



**Mapping and Performance Check of the Supply of  
Accessible Tourism Services  
(220/PP/ENT/PPA/12/6491)**

*Case Study 14*

**Barcelona Accessible Cruise Destination, Spain**

*"This document has been prepared for the European Commission; however it reflects the views only of its authors, and the European Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein."*

**European Commission  
Enterprise and Industry Directorate General  
(DG ENTR)**

"Mapping and Performance Check of the Supply of Accessible Tourism Services" (220/PP/ENT/PPA/12/6491)

**Case Study: Barcelona**

**- Accessible Cruise Destination, Spain**

# Contents

Executive Summary .....	4
1.0 Introduction .....	4
2.0 Overview and background information.....	8
3.0 The integration of the supply chain .....	19
4.0 Provisions for cross-impairments .....	21
5.0 Business approach – building a business case for accessibility.....	22
6.0 Evidence of impact .....	25
7.0 Conclusions.....	27
8.0 Recommendations .....	28
Annex I: Criteria and justification for best practices .....	29

## Executive Summary

This case study examines the City of Barcelona, Spain, with respect to its development of cruise tourism and related shore-side excursions and transportation, with particular emphasis on services for visitors with specific access requirements.

Over the past 25 years Barcelona has steadily gained a reputation as one of the world's most attractive and visited cities. It has become the fourth most popular city destination in Europe by visitor numbers, having 7.5 million visitors in 2013. and its number and variety of tourism offers has grown year-by-year to include sports and cultural events, heritage attractions, city-breaks, conferences, meetings and business tourism. In more recent years, cruise tourism has shown strong growth in Europe and Barcelona has become the most favoured port for embarkation, disembarkation and port-of-call passengers with a total of 2.6 million passengers in 2013.

Cruise tourism has a significant impact on European tourism both in terms of passenger numbers and economic turnover for cruise lines but also for shore destinations. Ports of call and the beginning and end points of the cruise can profit directly from tourists, as well as other services including, port infrastructure investments, shipbuilding and repairs and other related activities. The demographics of cruise passengers show a higher proportion of older persons who benefit from the comfort and ease of a ship-board holiday.

Barcelona has achieved a high level of provisions in terms of general accessibility of the built environment, accessibility information and itineraries for visitors, a well-designed and accessible public transport system and adapted services for visitors with access needs. This combination of factors contributes strongly to Barcelona's position as a desirable, year-round *accessible tourism* destination. Also, the Catalan region has a well-developed range of accessible, inclusive destinations with activities and venues for visitors, acting as a magnet for cruise ship tourists from Spain, Euro and overseas.

This case study explains the approach taken by the City of Barcelona, tourism operators and local businesses to become an attractive and welcoming cruise destination. The services for passengers who need good access are described and evaluated, in particular by an American, John Sage, who is a disabled wheelchair user and travel agent, specialising in European destinations. Overall, the study shows the successful results of the city authorities' plans and programmes and explains the benefits these actions have brought to the cruise industry, the visitors and suppliers.

### 1.0 Introduction

This case study examines Barcelona as an accessible cruise destination, exploring the extent to which people with disabilities and other specific access requirements are catered for within the growing cruise passenger market and the quality of the shore-side experiences in the city and surroundings.

The City of Barcelona is widely considered one of Europe's most accessible tourist destinations for people with disabilities and other visitors with specific access requirements.

Some facts about tourism attractions and visitor numbers to Barcelona:

- Barcelona is the only city in the world with nine buildings which are UNESCO World Heritage sites: la Pedrera, Park Guell, Palau Guell, Palau de la Música Catalana, Hospital de la Santa Creu i Sant Pau, Sagrada Família, Casa Batlló, Casa Vicens and Cripta de la Colònia Guell.
- Barcelona is the world's third most popular congress city, according to the International Congress & Convention Association (ICCA), and is the sixth city in the world for convention tourism, according to the Union of International Associations (UIA).
- Barcelona with 2,500,000 passengers in 2013 is the first port of call in Europe for cruise-liners and fourth in the world.
- According to British Airways, Barcelona is the preferred city-break destination for the British.

Its own leaders describe Barcelona as an active and dynamic city, in a constant process of renewal. In the 1990s it underwent a major transformation with the infrastructure and urban planning works for the 1992 Olympic and Paralympic Games. The city was effectively opened up to the sea, and was provided with an infrastructure of roads incorporating the latest technology.

In the same year the city established the Barcelona Provincial Committee which was tasked with developing Barcelona as a tourist destination.

The major 1992 event - the Olympic and Paralympic Games, left a rich architectural legacy - Isozaki's sports facility the Palau Sant Jordi, the Lluís Companys Olympic Stadium, the Olympic Ring, on the Montjuïc's mountain, and notably, an accessibility plan which continued from 1995 - 2004 making the city's pavements and squares more accessible for wheelchair users and persons with other disabilities.

Barcelona is the fourth in the ranking of the most visited European cities.

A study by the *Barcelona Tourism board* carried out in 2013 revealed that the number of tourists in Barcelona hotels grew by 0.7% in 2012 compared to the previous year. In total, Barcelona hosted 7.44 million tourists in the city's hotels.

The study also showed that a significant increase in foreign tourists that year compensated for the 6.8% drop in Spanish visitors. The number of tourists from Russia and Eastern Europe increased by 32%, those from the United Kingdom grew by 12% and those from the United States grew by 4.7%.

### **Urban-tourism destination**

Barcelona has established itself as one of the main urban-tourism destinations in Europe. The Catalan capital has every attraction for weekend breaks and three or more day's

visits. For some years now, holidaymakers have accounted for about 50% of visitors to the city, a similar figure to business trips, which have traditionally been Barcelona's strongest visitor segment. This makes the city the ideal place for short breaks.

Culture is one of Barcelona's main attractions old and modern architecture and World Heritage sites adds to the city's stature as a tourist destination. Barcelona's main museums attract some 14,000,000 visitors a year, The Sagrada Família is the most popular cultural attraction and over two million people visited it last year. La Pedrera, also designed by Gaudí, and the new CaixaForum also proved popular with 1,500,000 visitors.

**Figure 1. Barcelona Cruise Port**



Photo. Port of Barcelona

### **Barcelona Cruise Port**

This case study examines Barcelona as an accessible cruise destination, exploring the extent to which accessibility relates to the growing cruise passenger market and the quality of the shore-side experiences in the city and surroundings. The Port of Barcelona describes itself as "*The Mediterranean Turnaround Port Par Excellence*":

- The new ferry terminals feature excellent services and are within easy access of the city,
- Safety and security are of the utmost importance for us. Terminals fully comply with the requirements set forth by the IMO.
- Creuers del Port de Barcelona, SA operates 5 cruise terminals, of which 4 as a concessionaire.

- *Palacruceros*, the Carnival group terminal, started operating in 2007. The terminal has preference for Carnival Corporation ships under a neutral management.
- Both companies have invested over 100 million Euro over the last 10 years to extend and improve the cruise port facilities.
- Barcelona is co-funder and member of the MedCruise Association.

Barcelona has one of the most popular ports for cruise ships as well as for shipping companies. According to Lloyd's Cruise International, Barcelona is the first cruise harbour in Europe and Mediterranean and fourth in the world, enjoying a prime location in the western Mediterranean. It meets the pre-requisites of the cruise companies who use it as their home port: a prestigious tourist city, a quality hotel infrastructure, an airport with international air connections and harbour facilities devoted exclusively to cruise ships. Barcelona is also the centre of a Euroregion with a great number of potential cruise passengers.

Barcelona's seven cruise terminals are located in the heart of the city, and are well-served by public transport – buses and taxis -, which make it easy to reach any part of the city.

The Port of Barcelona plays a large role in the Catalan economy by stimulating propelling industrial and commercial activities of the surrounding area. It has a customer portfolio of over 3,000 companies which represent a turnover of €300 billion.

The port directly employs over 13,000 people, which added to the indirect employment as a result of port activities creates a total of 32,000 jobs, or 0.9% of Catalonia's job market. During the first half of 2013 the port increased its container export levels by 12% on 2012 to 276,544 TEU's (twenty-foot equivalent units), the highest amount ever achieved.

The port of Barcelona brings together the greatest number of logistic facilities on the Iberian Peninsula and in the south of Europe. The integration of all means of transport (port, airport, motorways, and railways) within a five-kilometre radius, and its location in a setting which offers the best services to the transport and logistic sectors, make the port one of the Mediterranean's hubs for commerce, transport and distribution.<sup>1</sup>

### **Airport**

Barcelona's airport, El Prat, is one of the main European air hubs. It is perfectly connected to the main European markets, and has yearly passenger figures of 30 million. Info: [www.aena.es](http://www.aena.es)

The Barcelona airport is a modern and practical space that fully satisfies the requirements of passengers and companies. It has been consolidated as a crucial facility in the Mediterranean and Southern Europe. This terminal has been designed as a center of distribution and connection of flights but also as a great center of services.

Among those services, since May 2010 Barcelona Airport there is a special terminal area for the cruise passengers in Terminal T1, with 14 check in counters in a specific hall. This

---

<sup>1</sup> See: [www.portdebarcelona.es](http://www.portdebarcelona.es)

special operations centre handles passengers flying with Air France, British Airways, KLM, Lufthansa and American Airlines.

Additionally, in summer 2011 the airport implemented baggage check-in also for those passengers that arrive to Barcelona by plane and continue their journey on a cruise ship. In addition, since 2008, Delta Airlines executes the check in between port and airport. For this operation, the airport has set up 16 check-in equipment in the port facilities. The luggage is transferred directly to the airport and controlled by the Automatic Treatment System of Luggage.

These different services offered to the cruise passenger makes easier the arrival or departure from Barcelona and raise the quality of the service.

### **Railway**

In September 2013 The Catalan Government, the Port of Barcelona and the Spanish Ministry for Public Works and Transport signed an agreement to build a railway connection to the port.

## **2.0 Overview and background information**

### **The cruise industry in Europe**

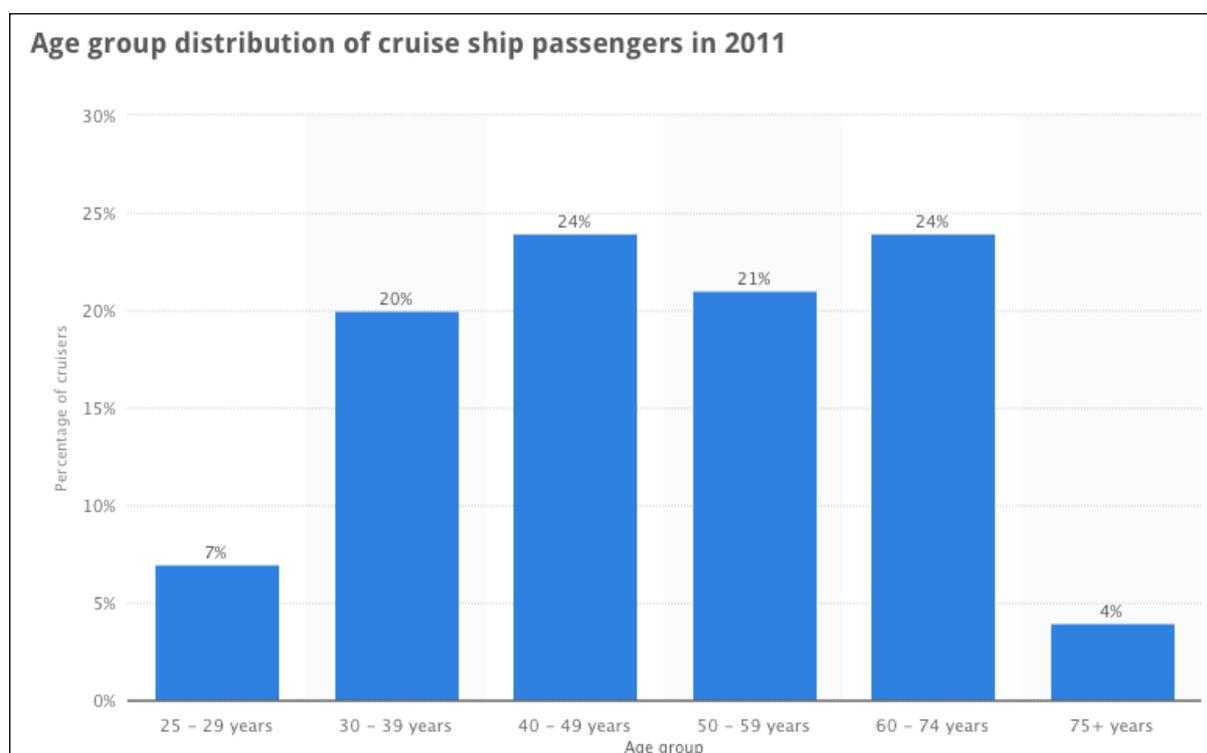
While the main focus of this case study is on the City of Barcelona and its development as a cruise port and accessible tourist destination, it is worth taking stock of the current status of cruise tourism in Europe and, not least, its contribution to the European economy.

Cruise tourism has been a tremendous driver of European tourism development over the last 10 years, by any standards, creating a genre of holiday experiences that have become highly sought after, not least among seniors and people with disabilities. Periodic surveys conducted by TNS, a market research company, for Cruise Line International Association (CLIA)<sup>2</sup> showed that 28% of surveyed cruise passengers were aged 60+ years. The average age of cruise passengers hovers around 50 years of age. Cruise holidays have indeed become the "holiday of choice" for many segments of the population.

---

<sup>2</sup> CLIA, 2001. Cruise Market Profile Study. PDF Download:  
[http://www.cruising.org/sites/default/files/pressroom/Market\\_Profile\\_2011.pdf](http://www.cruising.org/sites/default/files/pressroom/Market_Profile_2011.pdf)

**Figure 2. Age group distribution of cruise ship passengers, 2011. (Source: CLIA)**



Comparing “cruisers” to members of the public who take holidays but not cruise holidays, the most upscale group in the 2011 surveys shows these traits (vs. representative sample):

- Slightly older (median of age 48 vs. 47)
- Higher household incomes (\$97,000 vs. \$82,000)
- Higher education (76% college graduate vs. 71%)
- More likely to be retired (20 vs. 16%)
- Predominantly married (79%, same as rep sample).

It should be emphasized that the cruise industry has developed new classes of cruises and facilities on ships, targeting younger couples and families, with activities to suite the different demographic profiles of the customers. Advising which cruise to take, in terms of on-board facilities, destinations and the age profiles of fellow passengers is something which travel agents pay close attention to when selling a holiday.

For around 30% of cruise passengers, in all price classes, the *destinations the ship visits* is the dominant factor in choosing which cruise to take, according to the CLIA 2011 market survey.

Looking to the cruise industry’s place in the European tourism market, figures from *Cruise Lines International Association (CLIA) Europe*, published in 2014, show that the industry has shown steady growth over the past decade, not least due to the large-scale investments made by ports and cruise lines alike. Here some of the key numbers are quoted:

“In the five years from 2008-2013, the total output of the European cruise industry has grown by 44% to 6.4 million in 2013. The numbers choosing a cruise holiday in Europe has more than doubled in the past decade while the industry

attracted almost one million passengers from outside Europe. European passenger demand now commands 30 per cent of the global market.

Cruise tourism created more than 12,000 badly needed new jobs last year, and now generates employment for more than 339,000 people across Europe. European shipyards, which build almost all the world's state of the art cruise liners, received a welcome boost with a net increase of five ships on the cruise ship order book. 27 ships are now scheduled for delivery over the next four years, with a combined capacity of over 76,000 passengers and representing a total investment by the cruise industry in Europe of over €12 billion."

- During 2013 there were 43 cruise lines domiciled in Europe, operating 125 cruise ships with a capacity of around 145,000 lower berths. Another 73 vessels with a capacity of around 104,000 lower berths were deployed in Europe by 24 non-European lines.
- An estimated 6.4 million European residents booked cruises, a 3.6% increase over 2012, representing 30% of all cruise passengers worldwide.
- An estimated 6.0 million passengers embarked on their cruises from a European port, a 5.2% increase over 2012. Of these around 5.0 million were European nationals and about 1.0 million came from outside Europe.
- The vast majority of these cruises visited ports in the Mediterranean, the Baltic and other European regions, generating 31.2 million passenger visits at a total of around 250 European port cities, an increase of 8.7% over 2012.
- In addition, an estimated 15.2 million crew also arrived at European ports.

In 2013, Cruise lines spent €6.91 billion with European businesses for goods and services in support of their cruise operations, an increase of 4.7% over 2012.

Among the major expenditures were the following.

- Cruise lines purchased nearly €666 million in provisions consumed on board cruise ships from European food and beverage manufacturers.
- An estimated €840 million in commissions were paid to European travel agents.
- The cruise lines spent €1.55 billion on financial and business services including: insurance, advertising, engineering and other professional services.
- €3.80 billion in cruise passenger and crew spending.

Passenger expenditures included spending for shore excursions, pre- and post-cruise hotel stays, air travel and other merchandise at ports-of-embarkation and ports-of-call. Crew spending was concentrated in expenditures for retail goods and food and beverages.

Total passenger and crew expenditures increased by 4.5% from 2012.

- Including airfares, embarking passengers spent an average of €288.
- Excluding airfares, cruise passengers spent an average of nearly €80 at embarkation port cities.
- On average, cruise passengers then spent another €62 at each port visit on their cruise itinerary.
- Crew spending at each port call averaged €23 per crew member.

Source for the above statistics: CLIA Europe, *Contribution of Cruise Tourism to the Economies of Europe*, 2014 Edition

Clearly, Barcelona, as a destination, embarkation and disembarkation port has been one of the main drivers of European cruise tourism's positive trajectory.

Barcelona has one of the most popular ports for cruise ships as well as for shipping companies. According to Lloyd's Cruise International, Barcelona is the first cruise harbour in Europe and Mediterranean and fourth in the world, enjoying a prime location in the western Mediterranean. It meets the pre-requisites of the cruise companies who use it as their home port: a prestigious tourist city, a quality hotel infrastructure, an airport with international air connections and harbour facilities devoted exclusively to cruise ships. Barcelona is also the centre of a Euroregion with a great number of potential cruise passengers.

Barcelona harbour has seven cruise terminals which are located in the heart of the city, and are well-served by public transport –buses and taxis-, which make it easy to reach any part of the city.

The port of Barcelona plays a large role in the Catalan economy by propelling industrial and commercial activities of the surrounding area. It has a customer portfolio of over 3,000 companies which represent a turnover of €300 billion.

The port directly employs over 13,000 people, which added to the indirect employment as a result of port activities creates a total of 32,000 jobs, or 0.9% of Catalonia's job market. During the first half of 2013 the port increased its container export levels by 12% on 2012 to 276,544 TEU's (twenty-foot equivalent units), the highest amount ever achieved.

The Port of Barcelona is Europe's most popular cruise line destination and provides a significant boost to Barcelona's tourist sector with over €100 million being invested in the past 10 years in improvements to cruise liner infrastructure. The first half of 2013 was particularly successful with 1,040,823 passengers docking in the port, which represents a 15% increase on the same period of 2012.

### **Barcelona: City with the accent on "Access for All"**

Barcelona's development as an *Accessible City for All Tourism* has come about through conscious policies and decisions on the part of successive politicians in the Generalitat of Catalonia (Catalan Regional Government) and the City of Barcelona stretching back over 20 years. This example of vision and long-term commitment clearly shows how the "top-down" approach has been able to drive *accessibility* forward, as a concept for inclusive social development and as a practical approach in all city planning and infrastructure projects. With the example set by the public authorities, accessibility has also become recognised by large and small businesses as something that is good for business and for the social wellbeing of the city. How Barcelona reached this point and sustains this policy today is described briefly in this section.<sup>3</sup> Accessible city

In 1982 the Spanish Government passed the "Law of Social Integration for People with Disabilities" which was followed in 1984 in the Generalitat of Catalonia by decree 100/84

---

<sup>3</sup> Reference for this section: Aragall I Clavé, F. (2003). *Barcelona. From the Accessibility Plan to the City for All*. City of Barcelona.

making it obligatory to follow the law in various fields, technical solutions and in removing architectural barriers.

The Parliament of Catalonia passed the Law of Removal of Architectural Barriers in 1991, setting out a plan to create **formal regulations for accessibility**, an **action plan** and **Municipal Accessibility Committees**. These actions led to the Code of Accessibility of Catalonia 135/95 published in March 1995.

It is important to understand the context in which the political decisions and technical actions came of the 1980s and 1990s came about. While the political leadership was necessary to drive the top-down approach, the impetus came especially from people with disabilities themselves.

- **Firstly**, people with disabilities had formed powerful movements at the national level and in Catalonia, in previous decades, pressing for their needs to be taken into account in national, regional municipal planning. They demanded (and eventually got) representation in municipal committees dealing with planning matters and drove the agenda on removal of architectural barriers and other areas including education and employment. In Barcelona, the Municipal Institute for Persons with Disabilities (IMDB) promoted projects and actions for the integration of people with physical, sensory and cognitive impairments and in 1991 signed an agreement with the College of Architects to provide advice on building and urban design. This resulted, among other things, in the creation of the pedestrian street *Rambla Catalunya* and the specially designed "Barcelona" kerb-cut and crossing which takes into account the access requirements of all users and not only those who use a wheelchair. Other architectural innovations were developed and the first low-floor buses were ordered for the city in 1991.
- **Secondly**, in 1987 the City of Barcelona was granted the right to hold the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 1992, bringing the city an opportunity to develop its position and reputation as a global city. Barcelona showed itself capable of staging these world-class events with style and efficiency, also giving equal status to the Paralympics, which had not been held in conjunction with the Olympics before. The city centre pavements and new pedestrian streets were made accessible for all visitors, enabling disabled people to become part of the urban landscape on a scale not seen before. New railway and metro lines were built with accessibility requirements as part of every design brief. Stadiums and other special installations designed for the Games themselves were assessed at the planning stages to ensure that they would be built in accordance with the required standards. A geographical database was also established with accessibility information for 57,000 places to help visitors and athletes find their way around the city.

The commitment and high quality of the work on access in Barcelona gave rise to many international conferences, visits and workshops during the 1990s, as other cities and municipalities sought to improve their planning methods and tools, drawing on Barcelona's experiences.

One of the major outcomes of this work was the Barcelona Declaration (1995).

### **The Barcelona Declaration Project**

Facilitating Local Authorities in creating a more inclusive society<sup>4</sup>

The Barcelona Declaration made its first appearance at the 1995 conference *The City and the Disabled*. This was a major event with high-level Spanish and European support and attended by people from all over Europe. At the conclusion of the conference, 56 mayors and chairmen of European municipalities signed the Declaration in person and a further 86 indicated their intention by post and fax to sign in the immediate future. As of July 2004, 436 Municipal Authorities had adhered to what, at that time, was the most important European convention on accessibility.

The Declaration is a simple but powerful document. It has no legal force but, by committing municipal authorities to a wide range of actions, it is a major instrument of change. It is also subtle, in that while entirely non-threatening, the measures, which follow on its adoption, are wide-ranging. For example, an adhering city or town undertakes to produce a plan for the implementation of the Declaration and to establish structures for ongoing consultation with people with disabilities and their representatives.

To complete the formalities of registration, the Municipal Authority which decides to adhere to the Barcelona Declaration must register with Barcelona by sending a certified copy of the minutes of the Council meeting that adopted the resolution.

### **Catalunya 2020 Vision for Responsible Tourism**

This initiative, the result of a global conference in 2013, held in Barcelona, extends social participation in tourism under the theme of *Accessible Tourism for All*. Accessibility is now firmly recognised as an important parameter of all sustainable tourism developments.

<b>The Catalunya 2020 Vision for Responsible Tourism: The Barcelona Declaration<sup>5</sup></b>
---

Responsible Tourism in Destinations world conference October 2013.
--

---

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.barcelonaproject.ie/barcelona\\_declaration.htm](http://www.barcelonaproject.ie/barcelona_declaration.htm)

Link to the declaration: <http://www.barcelonaproject.ie/download.htm>

<sup>5</sup> See: <http://rtd7.org/home/declaration>

Everyone has the right to rest and leisure time that allows them to fully develop the various facets of their personality and their social integration. The right to tourism is undoubtedly a concrete expression of this overall right, and the desire exists to render tourism universal and accessible for all.

Encouraging **inclusive tourism** which involves **both improving accessibility for groups with disabilities (physical, sensory and/or intellectual) and increasing the social participation in tourism by groups faced with economic limitations and geographic challenges.**

#### **Social Participation in Tourism:**

1. **Encourage the development of local tourism initiatives** that will bring livelihood opportunities to people living in Catalunya.
2. **Promote the importance of local traditions and cultures** as a product differentiator to what makes Catalunya unique.
3. **Recognise local businesses and organisations that play their part in using and promoting local products and ensuring a thriving destination environment and economy;** providing all of the ingredients that make holidays special today, and for years to come.
4. Help to **fund the conservation of natural and cultural heritage; and provide visitors with enjoyable and high quality experiences** by participating in the delivery of improved sustainable tourism experiences for both hosts and guests.
5. **Encourage the training and employment of vulnerable and disadvantaged people in tourism businesses.**

#### **Accessibility: Tourism for All**

- **Firmly commit to the social inclusion of people with disabilities, by offering services and training** that guarantee accessibility to all areas of life and which enable them to develop autonomously and actively participate in their surroundings.
- Promote **"Tourism for All" as an action for universal accessibility** to natural and cultural resources, sport, communications and events etc
- Seek the **progressive removal of architectural barriers** in different areas, such as public roads, buildings, transport and communications
- The tourism industry and its stakeholders must take responsibility for implementing or **supporting programmes and actions that ensure access for all tourists, recognising the potential of this market segment as a business opportunity** and a means to contribute to economic and social development
- Social tourism activities must be characterised by affording **special attention to overall quality standards**, both in terms of amenities and staff service.

- The group highly recommends that **monitoring, evaluation and reporting** becomes part of the overall declaration.

The Declaration goes on to identify a number of key development points, which are relevant to the present Case Study.

### **The management of cruise tourism in the Mediterranean**

1. **The nature of the cruise product.** Cruising has helped fulfil the rights of access to travel. However the growth of the cruise industry may be at the expense of customers not paying the full cost of the services received, which are paid as externalities by the destinations visited. **A sustainable, lasting product internalises its impacts, and a responsible industry acknowledges this need.**
2. **Sustainable product design.** Cruises and related services are designed with sustainability requirements. Amongst others this **includes environmental efficiency and protection measures, fair working and supplier conditions to be built into product design and contractual arrangements.** The most vulnerable suppliers suffer most.
3. **Supply chain management.** We must acknowledge that most hidden impacts occur through subcontracting and in the supply chains. **Environmental and socio-economic criteria must be incorporated for suppliers of services and goods to cruises and shore excursions.** This must be sensitive to the capacity of suppliers and include supplier development to benefit the local economy, when possible offering tours or excursions that promote local culture and help to protect the traditional way of life, providing a source of income to the destination.
4. **Integrated sustainability planning and management.** The scale of positive and negative impact of cruise companies and suppliers means that collaboration with destinations is essential. This needs to go beyond a focus on efficiency and effectiveness of operations and land- and sea-use planning and crowd management, to consider hidden negative impacts. **The introduction of new standards and practices will require industry-wide collaboration.**
5. **Transparency.** Destination, port, cruise companies and suppliers have the ethical responsibility to **develop management and public reporting systems going beyond regulatory requirements.** Stating creation of jobs and income as their social contribution is not enough. **Agreement on reporting criteria and methodologies will increase the ability to learn from each other and collaborate on best practices.**
6. **The flow of passengers visiting the city centre needs to be managed responsibly to avoid overcrowding, degradation and resource space and the displacement of the local population.**

## **Continuing the accessibility plan**

Since the 1992 Paralympics Barcelona has continued to improve access for everyone including drop kerbs in the streets, flashing and audible crossings, tactile paving, pedestrian streets and long flat promenades along the beaches and marinas.

The public transport system is also improving year by year with a 100% accessible bus fleet and more and more raised, adapted bus stops for those with mobility impairments. Many of the vehicles on the Bus Tùristic (tourist bus) routes are also adapted with ramps making sightseeing a much easier task. As the metro continues to be slowly developed there are more lifts, accessible trains, visual station indicators and also audible announcements for every stop. The trams that mainly cover the outskirts of the city towards the football stadium, Camp Nou, and the area near Forum are also have facilities for people with different types of disabilities as do the airport shuttles that frequently leave for the city centre.

*With so much thought put into the city planning, Barcelona is almost the European utopia for people with disabilities.*

*– Craig Grimes<sup>6</sup>*

## **Professional views of visitor accessibility in Barcelona**

John Sage – an American travel agent and wheelchair user specialising in European destinations gives Barcelona cruise port a *5 Star Sage Accessibility Rating* (his highest cruise port accessibility rating). This is because disabled cruise passengers do not need to make any advanced reservations to use fully accessible routes into the city centre. Additionally, visiting the sights of Barcelona involves very few cobblestones and hills and public transport is wheelchair accessible.

John Sage lists numerous cruise excursion options in Barcelona, including “...beaches close to the city centre; the medieval city centre is more wheelchair friendly (with few cobblestones) than almost any other medieval city; great views are available from Mont Serrat and Mont Juic, accessible by teleferique ; and the Sagrada Familia is one of the most impressive and unique churches in the world. A morning accessible van driving tour combined with an afternoon accessible walking tour makes for a great day in Barcelona”. John Sage, wheelchair user has given Barcelona cruise port a 5 Star Sage Accessibility Rating (his highest cruise port accessibility rating). This is because disabled cruise passengers do not need to make any advanced reservations to use fully accessible routes into the city centre. Additionally, visiting the sights of Barcelona involves very few cobblestones and hills.

## **Getting from the Cruise Dock to Barcelona City Center**

Accessible travel options from the port into Barcelona city centre will depend on which

---

<sup>6</sup> See: [www.accessiblebarcelona.com](http://www.accessiblebarcelona.com) a website with information for disabled travellers to Barcelona, managed by Craig Grimes, travel expert and wheelchair user.

pier your cruise ship is docked at. Fortunately, there are step-free options from all piers. Barcelona cruise port disabled access is quite good with step-free access including ramps and elevators to get onto the cruise ships. Disabled cruise passengers will have few challenges, especially compared with the other ports they might visit on their cruise like Monaco, Livorno and Naples.

85% of cruise ships dock at the Moll Adossat / Muelle Adosado pier which has a wheelchair accessible shuttle into town. The rest of the ships dock near the World Trade Center. It does not have a port shuttle but is located within walking/rolling distance of the Las Ramblas street.

Most cruise passengers that are in Barcelona for a single day will spend half the day visiting the medieval quarter of Barcelona) and half the day visiting the accessible Sagrada Familia and other Gaudi sights.

A typical guided tour takes in the ancient remains of Roman walls to the still under construction Sagrada Familia. Visitors will see all of the Barcelona highlights using fully-accessible tour buses and walking / wheelchair-rolling in accessible streets and pedestrian areas. A popular morning excursion is to drive, for example, to the Eixample district, on top of the Montjuic hill, and elsewhere. "Barcelona accessible guided tours" are offered by local guides, and will be spent walking/rolling through the winding streets of medieval Barcelona and along the world famous Las Ramblas boulevard.

It is possible to take half-day accessible driving tour visits to the main tourist attractions outside of the Gothic Quarter using a wheelchair accessible van. Officially-licensed tour guides are used to guiding tourists with access requirements and itineraries are designed to allow sufficient time for visitors who walk slowly. Tour routes use wheelchair accessible pavements and pedestrian streets to visit the neighbourhood, and tour guide assistants can push manual wheelchair users if required.

Although finding truly accessible tours can be difficult in many destinations, accessible guided tours are proven to be accessible.

<http://www.sagetraveling.com/accessible-mediterranean-cruise-excursions>

The following example of a tour is taken from the website of [www.sagetraveling.com](http://www.sagetraveling.com), with the author's permission:

### Sage Accessibility



#### **[Accessible Barcelona Private Tour to Montserrat Mountain See the Spanish countryside!](#)**



Previous visitors to Barcelona, as well as anyone who wants to get out of the city will love this 5 hour [accessible Barcelona private tour](#) to Montserrat. You'll get to see the Spanish countryside and the impressive Montserrat monastery located 1236 meters above Barcelona. A visit to an accessible winery for touring and **tasting is also possible on this tour.**

If your ship is at the Moll Adossat cruise dock (which handles 85% of the ships), your ship will be met by a blue bus that has "Cruiser – T3" on the front.

Like all public buses in Barcelona, the port shuttle has a wheelchair ramp. It costs euro per person. Tickets can not be purchased in advance. The T3 bus will drop you off at the Christopher Columbus Monument located at the end of Las Ramblas. This is also the meeting point for a [half-day accessible walking tour](#) of the medieval Barcelona neighborhood.

### **3.2 km (2 miles) route from Moll Adossat cruise dock to Christopher Columbus Monument**

#### **Public space**

The walking portion of this [Barcelona accessible guided tour](#) uses routes that are provento be wheelchair and mobility scooter friendly. The tour routes use sidewalk ramps (like those shown in the photo on the left) and, where possible, avoid Barcelona cobblestones (like those shown on the right).



For example, when you visiting the Barcelona Cathedral located in the Gothic Quarter, you will avoid the steps (shown on the left) and use the wheelchair accessible entrance (shown on the right).



The Plaça del Rei (shown in the photo on the left) is a 14<sup>th</sup> century medieval public square that you will visit on the **Highlights of Barcelona Accessible Guided Tour**. The 600 year old Generalitat Palace (shown in the photo on the right) houses the presidency of Catalunya.



During your visit to Sant Jaume square, wheelchair users will be able to use the smooth path located in between the cobblestones.

Disabled Cruise Club.com provides information to members on access conditions at ports of call. They state that *"...the majority of cruise lines have wheelchair accessible tours at selected ports, many cruise lines also have a tailor-made department so if you want to do something specific which one of the wheelchair tour does not cover then the cruise lines can tailor-make an accessible tour for you."*<sup>7</sup>

**Accessible Travel Spain**<sup>8</sup> offers shore excursions in and around Barcelona for people with disabilities. These include cultural city trips, food and drink, adventures (including ballooning), charming small villages or "Go your own way", with rental scooters for two persons. And "sights off the typical tourist trail".

### 3.0 The integration of the supply chain

Barcelona demonstrates a clear strategy, on the part of the city's tourist office and other public offices, in seeking to create an integrated supply chain serving all tourists, and including those with specific access requirements. This involves the development of organisational structures, information and management systems and strategic partnerships among a range of stakeholders (companies, public entities and others). The city's officials have developed a coherent and cooperative approach with businesses, supporting the development of tourism products by fostering connections and synergies between players, in relation to venues and attractions, city neighbourhoods, transportation and other key infrastructure and related services.

---

<sup>7</sup> See: <http://www.disabledcruiseclub.com/about/faq.html#excursion>

<sup>8</sup> See: <http://www.accessiblespaintravel.com/accessible-shore-excursions-in-barcelona/>



The Turisme de Barcelona Consortium is responsible for promoting the city as a tourist destination. Turisme de Barcelona was founded in 1993 with the involvement of local government and the business world that hold an equal share in the organisation.

Barcelona Turisme has a clear policy on urban tourism and accessibility, which appears on the home page of the tourist board's website:

*"Barcelona is working to achieve accessibility for disabled people with one main objective: to create a cohesive city which will favour quality of life and respect for diversity. Between us all, we build a better Barcelona, in search of freedom, autonomy and facilities so that the most characteristic places and public transport are accessible and the city can be enjoyed by disabled people".*

The design of packages – from a few hours, one day, and more has been a fundamental part of the work of the tourist board. Accessible offers include the following ....

#### BARCELONA BUS TURÍSTIC

Discover the city at your own pace on the Barcelona Bus Turístic's fleet of double-decker vehicles. The service runs on two routes and you can get on and off as many times and for as long as you like with the same ticket. One or two-day tickets are available and are issued with a discount voucher booklet offering reductions at the city's main sights. A courier travels on board the bus to assist with any questions you may have, as well as an audio headphone available in ten languages.

#### CATALUNYA BUS TURÍSTIC

The Catalunya Bus Turístic offers you the main touristic attractions in Catalonia. This service offers different itineraries with the same concept than the Barcelona Bus Turístic which means discounts and free entrance in the main cultural spaces, stores and restaurants in the cities visited.

#### BARCELONA CARD

Card featuring free travel on public transport, discounts and free offers at museums, leisure facilities, night-clubs, shops, restaurants and on entertainments, other services and means of transport. Valid for two three, four or five days.

#### BARCELONA WALKING TOURS

Gothic Quarter: A guided tour of the Gothic Quarter, Barcelona's historic and political centre, led by a professional guide. The tours depart from the Turisme de Barcelona information office in Plaça Sant Jaume and take in the streets and squares of the Gothic Quarter.

#### PICASSO

A guided tour of the bohemian Barcelona where Picasso lived at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. A walking tour which retraces the stories, anecdotes and events that influenced the artist's life and career. The tour ends at the Picasso Museum which showcases the most important collection of works from Picasso's youth and formative years.

#### ONLINE TOURISM PRODUCTS

Turisme de Barcelona is now selling its products and services on line through its website. This new initiative is designed to help visitors make the most of their visit to the Catalan capital and offers them the possibility of putting together their own tailor-made travel package, combining their stay with the purchase of products and room reservations.

The website [www.barcelonaturisme.cat](http://www.barcelonaturisme.cat) features comprehensive information about this new service. The Barcelona Bus Turístic, Barcelona Walks, and the Barcelona Card are the first products which can be purchased online.

The website also features a comprehensive list of the city's hotels. The web is the best tool in order to plan a visit to Barcelona at long distance. It also includes a new section which will enable visitors to make hotel reservations in Barcelona. It offers a daily service offering complementary information which will provide anyone interested in making a booking with all the necessary details to plan their stay: locating the hotel; airport connections, port, motorways and railway stations; proximity to health services, restaurants, cultural facilities... The page also informs users of the site that they can complete their hotel booking by telephone, fax, e-mail and even via a chat room hosted by professional couriers.

#### TOURIST INFORMATION

Turisme de Barcelona has twenty tourist offices staffed by information officers who will help visitors with any questions they have about the city and its sights. Together they handle 14 million enquiries a year. The offices also sell publications by Turisme de Barcelona and other products, such as tickets for the Bus Turístic, the Barcelona Card, Barcelona Walks, public transport passes, and gifts in the BCN Original shop.

## 4.0 Provisions for cross-impairments

Barcelona is well equipped to serve visitors with a variety of access needs, including different disabilities, seniors, families with small children and others.

From information provision, to public transport systems and infrastructure, the city has made great efforts to provide the necessary supports and equipment, designed to enable independent travel and access for people with mobility problems.

*Barcelona Special Traveler* is a Barcelona-based inbound travel agent, one of several companies specialising in accessible tourism. In particular the company aims to "...seek out, design and offer a series of one-off and completely satisfying experiences to visitors with disabilities of all types (sensorial, physical,

*due to organ malfunction, etc.) and to people with reduced mobility problems (the elderly, people recovering from injury, convalescents, etc.)."*

Quoted from the Website: <http://www.barcelonaspecialtraveler.com/en/>

Given the wide range of measures to ensure 'access for all' in the infrastructure of Barcelona, visitors with access needs are generally well catered for in terms of mobility and transport, whatever their disability. Museums, public buildings and attractions have made specific adjustments to allow people with sensory, motor and cognitive disabilities to enjoy their visit and learn about the buildings, places and collections on display. The dedicated website of *Barcelona Turisme* (<http://www.barcelona-access.com/>) is an exemplary access guide to tourist attractions, presenting information on all aspects of accessibility for the city's disabled visitors.

## 5.0 Business approach – building a business case for accessibility

### **Integrating Accessibility in the Tourism Market**

In the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century The Catalan Tourist Board developed a model for integrating tourism accessibility on the offers available in its territory, with a plan of its territory.

The project had three main objectives:<sup>9</sup>

1. *"To enable us to identify tourism products and destinations that provide the necessary conditions for promotion among tourists with disabilities, reduced mobility or special needs through a "Tourism for All – Accessible Tourism Guide/Website"*
2. *To raise awareness and sensitivity among businesses*
3. *To design a promotional campaign focusing on accessible tourism"*

The benefits of this work were identified as:

- *Recognising*, through tourism promotion & marketing activities, those companies in the different subsectors of the industry that provide suitable conditions for people with disabilities or reduced mobility;
- *Raising awareness and sensitivity* amongst tourist industry companies and local and provincial officials about the importance of taking accessibility into account when planning and implementing tourist industry policies.

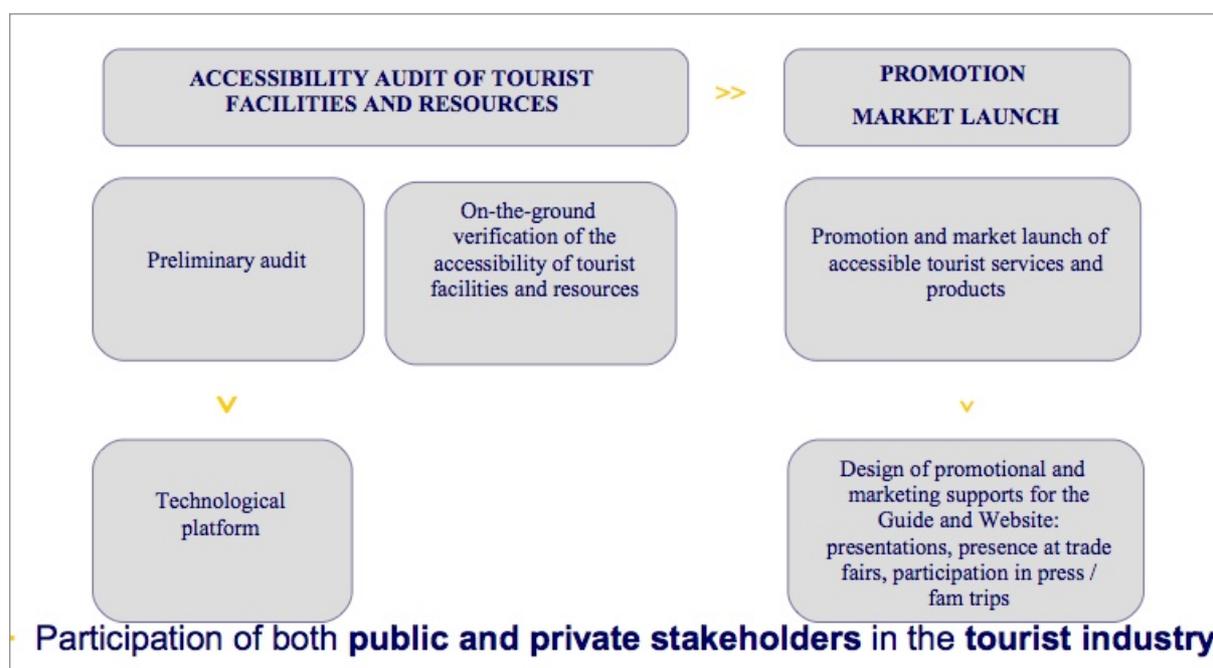
---

<sup>9</sup> Alba Gargallo, (2010). *Catalonia for Accessible Tourism: Tourism for All*. Presentation. Catalan Tourist Board.

- *Determining the standards of accessibility* achieved by the tourist industry overall through an audit of the situation.
- *Providing access to the use and enjoyment of tourist industry services* to a large sector of the population, a multi-client segment that helps to extend the tourist season.

The project structure was designed as shown below.

**Figure 3. Catalan Tourist Board regional accessibility project**



Accessibility audits were conducted to identify those businesses and facilities where there was already a level of provisions for people with disabilities. The "Tourism for All" was the most ambitious tourism accessibility study carried out in Spain in terms of the size of the area covered by the study, the number of tourist facilities audited and the resources and services that were involved. 6,315 tourist facilities, resources and services were audited, including 5,097 accommodation units, 744 cultural heritage sites, 281 natural resources and 193 transport services.

On the basis of these studies, the Catalan Tourist Board identified 19 destinations across the region that would be promoted as accessible destinations. Tourist destinations were selected according to the degree of accessibility of the different elements that make up the tourist experience chain.

**Figure 4. Map showing 19 Catalan accessible destinations (first phase, 2010)**



19 destinations were selected according to the accessibility standards of their tourist facilities, resources and services for people with disabilities or reduced mobility.

In some cases, the selected resources provided only basic services to enable such tourists to enjoy them, but they were nevertheless included due to their cultural or natural interest, etc., in short, as tourist sites of outstanding importance.

- This demonstrates the principle that, even where facilities are not 'perfect' for people with disabilities, the first step is for businesses to begin by declaring what they have, and then proceeding from there to develop and improve their offer.

Hand-in-hand with the promotion of the 19 destinations, a technical platform was developed to place all the relevant accessibility information online. An illustrated, detailed access guide was also produced in Catalan, Spanish, English, German and Italian, with maps, pictograms, photos and descriptions of activities and services.

The guides have been expanded since 2010 to cover 25 destinations and many more accessible facilities and services.

Today the accessible attractions of the City of Barcelona are fully described in the online guide referred to previously: <http://www.barcelona-access.com/>

The Barcelona-Access web service is fully integrated with the other parts of the Barcelona Tourism Office's other sections.

## **Barcelona Special Traveller**

The city of Barcelona Tourism Office website also links to the service website "Barcelona Special Traveller" which coordinates all the accessible services, allowing visitors to make their arrangements (in 6 languages) through one portal: <http://www.barcelonaspecialtraveler.com/en/>

Barcelona Special Traveller is Barcelona's first receptive travel agent to specialise in accessible tourism. This innovative initiative fills a very specific niche in the unbeatable tourist offering that the city of Barcelona provides.

*They write: "Our aim is to seek out, design and offer a series of one-off and completely satisfying experiences to anybody suffering from disabilities of all types (sensorial, physical, due to organ malfunction, etc.) and to people with reduced mobility problems (the elderly, people recovering from injury, convalescents, etc.). A project born out of a passion to offer and provide products and services of the highest quality to those who are habitually overlooked and excluded. A project that sets out to contribute a grain of sand to the building of a better, fairer world based on equal opportunities. A project that embodies creativity and innovation, which we see as the best tools for meeting the challenges of the modern business world. Barcelona Special Traveller is based on a combination of a profound knowledge of the needs and wishes of the disabled tourist and a desire to offer experiences until now unimaginable for many disabled people in Barcelona and Catalonia."*

This portal thus acts as an organising hub for businesses that wish to address the accessible tourism market, making their work simpler and helping them to reach more customers.

## **6.0 Evidence of impact**

### **Overall business impacts**

The city of Barcelona has had great success in terms of its tourism objectives, as the figures for tourist activity clearly show over a fifteen year period from 1995 to 2010.

Tourism numbers have doubled.

The number of overnight stays has increased by 40%.

Cruise passenger numbers have increased 10-fold

Visits to places of interest have tripled.

**Figure 5. Tourist activity in Barcelona 1995 – 2010**

	1995	2000	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
<b>Tourists</b>	3,089,974	3,141,162	6,709,175	7,108,393	6,659,075	6,476,033	7,133,524
<b>Overnights</b>	5,674,580	7,777,580	13,198,982	13,620,347	12,485,198	12,817,170	14,047,395
<b>Average room occupancy</b>	63.6%	84.0%	77.7%	79.7%	76.3%	72.4%	74.8%
<b>Airport passengers traffic</b>	11,727,814	19,808,812	30,008,302	32,898,249	30,272,084	27,311,765	29,209,595
<b>Passengers on cruises</b>	233,389	572,571	1,407,179	1,768,306	2,069,651	2,151,465	2,350,283
<b>Visitors to places of interest</b>	9,590,844	14,830,715	23,085,556	26,127,800	26,479,101	26,390,184	26,748,240
<b>Bus Turístic passengers</b>	131,600	873,611	1,881,125	2,181,599	2,076,785	1,913,419	1,925,226
<b>Hotels</b>	160	187	285	295	310	321	328
<b>Rooms</b>	15,076	16,561	26,968	27,806	29,143	30,933	31,776
<b>Beds</b>	27,988	31,338	52,484	54,036	56,695	60,331	61,942

In addition, Barcelona has re-defined its image as a world city, becoming one of the most visited and well-known destinations in Europe.

Juan Carlos Belloso, in a presentation to the Committee of the Regions in 2011, has described Barcelona as a "Branding Success Story".<sup>10</sup>

Evidence of this status includes being one of the world's most admired cities with one of the best images at an international level:

- Saffron European City Brand Barometer 2010 - One of the cities with the greatest awareness, image and reputation on a worldwide scale.
- The third ranked European city brand together with Munich, behind only Paris and London and in front of many European cities and capitals such as Berlin, Amsterdam, Rome, Vienna or Madrid.

<sup>10</sup> Belloso, J.C. (2011) *Barcelona – The City Branding of Barcelona – A Success Story?* Presentation to the Committee of the Regions, 19<sup>th</sup> October 2011.

- Sixth position in terms of brand image, behind Paris, Sydney, London, Rome and New York, and ahead of cities like San Francisco, Los Angeles, Vienna and Madrid.
- One of the most popular tourist cities on a global level, with more than 7 million tourists per year, and the best European city in terms of quality of life.

Belloso identifies the history of city development from 1987 to the 1992 Summer Olympic Games as a key period in the transition to becoming a global brand.

The key success factors he cites are:

- The city branding of Barcelona grounded in a profound transformation of the city.
- The vision and leadership of the municipal leaders.
- The involvement and participation of civil society.
- The key role of the 1992 Olympic Games.
- The unique and differentiated identity of the city.
- Creativity, innovation and boldness as a common denominator.

### **New challenges**

From the evidence of its surging performance as a tourism hub for the Mediterranean cruise industry, Barcelona has achieved what most port cities would envy. However, in recent years there have been some dissenting voices from parts of the citizenry of Barcelona, criticising the high numbers of tourists which, some say, are turning the city into an attraction, at the expense of the residents. The argument is that the city has, basically, reached the limit of what the local people can bear as more and more visitors throng the streets of central areas, public spaces and parks. The focus on tourists, they say, is draining the city of the very things they come to see – its authentic face as the capital of the Catalan Region – causing detriment to the lives of its citizens and a “tourism monoculture” with is driving down the quality of tourism.

This point of view is encapsulated in a recent film by Eduardo Chibás, *Bye Bye Barcelona*<sup>11</sup> which puts Barcelona in the spotlight, portraying the city as a tourist destination drowning in its own success. While the film’s message can be contested, at the very least, it serves as a familiar warning that other destinations may heed, concerning the impact which large-scale tourism can have on any destination.

## **7.0 Conclusions**

Barcelona’s rise to become Europe’s first cruise port has been the result of a vision and determined effort to make tourism its major industry. The cruise industry’s growth in Europe could be attributed on no small measure to Barcelona’s success.

---

<sup>11</sup> Eduardo Chibás. *Bye Bye Barcelona* (2014) <http://www.byebyebarcelona.com/>

What makes these developments stand out, in terms of the accessible tourism market, is that *accessibility* has been an integral part of the planning and design of the city and its tourism offers, ensuring that the city is capable of delivering good experiences to the many visitors and cruise ship passengers with access needs. The port-side facilities and services offered by the cruise lines, the Port authority and the businesses, in combination, have been shown to give a seamless experience which is hardly rivalled by other cruise ports.

The design of tourism attractions and products sees the accessible tourism market as one of the main client groups. Accessibility assessments of facilities and services are made for the 4 main disability groups: mobility, hearing visual and cognitive impairments, forming an integrated part of the service design.

Destination management services take an active role in organising the delivery of accessible services to customers, with access needs taken into through a dedicated Special Visitor office.

Barcelona offers a “model” approach to the design of an accessible city destination and continues to develop its competences and products through innovative approaches, in collaboration with business partners.

## 8.0 Recommendations

The City of Barcelona has shown how a cruise port can deliver accessible services to a rapidly growing cruise industry and its passengers, thanks to its preparedness through accessible city planning over a 25-year period. The following points are a short checklist of reminders and guidelines which other port cities may consider in their planning:

- The City of Barcelona and Catalan Region made political commitments to people with disabilities and involved them directly in the planning and implementation of the entire gamut of city infrastructure and service planning;
- Accessibility was addressed as a destination-level responsibility, involving the communities in the region in planning their tourism offers in an accessible way and promoting them as *accessible destinations* through special guides, publications and websites. As such, **the accessible tourism market is addressed both as an integral part of the “mainstream” market and as a specialised segment with specific service offers, thus allowing all people - with greater or lesser access needs - to receive the services they require;**
- The city continues to work closely with businesses of all sizes and kinds to integrate accessibility and inclusion in their offers: accessibility is *business as usual*.
- Accessibility is now firmly recognised as an important parameter of all *sustainable tourism* developments.

## Annex I: Criteria and justification for best practices

**Table x: Criteria and justification for best practice**

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Justification</b>	<b>On track/off track</b>
<b>Relevance</b>	Barcelona has developed its urban infrastructure on the basis of a strong accessibility policy, rooted in the disability rights movement, with government actions since the 1980s. The city's status today is draws on the legacy of these policies and builds new opportunities for its businesses based on its image as a tourist destination for all.	
<b>Transferability</b>	The city has made determined efforts to create a world class cruise port destination. Other ports around Europe can look to the example of Barcelona to inspire their own investment strategies, not forgetting that the demographic of cruise passengers matches to a high degree with the accessible tourism market. The development of shore-side excursions and ports as destinations in their own may look to the example of Barcelona to inspire their own strategies and actions.	
<b>Efficiency &amp; Effectiveness</b>	The top-down planning approach has proved to be successful in delivering accessibility in all parts of the supply chain and in all sectors of the tourism industry. Cruise lines have contributed actively to making accessible shore excursions part of the visitor experience in Barcelona.	
<b>Sustainability</b>	The trajectory of cruise business in Barcelona has shown a steep rise in the past 10 years ad continues to grow as ships become larger and more people from wider market segments seek cruise holidays. There are some signs of possible visitor overload in Barcelona's central attractions but this has not had a marked effect on the city's reputation or its offers.	

**Innovation**

The Catalan Tourist Board and the Barcelona Tourism Office have provided exceptional services for visitors with access requirements, allowing cruise tourists to enjoy a wide range of visits in the city and the region during the short time they spend at the destination.

