



**For Immediate Release
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Lonely Planet and the European Network for Accessible Tourism (ENAT) join forces to promote inclusive tourism around the world

Global travel brand and guidebook publisher Lonely Planet and ENAT, the European non-profit association working for accessible inclusive tourism, have established a cooperative agreement to bring greater attention to the requirements of visitors with disabilities and other travellers with specific access needs.

Their aim is twofold:

- to show tourism suppliers and destinations around the world how they can benefit from reaching out to the accessible tourism market; and
- to encourage people with a broad spectrum of access needs to explore their world with greater confidence so as to enjoy new experiences and the many benefits of travel.

Signing the new *Memorandum of Understanding* on behalf of Lonely Planet, Accessible Travel Manager Martin Heng, who himself became disabled due to a cycling accident, remarked:

"...Large parts of the tourism sector are still unaware of the potential of the accessible travel market and how to meet these travellers' needs. Thanks to our new partnership with ENAT we will be able to strengthen our efforts to improve information about access and make the accessible places and offers around the world better known to potential visitors. We have a growing community of travellers with access needs who are sharing information about how and where to travel, and we hope to see the supply of accessible destinations increase to meet the growing demand."

ENAT President, Anna Grazia Laura, welcoming the agreement, adds:

"...The accessible tourism market is worth €150 billion in Europe alone but many businesses hold onto the mistaken belief that this is a 'niche' market in which it is difficult for them to turn a profit. In fact, good access and inclusive customer service should be everybody's business! Through our studies and the work of our members in over 30 countries we are seeing that tourist destinations and suppliers who create inclusive, accessible offers are gaining more customers as a result. The market is extremely diverse and includes the growing numbers of seniors, visitors with disabilities and families with small children."

Laura concludes: *"We are really excited to be working with Lonely Planet, bringing ENAT's members and partners closer to the worldwide customer base that seeks accessible offers. This is a great opportunity for bringing a fresh and innovative spirit to the tourism sector. With our cooperation agreement we will be connecting with communities and businesses around the world, aiming to fulfil our mission to make all destinations accessible for everyone."*

As a result of their new *Memorandum of Understanding*, Lonely Planet's Travel for All Google+ community (<https://plus.google.com/communities/114049628154087345562>) will be connected with ENAT's web and social media channels, and the two partners will collaborate in joint promotion of each other's initiatives through publications, tourism conferences, events and incentive programmes.



In the last two years Lonely Planet has turned the spotlight on accessible travel, collecting and sharing information about accessible destinations and activities with its global following via its Travel for All community and Martin Heng's Twitter account (@Martin_Heng). Lonely Planet's first access guide, *Accessible Melbourne* – developed by a team led by Heng and available at <http://www.lonelyplanet.com/accessible-melbourne> – offers relevant advice for visitors with mobility, hearing and visual impairments. Offered as a free e-book, it has proved to be a great success with more than 10,000 downloads since its publication in December 2014.

ENDS.

To Editors:

LONELY PLANET is global travel brand producing award-winning coverage of almost every destination on the globe that is available across print, mobile, online, magazines and ebooks. Lonely Planet's products are also available in a multitude of languages and Lonely Planet's online community of over six million travellers can be found sharing travel tips and experiences across social media channels and its Thorn Tree forum.

Lonely Planet's mission is to enable people to have amazing experiences more often, because travel makes life better.

Lonely Planet exists to inspire and inform anyone with the desire to explore and connect with the world. Lonely Planet believes that the thrill of discovery can be found almost anywhere – whether you are exploring a new continent or finding hidden gems in your own local area.

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The European Network for Accessible Tourism (ENAT) is a non-governmental association established under Belgian law, with the aim of promoting accessible tourism on a non-profit basis.

ENAT's mission is to make European tourism destinations, products and services accessible to all visitors and to help promote Accessible Tourism around the world.

ENAT seeks to further the development of accessible tourism at an international level, meaning *to make travel and tourism everywhere possible, safe and comfortable for all*, including people with disabilities, seniors, families with small children and others who have specific access requirements.

ENAT members include over 150 member organisations in more than 30 countries in Europe and overseas.

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