

## **TITLE OF THE PROJECT: EUROPE WITHOUT BARRIERS**

## **ACRONYM OF THE PROJECT: EWB**

**PROJECT DURATION AND START DATE: 18 months, starting October 1<sup>st</sup> 2014**

### **SHORT DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT**

The general objective of the “Europe Without Barriers” (EWB) project is the creation of a network of organizations able to design, implement and promote itineraries accessible to all, keeping in mind the requirements of people with specific access needs. The project is composed of 3 main parts:

- 1) Design and implementation of new **accessible destination packages**.
- 2) Implementation of the “**Europe Without Barrier**” 14 day organized tour.
- 3) Organization of **Education and Training Conventions**.

#### **1) Design and implementation of new accessible destination packages**

Within the project will be implemented new itineraries accessible to all, considering each destination as cards of a puzzle, so that each destination package can be either purchased separately or as part of a whole itinerary. This way would be possible to offer **customizable accessible itineraries** in the **mainstream market** as well. The goal would be to have for each destination package the following peculiarities available:

- **transportation** services with accessible vehicles;
- **accommodation** with accessible rooms and areas. Not only hotels with few rooms in a contest which is not accessible, but properties where everything around is accessible (bathroom, lifts, breakfast room, relaxing area, etc.);
- **restaurants** inside the hotel or in the immediate vicinity which are accessible;
- activities and **excursions** in the surrounding. The concept of an accessible vacation should not be a structure where everything inside is accessible but all around there’s nothing guests can do except playing cards or watch TV, they must be free to enjoy the surrounding the same way other clients do;
- **trained and informed staff** in each location, since people with disabilities need special attentions.

#### **2) Implementation of the “Europe Without Barrier” 14 day organized tour**

The “Europe Without Barriers” tour will be a test and will become a model for all future developments. The EWB tour will be covering 5 European countries (Italy, Slovenia, Croatia, Austria and Germany) and will be open to all (not only to people with specific needs). The itineraries will include transportation by accessible vehicles, accommodation, sightseeing tours, meals in restaurants and will consider a large variety of experiences, such as historical city centers (Unesco Heritage appointed as well), culture, shopping, spa, lakes, mountains, countryside, ferry rides and culinary experiences.

#### **3) Organization of Education and Training Conventions**

The events will be held physically in 2 different Italian locations:

- in Central Italy, within the city of **Lucignano** (AR), Tuscany
- in Southern Italy, within the city of **Riccìa** (CB), Molise

The aim of the two Conventions would be to provide information and training to institutions (Regions, Provinces, Municipalities, etc.) and travel related organizations (staff and managers of hotels, restaurants, tour operators, travel agencies, tour escorts, tour guides, etc.) considering 4 training units:

1. Unit 1, dedicated to **institutions** and **local businesses**. Containing information about what is Accessible Tourism and its potential development.
2. Unit 2, dedicated to **hotels**. Aiming to train and inform managers and staff members about how to better welcome people with specific access needs and how to better promote through a dedicated marketing strategy their properties.
3. Unit 3, dedicated to **restaurants**. Aiming to train and inform managers and staff members about how to better welcome people with specific access requirements.
4. Unit 4, dedicated to **tour operators** and **travel agencies**. Aiming to train and inform managers and staff members about how to organize and/or sell tourist packages accessible to all.

Specific objectives within the project are also:

- creation of a network of professionals, larger compared to those partnering the EWB project, able to pursue the project and make it independent, even economically, at the end of the 18 months;
- educate local administrators and businesses about the concept of Accessible Tourism;
- create services that are totally barrier free and could allow people with specific access requirements to join attractive destinations.
- implement and spread skills and knowledge in order to allow a major number of professionals working in the tourism to understand and bear situations that can arise hosting people with specific needs;
- create social inclusion, so that people with disabilities and specific access requirements can experience the very same tourism services as all other travelers do.

Above all, it is important to underscore what is intended for “**people with specific needs**”. It could be people with reduced mobility, blind people, deaf people, people with psychological and intellectual disability, people with specific diet requirements or alimentary allergies, parents with a pram, pregnant women, people with hidden disabilities, people temporary injured by accidents and elderly people. Surely this listing is not complete, since the main question that any person should ask when dealing with accessible tourism is: “**Accessible to whom?**” There can be situations and requirements that could never be simply categorized, but just by reading the above mentioned listing is clear that creating accessible environments also means improving the quality of life to a huge part of our society, practically to everyone, since even a traveller carrying a heavy luggage could benefit from a barrier free territory.

**LEAD PARTNER/COORDINATOR:** SM Italia Scarl (Italy)

**PARTNERS:**

Partner 1: Accessible Poland Tours (Poland)

Partner 2: Comune di Riccia – CB (Italy)

Partner 3: Centro Servizi Foligno (Italy)

Partner 4: ENAT - European Network for Accessible Tourism (Belgium)

Partner 5: Christravel (Denmark)

Endorse: Comune di Lucignano – AR (Italy)

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