an archaeological museum focused on the findings of the archaeological site of the Acropolis of Athens. The museum opened to the public in 2009. Nearly 4,000 objects are exhibited over an area of 14,000 square metres. As the museum is built over an extensive archaeological site, the floor is often transparent using glass and thus the visitor can see the excavations below.

The New Acropolis Museum has excellent **wheelchair access**. On the north side of the building on Dionysiou Areopagitou street there is a wheelchair ramp at the entrance. Inside the building there is a long ramp to get up to the upper level. Additionally, the museum has an elevator to visit the three floors of the museum, and each of the floors is step-free. There are 3 wheelchairs available for loan and accessible public toilets for wheelchair users. Entrance is free for visitors in a wheelchair.

The Acropolis Museum supports independent learning by making available backpacks filled with activities and ‘family trails’ for families with young children, free of charge. Families can choose between a quick and simple visit using one of the booklets, or a longer and more intricate one using one of the backpacks, which are also equipped with games.

Website: <http://www.theacropolismuseum.gr/>



ELEVATOR Project Team at the Acropolis Museum

ELEVATOR ON THE ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF FEG

ELEVATOR Project presented by ENAT at the 18th FEG – Federation of European Tourist Guides Associations Annual Conference held in Brno, Czech Republic, 17 November 2016.

“Accessible Tourism in Europe” was the theme of a keynote address given by Ivor Ambrose on the invitation of FEG at their Annual Meeting and Conference attended by 150 tourist guides from across Europe. Mr. Ambrose’s presentation ranged across the work of ENAT, international developments in the field and accessible tourism



Left to right: FEG President Efi Kalamboukidou, ENAT Managing Director Ivor Ambrose, FEG Tourist Guide Trainer Themis Halvantzis-Stringer and FEG Training Committee Secretary Viola Lewis.

market trends. He also referred to the ‘ELEVATOR’ ERASMUS+ project, highlighting the work that is being carried out by the partner organisations to collect and provide training resources on guiding people with specific access requirements.

The tourist guides present showed great interest in learning more about accessibility, in particular due to the increasing numbers of older people with access needs in their tour groups. “Since tourist guides act as the ‘ambassadors’ of cultural and heritage destinations in many respects, they are well aware of the importance of good customer service and effective communications”, said Mr. Ambrose. “Having knowledge of access needs and being trained in how to cater for mixed age groups and abilities will enable tourist guides to provide a better experience for visitors, ensuring that everyone can have a meaningful and enjoyable visit, he concluded”.

More information: www.feg-brno2016.org/