

ENAT International Congress on Tourism for all

November 21-23, 2007; Marina d'Or, Spain



Summary Report from Round Table Sessions

Rapporteur: Lilian Müller, Tourism for All, Sweden.

Round Table 1 – Tourism for all as an enhancement of the Business Model

This Round table was held on the first day of the Congress, 21st of November. It was co-ordinated by Mr Luis Cayo Pérez Bueno (General Secretary of CERMI, Spain) and rapporteur was Ms. Mieke Broeders, Director of Toegankelijkheidsbureau in Belgium.

The Speakers:

- Mr Jon Cortina, CEO, Viajes 2000 (Spain)
- Mr Rafael Fernández Villasante, Air and Port Services Chief AENA (Spain)
- Mr Magnus Berglund, Disability Co-ordinator, Scandic Hotels (Sweden)
- Mr Luis Javier Domínguez, Commercial Tourism Director, Marina d'Or (Spain)
- Ms Ana Dolores Martínez Medín, Responsible for Tourism activities and Thermal Baths for Disabled people at IMSERSO (Spain)

Conclusions:

All speakers stressed that tourism for all has a clear business case. Not only is the number of disabled travellers growing because of the ageing of the population. 70 % of the disabled people are able to travel, but because of the lack of accessibility and adapted services, they don't. Disabled tourists are customers like all other customers, this means that they expect a certain quality of service. Nowadays there is a mismatch between the demand and the offers: the infrastructure, the destinations, the services are not meeting the needs a disabled client has.

Different stakeholders such as the tourism industry, the transport companies, the public authorities have to make more efforts to improve the quality of the tourism destinations. Action plans, manuals with clear procedures, integration in the quality management, staff training, and listening to the clients is the way to go forward.

The new EU regulation in the air transport sector is a major step to assure that every client is served on an equal basis, and the fact that airports will be responsible for fulfilling their role in the transport chain is vitally important.

Round table 2 – Standardisation, Regulation and the Development of Accessible Tourism

The Round table session was held on Thursday 22nd November. It was co-ordinated by Mr Henryk Handszuh, Director of Market Department in World Tourism Organization (Spain). Rapporteur was Mr Chris Veitch, ENAT; Project Manager at Visit Britain.

The Speakers:

- Ms Emmanuelle Tulliez, Delegate Secretary of the Tourism and Disability Association FFTST (France)
- Ms Pilar Soret, Programme Director, Via Libre (Spain)
- Ms Mónica Sanzo, Secretary Dirección de Normalización, (Spain)
- Mr Ercan Tural, TÜRSAB, Turkey
- Ms Aina Olsen, Advisor at the Directorate for Health and Social Affairs (Norway)

The objective of this Round Table was to review the status of regulatory and voluntary frameworks and standards setting intervening in the supply of tourism services to people with disabilities.

In his introduction, Mr. Handszuh emphasised that, at world level, the situation has improved thanks to the adoption by the General Assembly of the United Nations, at its sixty-first session in December 2006, of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Its article 30 covers a whole range of issues of utmost interest and importance to tourism from the perspective of participation in cultural life, recreation and sport. ⁱ (See End Note of this document for details).

A number of Key Areas which create a framework for promoting and developing accessible tourism were identified.

Legislative Rights for people with disabilities

Legislation at different levels, both Internationally and throughout Europe affecting the rights of disabled people were mentioned. Examples of these were:

- Legislation and the Treaties at an International and Pan European Level
- At national level the Disability Discrimination Act in the UK was highlighted as it affects the whole country.

- Spain was quoted as an example of a country with legislation being different at regional levels.

This highlighted the fact that while there is umbrella legislation and treaties at a European level, there is a variation in approach from country to country and as in the example of Spain from region to region. Common to all however is the fact that such legislation does affect the tourist industry.

Standards and guidance

Standards and guidance can help to support the legislation, and examples were given from Spain where these exist through the Tourism Product Chain addressing:

- Information (e. g. how to make websites accessible for all)
- Transport (e. g. access to vehicles)
- Buildings (e.g. Hotels – lift dimensions, town planning – to enjoy the environment)
- Labelling Systems (To help people with disabilities to understand businesses which can meet their needs. They also aim to motivate businesses to provide for and value the business of disabled people and their families). Examples of labelling systems were given from France and Norway. This highlighted the differences in approaches – both systems cover mobility, hearing and visual impairment, however the French system also includes people with cognitive /learning difficulties while the Norwegian System covers people with allergies.

Staff Training

Staff training was identified as being important to help create greater awareness of the needs of disabled people by better understanding their needs and how to welcome them.

Promoting Accessible Tourism

The promotion of Accessible Tourism and improving the visitor experience for disabled people was highlighted.

Examples were given of the use of Destination Guides (Accessible Istanbul) and how replicas in a Norwegian Church are used as tactile exhibits.

The need to understand the market is important.

The tourism industry needs to recognize the growing older population and see the market of people with disabilities as being profitable.

Working together

The benefits of networks and associations like BITS (Bureau International du Tourisme Social) was highlighted as this provides opportunities to share best practices, knowledge, ideas, etc.

Conclusion:

Accessible Tourism is probably in a better position than 15 years ago with new laws, giving rights to disabled people, resulting in standards and labelling systems to support the industry and the needs of disabled people. However, these are not consistent across Europe and there are differences in approach.

Round table 3 –Inclusion in Touristic Training and Employment

This Round Table Session was held on Thursday 22nd November. It was co-ordinated by Mr José Luis Martínez Donoso, CEO Fundosa Grupo (Spain). Rapporteur was Ms. Lilian Müller, Project Manager, Tourism for all in Sweden.

The Speakers:

- Ms María Fabiola Farina Thompson, School of Psychology, Universidad John F Kennedy (Argentina)
- Ms Anna Grazia Laura, Tandem Cooperativa Sociale Integrata (Italy)
- Ms Josefa Torres Martínez, Director Training and Employment, Fundación ONCE (Spain)
- Mr Richard Wynne, Director, Work Research Institute (Ireland)
- Ms M José Pujol, General Director, InOut Hostel (Spain)

Everyone has some kind of functional impairment at some period in life (getting older, pregnancy etc) There is a wide target group for accessible tourism. Training of staff is of great importance all along the tourism service chain. Products for training are

already in place, and are ready to use (e.g. the products of the EU FOR ME project). The existing training materials and modules can be further developed with ICT.

Accessible tourism is also a great opportunity for disabled people to get into the labour market. More people are required for jobs in tourism, especially in booking and selling (Spain). The paradox is, though, that despite an increasing interest in accessible tourism there is no great evidence of increased employment of disabled people!

The tourism industry lacks knowledge when it comes to how to welcome guests with disabilities, and how to solve problems of accessibility – issues that persons with disabilities often can provide expert knowledge on! The employment rate for disabled people seems to be higher in the larger companies, according to the Spanish experience.

It was pointed out that most people who acquire a disability or long-term illness do so during their working life. And employment plays a key role in preventing illness. It is therefore of great importance to improve the quality of work places in terms of safety and accessibility, and to improve the mechanisms for retaining people in work, if they should become disabled or chronically ill. This applies, not least, in the tourism industry. The lack of knowledge, suitable jobs and inflexible approaches in recruitment and job retention must be met by measures to overcome this situation. There is an EU code of good practice for employment of disabled people, and International Labour Organisation guidelines to improve employers' practices. To employ persons with different type of disabilities is to a certain extent a question of organisation and flexibility.

ⁱ END NOTE:

UN Convention, Article 30

Participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport

1. States Parties recognize the right of persons with disabilities to take part on an equal basis with others in cultural life, and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure that persons with disabilities:

- (a) Enjoy access to cultural materials in accessible formats;
- (b) Enjoy access to television programmes, films, theatre and other cultural activities, in accessible formats;
- (c) Enjoy access to places for cultural performances or services, such as theatres, museums, cinemas, libraries and **tourism services**, and, as far as possible, enjoy access to monuments and sites of national cultural importance.

2. States Parties shall take appropriate measures to enable persons with disabilities to have the opportunity to develop and

utilize their creative, artistic and intellectual potential, not only for their own benefit, but also for the enrichment of society.

3. States Parties shall take all appropriate steps, in accordance with international law, to ensure that laws protecting intellectual property rights do not constitute an unreasonable or discriminatory barrier to access by persons with disabilities to cultural materials.

4. Persons with disabilities shall be entitled, on an equal basis with others, to recognition and support of their specific cultural and linguistic identity, including sign languages and deaf culture.

5. With a view to enabling persons with disabilities to participate on an equal basis with others in recreational, leisure and sporting activities, States Parties shall take appropriate measures:

(a) To encourage and promote the participation, to the fullest extent possible, of persons with disabilities in mainstream sporting activities at all levels;

(b) To ensure that persons with disabilities have an opportunity to organize, develop and participate in disability-specific sporting and recreational activities and, to this end, encourage the provision, on an equal basis with others, of appropriate instruction, training and resources;

(c) To ensure that persons with disabilities have access to sporting, recreational and **tourism venues**;

(d) To ensure that children with disabilities have equal access with other children to participation in play, recreation and leisure and sporting activities, including those activities in the school system;

(e) To ensure that persons with disabilities have access to services from those involved in the organization of recreational, **tourism**, leisure and sporting activities.