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## **PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION**

President of Turismo de Portugal, João Figueiredo Cotrim and Anna Grazia Laura, President of ENAT - The European Network for Accessible Tourism, have signed a Framework Agreement to help develop accessible tourism in Portugal as part of the Tourist Board's plans for improving tourism accessibility during the coming years.

Turismo de Portugal has already embarked on an *Accessible Tourism Action Plan* that will support regions and businesses in making their offers suitable for seniors and people with disabilities. The aim is to create high quality, inclusive tourist destinations, with facilities, information and activities that meet the needs of all visitors.

Under the new agreement, ENAT, a non-profit association based in Belgium, will bring its expertise to the Portuguese work programme, cooperating with planners and destinations to qualify and refine the strategic programme.

The President of Turismo de Portugal, João Figueiredo Cotrim, stated: "Working with tourist agents in increasing the accessible tourist offer and being able to validate Portugal as a destination that is accessible to all is an opportunity to reinforce the attributes that differentiate and add value to Portugal as a tourist destination, boosting tourism flows and business to companies."

"In the coming years European countries and regions can expect a steady increase in the demand for accessible tourism services, as the average age of the travelling population increases", said Anna Grazia Laura, ENAT. She added, "This brings new challenges which need a coordinated response in the way destinations market themselves and cater for visitors who may have additional requirements regarding their comfort, safety and health, when travelling".

ENAT, which supports the [UN World Tourism Organisation's Ethics and Social Responsibility programme](#), is participating in strategic planning with the Portuguese Tourist Board, holding Technical Meetings with destinations and businesses. The first meetings took place on 13-14 November in Lisbon and Vilamoura, Algarve, involving public officials, owners of enterprises and students of tourism from the Lisbon and Algarve schools of Hospitality and Tourism.

The Portuguese Tourist Board presents its **Accessible Tourism Action Plan** on 19th November in San Marino, where the UNWTO is holding its first [European Conference on Accessible Tourism](#) for high-level delegates from the tourism sector.

At the UNWTO event, Anna Grazia Laura will present ENAT's research on skills development for accessible tourism services, featuring the online introductory training course: [www.accesstraining.eu](http://www.accesstraining.eu)

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