



“ACCESSIBLE TOURIST PRODUCT”

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Accessibility of the tourist supply chain – general overview –

Travelling and holidays are, nowadays, regarded as most important goods. Holiday making is, in fact, regarded as a necessary break while travelling an opportunity for growth and personal development. They both allow individuals to open up and come into contact with new people, realities and cultures, in an increasingly globalised context.

It is for those reasons that the right to travel is to be fully considered as one of the fundamental rights of every individual. It should, therefore, become a priority in the agenda aimed at guaranteeing equal rights and dignity for each citizen. Accessibility is, therefore, not just a goal to be reached with appropriate architectural solutions, but, first and foremost, it is a social and civic goal for true democracy.

Tourism operators have been increasingly diversifying their offer for tourism and leisure time, over the last years, trying to respond to the various needs, including those coming from people with special needs. Therefore, to the requirement to make accommodation facilities more accessible, the industry must add complete tourist services and packages able to turn a stay into an authentic holiday.

Each person, when organising a trip, goes through a simple series of steps: choosing the destination, gathering, whether independently or with the help of a tourist operator, information on transport and accommodation, and last, but not the least, identifying cultural, nature and leisure attractions available at the chosen destination.

The choice of a destination and the booking of specific services must correspond to what one can afford in order to fulfil the expectations associated with the holiday experience.

This should be true for people with special needs too. However, it is not so to this day.

There is a form of exclusion in the current tourist system, even if not at all intentional. The result is that people with special needs are, somehow, cast out. A tourist with disabilities is forced to choose on the basis of whether or not a destination is able to minimally guarantee the conditions necessary for them to autonomously use and enjoy the services and every moment of their holiday in total safety, rather than be able to choose a destination because they wish to do so.

A client with disabilities, like any other client, is looking for a product that is able to satisfy their expectations and needs, that is affordable according to their purchasing power, and that, above all, is able to satisfy their wish to be able to autonomously and safely enjoy it. Therefore, whoever is putting together a tourist package targeted at clients with special needs will have to take into account all the elements that make up the tourist offer, and work to make sure that they are as usable and enjoyable as possible.

The tourist operators that will be better able to win over this target of customers in the near future, will be those able to offer better quality from the view points of accessibility and other services.

Accessibility is linked to problems related to whether it is possible to gain physical access to the accommodation facilities, and also to whether it is easy to use and enjoy the tourist resources present on the territory where the facilities are located.

All in all, the problems faced by a person with special needs are due to:

- lack of an **organic and comprehensive approach** to the issue of accessibility from the legislative view point, also at international level;
- lack of a logic to integrate and link the individual components of a territory into a **system** with the aim of guaranteeing accessibility (unreliable and out-of-date information lacking specific details and an integrated view of the various components; infrastructures, structures, resources and places that, even if belonging to the same supply chain, are not connected according to an organic approach where accessibility is included as a key requisite..);
- **low level of knowledge** and awareness among **technical planners** of the issues related to accessibility and of the norms, dimensional and performance related, regulating the matter. Such professionals are responsible for planning and monitoring the creation of spaces and the building of places, public or private, where everyone, whether individually or in a group, lives, acts and works (inability to use spaces, services and offices whether public or open to the public, means of transportation; unavailability of equipment for the guarantee of safety to people with special needs in case of emergency);
- **discrimination and lack of respect for equal opportunities, dignity** and the safeguard of human and civil rights, due to a pervasive lack of awareness and culture on the topics related to disability (public officers and personnel at facilities open to the public are often neither trained to interact with people with special needs nor able to provide specific information; lack of adequate communication systems and of specific aid equipment).

The obstacles to the usability and enjoyment of facilities of interest to tourists are, therefore, many. Any tourism related product that is offered in the market should, as we can easily understand, satisfy a whole series of criteria to be fully accessible. Let us see some of them:

- **physical accessibility,**
 - **information accessibility,**
 - **economic accessibility,**
 - **psycho-social accessibility.**
- Physical accessibility of structures and equipment

The physical accessibility of structures, even if it does not satisfy the full spectrum of accessibility requirements of a tourist product, is, without a doubt, an indispensable starting

point. The possibility to gain access to and use facilities is the fundamental pre-requisite to allow a potential tourist with disabilities to even consider the tourist offer.

Article 2 of the Ministerial Law Decree n. 236 of 14 June 1989, provides some useful definitions. In point G, accessibility is defined as:

“the possibility, also for a person with reduced or impaired motor or sensorial capabilities, to reach the building and each and everyone of its facilities and environmental components, to easily gain access to them and use spaces and equipment in conditions of adequate safety and autonomy.”

By physical accessibility of a structure we, therefore, mean that anyone should be able to

- reach,
- gain access to,
- use the venue.

In point A of the same decree we read that architectural barriers that prevent physical accessibility to a structure are:

“the physical obstacles that make it difficult for anyone to easily move around, especially for those who, for any reason, have their motor capability reduced or, permanently or temporarily, impaired; the obstacles that limit or prevent anyone to comfortably and safely use parts, equipment and components; the lack of solutions and signals that allow anyone to orientate themselves and to recognise places and potential sources of danger, especially people who are blind, deaf or with reduced hearing.”

By **architectural barrier** we, therefore, mean any obstacle represented by:

- circumstances that present obstacles or physical impediments

for instance: narrow pedestrian paths, objects and terminals places very high out of reach, steps present at access points;

- circumstances that present sensory related barriers

for instance: lack of reference points, objects imperceptibility, wrong room lighting;

- circumstances that can cause discomfort

for instance: difficulty to grab objects, inadequate or wrongly sloped ramps, unsheltered paths;

- circumstances that can be potential sources of danger

for instance: slippery floors, doors or windows not adequately signalled, presence of stumbling blocks;

- circumstances that can cause fatigue

for instance: very long or very steep ramps, steep staircases, inadequate handrails, soft flooring, the presence of mats, carpets, etc.

All the circumstances listed above refer to **safety** conditions that must always be guaranteed.

- Information accessibility

Beside architectural barriers there exist other types of obstacles that can impede the use and enjoyment of tourist products. They too can be very discriminating. Many disabled clients that would like to travel lament the difficulty they face when trying to retrieve information and its little reliability. The meaning and the symbol itself of “accessibility”, for instance, are very often misunderstood by tourist operators who take them to mean a general willingness to welcome people with disabilities.

The main objectives of an information system must be:

- to guarantee the availability of detailed information;
- to ensure reliability and truth;
- to make sure clients' requests are clearly understood and responded to.

For a tourist product to be truly usable and enjoyable by everyone it will have to be very visible and clearly pointed out. Everyone should be able to independently gather information and information should have certain characteristics for clients with special needs (easily readable, available in audio format and printed in Braille). Web sites too should be adapted to the various types of disability.

It is, in fact, necessary, that information is distributed in such a way to make communication effective.

The information system should allow all potential clients to:

- plan a holiday;
- understand how to use spaces and equipment present at the tourism facilities;
- orient themselves and safely use venues and equipment.

In order to facilitate clients to orient themselves, an accessible tourist facility should especially guarantee:

- signage printed in different ways,
- signage adequately placed,
- pathways and routes easy to understand and follow,
- equipment, models and raised-print maps, etc.

It is, therefore, necessary to verify and validate the mechanisms for information gathering and distribution and to establish criteria that make the language used as much as universally understood and unequivocal as possible.

- Economic accessibility

It is fitting to briefly touch on the topic of economic accessibility to rectify some misconception about tourism for all. Tourism for all does not equate to social or subsidised tourism. The purchasing power of clients with special needs is not necessarily different from that of any other client. We must, however, consider the fact that people with disabilities have to very often incur additional costs due to:

- problems linked to accessibility; especially for transportation and accommodation at hotels (very often, in fact, truly accessible hotels are higher category hotels);

- problems linked to the need for assistance; people with disabilities that want to go on holiday without members of their family must also pay for the cost of someone to assist them. That means that a holiday can cost twice or three times as much compared to a regular holiday.

A tourist operator planning an offer for people with special needs should take all the above elements into account.

- Psycho-social accessibility

Tourist operators' negative attitude, their prejudices and unwillingness to listen to their needs are huge barriers for people with disabilities who wish to go on holiday. The need to spread a culture that allows to overcome stereotypes based on compassion and that recognises disabled clients as normal paying clients who deserve a quality and efficient service as anybody else, is absolutely essential.

If accessibility means the possibility for everyone to use a particular venue and to access communication and information regardless of their physical, psychic or sensory condition, then, accessibility is necessary not only for people with various disabilities, whether permanent or temporary. It is also necessary for the elderly, pregnant women, families with small children, overweight people or, simply, people carrying bulky baggage or packages.

An accessible tourist product should, therefore, be useable by anyone.

Administrators and operators of tourist facilities should, thus, start thinking about:

- the characteristics (dimensional and qualitative) and modes of use of their structures;
- the specific needs of potential clients and visitors.

In summary, accessibility can be implemented by tourist operators by:

- knowing well the environment they are working in;
- knowing the main needs of potential clients;
- making their facility recognisable and usable;
- communicating and providing information clearly, effectively and with immediacy.

The various types of disability

It is very difficult to know the number of people with disabilities in our country for various reasons. Firstly because the definition of disability is not universal. It often changes, in fact, according to the statistical study and who executes it. We were, however, able to estimate, even if only approximately, how many people with disabilities there are by putting together various information sources. According to a recent research study on “Health conditions and use of health services”, 2003, we see that there are 2 million and 615 thousand people with disabilities in Italy. That is about 5% of the population over 6 years of age living in a family. The estimate is based on a very restrictive definition of disability according to which only those who reported a total lack of autonomy for at least one essential daily life function during the interview are considered people with disabilities. If we consider, instead, people that reported a significant difficulty when performing such functions, the estimate goes up to 13% of the population living in a family and with more than 6 years of age.

Wanting to stick to the more restricted definition, we must, anyway, add to it the number of children below 5 years of age (that are about 42,460) and the number of people with disabilities living in residences. Those who suffer from some form of mental rather than physical disability and are able to perform daily life functions remain, however, outside of the statistics. The research did, anyway, reveal how it is not possible to subject to census all disabilities, especially the mental ones, because people tend to talk with reticence about such conditions. Questions about disability are among the so called “sensitive questions” that people can refuse to answer. We can, therefore, assume that the estimates presented are somehow conservative. The survey was, in fact, conducted through interviewing either people with disabilities directly or some member of their family. We cannot therefore exclude the fact that, according to the type of disability, family members may have not disclosed the presence of members with disabilities in their families.

People with disabilities are a heterogeneous group and we cannot make general statements about disability without careful consideration. Furthermore, people that present the same type of disabilities may have very different needs according to their degree of adaptation to their disability and the corresponding counterbalancing solution that was developed. It is, therefore, necessary to truly listen to each person because each one of them, beyond their disability, express different needs. It is, however, very difficult to put together a tourist product that is able to respond to the needs of all possible types of client. Needs can be very many and that is why the first step towards accessibility is to listen carefully and with an open mind to the client.

To try to understand the universe of specific needs from the different types of clients let us simplify matters by grouping disabilities into generic categories.

Physical disabilities

The most common physical disability is reduce mobility. According to ISTAT (the Italian national statistics institute) there are 1,100,000 people with motor disability in Italy. 60,000 of them are wheelchair users. They suffer from different types of physical disablement. Disablement can come from morphological alterations of the skeleton, limbs, joints, ligaments, body tissues, musculature and nervous system with consequent limitation of one's ability to move. Inability can be temporary or permanent depending on its root causes and its degree of severity. Many people manage to adapt to it in almost astonishing way. They even practice sports or develop new capabilities.

Technical aids are usually employed to compensate or reduce the degree of motor disability. They can be walkers and deambulation aids, vertical standing aids, especially sticks and crutches, and wheelchairs whenever general mobility is severely compromised. There are various types of wheelchairs designed to try to respond to specific user needs. The three main types of wheelchairs are: self-propelled manual wheelchairs (when the user is able to guide and self-propel the chair), attendant-propelled manual wheelchairs (when the user is not able to guide and self-propel the chair), electrical wheelchairs.

To propel and manoeuvre a wheelchair over long distances require a lot of physical effort. It is, therefore, essential that wheelchair users can benefit from accessibility features present at the entrance and within buildings and around the urban areas. There is a difference between paraplegic people (people whose lower limbs are paralysed) and tetraplegic people (people who cannot use neither their legs nor their arms). The former could be fully efficient as far their upper section of the body is concerned, while the latter often depend on help from other people for many daily activities such as eating, getting dressed, propelling the wheelchair to move around, writing, etc.. Even in the case of problems with the upper limbs, different is the predicament of those who still have an arm and who are able to autonomously perform some daily activities and even drive a car, compared to those who have no arms. Who has, instead, disabled hands needs to be helped with any action requiring grip.

This type of people have, in general, the following needs, also when it comes to tourist facilities:

- to have clear, detailed, up-to-date and easily retrievable information
- to be able to autonomously move around the facility and use equipment
- not to overexert to move around the facility and to use equipment
- to have adequate devices that guarantee safety.

Sensory disabilities

Generally speaking, people with sensory disabilities need help especially with their mobility, getting oriented and communication.

- Visual limitations

There are about 350,000 people with visual limitations in Italy. Visual limitations can happen at any age and can be congenital or acquired. The severity of the visual impairment is usually qualified in terms of reduction of one's visual acuity. A series of eye diseases can also reduce one's useful visual field causing telescopic or "tunnel" vision. Only a small percentage of people with visual limitations are actually totally blind.

People with severe visual limitations learn the Braille alphabet, even if such a communication system is well known to only 10-15% of blind people. People with reduced vision can often benefit from programmes aimed at making efficient use of the residual visual capability and at improving their getting orientation and mobility. Lastly, there is a difference between who became disabled as a consequence of an accident or illness and who is disabled from birth. The latter does not know shapes and colours and must use all the other senses to get familiar with and get oriented in the surrounding environment. A person with visual limitations is very often able to develop a superior tactile sensibility and enhanced hearing. In the majority of cases such people are highly skilled at recognising a person by their voice. Many blind people live by themselves. They use a white walking stick or a guide dog as aids. Guide dogs should be considered an indispensable aid to the person to all intents and purposes.

People with reduced vision may be able to distinguish between light and shadow or see object outlines, but they need help to get oriented and to spot obstacles along their path, such as a staircase or a ramp.

- Hearing limitations

There are about 800,000 people with hearing loss. Hearing limitations can happen at any age and can be linked to hereditary or inborn factors (deformities or morphological alterations) or can be due alterations at birth or consequences of health conditions. The most severe consequence of an early hearing limitation, developed in one's early years, is the late development of speech and use of language by the individual. In this case deaf people use very concrete expressions instead more abstract ones and may experience difficulty when they face linguistic subtleties and the use of an elaborated and varied syntax. A person who is deaf from birth does not know their voice and can have a peculiar way of speaking such as lack of modulation and an unusual tone. Deafness is a limitation that is not immediately visible like blindness. A careful listening to the person is for tourist personnel, therefore, the correct approach to find the best way to relate to them. One of the main consequences for people

with limited hearing is isolation from the surrounding world. In some cases, people with hearing limitations learn how to lip-read. That allows them understand what is being said through the reading of the speaker's lip movements. Depending on the severity of the limitation, they can use hearing aids or some other form of technical aid, together with luminous signals.

The main needs of people with sensory disabilities are:

- to have clear, detailed, up-to-date and easily retrievable information
- to be able to autonomously move around the facility and use equipment
- to have adequate devices that guarantee them to get oriented
- to have adequate devices that guarantee safety.

Mental or psychic disabilities

It is very difficult to survey mental disabilities compared to physical ones because of reticence and cultural prejudices that prompt the disabled individuals themselves or their family members to not to come into contact with the relevant public services and to not adequately respond to the questions during research studies and surveys. Anyhow, there are an estimated 750,000 mentally disabled people in Italy. Mental disability is a permanent condition that cannot still be cured and it is a consequence of brain damage or malfunction. Generally speaking, a person with mental disability will have a significantly lower degree of ability compared to that of a normal individual of the same age. Mentally disabled children do not develop as quickly as the other children and they never reach the full range of mental capabilities. People with mental disabilities can be helped develop their potential and take part in social life. However, for the most severe cases, they will depend to a lesser or greater degree on others for support and assistance for life.

People with psychic disabilities can display a variety of behaviours and symptoms such as anxiety, irrational fears, depression, confusion, over joy, obsessive disorders and many more. It is not easy to identify whether a person has mental problems unless the discomfort they are experiencing is openly manifested.

People with mental or physiological disabilities need:

- to have clear, detailed, up-to-date and easily retrievable information
- not to have to face places and situations that may cause anxiety or alter their perception
- to have adequate devices that guarantee them to get oriented
- to have adequate devices that guarantee safety.

Other types of disabilities

As far as the tourism industry is concerned, it is important to have knowledge of a whole series of other disability conditions that require special attention when putting together a product offer that should be adequately responding to a potential tourist's needs. For instance, people with allergies, also food related, or with food intolerance; individuals who have problems getting oriented or communicating; people with diabetes or kidney deficiencies or suffering from epilepsy.

- People with allergies

From the agencies and organisations that have been working on accessible tourism over the last years, we know that a large share of tourists express needs related to allergy-related problems. Allergy is a malfunction of the immune system that produces an excessive defence reaction against substances wrongly considered as harmful. There are many forms of allergy. People with allergies need that their bedrooms, venues they use and furnishings be adequately clean and many more solutions that will be looked at in details in the section regarding accommodation.

- People with food allergies and food intolerance

Such individuals express needs related to their diet. Special attention must be paid by the restaurant industry in particular when it comes to deal with this sort of disabilities. We must mention the celiac disease among the various allergies, as it affects a large percentage of people. It is a condition of the digestive system sparked by the ingestion of the gluten protein that can be found in food such as bread, pasta, biscuits, pizza and any other food made with wheat, barley, rye or, at times, oat. When a person with celiac disease eats food containing gluten an immune reaction takes place in their small intestine. The result is a damage of their intestine that is no longer able to absorb certain nutrients from food. There is no cure for the celiac disease, but it can be effectively kept under control with a change of diet. A person with celiac disease can eat gluten free food such as meat, fish, the majority of dairy products, fruit, vegetables, rice, potatoes.

The Italian Celiac Association has put together a map of hotels and restaurants that can satisfy the needs of people with celiac disease. Holiday and travelling is, therefore, according to representatives from the Association, no longer an insurmountable problem for people with celiac disease.

It is also necessary to keep in mind the special needs of the following people:

- people with problems with getting oriented and communication,



- people with kidney problems and needing dialysis,
- people with epilepsy.

Their needs are:

- to have clear, detailed, up-to-date and easily retrievable information on the general hygiene conditions of the venues
- to have clear, detailed, up-to-date and easily retrievable information on food ingredients
- availability of special food
- to be able to customise meal times
- to be able to properly keep their drugs
- to have medical personnel on call
- to have adequate devices that guarantee safety.

To put together a tourist product that is truly accessible one must consider all of the needs above in order to satisfy the largest possible number of clients. The ability to integrate different possible solutions, be them structural, organisation or management related, so as to reach out to as wide a target group as possible, is one of the most difficult goals to achieve. The keys to successfully reach such a goal can be found in the professional training of the operators and in the collaboration with representatives from the target group.



Difficulties related to the surrounding environment – the ICF Classification system -

The set of needs grouped by type of disability reported earlier can be further simplified and extended to everyone through an approach that sums the key difficulties a person can experience into 3 main ones:

- **Mobility related difficulty**
- This kind of difficulty can be referred to all those conditions that impede, reduce, slow down or make unsteady the movement of the lower limbs. Such conditions can be temporary or limited to a specific period in one's life (children, elderly, people who had a plaster put on). They can concern people who need to pull, push or transport something (like pushing a baby pram, pulling luggage along, carrying shopping bags) or people that use aids; disabled people with problems with their lower limbs that reduce or impede their use (paraplegic, tetraplegic, spastic); people with reduced vision, blind people, with limited hearing or deaf; cardiopaths or people with asthma; individuals affected by dwarfism. Such a mobility related difficulty can, depending on the condition, be eased with the use of aids such as wheelchairs, walking sticks, tripod crutches, etc.
- **Dexterity related difficulty**
- That is all those conditions that reduce, slow down or impede the movement of the upper limbs
- **Communication related difficulty**
- Conditions that reduce, slow down or impede communication either way, i.e. listening or speaking.

Such an approach focuses on the context the person is in, the external conditions intended as elements of the surrounding environment that can create difficulty or represent a danger.

It is based on the fundamental elements proposed in 2001 by ICF – International Classification of Functioning and Disability and Health - of the World Health Organisation, that completely shifts the focus from the “illness”, hence the person, to the context, as an individual's functioning and disability occurs in a context, and some of its elements as factors capable of “producing” disability. It is, therefore, the context that plays a key role in the inclusion or exclusion of people, especially if they are disabled, from the various domains of public life. Then context a person is in may, therefore, present features that can represent danger or create difficulties, independently from an individual's physical conditions.

The extreme simplification adopted by ICF does surely open the way to an approach to the difficulties expressed by people with disabilities that includes all the users that when carrying out their activities in a context can experience problems induced by that context.



The following classification system for the various types of disabilities is a necessary simplified system that can allow easily approach the world of special needs. We should also include all those people who, even if they do not have a true disability, have specific context-related needs.



Accessibility of the Tourist System – the norms

The Italian legislation defines in unequivocal terms the need for built structures, both private and public, to be accessible if they are meant for individuals to lead any relevant activity whatsoever in them.

How and when the current law regarding the removal of architectural barriers ought to be applied has been increasingly clarified and articulated over the years also thanks to clarifications reported by laws not directly related to this issue. The law is now applicable not only to new private and public constructions or any construction that is being restructured or refurbished, but also to listed places of particular historical or architectural interest.

The fundamental points of the set of norms regarding accessibility and participation, already present in article 3 of the Italian Constitution that reads: *all citizens have equal dignity and are equal before the law without prejudice, to personal conditions*, are the result of a long legislative effort for the integration and acknowledgment of disabled people's rights.

The current set of norms is quite extensive and no one can afford not to take into proper consideration what is already established by our Constitution.

As far as structures hosting tourism related activities are concerned, the right by people with disabilities to use and enjoy public places or places open to the public, already established by article 27 of the law 118/71 is unequivocally clarified in article 8 (letter c) of the law 104/92, whereby social inclusion and integration of any disabled person guaranteed by article 1 of the same law, should be also achieved through *"works aimed at guaranteeing access to public and private buildings and at removing or overcoming the physical and architectural barriers that hinder movement within public places or places open to the public"*. Furthermore, as stated in article 24, paragraph 1 of the above mentioned law, the technical norms aimed at removing architectural barriers are extended also to *"every building with public or private offices open to the public that may be such to limit their accessibility and visitability."*

The set of norms highlighted thus far integrates with other related norms relative to specific domains and provide a clear and unequivocal set of instructions on how and when they need to be applied. In fact, law 13/89 and its related enacting Ministerial Decree (D.M.) 236/89 apply to private buildings, while the Decree of the President of the Republic 503/96, which reports the same accessibility standards established by D.M. 236/89, applies to public buildings and places.

For instance, at paragraph 2 of article 13, law 503/96 we read that *"a suitable level of accessibility to the indoor spaces must be guaranteed at public buildings as to allow public and service personnel to use the building according to the instructions in article 3 of D.M. 236/89."*

We have, thus far, clarified the fundamental aspect pertaining the removal of architectural barriers that cannot and must not be ignored by whoever intends to work in the tourist sector.

We let the various operators further research on the applicable norms pertaining to their specific activity domain.

Document title See Annex 1	Articles pertaining to the removal of architectural barriers	remarks
<i>Law 30 March 1971, n. 118</i> <i>"Conversion into law of the Law Decree 30 January 1971, n. 5 and new norms in favour of the maimed and invalid."</i>	Art. 27	
<i>Decree of the President of the Republic (D.P.R.) of 27 April 1978, n. 384.</i> <i>"Regulation for the enforcement of article 27 of the law 30 March 1971, n. 118 in favour of the maimed and invalid, on matter of architectural barriers and public transport."</i>		Annulled by article 32 of D.P.R. 503/96
<i>Law 28 February 1986, n. 41</i> <i>"Instructions for the definition of the yearly and multi-year State budget"</i> <i>(Published in the Ordinary Supplement of the official gazette of 28 February 1986, n. 49.)</i>	Articles 20 e 21	
<i>Law of 9 January 1989, n. 13</i> <i>"Instructions to facilitate the overcoming and removal of architectural barriers in private buildings."</i>		The whole law pertains to the issue of architectural barriers
<i>Ministerial Decree – Ministry of Public Works 14 June 1989, n. 236.</i> <i>"Technical regulations necessary to guarantee accessibility, adaptability and visitability of private buildings and subsidised or facilitated residential buildings, for the overcoming and removal of architectural barriers."</i>		The whole decree pertains to the issue of architectural barriers. The decree enforces also the instructions of D.P.R. 503/96.

<p><i>Law of 5 February 1992, n. 104</i> <i>"Framework law on assistance, social integration and the rights of handicapped people." (Published on the Official Gazette of 17 February 1992, n. 39, S.O.)</i></p>	<p>Article 24</p>	
<p><i>Decree of the President of the Republic (D.P.R.) of 24 July 1996, n. 503.</i> <i>"Regulation with norms for the removal of architectural barriers in buildings, places and public services."</i></p>		<p>The whole decree pertains to the issue of architectural barriers.</p>

The tourism legislation

The legislative power in matter of tourism in Italy is actually completely delegated to the Regions. On the basis of the main principles and tools introduced by the Law n. 135/01 and the principles of harmonisation and definition of homogenous minimum standards introduced by the Prime Minister's Decree (D.P.C.M.) of 13/09/02, Regions have the power to regulate the tourism sector through their own norms.

Document title	Articles that explicitly mention people with disabilities and the removal of architectural barriers
<i>Law 29 March 2001, n. 135 "Reform of the national Tourism Legislation"</i>	Article 1
<i>D.P.C.M. 13 September 2002 Acknowledgement of the agreement between State and autonomous provinces on the principles for the harmonisation, development and value creation of the tourism system</i>	Article 1

The considerable number of laws and regulations pertaining to tourism and accessibility bears witness to the law makers' desire to control such a complex matter, while it is also the source of contradiction and, paradoxically, hindrance to their application.

Article 1 of the law 135/01 lists a number of principles, among which we find the promotion of initiatives aimed at removing the obstacles not allowing the use of tourist services by citizens, especially people with reduced motor and sensory capabilities.

Article 1 of the D.P.C.M. states: "...tourist services and activities should guarantee, according to the current norms in matter of removal of architectural barriers, the possibility of being used....".

All these instructions to abide by and guarantee the respect of what is established by the national legislation, have very often not been followed by the regional laws, leaving the implementation and appropriate application of solutions that allow the possibility of experience travel for all to the private initiative of the individual operators whether private or public.

This lack of enforcement can be especially seen in the implementation of some accommodation or restaurant facilities such as the agritourism enterprises.

As far as agritourism enterprises are concerned, some regions adopted specific norms, while others let it entirely to the private initiative of the operator, and the professionals in charge of the implementation of the solutions, to facilitate the use of the facilities by people with special needs.

The complexity of the topic of removal of architectural barriers and above all the difficulty of approaching it can be also seen in the different interpretation of the national norms (Law 13/89, DM 236/89, DPR 503/96) enacted in the various regional and provincial laws. Some of those laws acknowledge the national norms as binding, while others “override” them proposing a different set of dimensional parameters.

It is not difficult to understand that the above situation brings about difficulties for the tourist sector, and in general, such as:

- ❑ lack of synchronisation among the various national and local norms and the regulations enacting them for the various domains (including the health services),
- ❑ diversity among norms in the various Regions and, at times, among Municipalities as well,
- ❑ lack of clarity of information provided and pertaining to accessibility.

Technical-Functional requirements – the four critical parameters of accessibility

There are four parameters that can be used to assess the degree of accessibility of tourist facilities. Such parameters can be regarded as critical and can be generally applied to all types of facilities.

- Horizontal mobility (covering distances) concerns the length and the characteristics of the routes linking the various sections of the facility or functional area, the size and characteristics of doors and access ways, the way furniture is arranged.
- Vertical mobility (overcoming differences of level) that is stairways, sloping ramps and other systems (including mechanic systems) linking different floors.
- Enjoyable-to-use venues. Each venue should be designed and arranged in such a way to be easily enjoyable by people with disabilities, by removing obstacles and differences of level and through a careful arrangement of furniture.
- Adoption of norms and regulatory compliance (architectural barriers, safety, fire safety, etc.).

The technical requirements that venues must satisfy are listed below in order of priority for each type of disability defined. In fact, a specific requirement satisfying the specific need of a person with a specific disability may not necessarily be a priority for another person with a different disability. For instance, people with reduced vision prefer to go from one level to the next using steps, while wheelchair ramps (gently sloped) are an absolute priority for wheelchair users.

The approach adopted below defines the main requirements for the main types of components of the various tourist facilities, grouped by type of disability. We start from the outdoor components to move, then, to the indoor ones (for each type of disability we address the relevant functional spaces).

Accommodation and ancillary facilities

Motor disabilities (people in wheelchairs and with reduced mobility)

The car park

To facilitate, as much as possible, the approach to the facility or open space, it is advisable to provide parking areas, compliant to the law requirements, within the private parking area, or garage, reserved to cars of the disabled clients. Disabled parking slots should, otherwise, be adequately signalled in public car parks.

To prevent cars, that are not displaying the identification mark, to park in the disabled parking slots, solutions to discourage such a behaviour can be adopted. They include the use of small pillars that can be lowered into the ground through an access card issued only to authorised

clients. It is, anyhow, always important to explicitly point out the parking slots reserved to disabled clients, also when located within the private parking area of the facility. The option for assistance to the client, if necessary, can be guaranteed through interphones placed at the entrance of the parking area.

Entrance

Solutions that allow easy access for people in wheelchairs must be present at the entrance. They include removal of architectural barriers, door mats, grids or any other element that can be obstacles that can hinder entrance, even if only temporarily. Attention must also be paid to the sizing of access ways and access areas.

Pathways

It is appropriate to place seats and handrails along pathways for people with reduced motor capabilities. Alternatively, other adequate solutions can be placed along the way as resting spots, so long as they are not source of potential danger. The flooring of the outdoor spaces must be as levelled as possible, with minimum cross slope and no disjointed sections (it is, for instance, preferred to use tiles rather than cobbled paving). As far as indoors are concerned, carpeting and plastic flooring are advised against as they can slow wheel movement because of the excessive friction or they can make walking more difficult.

The route to reach upper floors should be equipped with adequately sized lifts. Lifts are preferred to other solutions such as wheelchair stair lifts that, beside being only for wheelchair users, are reluctantly used by them.

Open spaces annexed to facilities

For open spaces, such as parks, the use of wooden planks for pathways is recommended. Where the pathways are significantly long a small-electric-vehicles rental service should be arranged. If the path is particularly impassable, “viewing points” can be set up, that is areas where to stop and that can be reached by car, from which a panoramic and privileged view of the surrounding area can be enjoyed. This “alternative” solution is appreciated by many, because it allows also people who have no special need a different way to enjoy the surrounding natural environment.

Reception area

Adequate free space and seating and furniture (desks, etc.) with height adequate to facilitate interaction with the client, should be planned for interaction areas with clients or for information points, such as the reception area.

Bedrooms and toilets

Bedrooms should have adequate dimensions so as to be easily used by clients in wheelchairs. Bedrooms, like any other room, should allow enough space to guarantee the free movement of people in wheelchairs. It should also be easy to move furniture around the room, if necessary, so as to easily rearrange the room according to needs.

Toilets, both private toilets in the bedrooms as well as the shared ones, will be sized so as to make it easy to reach the sanitary fittings. They will also preferably have a shower cabin with a foldable seat and a large grab rail to make it easy to manoeuvre to use the sanitary fittings.

Functional spaces

All areas of indoor and outdoor facilities where specific functions open to the public are performed, will also have to be easily reachable. Breakfast halls and restaurant halls of any accommodation facility should also be accessible through an uninterrupted pathway with connection ramps. The hall must also have at least one space reserved to wheelchair users. Such a space must be on level floor and sized as to allow the manoeuvring and stationing of a wheelchair. Easy access to a toilet must also be guaranteed.

As far as exhibition spaces are concerned, display cabinets and information panels should be placed such to be accessible to everyone.

Sensory disabilities (blind people, people with reduced vision, deaf or people with reduced hearing)

The car park

For this user category too, specific parking slots should be provided. They should be located close to the car park entrance. The slots should be adequately pointed out. So should the pathways leading to the entrance of the facility be adequately pointed out. A raised-print map of the pathway should be placed at the car park.

Entrance

Entrance to indoor facilities should be properly pointed out and should be built using materials with contrasting colours and without too large sheet glasses that may disorient people with reduced vision.

It is necessary to provide adequate lighting and to avoid background noises that can disturb people with reduced hearing.

Pathways

Pathways can be followed with the aid of what are called “natural guides”. That is sideline elements that can guide a person using a walking stick along the pathway (such as the side-wall of a corridor free of obstacles or a hit-against stringcourse), or a special handrail, making always sure that the pathway is obstacle free. We would also like to highlight that visually impaired people prefer to use stairways (with depth and height of each step adequately sized and with a limited number of steps) rather than sloping ramps. To help people with reduced vision, it is useful to have the wainscots lining the walls coloured in high contrast colours. The same goes for window or door frames. All of the above solutions can be enhanced with the

use of raised-print maps that the client can use to get oriented, and to be placed at the entrance of the facility, or with the use of audio guides. Lifts should have buttons with numbers in raised prints and contrasting colours, any printed character also in Braille, and floor-calling audio messages. For people with hearing impairment there should be visual-guide solutions.

Stairways should have handrail on both sides.

There should be visual-guide solutions that allow people with reduced hearing to get oriented and that guarantee their safety in case of danger.

Open spaces annexed to facilities

As far as open spaces solutions such as stringcourses along paths and wooden hand rail can be adopted to provide guides for people with special needs. Information notice boards with raised prints about the local flora and fauna can also be placed along the pathways together with bowls with sample leaves.

Underwood fronds that can be source of danger for people with special need should also be kept under control along the path and removed as necessary.

Functional spaces

Furniture, door frames, handles and switches in functional spaces should have contrasting colours for easy spotting.

Any blind client should find furniture and personal effects, in the room they are staying, always in the same position and location they left them in.

It is necessary to provide to install the following equipment in the room to allow easy communication and not make feel the person isolated: audio or vibrating call alerts, DTS telephones, writing material, alarm clock with visual or vibrating alarm function, television sets with teletext.

As far as non-accommodation facilities such as restaurants, personnel will have to escort a blind client or a client with reduced vision to the table. Menus and wine lists should also be printed in Braille.

Other disabilities

In the domain of other disabilities we include:

- people with psychic disabilities;
- people with orientation problems;
- diabetic people;
- people with allergies;
- diet-related issues.

As far as the above disabilities are concerned, there are no specific technical or functional specifications to follow. In any case, care should always be taken when interacting with clients

with such needs and adequate solutions must be provided to respond to their diet, hygiene or medical related needs.

- **People with psychic disabilities**

The presence of problems related to this sort of disability cannot always be easily detected. Therefore, when you come into contact with a client it is necessary to try to understand if they have problems.

In the case of contact with clients with this type of disability it is necessary to appear available and have an open attitude. Try to spontaneously involve the client in all the various activities going on at the facility. Use simple language and never speak as if you assume they are slow to understand. Generally speaking, this sort of people have superior intellectual capabilities compared to what they show.

- **People with orientation problems**

It is necessary to find ways to help people compensate such a problem. They may need to be escorted, have reference points pointed out when they need to change course, or have available signage pointed out.

- **Diabetic people**

It is necessary to offer the client the possibility to keep their drugs in the fridge, whenever there is no fridge-bar in the bedroom.

- **People with allergies**

It is necessary to keep very strict hygiene standards and regularly maintain the air-conditioning or heating system filters.

Gather information on the specific requirements related to the allergy and adequately respond to the clients' needs.

Inform a client in advance if there are animals present on the premises of the facility.

The solutions to be adopted in case of clients with allergies

The following solutions should be adopted at accommodation and at non-accommodation facilities:

Bedroom

- There should be no plants, animals, residual smoke traces or smell.
- Mattresses and pillows should be covered with anti-allergy fabrics that also allow airflow. The fabric should be non-rustling fabric and washable at 60°C.
- Bed sheets and blankets should be washable at 60°C. Quilt covers should also be made of anti-allergy, non rustling fabrics washable at 60°C as for mattress and pillow covers. A similar solution must be adopted for armchairs and sofas unless upholstered with washable and waterproof material such as leather or mock leather.
- Window curtains should be washable at 60°C and made of smooth fabrics in order not to trap dust.
- Carpets and bedside mats should not be used, unless thin and easily washable. Walls should not be carpeted either.
- Walls must be smooth and painted with washable paints.
- Floors must be smooth (covered with ceramic or marble tiles, or parquet). The floor should never be carpeted and possibly not covered with linoleum as it can release formaldehyde.
- Wardrobes should be easy to clean.
- Room temperature should not be over 22°C.
- Ventilation should be adequately guaranteed and windows should allow good airflow.
- Air filters should be used to eliminate possible air-born allergy agents such as pollen, mould, animal dandruff.
- Metal objects that might be touched by clients, such as door handles, keys, etc., should not contain nickel.
- The room should have a telephone for emergency calls.
- Clearly visible signage should be displayed on the door indicating that the room is suitable for an individual with asthma and/or allergy and that allergy and/or irritant agents are not allowed in the room.

Toilets

- Walls and floor should be easy to clean. They should not absorb water and be covered with ceramic tiles.
- There should not be water leaks that can increment the humidity level and, hence, facilitate the growth of moulds and mites.
- Ventilation should be adequate through a window or a ventilation system with minim air velocity of 2 m/s.
- Air deodorants or perfumes should not be used.

Reception, restaurant and meeting hall

- No smoking.
- No animals.
- No floor carpet.
- No carpeted walls.
- No plants.
- Adequate ventilation for good air flow.

Kitchen and food

Kitchen staff should take care of not contaminating food with ingredients that can cause allergies through their utensils or hands. They should not wear latex gloves.

When eating at a restaurant, a client with allergies should:

- inform staff early of their problems, explaining what they can and cannot eat.
- explain how even small quantities of the ingredient they are allergic to can cause them to be sick.

Cleaning services

Daily activities:

- vacuum clean the floor (the vacuum cleaner used in rooms occupied by people with allergies should not be used in other rooms in order to avoid the spreading of allergy agents)
- clean the floor with dry cloths in order not to increase humidity.
- clean tables and other surfaces using a lightly humid cloth.

Weekly activities:

- disinfect the shower box and then let water run.
- Clean lamp shades and door frames.
- steam clean the room with steam at 100°C or better still with dry steam (>100°C) as it induces lower humidity.
- use a slightly humid duster on mattress, pillow and, if present, quilt covers.
- Clean the fridge bar to avoid the growth of moulds (steam can also be used for this).

Monthly activities:

- clean the ventilation system.
- Wash the blankets.

Bi-monthly activities:

- Wash the pillow, mattress, quilt covers and window curtains.

N.B.: all products used for cleaning should not have strong smells. It is appropriate to air the room after cleaning it.

First-aid kit

It is necessary for a hotel to keep some basic drugs as well as basic medical equipment, such as aerosol equipment and expansion chamber, necessary to administer them. The drug name and its corresponding active principle should be explicitly reported in the most common languages.

Contact person

At any time, there should be a person on call at the hotel that can provide first aid if necessary. Such a person should have attended a first aid course led by qualified providers.

Questionnaire

In the case of the presence of guests with allergies it is useful to ask them to fill in a service quality evaluation questionnaire with simple yes-or-no-answer questions such as:

- Did you smell smoke or any other foul odours in the room?
- Did the ventilation system release any smoke or foul odours?
- Was the room sufficiently ventilated? (the presence of condensation on toilet mirrors or glasses indicates poor ventilation)
- Was there too much humidity in the room?
- Was the room unacceptably dusty?
- Was the room temperature OK (20-22° C in winter)?
- Did you have any problem with the room? If yes, please, specify.

Feel free to add any suggestion.

• Diet-related issues

Provide clients with a special form where they note the kind of diet they need to follow. Adequately inform kitchen staff, dining room and waiting staff of the needs highlighted by the client.

Offer a menu with food that is suitable for people who need to follow special diets, at least the most common ones, such a vegetarian diet.

Solutions to be adopted for clients with celiac disease

Celiac disease is a disorder caused by a sensitivity to gluten that makes the digestive system unable to deal with fat. Gluten is a protein substance present in oat, wheat, spelt, kamut grain, barley, rye, triticale grain. The number of people with this type of disease in Italy is estimated at one every 100 or 150 people. There should, therefore, potentially be 400,000 people with celiac disease, even if only 35,000 have been diagnosed. 5,000 people are diagnosed with the disorder every year, while 2,800 children are born every year with the disease, with a 9% year on year increase. Celiac disease can be cured by removing some common food ingredients from one's diet such as bread, pasta, biscuits and pizza and also by not eating dishes containing flour. A strong food education is, therefore, necessary. In fact, eating even a small amount of gluten can cause damages.

A very useful handbook, published by the Italian Celiac Association (AIC), the most important association concerned with this disease, is available to restaurant service operators. The handbook was published as part of *Progetto Ristorazione* (Catering Project), promoted by the AIC to create a chain of catering services knowledgeable about the celiac disease and able to offer a service responding to the needs of people with celiac disease.

Progetto Ristorazione is a program with the following projects:

- Restaurants/Pizzeria Project
- Ice cream parlours Project
- B&B Pilot Project

To be included in the chain a service provider must:

- Have taken part in a Basic Course organised by AIC on the celiac disease and gluten free diet
- Have completed the training programme by taking part in further courses/workshops organised by the regional AIC chapters

- Register with their regional AIC chapter as catering service provider to receive information material from the Association
- Allow regular controls by the regional AIC chapter
- Use products registered with the Ministry of Health and listed in the National Register of Food and/or listed in the AIC manual
- Have dishes suitable for people with celiac disease on their menu
- Guarantee that dishes are not contaminated with gluten at any step of their preparation and up to their delivery at the table
- Guarantee that food is not contaminated with gluten during preparation and storage.

A team of volunteers and professionals from AIC will monitor the various services in the chain through regular checks. They will offer support as necessary as well. It is however, clear, that the main responsibility for fulfilling the requirements rests totally with the service provider. A client with celiac disease should, anyhow, always check whether any member of the AIC *Progetto Ristorazione* does not fully respond to their needs. They should, thus, report any non-compliance via fax or via email to:

- the Regional Chapter the service provider belongs to (the chapters contact details and addresses are published in the *Celiachia Notizie (Celiac Disease News)* and on the web site www.celiachia.it)
- the Secretariat for catering services of the association (fax 0883.527513 - e-mail: ristorazione@celiachia.it) quoting "Non-compliance report" in the message subject.

Suggestions:

Always book a restaurant table in advance asking for the person indicated as the restaurant contact representative. At the restaurant, always deal with the person reported on the menu as the contact person, rather than discussing orders with the table waiting personnel. Always identify yourself as a person with celiac disease before you start placing your order and ask what type of "allowed" products are used.

Facilities and spaces for leisure time and cultural activities: green and exhibition areas

Solutions to be adopted for green areas ³

In order to ensure accessibility of green areas it is not enough to simply provide ramps for wheelchair users, or to simply apply the accessibility norms regulating the matter. It, instead, requires a sustained effort to pay continuous attention to and to satisfy as much as possible the needs, interests and expectations of a wide range of users: children, elderly, people with motor (whether temporary or permanent), sensory, psychic disabilities, cardiopaths, etc.. Making a protected area accessible implies, in fact, not only that physical access to the area is guaranteed to the various types of users, but also that users are allowed to autonomously relate and interact with it, satisfactorily enjoying its qualities and benefits. Improving accessibility of natural protected area does require a positive commitment from the management of the areas that must be open and sensitive to the issue. It is not, however, a titanic effort. Simple solutions adopted during the planning and design stage are very often sufficient to do that. Providing adequate services to the person, together with reliable information, is also often enough to significantly enhance the usability and the chance to enjoy the territory or, at least, some of its parts.

Motor disabilities⁴

- Above all, it is necessary to have one or more entrance points to the area accessible to everyone. Parking slots for disabled should also be made available very close by those entrance points.
- While keeping always in mind the primary objective of safeguarding the natural environment, it is necessary to create one or more paths within the park that can be easily followed also by people with reduced motor capabilities. They should, therefore, have adequate width, include slopes and be made of material compatible with reduced motor capabilities and everyone else's needs.
- Services and equipment such as water fountains, telephones, shaded and sheltered areas, restaurant points, toilets, etc., should be planned and designed in such a way that they can be easily used by everyone.
- There should be information boards that allow everyone to choose their excursion route across the park.

³ Information reported in this section were gathered from the web site www.parchiaccessibili.it, managed by Cts, Ministry of labour and social policies, Legambiente and Co.In.

⁴ Information reported in this paragraph were sourced from the WWF report "Decalogue for Universal Accessibility of natural protected areas".

- Waiting and rest areas with benches and adequate seating points should be maintained along the pedestrian pathways.
- Regular and adequate maintenance of all facilities and structures built to facilitate the enjoyment of the area should be carried out.
- For considerably long distances a service for the rental of small multi or one-seat electric vehicles should be provided. Such rental services should be located near the car park. The electric vehicles will provide an easy and eco-friendly system that will allow people with reduced motor capabilities to enjoy the natural protected areas.
- The park personnel and workers, especially those staffing fruition services, should be properly and regularly trained to acquire and maintain specific competencies necessary to guaranteeing adequate accessibility to disabled visitors and the highest possible enjoyment of the areas to everyone.

Sensory disabilities

For people with this type of disabilities, the following solutions must be provided in addition to the above ones, in order to allow them a better enjoyment of the green areas:

- Information material printed in Braille or in large prints.
- Audio signage and/or signage printed in Braille or large prints.
- Raised-print maps throughout the area.
- Guides or personnel that can accompany the person and describe the surrounding flora and fauna in details verbally or/and using sign language.

Solutions to be adopted for exhibition areas

Motor disabilities

The solutions to be adopted for people with motor disabilities in museums and their functional spaces (toilets, bookshops, catering points, etc.) are the same ones suggested for accommodation and non-accommodation facilities. They include the availability of near-by or adjacent car parks, accessible main and secondary entrance points, lifts and stair lifts, dislocation of emergency exits and toilets, adequate design of the visitors' route, accessibility of ticket counters and bookshops, information material on display easily reachable and/or readable by wheelchair users. Museums should also provide points or equipment, fixed and mobile, for resting, waiting and the observation of the works on display.

Sensory disabilities

- Information material printed in Braille and in large prints.
- Signage printed in Braille and in large prints.



- Guides or personnel that can accompany the person and describe the works on display in details verbally or/and using sign language.
- Plaster casts of the main sculptures on display for tactile examination.
- Free audio guides.
- Raised-print maps at the entrance.
- Raised-track floor to guide blind people around.
- Captions printed in Braille beside the works they relate to.
- The presence of a handrail all along the visitors' route to guide a blind visitor step by step along the halls equipped for them.
- The possibility to touch the works on display or parts of the architectural elements: pillars, frames, etc..
- The presence of an education room, available upon reservation, for children with sensory disabilities.



Accessibility and the transportation system¹

Travelling is a very important activity that is very much part of our daily lives, whatever the reason we travel for. It is, therefore, very important to choose the right means of transport and make advance arrangements to avoid critical circumstances with no possible valid alternatives.

Accessibility of the transportation system to people with special needs cannot always be guaranteed, even if many improvements have been made over the last few years.

The following sections describe the current situation of the various type of transportation systems and if and how they are used by people with special needs.

1. Air travel

Assistance on board, and throughout the travel, to a passenger with special needs is regulated by international agreements (IATA rules) and by the internal procedures of each airline company.

Reservations: at the moment of making their reservation passengers must make known their special needs to the airline company or the travel agent they are buying the ticket from. They should clearly describe the degree of reduced mobility and the type of assistance they require. This will allow the carrier to make the necessary arrangements to provide assistance during boarding and disembarking, to correctly complete all the necessary procedure at the airports (check in, security screening, passport control, baggage control), and to manage transit at connecting airports.

It is very important to ensure that the required documentation is prepared and submitted on time, since many airline companies require passengers with special needs to fill in a form or to submit a medical certificate attesting their health conditions and their needs.

Passengers with special diet needs (people with celiac disease, diabetics, etc.) can ask for special meals to be served on board. People who need assistance with their bodily functions (eating a meal and toilet use) usually travel accompanied. Some airlines allow passengers that require assistance during boarding and disembarkation to travel alone. This is usually allowed for flights shorter than 3 hours. The decision is, however, left to the discretion of each airline company.

Check In and Welcoming: to allow the correct and timely completion of the check in procedures, passengers with disabilities must be at the check in counter at least one and a half hours before departure time. A disable passenger is usually boarded before anyone else

¹ From "Travelling by air, train, sea.. or any other means of transport. What to know, what to do" by SUDMOBIL Project, Italian Group–Clearing Group.

and disembarked last. Airline companies often reserve seats for passengers with reduced mobility (in the majority of cases, for instance, airline companies have special seats with the aisle-side arm rest that folds up). Many airline companies also limit the maximum number of people with reduced mobility allowed on board of a single flight according to the type of disability and the aircraft model. It is important to know what that limited number is, especially if group travel is being arranged.

The passenger's wheelchair is checked in as registered baggage at no extra cost. As far as battery operated electric wheelchairs (whether with wet or dry batteries) are concerned, specific embarkation procedures must be followed because of safety concerns. It is, therefore, advisable to check with the airline company what those procedure are like. It is also necessary to check with each airline whether it is possible to bring any other type of aid or equipment as registered baggage.

Alitalia, the Italian national carrier, has arranged for a customised service. They have special welcome lounges at the Fiumicino airport in Rome and the Malpensa airport in Milan called "Sala Amica" (lounge-friend) where disabled clients can do their check in and wait for departure.

Airports Accessibility requirements: every airport should be equipped so as to allow a disabled passenger to move through the facility, perform the various procedures and reach the aircraft without having to face any obstacle. If boarding is not through a bridge, embarking should be guaranteed through the use of a fenced mobile platform or a freight lift. All indoor and outdoor facilities should be fully accessible, as prescribed by the law. Some aircrafts are equipped with a narrow wheelchair to allow the disabled passenger to move along the aisle and reach the toilet with the help of on-board personnel. The level of service facilities on the ground are usually commensurate to the airport size. Some airports offer their own services for disabled passengers independently from the airline companies that make use of the airport services and facilities. It is, therefore, useful to make information about these potential other services at the airport available to the disabled passengers.

Airports are true business enterprises in their own merit. Each airport, will therefore offer different services and facilities to passengers with disabilities according to their marketing strategy. As for many other businesses, web sites are now used to provide relevant information and to market the services.

When services and facilities for people with disabilities are advertised on the airport web site, symbols are frequently used to describe the type of services on offer. There are different ways to gather information on airport services. Information can be retrieved from the airline web site, for instance, directly via email. The web site can also provide the relevant telephone or fax numbers. The web site of the National Airports Authority of the country of interest can also be consulted, where you can find descriptions of the services offered by some of the airports in the country or where hyperlinks to the airports web sites are provided. It is important to know that many smaller airports in some of the EU countries do not have a web site. In that case, the National Airport Authority will be able to, at least, provide a direct telephone number to call for information. Lastly, it is possible to consult an independent travel

guide and, above all, specialised publications for people with disabilities reporting contact details, web site address, telephone and fax numbers for each airport.

2. Travel by Train

The National Railway Company is implementing a program to adapt its services to the needs of people with disabilities.

Accessibility of the railway system to wheelchair travellers is limited to only specific trains, particularly for mid and long-distance trains.

Escort-dependent disabled passengers can enjoy special fees if they possess the "Blue Card" (Carta Blu) that allows the bearer to buy a single ticket valid for two passengers. The "Blue Card" currently costs 5 Euros. It is valid for 5 years and can be collected at any station upon showing the original Invalidation Certificate (together with copy) issued by Local Health Authority attesting the 100% invalidity and the need for escort. A client with disabilities can call on the assistance service available at the departure station. The service personnel will also activate the service throughout the client's journey, as necessary, alerting the Assistance Centre of the station at least 24 hours in advance. Personnel will also arrange for a complimentary wheelchair offered by the Railway company, if so desired by the client. It is also necessary for the passenger to be at the station minimum 30 minutes before the train departure time.

The National Railway Company published the Guide "Services to clients with disabilities" where all the special services and benefits provided are explained and stations where the Assistance Service is active are listed (there are 225 stations with such a service in Italy). Furthermore, contact details of all Assistance Centres available are provided. Information can be found on the web site www.trenitalia.it.

We must also mention the "Special Concession III and VIII."

The former allows for special fares to be enjoyed by people with reduced vision. A blind person can have a card (valid for 5 years) extendable to their escort for single trips upon request. The "Special Concession III" allows the blind person and their escort to travel at the cost of a single ticket at the normal fare.

The latter is, instead, intended for people who are invalid of war or of service (applicable to Italian citizens resident in Italy) who can enjoy special fares. Severely invalid people who are escort dependent can enjoy unlimited travels for two at the cost of a single ticket with 30% additional discount.

3. Travel by Ship

Various maritime companies, offering ferry transfers between mainland and islands, have made some of their ships accessible to people with special needs.

It is always necessary to highlight the presence of a passenger with disabilities when making a reservation, clearly specifying their needs.

At the moment of departure it is necessary to approach the officer in charge, that will make the necessary arrangements for the boarding. Passengers with disabilities will be boarded first.

Costa Crociere, for instance, has ships equipped to host passengers with disabilities. There are particularly spacious internal cabins available to them. Their doors are large enough to allow a wheelchair through, while their toilets are adequately equipped and have no steps. Moving from one bridge to another is also very easy on board of all passenger ships of the company. Lifts are provided to facilitate that. The company will also make all necessary arrangements for help at the time of embarkation if notified at the time of making the booking. It is also possible to request for special meals at the time of booking. The ship crew will be notified directly and they will make arrangements as necessary.

4. Travel by Car

No urban public means of transportation can be currently considered fully accessible. The disabled people's need to move around the city is usually addressed with the use of appropriately modified vehicles with platform lifts that can be booked by disabled citizens according to their needs.

The demand for urban transport can be satisfied also with private vehicles that can be allowed to circulate also in case of traffic limitations.

As far as mobility of individuals in their cars, it is necessary for them to have a special circulation permit to be displayed. The permit allows cars at the service of people with disabilities to be freely parked in blue-line-marked parking slots or in the spaces reserved to them. They can also have access to the Limited Traffic Zone and use preferential lanes reserved to means of collective public transport and taxis.

As far as car rental services are concerned, there are few companies that have cars for people with disabilities. There are only 3 car rental services in Italy (Hertz Italia, Europcar and Brandini Fiat) that have cars with manual controls. These services are available in Rome and Milan, and a reservation should be made at least 72 hours in advance.

Motorway rest areas have been improved over the last years and many of them are now accessible as far as their resting areas and toilets are concerned. Such an accessibility improvement process is extending to the waiting areas as well, where disable parking slots and accessible toilets are being increasingly provided. Accessibility of waiting and service areas along state and provincial roads depends mainly on date of their construction and/or refurbishment.

Information retrieval to put together an accessible tourist package

The tourist product is characterised by a high degree of **intangible** quality. It cannot, therefore, be described in details, neither it can be shown before the purchase. Consumers, therefore, are not able to easily choose among the various alternatives and evaluate their quality beforehand. Consequently, clients' expectations are entirely based on information retrieved before their making their holiday experience.

The Garzanti dictionary of the Italian Language states that **information** represents an *element that allows to know facts, situations etc.*

Therefore, we can say that all that is giving us a distorted knowledge of reality, that is not corresponding to truth, is not information.

On the contrary, detailed and precise information allow any potential client to make their choice of what tourist package to purchase on the basis of their own needs and desires.

Especially in the case of information necessary to people with special needs, reliability and certainty of information is fundamentally important.

However, people with special needs generally lament the lack of information regarding the conditions of accessibility of tourist destinations. Whenever information is available, it is not reliable or lack shared and common standards. It does not, therefore, allow to compare between various alternatives and it generates an incorrect communication between operators and clients.

This can be avoided only through an accurate control of all components that make up the offer. The tourist operator that wishes to create an offer targeting an extended user group should, therefore, verify that all elements of the package are respondent to requisites of accessibility before releasing it on the market.

Information provided with the tourist package on offer will, therefore, have to:

- ✓ allow the potential client to make their own individual choice validated against their own specific needs ;
- ✓ combine products from the various sectors of the tourist offer for an end-to-end solution;
- ✓ guarantee quality of the hosting service;
- ✓ offer an adequate quality for money value proposition.

All of the above will allow tourist operators to develop the necessary awareness of the economic value represented by the *target* group of clients with special needs. To offer a service that is truly for all it means: incrementing the portfolio of clients, having the opportunity to make one's offer less season dependent, developing lasting relationships with customers, thus achieving the key objective of *customer satisfaction*.

The information system

The information system allows the description of the various components of the tourist package and it enables potential client to:

- take the decision to go on holiday;
- be aware of the characteristics of the facilities;
- choose the package best responding to their needs;
- purchase an accessible tourist package;
- live their holiday with peace of mind and with satisfaction.

The decision making process of each consumer (the tourist with special needs is not a disable for the tourist entrepreneur, but a client) starts from the decision to go on a trip.

They will make an initial selection, among the many offers present on the market, based on their own needs and wishes that prompted them to go on the trip.

The ways people with disabilities usually gather information are:

direct; that is the tourist autonomously and independently gathers information through:

- the use of *Internet*;
- consultation of specialised guide books – if available – reporting information regarding the accessibility of tourist facilities and services available in and around the location of the destination;
- word of mouth; information gathered this way is equally reliable and such to allow a choice with peace of mind, especially because it comes from direct evidence;
- retrieving information directly from the tourist/information desks available at the destination;
- contact with specialised information desks;

indirect, achieved through:

- contacts with established tourist operators already known through experience and expert;
- the organisations of people with disabilities that offer tourist packages for people with special needs. They guarantee assistance and they can be trusted.

The client will subsequently go on a detailed analysis of the available offers, ascertaining that information gathered is certain and reliable, and that the destination can, therefore, satisfy their personal needs. They will then proceed on to making their final choice and, finally, on purchasing the tourist package.

The process just described above is further complicated by one of the fundamental characteristics, already mentioned, of the service that brings together tourist offer and demand, that is, intangibility. The fact that such a service does not include a physical and direct contact with what is being offered makes it impossible to evaluate the quality level of the tourist service on offer before its being supplied. This does make the choice by the consumer more difficult. Consumers cannot base their choice on the basis of objective parameters, but exclusively on subjective ones that are practically the expectations aroused by information provided.

It is for the above reason that tourist operators must commit to provide detailed, and above all, validated information about their offer.

Generally speaking, tourist communication should be based on rules that apply to the advertising messages mainly and that can be summed up as follows:

- ✓ knowledge of the target user;
- ✓ use of captivating messages;
- ✓ use of exhaustive information;
- ✓ evaluation of the target user's reactions;
- ✓ usage of appropriate advertising channels;
- ✓ continuous improvement of the message content.

The process of communication has two main players at the moment of its happening: the sender and the receiver. The former sends the message, the second receives it. The most important characteristics of the process at the moment of its execution do not regard those two players. They rather concern the method used to transfer the message and the route the message follows to reach its destination. We refer to the mechanisms used for the codification and de-codification of the message in particular. There is a wide variety of such mechanisms. Think for instance of a message broadcaster that cannot speak and of a receiver that can, instead speak. The former will use the sign language and gestures to express themselves. It is obvious that if the receiver does not know such a language will never be able to de-codify the message received.

The channel of communication, too, plays an important role. If we take again the previous example, the communication channel is the gesture used by the person to put their message across.

Tourist operators, in order to include all potential clients in their offer, should, therefore, know:

- the clients' needs;
- the specific elements they must provide information on in relation to the various special needs;
- the tools available to collect and organise information;
- the information distribution methods;
- the information distribution channels.

Specific elements to provide information on according to specific needs

Any market analysis is based on the study of the purchasing behavioural patterns of the demand. First, the target segment is quantified and progressively those belonging to that segment are profiled. As far as tourism for all is concerned, it is necessary to know that the behaviours of our specific target group are often comparable to those of other tourists. The difference lies only in the actual degree of accessibility of each element that make up the offer.

It is, therefore, necessary to have detailed and specific information on:

- ✓ whether architectural barriers are present or not;
- ✓ whether specialised aids or services are available or not;
- ✓ the language and the behaviour to adopt when relating to people with disabilities.

The suggestions reported in the following sections, valid for all types of tourist facilities and outdoor areas, are provided after having been prioritised on the basis of the type of disability being addressed.

physical disabilities

People with physical disabilities need information on:

- location and characteristics of the car park areas (type of material used for paving the ground, distance from the entrance, etc.);

- characteristics of the outdoor pathways (length, type of material used for paving the ground, presence of seats, handrails, obstacles along them, etc.);
- location and characteristics of the entrance to the facility (width, areas before and after the entrance, availability and location of call bells, etc.);
- characteristics of the indoor pathways (length, type of material used for paving the ground, presence of obstacles and between-levels connecting systems along them, etc.);
- characteristics of the spaces where activities are performed (width of access point, size of the areas before and after the entrance, size of the venue, presence and characteristics of equipment, etc.);
- characteristics of alarm systems.

sensory disabilities

People with vision-related disabilities need information on:

- location and characteristics of specialised information systems (raised-print systems, large-print systems, Braille print systems, raised-print maps and guides, handrails, wainscots, audio signals, etc.);
- characteristics of pathways (length, type of material used for paving the ground, presence of seats, handrails, obstacles, connecting elements such as stairways or sloping ramps along them, etc.);
- dimensions and composition of spaces where activities are performed;
- location and characteristics of furniture;
- whether guide dogs are allowed or not;
- characteristics of alarm systems.

People with hearing-related disabilities need information on:

- whether specialised aids are available or not;
- characteristics of alarm systems.

other types of disabilities

People with allergies and/or food intolerance need information on:



- exact ingredients of the food prepared;
- whether the service provider is willing to cook food provided by the client;
- whether there are areas dedicated to the cooking of special food;
- whether anti-allergy materials are used;
- thoroughness of the room and air filters cleaning.



Available information retrieval tools

The main tool used to verify the accessibility of facilities is usually a Questionnaire-based survey, that can imply:

- an indirect survey targeted at third parties, through telephone interviews for instance. This type of survey does not guarantee the truth of the gathered information, neither it allows to provide dimensional information, and it is generally used during a preliminary phase that comes before the direct survey.
- a direct on-site survey. This type of survey, given the complex set of information to be gathered, must be conducted by adequately trained professional personnel.

The most significant direct survey method, that was then used as the basis for other methods developed later, is the one employed in the program "Italy for all". The program was initiated by the Tourism General Directorate of the Ministry of the Productive Activities. Its goal is to promote and spread accessible tourism. The project StarE was developed by ENEA as part of the program. Its main deliverable is the IG-VAE methodology, where IG-VAE stands for Guaranteed information (for the) Evaluation of Accessibility (related to one's own) Needs. Other institutions and organisations participated in the program such as: State and Regions with their framework agreement ratified by the document containing the guidelines for the implementation of the program "Holiday for all", the Department of Social Affairs of the Prime Minister's Office, entrepreneurial organisation and associations of people with disabilities, local governments, the CIPE, and the Tourism Directorate General itself.

The methodology, based on a direct on-site survey, comprises of the following procedural steps:

- ✓ training of the surveyors;
- ✓ collection of information from the on-site visit of the facility done by the surveyors;
- ✓ direct check of dimensions and characteristics of the various components of the facility being surveyed;
- ✓ direct contact with the management personnel and administrators of the surveyed facilities so as to make the goals of the project known to them and raise awareness on the issue of accessibility.

The information gathering, based on direct on-site visit by adequately trained personnel to the tourist facility after being authorised by its management, is performed with the help of a Survey questionnaire, specially developed for this purpose and validated by the Associations of people with disabilities. The Questionnaire allows to survey all characteristics and elements



necessary to guarantee exhaustive information for a wide variety of needs on the accessibility conditions of the tourist facilities.

The survey program led to the survey of about 5,000 accommodation and complementary facilities across the national territory. This has provided people with disabilities with a large number of validated and reliable pieces of information.

The Questionnaire is divided into 42 sheets, grouped into four main sections:

1. Identification section, for the collection of general introductory information on the surveyed facility; It reports general information that qualifies the facility, its functional map and information about the facility management personnel's experience of welcoming and hosting clients with special needs.
2. Type-specific section, for the collection of information specific to the type of tourist facility surveyed (accommodation facilities, restaurant facilities, stations, museums, parks, cinema halls etc.).
3. Functional spaces section, for the collection of information regarding the characteristics of the various functional spaces belonging to the facility being surveyed (car park, outdoor and indoor pathways, common halls, lifts, hotel rooms, toilets, etc.).
4. Update reporting section, this section of the questionnaire is left with the facility management personnel. They should use it to communicate changes occurred after the survey in order to update the set of information gathered.



Information distribution methods

When distributing information it is very important to pay attention to the **language code** adopted. It is necessary to have shared and common language codes that should satisfy the following general criteria in the spirit of Tourism for all:

- unique and shared definition of the main terms used;
- knowledge and awareness of the various tourists' needs;
- knowledge and awareness of the characteristics of what is on offer;
- simplicity, clarity, immediacy and effectiveness of the message.

Information gathered through the surveys should be presented according to a clearly defined criterion. This will allow the person receiving the set of information to understand how it was gathered and how it is provided. They will, therefore, be able to read and understand without misinterpretations and misunderstandings.

Two criteria are usually adopted:

1. the explicative criterion, that is information is objectively reported through the description of the significant elements present at the surveyed facility;
2. the synthetic criterion, whereby the description of the significant elements present at the surveyed facility is done through the use of summary/synthetic symbols.

Information distribution usually follows one of the following methods:

- ✓ **synthetic**, whereby only the symbol of accessibility is used. The symbol is, however, very often not awarded on the basis of specific criteria (in many cases the tourist operators make a self-declaration of the accessibility conditions of their facility).
example:
traditional tourist catalogues;
- ✓ **semi-synthetic**, whereby one of three different degree of accessibility is awarded to the facilities – accessible, accessible with help, not accessible – on the basis of clearly defined and specified criteria.
example:

printed guidebook *Roma accessibile* (accessible Rome) – tourist guidebook for people with disabilities, by CO.IN. onlus, Officina della carta; City of Roma – Office for social policies - Italy 1999 (see Annex II example 1)

- ✓ **explicative**, whereby the characteristics of the various elements of the physical space (facility or open space) are described in detail - the car park, the outdoor pathways, the access point to the indoor sections of the facility, indoor pathways, the indoor venues where specific functions related to the service offered by the facility are performed (such as the bedroom in the case of a hotel) the toilets.

examples:

the following web sites are examples of explicative information distribution:

www.italiapertutti.org

www.parchiaccessibili.it

www.turismo.comune.parma.it

www.turismo.parma.it

the printed guidebook *Itinerari per tutti* - Book dell'offerta turistica - Manuale di qualità ospitale (*Itineraries for all* – Book of the tourist offer – Manual of hospitality quality) edited by CST Assisi and the social cooperative Tandem, Project HERCULIA – Hospitality Equal: Local Entrepreneurial and Environmental Cultural Human Resources, Potenza - Italy 2004 (see Annex II, example 2), and available on www.reteherculia.it.

- ✓ **semi-explicative**, whereby the dimensional data of only some of the elements regarded as fundamental to ensure easy of use and enjoyment of the facility are reported (the dimensions of the access door – the height of the doorstep, etc.).

examples:

the following printed guidebooks:

Genoa for all of us – guide to a barrier-free tourism, available on

www.terredimare.it;

Promotional catalogue by *Viaggi del ventaglio*.

As far as the option to directly disseminate information through **information desks** staffed with competent personnel trained on these specific topics, such information desks are available throughout the national territory through:

- direct telephone contact;
- indirect contact via email.

examples:

- Information desk for the Disabled Aias Milan (see Annex II, Description 1);
- Project Superabile INAIL (see Annex II, Description 2).

Level of information details – the summary notice

The summary notice is the detailed description of the characteristics of the physical space without reporting any assessment of its degree of accessibility.

The detailed information requires a survey tool similar to the one adopted by the IG-VAE methodology described earlier.

The various information reported in the Summary Notice allows the reader to identify:

- ✓ how to reach the facilities;
- ✓ how to gain access to the facilities;
- ✓ the characteristics of the facility outdoor and indoor pathways, functional spaces and the equipment in them;
- ✓ hospitality and rapport between personnel and visitors.

The Summary Notice allows the tourist to evaluate each individual facility on the basis of their own personal needs. They can, thus, make an informed choice. The floor plan and map of the facility are attached to the summary notice, together with the more significant pictures of the surveyed facility (entrance, main functional spaces, toilets).

Information distribution: available channels

The first and most important communication axiom is «You cannot not communicate».

Any action and activity undertaken by an entrepreneur communicate, therefore, a message to the consumers. The message can be indirect or direct according to the type of message to be sent, its receiver and so on.

Direct messages are transmitted through specialised communication channels using a platform that can be paper or information technology based, or through a direct connection with the listener.

- **The printed channel**

The printed channel clearly includes all the guidebooks, brochures, leaflets, catalogues that tourist operators have designed, printed and later distributed for them

Catalogues, used mainly by *tour operators*, present a summary of the whole range of offers tailored to the client segment that is being targeted. Special insert editions can also be created and included in the main catalogue.

Special attention must be paid to the type and size of the typefaces used for the text, the colours and pictures chosen when the paper material is designed.

The strong points of the printed channel lie in the characteristics of the transmission of information. The message is immediate and concise. The immediacy of the message is the result of its being concise: the message must be summed up in few lines so that it can be easily recalled to mind. Short slogan-like sentences are, therefore, used, together with brief descriptions of the services on offer.

While catalogues allow to report such information thanks to the size of their pages, guidebooks and brochures present space constraints. They are, in fact, usually smaller in size with short sentences and many pictures. The best solution would be to report the contact details of the company offering the service so that any potential client can contact the facility and already establish an interaction with its personnel to whom they can ask specific questions and obtain detailed answers.

The weak points of the printed channel are represented by:

- the limited space available that does not allow to publish a considerable amount of details. Dimensional and quality related information are usually not published, even if they are very important to people with special needs;
- the distribution system that allows to reach only a limited number of people because of the high printing costs;
- the limited number of printed copies;
- the inability to systematically and easily update information unless a new edition is published.

- **The ICT channel**

When we talk about Information Communication Technology-based channel we mean today's most popular means of information retrieval, that is *Internet*.

For the ICT channel too, attention must be paid to the graphical design of the published material. Special attention must be paid to the typeface used and the text size, to the pictures that should have captions, to audio alarm that should be implemented to signal that the mouse is being moved over a picture or a link, etc..

The strong points of the ICT channel are represented by:

- the immediacy of available information;
- the wide variety of available information;
- the high availability of detailed information.

Its weak points can be referred to:

- the need to have data and graphics constantly up to date; since information available through the Internet is more immediate than information through the printed channel, it must be kept up-to-date;
- the accessibility of the web site that should be such to also allow people with disabilities to navigate through it;

There is a web site, www.webxact.com, that offers free tools for the automatic verification of the accessibility of web sites. At the end of the evaluation process suggestions on how to improve the accessibility of the site are given. An evaluation according to a three-level ranking system is also given. The levels go from scarce to excellent (A – AA – AAA).

- **The direct channel**

The last channel to be examined is the direct channel that implies a direct interaction, that can happen through a mediator as well, between who knows the product and who wishes to purchase it. An example of a direct channel is the *call center*. The call center allows to have a direct contact with the operator, that, with the help of center staff can provide detailed answers to each question put to them. The call center also allows to already tailor the offer according to the special needs described by the caller.

The call center, does, however, present some shortcomings such as waiting times that can be very long at times, the need for adequate training of the staff on issues of accessibility and on the characteristics of the various facilities.

Human resources are a very important productivity factor for service providers. They have a direct impact on the perceived quality and character of the service being offered, given the very intangible character of the tourist service. Customer care, quality of information and the answer to every single need are all very much in the hands of personnel. Each tourist enterprise will rely on their human resources, that will have to be adequately trained, to achieve its stated *mission*. All of this is not, however, enough in the case of tourists with special needs. They require a tailored and specialised service from the tourist service personnel who must know their needs and must consider the disable tourist like a true client. Tourist service professionals come in to contact for a limited time only with the end client. During such a short time they must be able to:

- ✓ understand what type of disability there are dealing with;
- ✓ focus the special needs expressed;
- ✓ act accordingly and appropriately.

Clients with special needs expect to find personnel that have a “multifaceted” view of potential clients.

If personnel demonstrate to be able to respond to the needs of each client, that is due to the fact that relevant information followed a path starting from the top management to arrive to those who are to interface the client.

Training of personnel is, therefore, an important step of the process to develop an adequate offer. Training is also an information distribution channel in itself, in this case within the company. We must remember that making first the facility accessible and then not providing personnel with proper training will not take the company forward into the accessibility program as personnel will not know what the whole effort is about. For example, think of a receptionist receiving a telephone call from a client in a wheelchair who, knowing that the facility is accessible, wants some more detailed information on sizes and spaces of the building. If the *receptionist* has not been informed, that is trained, on the conditions of accessibility of the accommodation facility, she will not be able to provide the potential client with a proper answer. Being disappointed, the client will greet the receptionist and become a missed client. Training is, therefore, a tool that allows the management personnel of a tourist facility to pass on all information and data that need to be known by personnel to fulfil their duties as envisaged. Through training the entrepreneur can make known to their employees every characteristics and feature of the facility, how they work, how the relationship with clients must be managed and its key components, and how the service should be provided. Contact personnel must know the difference between the various types of disabilities, but, above all, the needs that each one of them may potentially express. This will allow them to give a correct answer rather than a vague one.

Personnel will also have to be kept **up to date**. That is training must be a sustained program. After a while personnel will be invited to training again to be informed of the changes that happened since the last training or updating session. Personnel will, thus, be able to answer any question.

Indirect messages are more difficult to manage and they are passed on by word of mouth. That communication channel is, most probably, the most powerful in the service domain and, therefore, in the tourism domain. It is unavoidable on one hand and the most effective channel on the other hand.

We will shortly describe the main characteristics of that communication channel in order to know how it can be exploited.

- **The word-of-mouth channel**

Communication by word of mouth is one of the most powerful form of communication in any domain and sector. It has been established that word of mouth follows a ratio of 1 to 12. That



is, when a person comes to know about something or lives through an experience, whether positive or negative, other 12 people come automatically to know about it.

It is, therefore, a means of communication with high outreach capabilities. Nowadays, information that people with special needs are able to gather are not always true and reliable, as we already explained much earlier in this document. That is the main reason why this group of people trust the opinion of their friend's, relatives' or acquaintances' before making a trip, rather than going to travel agencies, tour operators and so on.

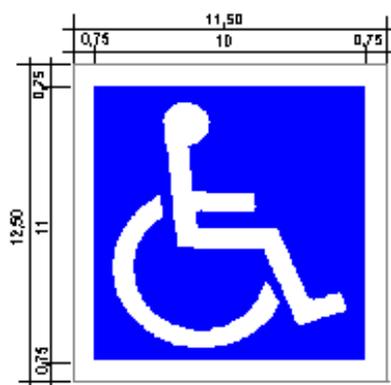
The word of mouth should take a prominent role in the promotion strategies for a product, and that can happen in only one way: through customer satisfaction. We come, therefore, back to the key principle of "custom satisfaction". If customers are truly satisfied, they will positively talk about the service to others. It is also worth remembering that communication by word of mouth is absolutely free and follows no rules unlike the other channels.



The international symbol of accessibility

The ISA symbol is generally regarded as the international symbol of accessibility the use of which, with its colour and size, is regulated by national norms.

International symbol of accessibility



For the Italian norms the symbol can be used to qualify information and by people with disabilities.

Document title See Annex 1	Articles regarding the removal of architectural barriers	Remarks
<i>Decree of the President of the Republic 27 April 1978, n. 384.</i> "Regulation for the enforcement of article 27 of the law 30 March 1971, n. 118 in favour of the maimed and invalid, on matter of architectural barriers and public transport."	Article 2	Annulled by article 32 of D.P.R. 503/96

<p><i>Ministerial Decree – Ministry of Public Works 14 June 1989, n. 236.</i> "Technical regulations necessary to guarantee accessibility, adaptability and visitability of private buildings and subsidised or facilitated residential buildings, for the overcoming and removal of architectural barriers."</p>	<p>Articles 4.3 and 5.7</p>	
<p><i>Decree of the President of the Republic (D.P.R.) of 24 July 1996, n. 503.</i> "Regulation with norms for the removal of architectural barriers in buildings, places and public services."</p>	<p>Article 2</p>	

The symbols of certified accessibility

The international symbol of accessibility does not fully cater for the heterogeneous world of people with disabilities and their large variety of special needs. It is even less efficient to qualify information it represents. Many European countries, while adopting the symbol, are trying to fill the gaps through the use of certified unique symbols. The new symbols are not just symbols, but a true quality certification issued to the various facilities.

Denmark

This is the only official national symbol of accessibility. It is a quality symbol that provides information on accessibility to the public in general. Restaurants, accommodation facilities, tourist attractions, convention centres and so on can apply for the right to use the symbol. The right to use the symbol is granted after a careful assessment of the facility to see if they guarantee accessibility to people with motor, visual, hearing or learning disabilities, to people with reading problems, with asthma or allergies.

The eligibility criteria are clearly related to the ability of the facility to provide specific services to respond to each person's needs and the level of competence of their staff. For a "disabled" tourist wanting to gain access to a facility to know if it is truly accessible or not, it is enough to check if the facility is displaying the symbol or not. The consumer can also check the



requirements used to assess the facility against, at the website www.godagang.dk clicking on the hyperlink “Search for legislative requirements”.

Luxemburg

Luxemburg has adopted some symbols: EureWelcome, Accessible e AccessiblePlus. The



symbol **EureWelcome** focuses on raising awareness and promotion of accessibility. The symbols **Accessible** e **AccessiblePlus** require satisfying clearly defined requirements, the former by public facilities, the latter by private facilities. The application procedures to obtain the right to use the EureWelcome and AccessiblePlus symbols must follow a specific approval process. The symbol guarantees the

quality of the offer and it creates value for the facility brand name since current and potential clients come to know what facilities are truly accessible. The accessibility assessment is performed by paid professionals. The cost is a function of the time used to carry out the assessment. The quality marks were introduced in 1996 and the application procedures have hardly changed since then.

Sweden

The symbol on the right was introduced by the organisation Turism för Alla, operating in Sweden. The organisation carries out the accessibility surveys of Swedish facilities. Equality is a certification program for accessibility the aim of which is to provide reliable information about the characteristics of a destination and to establish an



information channels for tourists separate from the one dedicated to the tourist enterprises. The five reasons why a facility should be assessed are: the size of the *target group* that increases with the degree of accessibility; a facility accessible to people with disabilities is even more accessible to everyone else; the growing demand for accessibility characteristics from the legislation; the return of the investment; competitive advantage. The peculiarity of the program is the diversification of the symbols in relation to each type of disability.

France

The *Association Tourisme & Handicaps*, founded on 28 February 2001, has the goal of creating a guide about methods to welcome disabled tourists, of defining a symbol for guaranteed tourist products, of monitoring market changes and disabled tourists' needs. The symbol (on the left) they created allows tourists to find objective information on accessibility of recreational and tourist places, whatever their disability, and entrepreneurs to develop appropriate and tailored accommodation solutions.



Annex I.

Normative provisions – abstract of the most important articles

See the Italian version of this document.

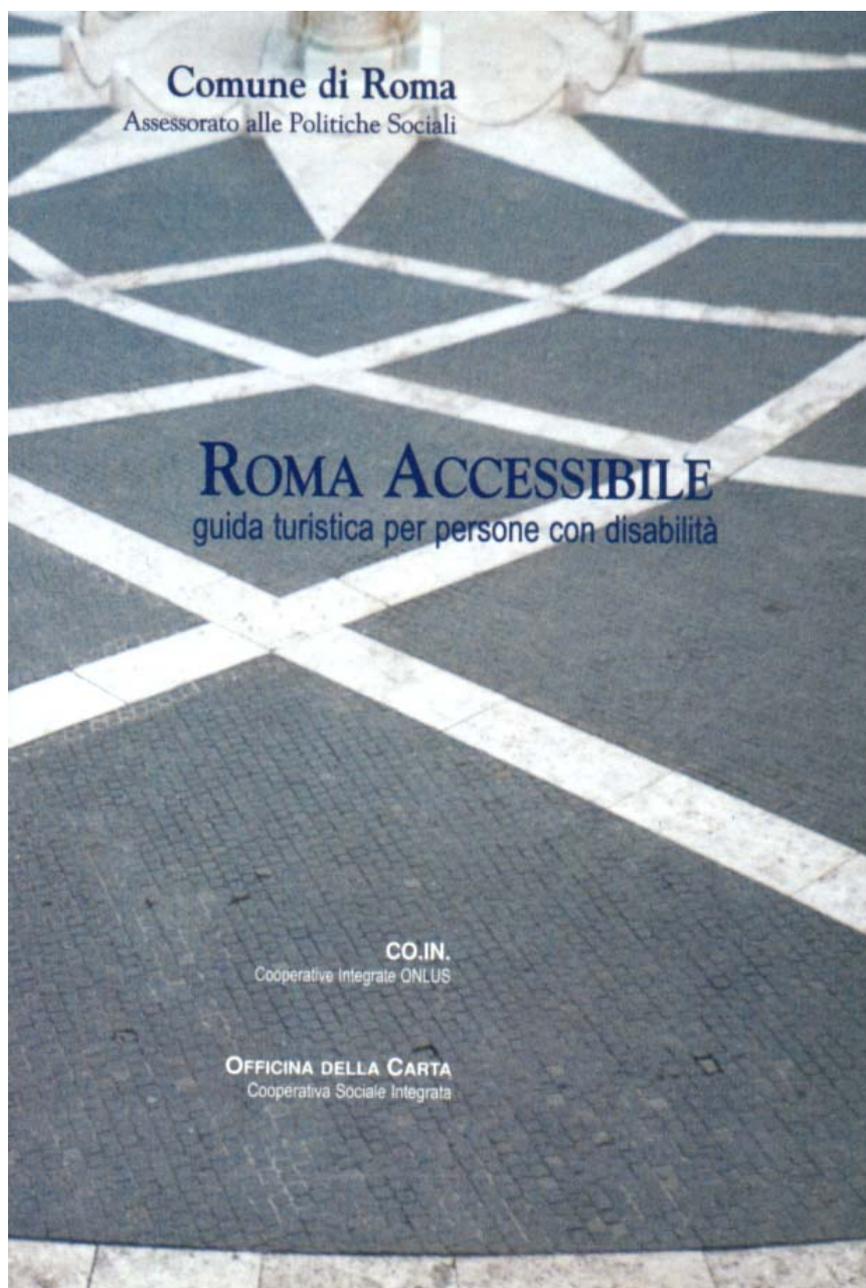
Legislation of the tourism sector

See the Italian version of this document.

Dimensional references from Ministerial Decree of 14-06-89, n° 236

See the Italian version of this document.

Annex II
Example 1



CRITERIA OF ACCESSIBILITY

P & 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of one or more reserved parking spaces within 50m of the entrance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • With no steps or with a raised threshold of up to 2.5 cm • Ramps with a gradient of up to 8% • Doorways or corridors with a net minimum width of 75 cm • Sufficient room for manoeuvring in connection with internal usability
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximum difference in height constituted by one step of no more than 20 cm • Ramps with a gradient of up to 12% • Doorways or corridors with a net minimum width of 65 cm • Presence of slight obstacles negotiable with assistance
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of steps • Ramps with a gradient of over 12% • Doorways or corridors with a net minimum width of less than 65 cm • Use of internal facilities difficult or impossible for wheelchair users
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of no more than 20 steps
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of over 20 steps
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structures which satisfy the requirements set forth under the heading "Entrance and interior accessible" only in certain areas or spaces
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doorways with minimum net width of 75 cm • Minimum depth of lift cabin 130 cm • Space for manoeuvre in front of lift of 150 x 150 cm
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doorways with minimum net width of 65 cm • Minimum depth of lift cabin 120 cm • Space for manoeuvre in front of lift of 140 x 140 cm or of sufficient size to permit manoeuvring, albeit with some difficulty
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insufficient size
WC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doorways with minimum net width of 75 cm • Possibility of manoeuvring wheelchair inside or outside • Possibility of getting alongside (min. 80 cm) or at an angle to the bowl • Presence of supporting bars next to the bowl
WC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doorways with minimum net width of 65 cm • Possibility of using WC with assistance
WC 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of obstacles, insufficient space, impossibility of approach
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aids specified case by case in the relevant space for notes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aids specified case by case in the relevant space for notes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Special menus for those with specific dietary requirements

Centro Storico

EX TEATRO DEI DIOSCURI

Via Piacenza, 1
Tel. 06.4747155
c.a.p. 00184
Chiuso la domenica



GALLERIA COLONNA

Piazza della Pilotta, 17
Tel. 06.6784350 Fax 06.67946487
c.a.p. 00187
Aperto solo il sabato mattina



GALLERIA COMUNALE D'ARTE MODERNA E CONTEMPORANEA

Via F. Crispi, 24
Tel. 06.4742843
c.a.p. 00187
Chiuso il lunedì



GALLERIA DORIA PAMPHILI

Piazza del Collegio Romano, 1/A
Tel. 06.6797323 Fax 06.6780959
c.a.p. 00186
Chiuso il giovedì



NOTES NOTES HINWEISE

Platform lift and stair lift. Reading room inaccessible.

Présence d'une plate-forme élévatrice et d'un monte-escalier. Salle de lecture inaccessible.

Plattform- und Treppenlift vorhanden. Lesesaal nicht zugänglich.

The gallery is on the 1st floor. Steps. Lift with doorway of 56 cm.

La galerie est située au premier étage. Présence de marches. Ascenseur avec porte de 56 cm.

In der Galerie im ersten Stockwerk befinden sich Stufen. Aufzug mit 56 cm Türbreite.

Accessible alternative entrance at Via Zucchelli, 7. Equipped with stair lift. Guided tours for the blind. Computer for virtual visits with voice software. Lift with braille control panel.

Entrée secondaire accessible Via Zucchelli, 7. Présence d'un monte-escalier. Visites guidées pour non-voyants. Ordinateur avec logiciel vocal pour visite virtuelle. Ascenseur avec touches braille.

Zugänglicher Nebeneingang in Via Zucchelli 7. Treppenlift vorhanden. Führungen für Blinde. Aufzug mit Braille Bedienungsknöpfen.

The museum is located on the 1st floor.

Le musée se trouve au 1^{er} étage.

Das Museum liegt im ersten Stockwerk.

Example 2



Hotel ristorante **BOUGANVILLE**
S.P. 83

tel. 0971 991084
www.hotelbouganville.it

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L'area di **parcheggio**, riservato ai clienti, è antistante all'ingresso con pavimentazione in cubetti di porfido (sampietrini). In corrispondenza della porta d'**ingresso** c'è un gradino alto 14 centimetri e profondo 64.5 centimetri. Il varco di accesso è costituito da un doppio set di porte (due porte consecutive); quella esterna, a due ante, ha apertura manuale, per un totale di 147 centimetri e presenta qualche difficoltà nell'apertura; quella interna è scorrevole elettronicamente, per un'apertura massima di 120 centimetri.

La **reception** ha il banco a sinistra dell'ingresso ed ha aree di seduta. Le **sale da pranzo** hanno spazi ampi per la fruizione da parte di persona su sedia a ruote.

La camera rilevata, numero 104, è situata al primo piano.

L'**ascensore**, che presenta spazio antistante l'accesso sufficiente per effettuare le manovre da parte di persona su sedia a ruote, ha il varco d'accesso di 80 centimetri e dimensioni interne pari a 96x140 centimetri; è dotato di maniglione orizzontale posto a 90 centimetri da terra.

Le **scale** sono prive di corrimano.

La **camera** è dotata di un letto matrimoniale e di altri arredi mobili, gli spazi sono sufficienti alla fruizione da parte di persona su sedia a ruote.

Il **servizio igienico**, dotato di maniglioni, ha superficie sufficiente alla fruizione da parte di persona su sedia a ruote e presenta una doccia a pavimento con seggiolino.

Alla camera è annesso un terrazzo.



foto dell'ingresso

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PICERNO

Hotel Restaurant Bouganville

The **parking area**, reserved for clients, is in front of the entrance and paved with stony small cubes.

At the **entrance** door, there is a step, 14 cm high and 64.5 cm deep. The doorway is constituted by a double set of doors (two consecutive doors); the outer one, twofold, has a manual opening system, it is 147 cm wide (total) and a little difficult to open; the internal one is an electronically sliding door with a 120 cm maximum span.

The **reception** desk is on the left of the entrance and in the room there are sitting areas.

Dining rooms are spacious enough to be used by wheelchair users.

The examined room, number 104, is placed at first floor.

The **lift**, in front of whose entrance there's space enough to allow wheelchair users to manoeuvre their wheelchairs, has a 80 cm opening and inner dimensions equal to 96X140 cm; it has a horizontal handling placed at a height of 90 cm.

Stairs have no handrail.

The **room** is equipped with a double bed and other mobile furniture, the inner spaces allow the fruition by wheelchair users.

The **bathroom**, equipped with handlings, has space enough for the fruition by wheelchair users and has a roll-in shower with a shower-chair.

The room has a private balcony.

Description 1

“SUPERABILE” PROJECT

Brief description of the project

The ‘SuperAbile’ project, started at the end 1999, represents today one of most interesting initiatives and testifies INAIL’s commitment as a participant in the social care system.

SuperAbile was conceived and planned to create a "Contact Centre" service available to the people with disability. Made up of a call centre and a portal, the service provides information and consulting on the topics of interest (aids, architectural barriers, regulations, sports, technologies, accessible tourism).

The call centre, active since 2001, contactable via telephone or fax at the free number 800 810 810, provides information to the invalids assisted by INAIL and customised solutions for the most important problems related to the various functional needs in the daily lives of the disabled people.

The news-like portal www.superabile.it, started as a pilot in March 2002, it is a completely accessible virtual location where information, updates and in-depth studies on rights and opportunities are available.

Motivation

The project SuperAbile INAIL was born from the positive meeting of the Institute (INAIL) with the more advanced efforts of the world of the people with disabilities. It aims to provide them new learning and communication tools using technologies as a means to help overcome one’s handicap, isolation and, therefore, help them to reintegrate into the family and into the social and working life.

Objectives

- To provide quick and complete information on the topics: norms, architectural barriers, individual and collective mobility, rehabilitation therapy, assistance, reintegration in to the work environment, travel, culture, sport;
- To provide personalised answers that are timely and exhaustive with regard to the main problems of daily life, giving particular value to the competencies developed directly from inside the world of handicapped people, in the way of “on par” consultancy (peer counselling and peer support) from a disabled person (as a qualified and expert operator) to a final user (a disabled person or someone interested in the topic);
- To make access to information readily available through a daily news platform with un-

to-date news and specialised columns with in-depth information on issue related to disability;

- To facilitate the flow of information among agencies, associations, institutions, operators and mass media;
- To create qualified job opportunities for the disabled people.

Innovative initiatives and elements

The project implements, in a unique, free and unusual way (in Italy and abroad), an integrated system of interactive communication tools for the world of the disabled (disabled people and providers of professional services) utilising traditional technologies (call centres, with systems that cater for the hearing impaired too) and new technologies (IT-based Information System, vertical portal with news and services).

The execution and daily management of the project allowed to initiate forms of collaboration with non-profit (associations for disabled, research agencies), providers of professional services (social co-operative, IT companies, news agencies), with professionals in the field of communications and experts in disability.

Results

Expected:

For the final users of the project: - counter-balance their handicap through the use of technologies; - knowledge of and leverage on the existing opportunities; - extension of a “positive” culture of disability.

For the Institute: - consolidation of its role as an active subject in the system of social protection; - help fulfil their task to “take care” of the disabled; - better image of INAIL with their target group; - increment of its visibility in general.

The following list highlights the main problems:

- 1) lack of reliable statistics on the actual number of disabled people
- 2) difficult segmentation of the target group
- 3) low IT literacy among the disabled people
- 4) the presence of many web sites with fragmented information

Expected and achieved benefits

- Overcome the following barriers: information, communication and social isolation;
- Facilitate the reintegration of the disabled into their family life and the social and job context

Description 2

Aias Milano's "Holiday Counter for Disabled"

This initiative was planned and is managed by AIAS Milano for the Director General for the Family and Social Solidarity of the Lombardia Regional Administration Council, since 1998. It is part of the larger project "**Counter for the Disabled**" by the Lombardia Regional Administration, a call centre for information on topics related to disability, jointly managed by the two associations, Aias Milano and Ledha, and located at:

Spazio Regione Milano - Via Fabio Filzi, 22

tel. 02 67654740 fax 02 67655898

mail: sportello_disabili@regione.lombardia.it

website: www.famiglia.regione.lombardia.it/dis/dis.asp#sportdis
www.milanopertutti.it

The Holiday Counter for the Disabled offers **consulting and information services to help disabled organise their travels and holidays**. It is available to individuals who are disabled, their families, associations, public and private organisations for disabled and to the tourism sector (tour operators, travel agencies, tourism promotion agencies)

In particular, the counter offers information on:

- accessibility of the accommodation facilities (hotels, residences, camping sites etc.), the tourist facilities (monuments, museums, cultural and nature itineraries, etc.) and of the transportation system
- organisations that offer travels and holidays enjoyable by disabled people
- group holidays with assisting personnel

Further information is available on www.famiglia.regione.lombardia.it/dis/dis.asp#sportdis under the menu option "**Letters from the Counter for Disabled**"

It offers consultancy to the tourist operators on how to formulate travel offers and accessible holidays. It also has tutors that teach in various education and training courses related to these topics.

Publishes the **newsletter "Counter on the web – news from the Counter for Disabled of the Lombardia Region"**, together with Ledha. The newsletter is available at the following address:

www.famiglia.regione.lombardia.it/CamperDisabili/newsletter.asp

It manages, together with Ledha, the project "**Mobile Counter for the Disabled – Lombardia Region**": a **coach**, accessible by disabled and transformed into an office, that

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travels across the region to meet citizens and the associations from the world of disability. For further information please, refer to: www.famiglia.regione.lombardia.it/CamperDisabili

Other activities related to the topic “Leisure Time and Holiday”

With the aim of promoting a larger spreading of opportunities for leisure time and accessible tourism, The Holiday Counter, has been working with:

- Lombardia Region – Director General for the quality of the environment, on the monitoring of the accessibility of regional nature parks
- Milan City Council – Social and Medical Services Administration, on the management of the summer holidays service for handicapped people
- Milan City Council – Tourism Administration, on the assessment of the accessibility of the tourist and leisure facilities in the city
- Province of Milan – Social Policies Administration, on initiatives for the training of those responsible of leisure activities in public and private organisations
- “Si Può – national laboratory on accessible tourism”, an associations of experts in the matter of tourism for all
- Publishing houses such as Touring Club and De Agostini, to publish guides on accessible tourism in Italy
- Various organisations in Italy and abroad, on various European projects aimed at the promotion of the rights to mobility and to leisure time for all
- Any organisation, private and public, interested in implementing projects related to the issues of mobility and tourism for all.



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