

ENAT Looks Forward to a Bright Future!

Ivor Ambrose, Coordinator of ENAT, the European Network for Accessible Tourism, takes an end-of-year look at what ENAT has achieved, and where it will go next.

ENAT has come a long way in the two years since we began.

- 400 registered members in 46 countries
- 2 international workshops (Brussels 2006 and Athens, 2006)
- 1 international Congress (Marina D'Or, 2007)
- The ENAT website with
 - over 450 pages of fresh information, searchable by accessible tourism keywords
 - links to more than 100 relevant websites around the globe
 - more than 40 fully referenced Projects and Good Practices in accessible tourism
 - more than 100 reports and articles to download
 - workshop and conference presentations to download
 - Newsletters and regular news items, plus a new e-Bulletin service
 - Press coverage.

We have built up momentum and we are now forging ahead in delivering up-to-date, relevant and reliable information to our members and to the global community. Our website at www.accessibletourism.org has received more than a quarter of a million "hits", and 17,000 unique visitors since April 2006.

We are seeking to improve our services and make membership of ENAT even more attractive in 2008. Here are some things that are lined up for the future:

From the beginning of 2008, ENAT will be registered in Belgium as a non-governmental organisation. The ENAT Board, in close consultation with non-executive Board Members and National Coordinators will define the ENAT workplan for 2008-2009. Some of the first actions are already being put in place.

ENAT Members will be invited to sign up to the **ENAT Code of Good Conduct** containing clear statements about how businesses and organisations should deliver accessible tourism services responsibly to their clients and customers. In future, **only members who pledge to follow this voluntary code of conduct will be entitled to use the exclusive ENAT label as a mark of recognition for their effort.** Our ambition is that the ENAT label will serve the tourism industry as a badge of quality which customers throughout Europe will come to recognise and rely on as a guarantee of the highest standards of accessible tourism service.

In order to enable businesses and organisations to fulfil the promises of the ENAT Code of Good Conduct, ENAT will publish a series of short and simple

Good Practice Guidelines for Accessible Tourism covering aspects such as: service delivery, building design and maintenance, infrastructure, transport, information services, staff training, recruitment and employment, visitor safety and security...

ENAT will bring in a range of new services for members and a new fee structure from 1st April 2008.

Members' services will include:

- exclusive access to information bulletins and on-line resources; promotion/marketing channels;
- favourable discounts at conferences and events;
- business-referrals;
- opportunities for participation in trans-national project proposals on specific accessible tourism themes;
- support for regional and national ENAT coordination centres.

ENAT will issue calls for tender (to ENAT members only) to hold international events in 2008 and 2009.

The ENAT website will be extended to cover new languages, with Greek and Italian coming in the first months of 2008, followed by French, Portuguese, Dutch, Swedish and Spanish.

As ENAT gathers members from Europe and countries across the world, we will extend our efforts to represent our members' interests by engaging with national, European and international political institutions, authorities and organisations.

In the EU, it is especially encouraging that Members of the European Parliament recently passed a resolution on a renewed EU Tourism Policy, as described in the report: **Towards a stronger partnership for European Tourism**. This report, by Italian MEP Paolo Costa calls on all Member States, tourism providers and national and local tourist organisations to join and/or to support initiatives which will specifically enhance accessible tourism.

Accordingly, ENAT will contribute to this positive development by offering its network and its dissemination channels to specialists, public authorities and NGOs in order to further dialogue and the spread of good practices. We will also actively consult with our members regarding possible legislation, standards and guidelines where accessible tourism may be promoted – or threatened – by future policies and practices.

We will also seek to consolidate the position of ENAT by forging alliances with other players in accessible tourism – in the tourism industry, other service sectors and education, and also among organisations of consumers, people with disabilities, seniors, families and other groups with special interests in accessible tourism.

None of this can be achieved without human and financial resources!

ENAT is therefore looking for partner organisations to take on the role of National Coordinator in those countries where we don't have such representatives. We are missing coordinators in France, Germany, The Netherlands, and the "new" Member States, to name just a few. National Coordinators will be advised and encouraged to organise and recruit new members and to develop content for the ENAT portal in their own language, thus serving the needs of their national and regional members more directly. National events can also be planned for ENAT members.

We also call on Sponsors who share our values and objectives to contribute with financial support for the work of ENAT. If you would like to discuss the possibilities and benefits of sponsorship, contact me directly, using the contact details given below.

Finally, we look forward to welcoming many new ENAT members in the year ahead. We welcome companies, organisations and institutions that aim to learn from each other, so they too can share in the benefits of a world where accessible tourism is the rule, rather than the exception.

ENAT – Working Together to Make Tourism in Europe Accessible for All

Contact

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Note: NEW ADDRESS!

Members! Please be sure to register your postal address to receive your ENAT Membership Certificate and free **2008 Accessible Tourism Calendar**.