



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

Case Study 7

Disneyland Paris, France

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European Commission

Enterprise and Industry Directorate General (DG ENTR)

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Executive Summary

Disneyland Paris opened in 1992 and is Europe's leading tourist destination. They have been working on accessibility since 1993 and the first dedicated department "*Accessibilité Visiteurs*" was established in 1997. Over the past 10 years, Disneyland Paris has been increasingly active in the area of accessibility, investing in making the park and the attractions available to everyone. Diversity and integration are key points in the company's policy, employing people from different countries and backgrounds, as well as disabled people. Throughout the years, accessibility has become part of these key points. The park has gradually been made accessible, and different training modules in accessibility are provided to the staff through different channels. This investment seems to have had a positive impact. The number of disabled visitors and guests with special needs has increased from about 40 000 in 2007 to over 65 000 in 2012¹.

Different initiatives originating from the national government seem to have been key in this development. A national legislation from 2005 states that establishments receiving public must be made accessible before January 2015 and the ministry of tourism introduced the Tourism and Handicap Label in 2001, with the objective of awarding different tourist destinations for their accessibility measures. Furthermore, increasing awareness and acceptance over-all in France, in combination with a growing amount of available services have led to a higher number of disabled tourists. As a result, the demand and expectations for accessible services have increased as well.

Disneyland Paris provides a specific information service to visitors with special needs through their call centre. This service has the role of communicating with the visitors prior to their arrival, providing them with information about the services available and contacts to external services, and coordinating with the Disneyland services in view of the visitor's arrival. This information service enables a tailored assistance adapted to the needs of each individual. In addition to this, infrastructure, attractions and hotel rooms have been made accessible, and Disneyland is cooperating with external businesses in order to provide accessible transports for the visitors to reach Disneyland Paris. Another important measure applied is the provision of training and skills development to the staff. Every new employee must take a mandatory awareness module relating to accessibility. Specific working teams have specific trainings developed and adapted to the needs of their working area, e.g. the information service for visitors with special needs, or the technical services team.

¹ Disneyland Paris, Accessibilité Visiteurs Department

The case study concludes by providing recommendations regarding accessible services based on the data collected through interviews with Disneyland staff, external business partners and stakeholders. Disneyland Paris provides a successful and interesting example of a company that has made particular efforts and investments to render their services accessible to anyone. This has resulted in a high consumer satisfaction and increasing numbers of visitors with disabilities. Learning from the Disneyland case study, a number of practical recommendations are provided at the end of this report, focusing in particular on training, the legislative framework, cooperation and dialogue with external stakeholders and partners, as well as the involvement in the decision-making and policy by disabled people themselves.

1.0 Introduction

This case study presents an example of a company, very much present in different areas of the tourism sector (attraction parks, hotels, conference centre, restaurants and shops), having made considerable efforts for the development of accessible services. The attraction park is situated outside of Paris, in Marne la Vallée, and opened in 1992. Since then, 275 million people have visited the park. These numbers make it Europe's leading tourist destination with over 15 000 cast members (Disneyland employees) working on the site². In 2002, the park expanded with the establishment of a new theme park. The resort was originally established imitating the structure and organisation of Disneyland in Florida, the US, and today consists of the two attraction parks, shops, restaurants, various hotels and two conference centres. This case study is particular since it demonstrates a large company which is actually a tourist destination in itself, comprising all steps of the tourism supply chain except from transports.

In terms of accessibility, Disneyland Paris has over the past 16 years expanded and developed, and made a significant effort in making the park and its attractions accessible to everyone. Diversity and integration are key factors in the policy of the company, and this factor has been one of the drivers for these changes. Furthermore, reforms to national regulations have also had an impact, encouraging increased accessibility. Another important driver has been a strong demand originating from both visitors and staff. However, the complexity of this kind of tourist destination needs to be taken into consideration. Disneyland Paris is built up as different worlds, where decoration, lights and sound are part of the experience. Therefore, it is a challenge to render the totality of the resort accessible to everyone, and in some cases it is not possible.

² Disneyland Paris press release, 9 June, 2011

This case study will outline the structure and organisation of Disneyland Paris in terms of provision of accessible services covering the different steps of the tourism supply chain. Potential barriers and drivers of success will be discussed and accounted for, as well as any evidence of impact. The case study will be concluded by the provision of recommendations based on the experience of Disneyland Paris in these past years, and the information gathered and presented throughout the case study.

2.0 Overview and background information

Over the past few years accessibility in general has gained increased attention in the tourism sector. A few different initiatives have been particularly central in the development of accessibility for Disneyland Paris and were discussed with various interviewees during the data collection phase of this case study:

- National legislation from 2005 on equal opportunities for everyone, on participation and citizenship of people with disabilities and the ambition to change the perception that the society has on disability;
- Agreement with internal trade unions, favouring the employment of handicapped people, signed in 2011;
- The tourism and handicap label (created in 2001, awarded to Disneyland Paris for the first time in 2004).

The different initiatives and their impact for Disneyland Paris will be outlined below in further detail.

The national legislation on equal opportunities

The national legislation from the 11th of February 2005 promotes equal opportunities for everyone and aims to increase the participation of people with disabilities in France, as well as to change the perception of disabilities in the society. The legislation takes into account all different types of disability, i.e. motor, sensorial, cognitive and emotional, and includes people with disabilities and reduced mobility, as well as those with temporary disabilities or illnesses. It is the first national legislation considering the built environment,

and it aims to make all establishments receiving public completely accessible. The 1st of January 2015 is the target for these conditions to be met³.

7th Agreement favouring employment of handicapped people

The agreement was signed in 2011 in cooperation with the associations ADAPT and Tremplin Enterprises, working to promote disabled people in the work force⁴, and has been central to Disneyland's accessibility activities. This agreement encourages the employment of disabled people within the company. As mentioned above, diversity and integration are key to Disneyland's policy which is why they have made progress in employing people with different disabilities in the tourist resort. Today, 602 disabled people are employed by Disneyland Paris, in a variety of roles⁵. This has brought a certain general awareness to the company and its staff. Currently, Disneyland Paris participates in the 7th agreement and a new one is in progress.

Tourism and Handicap Label

The tourism and handicap label was introduced in 2001 by the French Ministry of Tourism and stands for quality in the reception of clients with disabilities. The label has the objective of identifying and guaranteeing the accessibility of an establishment, a tourist resort or a cultural sight for people with special needs. The label is the result of a cooperation between the Ministry of Tourism, professionals from the tourism industry, and associations representing people with disabilities. The Tourism and Handicap Association is responsible for the national coordination of the label⁶. The national legislation of 2005 obliges any actor in the tourism industry to take accessibility into account, and this label has the role of promoting and rewarding the measures taken. Disneyland Paris was the first theme park to receive the label for the four types of disabilities in 2004, this included the totality of the resort (attractions, hotels, restaurants and shops). The park was then audited in 2008 resulting in recommendations for improvement, and in 2013 Disneyland Paris was again awarded the label for the four types of disabilities for the two parks only. Due to reinforced criteria, Disneyland Paris hotels were not considered completely accessible regarding the arrival and departure of the guests.

³ <http://www.developpement-durable.gouv.fr/-L-essentiel-de-la-loi,2180-.html>

⁴ Disney, press release, 9 June, 2011

⁵ <http://careers.disneylandparis.com/candidates/diversity.php>

⁶ Association Tourisme et Handicap, Label tourisme et handicap

The three initiatives described above, have jointly contributed to an increased awareness in terms of accessibility in the tourism sector in France generally, and in particular within Disneyland Paris and among its employees. The following sections will demonstrate the efforts and improvements made by the tourist destination in terms of accessible services throughout the supply chain, taking into account a variety of disabilities.

3.0 The integration of the supply chain

As mentioned above, diversity and integration are key factors in the policy of Disneyland Paris, and this factor has been one of the drivers for the changes and improvements made throughout the years. Furthermore, pressure from both visitors and employees have led to improvement of available services through for example training in accessibility to the staff. Even though the main destination is the attraction park situated outside of Paris, the two parks are accompanied by hotels situated in connection to the parks, as well as different restaurants and cafés. These services, together with transports and information services, are part of the supply chain, and crucial to guarantee accessibility for tourists with special needs throughout their travel. The cross-sectorial nature of the tourism sector is making it particularly important to adapt the various steps of the supply chain and to establish contact and communication between the different phases and actors, since they might be disconnected from each other. This is for example the case with Disneyland Paris and transports to and from the tourist destination.

An important work on accessibility has been done in the attraction parks of Disneyland Paris, and the various steps of the tourism chain are covered to some extent. Disneyland Paris cooperates informally with a large number of external businesses in the tourism industry as well as with services of other industries that might be required by visitors with special needs. This informal cooperation allows for an accessible tourism supply chain which is outlined below.

Information and bookings

Disneyland provides information about their offer on their own websites. In addition, there is an on-going cooperation with travel agencies which ensures that adequate information is made available through these actors and disseminated to visitors, on a national, European and international level. An accessibility guide has been developed by Disneyland Paris providing extensive and practical information about the parks, available services, and details on the accessibility of the attractions. The guide covers both parks and provides a full list of recommendations and restrictions, as well as information on which attractions are most suitable for certain disabilities. This guide is

available online and hard copies are available for order through local Disneyland Resort Paris booking hotline.

Furthermore, Disneyland has since many years an information and booking service for visitors with special needs. Following a reservation online or through a travel agency, visitors are advised to contact this service to obtain further information and to provide Disneyland Paris with the information required in order to prepare their visit and any special assistance needed. A specific staff of three people works with these enquiries and the resulting coordination with other services within the tourist destination and other external actors. This staff will provide information to the visitor and specific contacts to potential external service providers that might be useful for the visitor, such as pharmacies in the vicinity of Disneyland Paris, providers of oxygen, or transports. The purpose of this service is therefore twofold, it provides the visitor with essential information prior to their arrival, while informing Disneyland Paris on the disability and special needs in order to prepare and coordinate services and assistance. This type of enquiry and assistance is always linked to a specific booking and completes the booking process. The service has a particular document with different sections that needs to be filled in with information regarding the client: type of disability, type of needs and assistance, whether they have their own specific equipment or not, etc. Following the phone call, this information is circulated to all relevant services to enhance coordination and preparation of the visit.

In terms of preparation of the stay, information available, and the arrival at the destination, this step in the supply chain seems to be fully accessible thanks to this service. The interviews carried out in the data collection phase have indicated a great satisfaction being able to provide this service, but also a will to improve the service through an increased staff, but also through a more specialised staff. Currently, the small team working with these enquiries receive training on how to handle these calls. However, in addition they are also responsible for other enquiries regarding special needs, for example visits by VIPs, large groups and similar, which might imply very different needs and types of service compared to visitors with disabilities. The service has noticed increasing enquiries regarding food allergies, but also regarding mobility disabilities, wheelchair access and temporary disabilities.

Information is a crucial point for any tourist to prepare a trip, however, regarding tourists with disabilities it is central even to the basic management of the trip. Disneyland Paris therefore ensures the provision of information to visitors regarding both services and regulations. By providing information about regulations in place, Disneyland aims to share the responsibility with visitors in regards to security. Finally, information points are available within the attraction parks and are of great importance for visitors with disabilities.

Attractions and parks

Access procedures in the Disneyland parks differ from one attraction to another. In some cases, Disneyland cast members can refuse a disabled

visitor to enter certain attractions due to security risks, and in other cases only one person with a specific disability can be allowed onto an attraction at once. Furthermore, some attractions have not been possible to render accessible to everyone due to special visual and lighting effects being used. This is particularly problematic for people with epilepsy or photosensitivity. Disneyland Paris therefore advises those visitors to consult their doctors before coming to the parks, and to avoid certain attractions which may be particularly problematic for them.

Disneyland Paris provides two types of access cards for visitors with disabilities, temporary disabilities or illnesses, but also to e.g. pregnant women. These cards will give priority access in the queues for disabled visitors and in some occasions to their helpers as well:

- **The priority card** gives priority access in queues to disabled visitors and their helpers to certain attractions through specially adapted entrances. Access is not instant and the queuing time will depend on visitor numbers. The visitor can be accompanied by a maximum of four helpers. Safety is taken into consideration by Disneyland Paris, requiring that for most disabilities, at least one helper is compulsory. The cast members of Disneyland Paris are available to help, nevertheless, the help that can be provided is limited and in many cases a helper needs to accompany the disabled person on the attraction. On other attractions, one helper can accompany several disabled guests at a time. The cast members are available to provide boarding instructions to the helpers.

In order to receive this priority card, visitors need to provide evidence of the disability or special needs, such as a national disability card, a medical certificate or a European disabled parking badge.

- **The Easy Access Card** is given to visitors in case of illness, temporary disabilities or pregnancies. This card gives access to specially-adapted entrances for attractions, but does not give priority in the queuing system. A medical certificate is required in order to receive this card. In this case, only one person can accompany the visitor as a helper⁷.
- **Guidance and assistance dogs** are allowed in Disneyland Paris, and **wheelchairs** can be rented in the parks.

Transports

As mentioned previously, Disneyland Paris booking centre liaise with visitors prior to their arrival at the destination. This allows Disneyland Paris to receive all necessary information on the visitors' special needs and to prepare their stay and coordinate with relevant services. In terms of transports, Disneyland

⁷ Disney Park's Accessibility Guide (2013)

works together with e.g. TGV (national high-speed trains) and Air France. When a guest with special needs call Disneyland prior to the visit, the specialised staff will provide the guest with a specific contact of the service/transport company required. Following further contact with the guest, the external company gets back to Disneyland to confirm the booking.

In order to reach Disneyland Paris, **Eurostar** has over the past 20 years become an increasingly important link from the United Kingdom, but also from some parts of France. Eurostar has from the inauguration of this train link in 1994, aimed to make the **trains accessible to anyone** and has as a company objective to make Eurostar the most loved travel experience in Europe. The staff has received extensive training in order to improve their capacities to inform and assist travellers with disabilities and special needs. In terms of mobility disabilities, each train has currently specific allocated space for two wheelchairs. In the new fleet which is currently being developed, space for two additional wheelchairs will be available.

Travellers with disabilities are advised to inform Eurostar at least 48 hours in advance of their travel to notify the staff about their potential needs for assistance⁸. Upon this, it is sufficient to be at the station one hour prior to departure, where the general information desk will take care of the traveller and ensure that the assistance required is provided. On the Eurostar website, an accessibility guide is available, as well as the policy and practice guidelines of Eurostar⁹.

Disneyland Paris does not have a formal cooperation with Eurostar, however, since one of Eurostar's stations is Disneyland Paris, Marne la Vallée, this has become one of the main destinations for Eurostar travellers and as a result an informal cooperation has developed.

Some visitors with disabilities come to Disneyland Paris by car or coach. **Accessible parking lots** are provided in all car parks of Disneyland Paris. These reserved areas are situated close to the park entrances in order to facilitate the access for visitors with reduced mobility.

For transports between the two Disney parks and the Disney hotels, specially adapted mini-buses are available to transport visitors requiring wheelchair assistance.

Restaurants and shops

Disneyland Paris has also worked to provide accessible services in terms of restaurants and shops situated in the two parks. The shops and restaurants available in the Disneyland complex are all wheelchair accessible, and

⁸ Making rail accessible: Guide to policies and practices, Eurostar (2013)

⁹ Eurostar website, Special Travel Needs, http://www.eurostar.com/uk-en/travel-information/service-information/special-travel-needs#.UynBk_dFBMs

additional assistance from cast members is available if required. Toilet facilities are adapted to the needs of visitors with reduced mobility, and in some cases also allow access to a person accompanying the visitor with disabilities.

In addition to the above, some restaurants provide menus in Braille (French and English), cash tills are adapted to the height of wheel chairs, and induction loops are available in some shops and cinemas. Furthermore, visitors with allergies or salt-free diets are advised to use table restaurants where the staff is able to adapt the menu to the specific requirements. Finally, a specific food and allergy guide has been developed with the aim of facilitating the stay for visitors with allergies and other food-related requirements¹⁰.

Hotels

Disneyland Paris has seven theme hotels which all provide a number of accessible rooms, adapted to meet the needs of visitors with reduced mobility. For example, these rooms have large bathrooms equipped with hand rails and a raised toilet, as well as a door viewer at wheelchair height and a double bed. Mobility-impaired visitors can also hire a special seat enabling them to have showers without assistance.

The specific information service which has been mentioned in previous sections, has a crucial role in coordinating the stay of visitors with special needs, and informing the hotels of the assistance that may be required. It is crucial that the hotel is informed about any potential requirements prior to the arrival of the guest.

The hotel staff has been trained to provide accessible services and welcoming. Furthermore, pictogrammes are used for the cleaners in order to guide them on how to prepare the accessible rooms. It is for example crucial to know where to put the towels for guests with mobility disabilities.

Infrastructure

The infrastructure of Disneyland Paris has been made accessible to a large extent. A specific training was developed by Disneyland Paris in cooperation with the external organisation Handigo, specialised in design and architecture for people with disabilities. 16 employees from Disneyland's technical team received this training lasting 2.5 days. The main objective was to increase the comprehension of disabilities, the knowledge of regulations (e.g. national legislation of 2005) and the various steps to follow in order to comply with these.

¹⁰ "Food allergies? Disneyland Paris has got you covered" (2013)

Policy guidelines and labels

In the case of Disneyland Paris, the accessible measures are part of the company's policy and image of inclusion and non-discrimination. This has been highlighted at various times during the interviews conducted with Disneyland staff. A number of other initiatives such as the inclusion of disabled people in the staff, special activities and days for children with special needs, or low-income families are also part of this policy. The accessibility measures have developed over the years, and the tourism and handicap label as well as the 2005 legislation have been highlighted as additional policy instruments that have pushed for improved services. Furthermore, the growing demand from visitors has also been important.

Disneyland Paris was the first theme park to receive the label for the four types of disabilities in 2004, and included at that point the whole resort (attractions, hotels, restaurants and shops). The park was then audited in 2008 resulting in suggestions for improvement, and in 2013 Disneyland Paris was again awarded the label for the four types of disabilities for the two parks only. Due to reinforced criteria, Disneyland Paris hotels were not considered completely accessible regarding the arrival and departure of the guests.

The tourist destination has been in the fore in the early developments towards increased accessibility, however, according to the interviewees consulted, they are now to some extent late in the development. Accessibility has increased generally in France which can be noted by the increasingly restrictive criteria and conditions of the tourism and handicap label. However, both in regards to the accessibility of the park and to the training of the employees, they look forward and aim to improve the currently available services.

Furthermore, in order to improve, Disneyland Paris forwards complaint coming from visitors to a special accessibility committee which is meeting once a month. The perspective of a visitor is different from the one of an employee, a consultant or an association, and is crucial to take into consideration. Very often modifications that have been carried out, initiate with one of these complaints. Some examples include the integration of autism as disability on the access card, revision of allowed number and profile of the helpers, and revision of procedures.

Accessibility training is another way of working to improve accessibility services. Disneyland Paris provides all their staff with accessibility training. An introductory training module is compulsory for new employees, and the same training is provided in an online version to those employees who started prior to the introduction of this training. Furthermore, a training for trainers of staff is accessibility was introduced in 2011, the participation in a sign language

course has been encouraged among cast members, there is also a training for technical staff, as well as for the staff employed in the information and booking service. Following the introduction of accessible services, the need for a trained staff increased and pressure from both visitors and staff resulted in a development of these different training modules.

4.0 Provisions for cross-impairments

The efforts made by Disneyland Paris in order to make the tourist destination accessible to anyone, account for the four main types of disabilities. The tourism and handicap label which has been mentioned before as one of the more important policy initiatives in this area, has equally had an impact for Disneyland Paris. Since the label is divided into four categories, focus has been put on these different categories in the accessibility work. The label works both as a reward for the efforts made by the establishment – but it also becomes an important way for visitors to recognise what establishments are made accessible and what service and assistance can be expected.

Disneyland Paris was the first theme park to receive the label for the four types of disabilities in 2004, including the whole resort (attractions, hotels, restaurants and shops). The park was then audited in 2008 resulting in suggestions for improvement, and in 2013 Disneyland Paris was again awarded the label for the four types of disabilities for the two parks only. Due to reinforced criteria, Disneyland Paris hotels were not considered completely accessible regarding the arrival and departure of the guests.

The table below provides some examples of how the Disneyland Parks provide accessible services taking into account different types of disabilities.

Table 1: Provisions for cross-impairments

| Service | Details | Disability |
|---|---|---|
| Animagique, CineMagique, Gaumont Cinema | Audio induction loops available, wheelchair access. | Hearing impairments and mobility disabilities |
| Disneyland Parks in general | Guided tours in sign language can be organised on request in advance. | Hearing impairments (for groups only) |
| Disneyland Parks in general | Guidance dogs are allowed in the parks, however, for their safety, they are not | Vision impairments |

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| | allowed onto most of the attractions. | |
| Attractions such as the Flying Carpets Over Agrabah | Particularly recommended to guests with vision impairments since an experience of sensations very similar to able-bodied guests is possible. | Vision impairments |
| Information guides | Guide available in Braille (FR and EN) | Vision impairments |
| Some attractions | Information and recommendation provided since some attractions may frighten guests with mental disabilities. Helpers are therefore asked to take special care. | Mental disabilities/learning difficulties |
| Access in parks | Wheelchairs are provided for rent and structures of the park are made wheelchair accessible, as are restaurants, shops and hotels. | Mobility disabilities |
| First aid points in both parks. | Provision of emergency first aid and medically-prescribed nursing care. In addition, medication which need to be kept cool can be left with these points over the day. | Any type of disability requiring medication kept cool. |
| Planet Hollywood | Menus in Braille are available (FR and EN). Provision of specific food guide by Disneyland Paris informing visitors with allergies. | Vision impairments, allergies |
| Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show | Places reserved for guests in a wheelchair are available. However, | Mobility disabilities, asthma or breathing |

| | | |
|--|---|----------|
| | in case of asthma or breathing problems, the show is not recommended. | problems |
|--|---|----------|

The information- and coordination service of Disneyland Paris and the close contact with visitors enable a tailored supply of services for each individual. Rather than providing accessible services adapting to a specific type of disability and the different needs related to that disability, the basis for the service provided is the individual needs of a specific person. The interviews performed in the data collection phase of this study have also demonstrated the significance given to provision of information to visitors. Through communication and information, the company shares the responsibility with the visitors in case of any safety or security problem. Information is crucial for disabled visitors in order to know what to expect from accessible services, but also to understand the measures put in place and why, as a way of being prepared for what should be done in case of an emergency or incident. The information service has encountered some difficulties when visitors with mobility disabilities have contacted the service but who then have refused to take an accessible room. The balance between satisfying the visitor or client, and providing complete security during the stay is sometimes difficult. Disneyland Paris is working on these issues internally in order to establish working procedures on this. These meetings involve the legal service, risk management, hotels and the information service – however, it has proven to be a difficult job that will require time.

As previously highlighted, the existing service should ideally be improved and more specialised on accessibility issues. Currently, the service provides information on any type of special needs which also may include for example VIPs or very large groups. As a consequence, the small staff does not have the possibility to specialise sufficiently in accessibility topics. Knowledge and experience are important factors to provide accurate information in an accessible way, and very often the services available may be very specific to each type of disability. Therefore, the need to be specialised on these topics and to concentrate solely on the bookings for people with disabilities, is crucial. Disneyland Paris is aware of this and aims to develop this service further.

In terms of transports to get to Disneyland Paris, Eurostar is providing accessible train services stopping at Disneyland, Marne la Vallée. Eurostar staff has been particularly trained to assist travellers with wheelchairs, mobility problems, visual and hearing impairment, as well as mental impairment and learning difficulties. Specific assistance is also provided to pregnant women, elderly people and families with small children. The trains have wheelchair accessible toilets situated next to the adapted wheelchair spaces. In order to board and leave the train a ramp and assistance from the train staff are provided. Furthermore, Eurostar has made

available their accessibility guide through the website, providing both a large print- and an audio version. A hard copy or a Braille version of the guide can also be requested. In addition to the above, guidance dogs are allowed on-board of the trains and food allergies are taken into account by the catering carriage if requested¹¹.

5.0 Business approach – building a business case for accessibility

This case study has so far outlined the efforts made by Disneyland Paris in regards to making the tourist destination accessible for everyone. The different accessible services have been described and it has been indicated how different types of disability have been accounted for. It has previously been mentioned that the accessibility work performed by Disneyland Paris is part of the company policy of inclusion and non-discrimination. However, the services available have also proven to result in an increase of visitors which, as a result, implies an increase of profit and growth of the company. The budget of Disneyland Paris for the adaptation of infrastructures to needs of disabled visitors, estimates 16 million Euros. This sum does not include training of staff or the development of communication supports.

The table below demonstrates the increase of disabled visitors per year.

Table 2: Number of disabled visitors

| Year | Number of disabled visitors |
|---|-----------------------------|
| 2009 | 55 462 |
| 2010 | 46 544 |
| 2011 | 58 799 |
| 2012 | 65 179 |
| 2013 (last estimates, excluding September-December) | 57 071 |

Source: Disneyland Paris, Accessibilité Visiteurs Department

Over the past few years, a change of attitude has taken place in regards to accessible tourism. There is an increasing tolerance and openness towards disabled people, and these people have also started to travel increasingly. This has resulted in a general improvement of the services available in

¹¹ Eurostar, “We’re here to help”, accessibility guide document

France, and as a consequence the expectations are higher currently than they were ten years ago. This is indicated also by the increasingly restrictive conditions of the tourism and handicap label. Another consequence of this over-all acceptance is that disabled travellers want to be considered and treated by any other tourist. This represents a positive development, however, it might also create difficulties. As mentioned before, it has happened that visitors with mobility disabilities have refused to stay in accessible rooms. For a company like Disneyland Paris, one of the key objectives is to satisfy the visitor's needs and wishes. These cases therefore provides a difficulty in terms of balance between satisfying the visitor and providing security, and as a result also in terms of responsibility in case of an emergency. When this has happened, the information service has informed the hotels and provided as much information as possible on security risks in order to share the responsibility with the visitor. So far no following problems have been reported back to the information service from the hotels, which indicates that the issues have been solved at the arrival of the visitor.

Disneyland Paris was among the first businesses to provide accessible services in France. As a result, the destination gained popularity and a reputation worldwide among people with disabilities. The company has invested importantly in the services available, and they still put a strong focus on improving their services through training, feedback from visitors, cooperation with stakeholder and external organisations representing certain disabilities. In addition to this, the involvement of disabled people in the work force is also an important factor. These efforts have proven to be rewarding and have resulted in increasing numbers of disabled people coming to the destination. As a consequence, Disneyland Paris provides an important example of a business with a policy of inclusion which has focused on accessibility and obtained important gains and benefits through this work.

6.0 Evidence of impact

The total number of disabled visitors has increased over the past few years. In 2007, Disneyland Paris received about 40 000 disabled visitors per year, in 2012 the number had increased to over 65 000 (see table 2 above). The staff has noticed an increase in demands from people with disabilities, and the image of Disneyland Paris as an accessible destination has been spread through shared experience, media, and the British award that Disneyland Paris received in 2002 for being the Best Disabled Facility¹². More and more people are travelling despite their disabilities, and more and more services are available. As a result, the expectations on the services are higher.

Disneyland Paris is collecting statistics to see how the numbers of disabled visitors develop. The data collection is made through the access card that is given to each visitor and which indicated whether the visitor has a disability, as well as the kind of disability. However, it is important to note that some

¹² Best Disabled Facility Award, Group Leisure Award Dinner, London

people may not indicate their accessibility through the access cards, therefore the number provided in the table 2 above may be slightly under estimated. Furthermore, it is generally difficult to collect information and statistics of this type in France due to the fact that it is prohibited by law to ask people about their disabilities.

Feedback from visitors has been mentioned previously as an important factor in the tourist destination's accessibility work. Disneyland Paris forwards complaint coming from visitors to a special accessibility committee which meets once a month. This procedure aims to improve what is not sufficiently good, and what lacks completely. The perspective of a visitor is different from the one of an employee, a consultant or an association, and is crucial to take into consideration. Very often modifications made to the company's accessible services, start with one of these complaints. Some examples include the integration of autism as disability on the access card (previously not included), revision of allowed number and profile of the helper, and revision of procedures.

Finally, interviews conducted with Disneyland Paris employees have reported a general satisfaction among visitors with disabilities. The renewal of the tourism and handicap label in the four categories in 2013, for the two Disneyland parks also confirms the level of accessibility services provided.

7.0 Conclusions

This case study has looked at the example of Disneyland Paris, highlighting the special features of this company in terms of accessibility awareness and provision of accessible services.

By reviewing and discussing different measures generally originating from the national government, the case study has demonstrated resulting impact both on accessibility in general in France, as well as on the accessibility developments in Disneyland Paris.

According to the information gathered through the interviews conducted with different staff from Disneyland Paris, it has been underlined that accessibility is part of the company's core policy, and has the same importance as diversity and integration. Therefore, the main objective seems to be the provision of the Disneyland Paris experience to any visitor, with or without disabilities. Disneyland Paris has since a long time been active in this area and has, as a company made various efforts in order to improve staff skills and accessibility of the tourist resort. The number of disabled visitors has grown following these efforts. Disneyland Paris has become known for

providing an accessible tourist destination, and this fame has spread thanks to visitors, labels and awards. In 2009, the number of disabled visitors was 55 462 whereas in 2012 it had increased to 65 179. These results evidently impact on the business and imply positive growth for the company.

According to the interviewees, Disneyland Paris seems well aware of the fact that accessibility is a slow process and that the existing services can be further improved. In order to reach an ideal situation in terms of accessibility, there is a stage of trial and error to see what works and what does not. The staff seems to think forward and plans to improve and develop the accessibility of the park. They are now at a stage where improvements are required and there are specific developments that they want to work on the coming years. One of these potential improvements would be the concentration of part of the information and booking service on visitors with disabilities only, rather than on special needs in general.

To conclude, Disneyland Paris seems to be a successful example of a company willing to improve its accessibility, through investment of time and resources spent on adapting its infrastructures, training of staff in different categories, and general awareness raising and specific accessible services. Both staff and visitors have proven to be satisfied with the efforts made and the increasing number of disabled visitors is underlining this further.

As a final conclusion of this case study, we have suggested some recommendations based on the information collected and the analysis performed in these pages, which will follow in the next section.

8.0 Recommendations

- Harmonised regulations regarding accessibility and definitions of different disabilities would facilitate accessible tourism throughout Europe, and in particular it would enable the European Commission to address this issue through a common effort. For example, autism is recognised as a disability in some countries, but not in all countries, which may create difficulties. It is often an issue related to vocabulary but it may result in important difference. In the case of Disneyland Paris, following feedback from visitors, they decided to include autism as a disability for their access cards.
- The significant cooperation with external stakeholders such as business partners but also organisations representing certain disabilities, has been of great importance to Disneyland Paris. This is an efficient and reliable way to work towards improved accessibility and in addition, it is a tool that could be applied anywhere with considerable results. Such a cooperation could be encouraged and also performed on a European level, but it is also crucial for the development of small and large tourism businesses.
- Disneyland Paris works together with the associations ADAPT and Templin Enterprises that both are working to promote disabled people in the work force. Today, about 600 people with disabilities are employed by Disneyland Paris, in a variety of roles. This has brought high awareness among employees which is important for them to be able to assist, communicate with and understand the difficulties of the disabled visitors. Such an approach could be applied and encouraged at a national and European level, as a means of improving awareness and accessibility in various destinations.
- Training and skills development has been important to the development of accessible services in Disneyland Paris and of the staff working closely with visitors. An introductory training module is compulsory for any new employee arriving. Even though such a training is limited to basics, it will however open up for discussion and raise awareness on these issues. The introduction of a compulsory training module would be a useful tool for any business working closely with the public.
- The national legislation of 2005 stating that all establishments in France receiving public must be made accessible before January 2015, has proven to be a crucial driver regarding accessibility in France. Such a tool could be used in other countries, and could also be encouraged at a European level. This is true also for the tourism and handicap label which rewards the businesses investing in, and working to develop accessible services. A European label, and e.g. an online

tool and website to promote the label and inform the public about accessibility in Europe would imply an efficient tool.

Annex I: Criteria and justification for best practices

Table 1: Criteria and justification for best practice

| Criteria | Justification | On track/off track |
|------------------------|---|---|
| Relevance | <p>The important work carried out by Disneyland Paris in terms of accessibility is a crucial part of the company's core policy on inclusion and diversity. No specific guidelines have been mentioned during the interviews performed, however, most interviewees have underlined the importance of being able to provide the same Disneyland experience to a disabled visitor as to an able-bodied visitor. Training is provided to the totality of the staff. In particular, an introductory training module on accessibility is compulsory for new employees as a way of raising awareness and preparing the staff for certain situations. Furthermore, the involvement of disabled people in the work force is another way of awareness raising and represents an instructive factor for other employees.</p> <p>Disneyland provides accessible services tailored to the specific needs of each individual requiring assistance. An information service is available to communicate, prepare and coordinate and will take into account the needs of the specific person. Generally, the four main types of disabilities are taken into consideration in the accessibility work, which is further highlighted by the award of the tourism and handicap label in the four categories in 2013. Following the first accessible services, demand and pressure from visitors have been an important driver for further investments in accessible services, as well as the demand from staff to receive training to be able to assist visitors with disabilities in an accurate way.</p> |  |
| Transferability | <p>Disneyland Paris has been cooperating with a variety of external stakeholders in order to provide suitable services for visitors with special needs and disabilities. These stakeholders include both consultants, trainers and experts, as well as organisations representing different disabilities. This has proven to be an efficient way of identifying good practices and of providing</p> |  |

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| | <p>accurate and reliable accessible services. The training provided to the Disneyland employees is another factor that should be highlighted in this context, since it contributes to a general awareness among the staff which will help prepare them to handle certain situations. This might be applied on a wider scale on e.g. a national level.</p> <p>Furthermore, visitors' feedback is being used on a regular basis in order to improve services and increase the understanding of visitors' needs. This, in combination with the training provision could possibly be replicated on a wider scale.</p> | |
| Efficient & Effectiveness | <p>Impacts of the efforts made by Disneyland Paris are visible to a large extent. Customer satisfaction is high, and there is a specific service working with the feedback – both positive and negative – received from visitors. The growing fame of Disneyland as an accessible tourist destination was also significant following the initial steps towards accessibility. Furthermore, the award of the Tourism and Handicap label twice, and other awards and media coverage are other examples of measured impacts.</p> |  |
| Sustainability | <p>Disneyland is working closely with external stakeholders and service providers, in order to assist the visitors with special needs. In particular, the accessible services provided by Eurostar has been highlighted in this case study, however, other companies such as TGV and Air France have been mentioned as well. Furthermore, Disneyland as a destination also includes hotels, restaurants and shops which are accessible and in line with the park's accessibility criteria. Generally, in France and thus also for Disneyland Paris, the national legislation from 2005 has been an important measure which has pushed for increased accessibility in a sustainable way.</p> |  |
| Innovation | <p>The personal contact provided by the information service enables an adaptation of the services to the specific needs of an individual. This implies that instead of providing basic information on the type of disability, and thus categorising a person, a personal service is an innovative and open way of dealing with these enquiries and demands for accessible services. Furthermore, the involvement of a high number of disabled people in the work force of Disneyland Paris represents an innovative way of integrating disabled person as a natural</p> |  |

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| | <p>component of the daily work and life at Disneyland, not only in regards to visitors. This prepares employees to handle difficult situation with disabled visitors and to be more comfortable in their assistance and contact with disabled visitors.</p> | |
|--|---|--|