

PROJECT ELEVATOR NEWSLETTER

3 | June 2017

ROME, Italy – This is the newsletter of the project ELEVATOR, through which we inform you about the project's progress. This issue is devoted to the third international project meeting which took place in Rome, Italy in May, 2017.

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:

- KAZU (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 will be created to support adult education and vocational training in accessible tourism:

- **Accessible Tourism Pocket Guide** - this output will provide the answers to the most frequent questions about accessible tourism. The partners agreed the content of this output and now we will gather practical tips and good examples from practice proving the value of accessibility.
- **Comparative analysis of Accessible tourism training** - this output intends to inform about existing educational programmes, tools and conditions for accessible tourism training in partner countries of the ELEVATOR project. The second part of the output, which was begun, will give suggestions about which skills and competencies should be developed in the training.
- **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. The first draft of the output was discussed with partners within the meeting in Rome. Tourist guides were involved in the creation of the output.

The question of a proper training for tourist guides and the situation of courses availability in the Partners' countries have been discussed at the workshop, organised in Rome on the 9th of May, 2017, with local representatives of the Italian national associations of tourist guides. A brief summary of the workshop results is also included in this issue of the newsletter.



ELEVATOR project team on transnational project meeting in Rome, Italy

SHARING OF EXPERIENCE AND GOOD PRACTICE

Within the 3rd transnational meeting a workshop was held focusing on **Education of tourist guides on accessible tourism**.

Education of tourist guides on Accessible Tourism

The workshop was organized inviting Associations of Tourist guides and tourist guides themselves to discuss the state of the art of training for tourist guides. Specific training will allow them to intervene properly in case of criticalities during the tour and to have a better knowledge of the requirements expressed by the tourists with access needs.

The discussion was very productive and the following points were highlighted as being important recommendations to be brought forward in the ELEVATOR final outputs:

- Qualifications of tourist guides on the issues of visitors with specific requirements is a must since no regular programming initiatives are available in all the countries.
- Guides are willing to pay for qualified training courses and normally prefer face-to-face offers preferably during low season.
- Training is a necessity also to maintain and improve the quality of the guiding offers, which have been seriously threatened by the deregulation of certification, at European level.
- It could be important to inform and influence politicians towards a complete recognition of the specialized skills that a tourist guide must have.
- Politicians and public administration in general must be informed and involved so that the managers and staff working in the tourist sector understand the importance of the flows of information among all the actors of the tourist service chain. Tourist guides are often faced by critical unforeseen situations and no one simply cared to inform them.
- Reliable information on how and where to find provisions for the requirements of visitors with disabilities are also very important, together with the fact that what is available MUST be possibly used (e.g. Use of public accessible toilets).
- It is common to have one wheelchair user in the group but tourist guides are not always informed about it beforehand. So guides must know the way e.g. to the Sistine Chapel you must take a different route - this can mean separating the group.
- Problems of accessibility are not pointed out in advance. Not only to tourist guides but ALL tourists do not get this information. Visitors expect a kind of service but it can be missing - not done for months, e.g. the lift not working.
- Barrier-free solutions are often implemented separately without considering the surrounding and related services - e.g. In Roman Forum accessibility has been solved only inside, but outside, behind the gate the street remains a barrier, mainly at the exit side, where the street is composed of very large cobblestones.



Workshop with Italian representatives of tourist guides

Analysis of the situation of training for tourist guides in the Partners' countries

The training offer for tourist guides on accessible tourism is weak if not completely absent in the partners countries. The analysis conducted in the Czech Republic, Greece and Slovenia shows that specific courses on this topic are not regularly provided. The experience of T-Guides has been developed following the results of an EU funded project and thanks to the commitment of the FEG (European Federation of Tourist Guides) and ENAT. This is so far the only available training course which gives a recognition /credit to those who attend it.

The Italian situation is not different, as discussed with the Tourist guides representatives with some exceptions. The training on accessible tourism is not included in the professional training curriculum of tourist guides, but some associations, like Museums, or the Italian Association Environment and excursion, provide regular courses to their volunteers or associates, in order to be prepared to guide properly people with different access needs.

STUDY VISIT TO THE ROMAN FORUM

The project team visited the Roman Forum in a 2,5 hours tour.

The tour was guided by Gabriella Cetorelli, officer of the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Tourism active in the field of special education and accessibility of the Cultural Heritage, and Silvia Monti, an official regional tourist guide.

Mrs. Cetorelli, in particular, illustrated what kind of accessibility solutions have been implemented within the area. In this sense, the visit was conducted along the accessible path for people with mobility impairment as among the visitors from Tandem there was an electric wheelchair user.

The accessible path starts from the entrance of Largo Salara Vecchia where there is an elevator that goes down to the archaeological level avoiding the very steep path from the entrance-

This path is made of a cement base, placed upon the ancient Roman pavement, and is flat.

Unfortunately, some parts of the path, at the moment of the visit, were removed due to maintenance and restoration works in the area of the Lapis Niger.

The visit touched also the Casa delle Vestali (House of the Vestals) about 400 metres from the entrance, that can be reached through some ramps and where accessibility solutions have been integrated with the ancient remains through the choice of materials and colours similar to the original surrounding ones.

Then the visit continued along the via Sacra where the same cement path is present. Along the way it is possible to see also the Temple of Divus Romulus, closed in the day of the visit but also made accessible through a ramp.

The visit ended (after almost a total 800 meters path) in the area of the Arch of Titus where also a platform lift is placed to enable wheelchair users to overcome the relevant change of levels between the lower area of the Forum and the area going to the Palatine Hill.

The entrance to the Forum is free for visitors with disabilities.



ELEVATOR Project Team at the Roman Forum



Accessible path in Roman Forum

International Congress on Ethics and Tourism in Krakow

United Nations declared 2017 the **International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development**. At the end of April the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) in collaboration with the European Commission and the Government of Poland organized the 3rd International Congress on Ethics and Tourism in Krakow.

One of the sessions focused on **Tourism for All** as an important part of sustainability. Inclusive tourism enables all people, whatever their abilities or socio-economic circumstances may be to experience travel and tourism. Inclusive tourism environment, products and services can make tourism businesses more innovative and therefore more competitive. Ivor Ambrose from ENAT - and member of the ELEVATOR team - was the speaker in this session.

Conclusions of the session called ***The imperative of advancing Tourism for All*** were:

- Tourism is a human right and not a privilege.
- An inclusive tourism sector does not only do good for its direct beneficiaries; it also enhances competitiveness and quality, better distributes tourism flows, brings in new customers and more income. It is good for business.
- Accessible tourism requires a change of mindset. We can enforce laws but it is the attitudinal barriers that we need to break first.
- Every customer has different needs. Companies should provide accurate and regularly updated information so as to enable travellers to assess if their individual access requirements can be met.
- Accessibility needs to be mainstreamed in tourism policies and throughout the supply chain to ensure a seamless tourism experience.