

# Accessibility Review of European National Tourist Boards' Websites 2012

**Presentation of a Study carried out by  
European Network for Accessible Tourism (ENAT)**

12th May 2013

[www.accessibletourism.org](http://www.accessibletourism.org)

Email: [enat@accessibletourism.org](mailto:enat@accessibletourism.org)

ENAT - Working together to make Tourism in Europe Accessible for All

# NTO Websites – Playing a key role



- NTO-websites are an important medium for informing visitors when planning to visit a specific country or region of Europe
- The “international face” of the country’s tourism offer
- An overview of key features, essential information
- Links to other websites and tourism / travel providers
  - Offers, tourist packages, travel and transport possibilities, accommodation, reservations and ticketing .....
  - Further information on specific themes, regions...

# Survey of European NTO Websites

- ENAT researchers examined 41 NTO websites

The list of NTO web sites was taken from the website of the European Travel Commission, supplemented with NTO sites of those EU member states which are not ETC members.

- Sites were tested and examined in the period August to October, 2012
- Both automated and manual (human) checks were carried out.

# Survey of European NTO Websites

## Two main questions:

1. Is the website accessible for people with disabilities?
2. Is there information about the accessibility of destinations, transport and venues on the website – or, if not, is there “signposting” to where this information can be found?

# Web Accessibility and Tourism Websites

## Definition of accessibility in the World Wide Web:

- Information has to be **accessible to all people**, no matter whether they are disabled or not
- Information must be accessible **independent** of
  - Which **browser** one uses (Chrome, Firefox, Internet Explorer, Safari, etc.)
  - Which **device** is used: (PC, tablet, smart phone, etc.)
- **Tourism related websites** will be more effective and gain more revenue by being accessible:
  - Easier for visitors to use, navigate and interact with
  - Working at lower bandwidths, content loads faster
  - Less maintenance, more reliable, cost-saving and future-proof

# Technical Guidelines for Web Accessibility

- Technical guidelines for accessibility of websites and web content
  - Standard HTML code is defined by the W3C (World Wide Web Consortium)
  - WCAG (Web Content Accessibility Guidelines) are defined by W3C
    - WCAG level 1.0 (previous edition) or level 2.0 (current edition)
    - Accessibility levels from lowest to highest:
      - Level A, Level AA and Level AAA

# Reasons for building accessible Websites

- Most important source of information and communication
- Bookings through the internet are increasing steadily



# Meeting Market and Policy Expectations

- Without Web accessibility:
  - Possible loss of customers in general
  - Loss of customers from the increasing segment of people with special needs or disabilities
- Market and policy issues:
  - Increasing ageing population
  - Accessible public Websites required under United States law
  - Compliance with UN-convention of the rights of people with disabilities, signed by EU
  - EU and Member States support accessibility of all public websites
  - A proposal for an EU Accessibility Act (2013) may require accessible websites by law.



# Survey of European NTO Websites

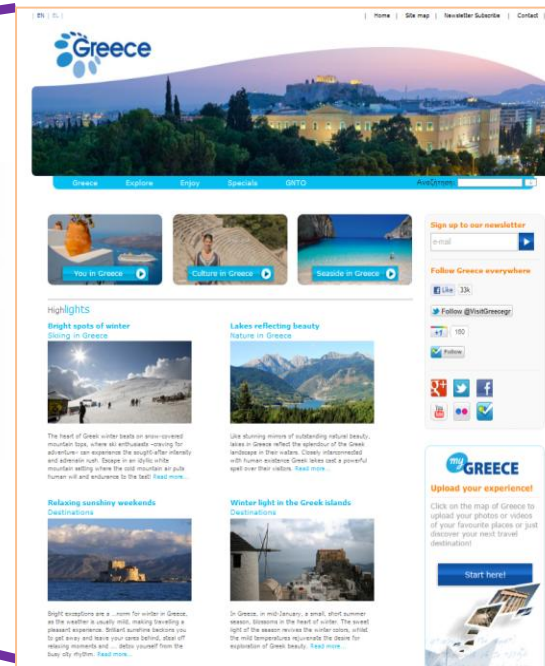
- Question 1. Are NTO websites accessible for people with disabilities?**



> Test of compliance with HTML



> Test of compliance with Level Double-A conformance, W3C WAI Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0



# Web Accessibility Test Methods

1. Automated accessibility test (Total Validator analyzing software)
2. Accessible information was reviewed by market researchers

## **Limiting factors:**

- A snapshot of websites taken in August to October 2012
- Automatic testing is just a part – much manual work has to be done. Due to lack of resources the study could not go into depth for every NTO site.

# Countries & websites (1)

Country	National Tourist Organisation	Website
Austria	Austrian National Tourist Office	<a href="http://www.austria.info">http://www.austria.info</a>
Belgium		<a href="http://www.visiteurope.com/Belgium">http://www.visiteurope.com/Belgium</a>
Belgium-Flanders	Tourism Flanders	<a href="http://www.visitflanders.co.uk/">http://www.visitflanders.co.uk/</a>
Belgium-Brussels/Wallonia	Belgian Tourist Office Brussels	<a href="http://www.opt.be/">http://www.opt.be/</a>
Bulgaria	Bulgaria Travel	<a href="http://bulgariatravel.org/en/official_tourism_portal/">http://bulgariatravel.org/en/official_tourism_portal/</a>
Croatia	Croatian National Tourist Board	<a href="http://croatia.hr/en-GB/Homepage">http://croatia.hr/en-GB/Homepage</a>
Cyprus	Cyprus Tourism Organisation	<a href="http://www.visitcyprus.com/wps/portal!/ut/p/c5/04_SB8K8xLLM9MSSzPy8xBz9CP0os3hXN0fH">http://www.visitcyprus.com/wps/portal!/ut/p/c5/04_SB8K8xLLM9MSSzPy8xBz9CP0os3hXN0fH</a>
Czech Republic	CzechTourism	<a href="http://www.czechtourism.com/Homepage.aspx?lang=en-GB&amp;selectedculture=en-GB">http://www.czechtourism.com/Homepage.aspx?lang=en-GB&amp;selectedculture=en-GB</a>
Denmark	VisitDenmark	<a href="http://www.visitdenmark.com/denmark/tourist-frontpage">http://www.visitdenmark.com/denmark/tourist-frontpage</a>
Estonia	Estonian Tourist Board	<a href="http://www.visitestonia.com/en">http://www.visitestonia.com/en</a>
Finland	Visit Finland	<a href="http://www.visitfinland.com/">http://www.visitfinland.com/</a>
France	The French Tourist Board	<a href="http://www.visiteurope.com/Discover/Countries/France">http://www.visiteurope.com/Discover/Countries/France</a>
France	The French Tourist Board	<a href="http://uk.franceguide.com">http://uk.franceguide.com</a>
FYROM (Yugoslav Republic of)	Macedonia travel portal	<a href="http://travel2macedonia.com.mk/">http://travel2macedonia.com.mk/</a>
Georgia	Georgian National Tourism Agency	<a href="http://www.georgia.travel/">http://www.georgia.travel/</a>
Germany	German National Tourist Board	<a href="http://www.germany.travel/en/index.html">http://www.germany.travel/en/index.html</a>
Greece	Greek National Tourism	<a href="http://www.visitgreece.gr/">http://www.visitgreece.gr/</a>
Hungary	Hungarian National Tourist Office	<a href="http://www.hungary.com">http://www.hungary.com</a>
Iceland	Iceland Tourist Board	<a href="http://www.icelandtouristboard.com">http://www.icelandtouristboard.com</a>
Ireland	Tourism Ireland	<a href="http://www.discoverireland.com/gb/">http://www.discoverireland.com/gb/</a>

# Countries & websites (2)

<b>Country</b>	<b>National Tourist Organisation</b>	<b>Website</b>
Ireland	Tourism Ireland	<a href="http://www.discoverireland.com/gb/">http://www.discoverireland.com/gb/</a>
Italy	Ministry of Tourism	<a href="http://www.italia.it/en/home.html">http://www.italia.it/en/home.html</a>
Latvia	Latvian Tourism Development	<a href="http://www.latvia.travel/en">http://www.latvia.travel/en</a>
Lithuania	Lithuanian National Tourism Office	<a href="http://www.lithuania.travel/">http://www.lithuania.travel/</a>
Luxembourg	Luxembourg National Tourist	<a href="http://www.ont.lu/home-en.html">http://www.ont.lu/home-en.html</a>
Malta	Malta Tourism Authority	<a href="http://www.visitmalta.com">http://www.visitmalta.com</a>
Monaco	Monaco Government	<a href="http://www.visitmonaco.com/en">http://www.visitmonaco.com/en</a>
Montenegro	National Tourism Organisation of	<a href="http://www.montenegro.travel/en">http://www.montenegro.travel/en</a>
Netherlands	The Netherlands Board of Tourism &	<a href="http://www.holland.com">http://www.holland.com</a>
Norway	Innovation Norway	<a href="http://www.visitnorway.com">http://www.visitnorway.com</a>
Poland	Polish Tourist Organisation	<a href="http://www.poland.travel/en-gb">http://www.poland.travel/en-gb</a>
Portugal	Turismo de Portugal, I.P.	<a href="http://www.visitportugal.com/Cultures/en-US/default.html">http://www.visitportugal.com/Cultures/en-US/default.html</a>
Romania	The Romanian Tourist Office	<a href="http://www.romaniatourism.com/">http://www.romaniatourism.com/</a>
San Marino	San Marino Board of Tourism	<a href="http://www.visitsanmarino.com/online/en/home.html">http://www.visitsanmarino.com/online/en/home.html</a>
Serbia	National Tourism Organisation of	<a href="http://www.serbia.travel/">http://www.serbia.travel/</a>
Slovakia	Slovak Tourist Board	<a href="http://www.slovakia.travel/intropage.aspx?l=2">http://www.slovakia.travel/intropage.aspx?l=2</a>
Slovenia	Slovenian Tourist Board	<a href="http://www.slovenia.info/?home=0&amp;lng=2&amp;id_country=5">http://www.slovenia.info/?home=0&amp;lng=2&amp;id_country=5</a>
Spain	Instituto de Turismo de España	<a href="http://www.spain.info/en_GB/">http://www.spain.info/en_GB/</a>
Sweden	VisitSweden	<a href="http://www.visitsweden.com/sweden/">http://www.visitsweden.com/sweden/</a>
Switzerland	Switzerland Tourism	<a href="http://www.myswitzerland.com/en/home.html">http://www.myswitzerland.com/en/home.html</a>
Turkey	Turkey's Official Tourism Portal	<a href="http://www.goturkey.com/index.php?lng=en">http://www.goturkey.com/index.php?lng=en</a>
United Kingdom	VisitBritain – UK National Tourism	<a href="http://www.visitbritain.com/en/GB/">http://www.visitbritain.com/en/GB/</a>

# Technical check

- The technical questions referred to what degree the internet pages correspond to the standards of the WCAG (**Web Content Accessibility Guidelines**) and which type of errors and warnings occurred
- Testing was carried out using the “**Total Validator**“ validation tool in English
- Particular notice was taken of the impact on the accessibility of a specified error or warning

# Technical check

## “Total Validator“ description

- Total Validator is an (X)HTML validator, an accessibility validator, a spell checker, and a broken links checker all rolled into one tool allowing one-click validation of web pages.
- The language is English.
- Total Validator provides the following basic features:
  - A parser that validates the basic construction of web pages
  - The best HTML validation against the W3C Markup Standards
  - Accessibility validation against the WCAG (1.0 and 2.0) and US Section 508 standard
  - CSS validation against the W3C CSS Standards
  - Checks each page for broken links
  - Spell checks the content of web pages: English (American and British), French, Italian, Spanish, and German
  - One-click validation using the Browser extensions

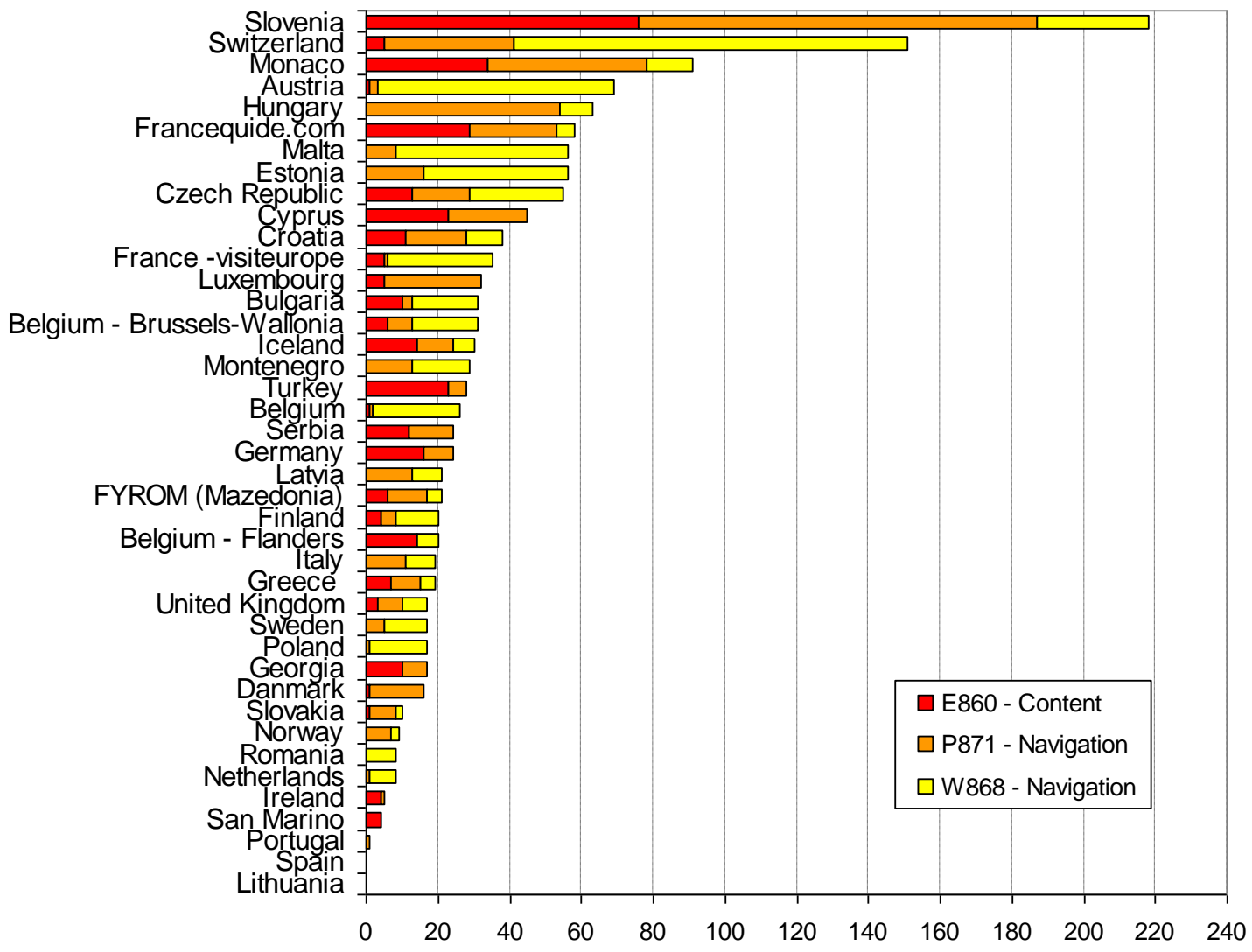
# Technical check

- Pre-testing started with the check of six countries, using the English version, the German version and the version of the native language. As nearly the same kind of errors occurred with each version we decided to apply only the English version in the study because of limited time resources. If there were different English versions, the UK version was used.
- The dates of carrying out the technical tests were: 15.08.2012, 19.08.2012, 26.08.2012, 08.09.2012.
- The technical report, “Accessibility of the NTO-Websites, Results of the tests performed with Total Validator 7.5.1 (Raw material)” was written on 9th of September 2012.

# Compliance with WCAG

- **None** of the 41 NTO websites complied fully with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, not even the basic level A.
- **Some** content providers tried to pay attention to accessibility, but still missed some important points.

### Frequencies of the most common failures



# Examples of accessibility problems

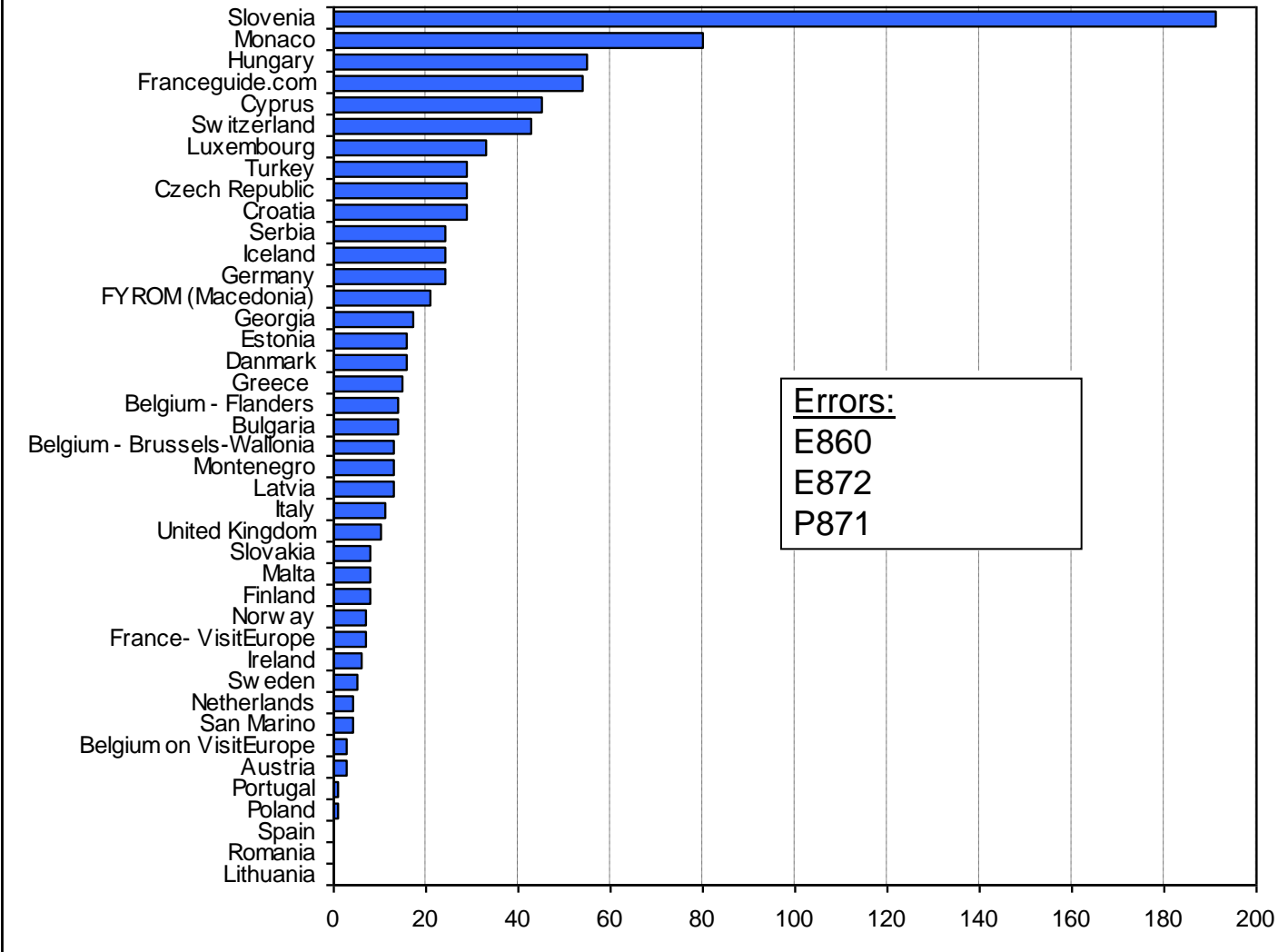
- Same link text leading to different pages
  - Confusing to users who use screenreaders
- Links with no text at all, forms with no submit-button
  - Page might be inaccessible to users with screenreaders, smartphones or tablets
- Missing alt-tags on images
  - Some information can not be accessed by blind people and cannot be indexed by search engines

The next slide shows a summary of most typical errors:

# Error meanings

Error	Occurrences	Message	Description	Severity	Type of problem
W868	565	Different links that use the same link text may be confusing.	Typically this error occurs when using link texts which do not mean anything - such as "click here". Screenreaders offer the ability to read back a list of links – with such a text this list becomes meaningless, thus making it difficult for people with seeing difficulties to navigate the page. The best solution is to extend the link-text to something like "click here for more information about hotels in Athens". Alternatively a normally invisible Link-title can be provided which only shows up as a tooltip when hovering over it with the mouse.	Average	Navigation
P871	536	Link text is missing	Links should always have text clearly describing where they lead. It can also be an image with alternative text. Here however there is no text provided at all or just a meaningless URL - rendering the link mostly useless to people using a screenreader	High	Navigation
E860	338	When using images, specify a short text alternative with the 'alt' attribute	Images and other visual media must have an alternative text describing it's content. If this is missing screenreaders can not interpret the information and read back nothing or a meaningless filename.	High	Content
E872	24	The submit button is missing	Forms such as contact forms, search boxes or some navigation menus must provide a button to submit the forms contents. In this case the action is triggered somehow else, like by clicking on a separate element or just by performing a selection in a drop-down box. This can make it difficult for users with screenreaders or mobile devices to use this specific form. (On mobile devices you don't have a mouse, blind people typically do not use mice)	High	Navigation

### Sum of the three failures with high severity (concerning navigation and content)



Errors:  
 E860  
 E872  
 P871

# Some observations

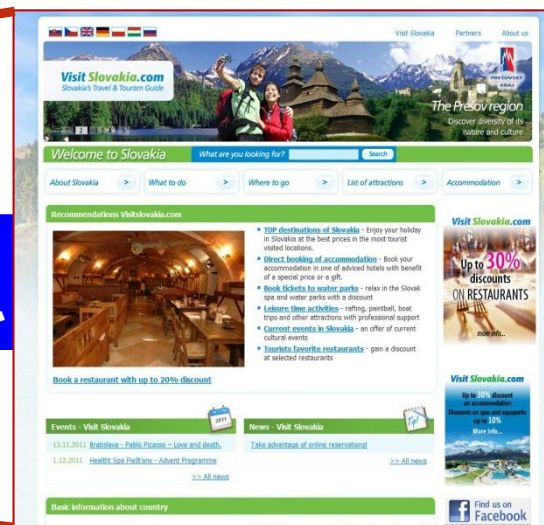
No websites were completely free of errors...

Considering these “high severity” failures:

- The average number of errors is 21.9
- Median is 13;
- Range is: 0 to 191;
- Standard deviation is: 18.3
  
- NOTE: as NTO websites have different numbers of pages, they are not directly comparable. Sites with more pages can lead to more errors; sites with fewer pages are more likely to have fewer errors.

# Survey of European NTO Websites

- **Question 2. What accessibility information about destinations, venues, accommodation etc. is available on NTO websites for the visitors who need it?**
  - Is there any information at all? Is it easy to find?
  - Where is it exactly? How many clicks does it take to get there?
  - How is the information structured and how useful and reliable is it ?



# Manual check

A manual check was carried out on every web site to see whether there was any information directed towards **customers with disabilities**

- A pre-test was conducted in August 2012 to identify the possible range of target information and to refine the search techniques. Manual testing ran from September to October 2012.
- For many pages it was necessary to “look twice” or even more often to see if there was any access information to be found. The latest days of going through all websites were the 20th and 21st of October 2012.

# Content checking procedure

- **The first question** was easy to answer with the following command typed in the Google search box of the browser: “*search-item site:domain-name*”. This command searches for the specified item (disabled, access, barrier, etc...) in the main page and sub-pages.
- **The second question** was easy to answer by looking at the main page and searching for one of the items.
- **The third question** had to be answered mostly by relying on common sense. It is obvious, that a link labelled “**Practical info**” is more likely to be recognised as a link which could lead to access information, as opposed to a link labelled “Things to see and do”.
- In general it is difficult to rate information as the type of information (the entire information on one page, short information with links to more detailed information or just links to detailed information) does not correspond with range, reliability and validity of the content.
- To check each sentence, each passage or each link, was not possible due to time and resource limitations. So short checks at a few links per page were carried out to find out whether information is available in English.

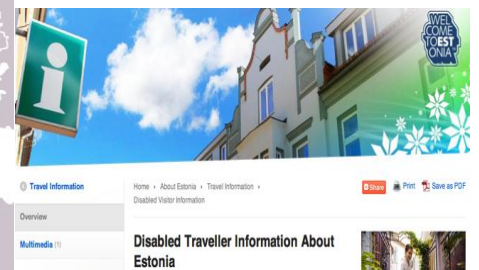
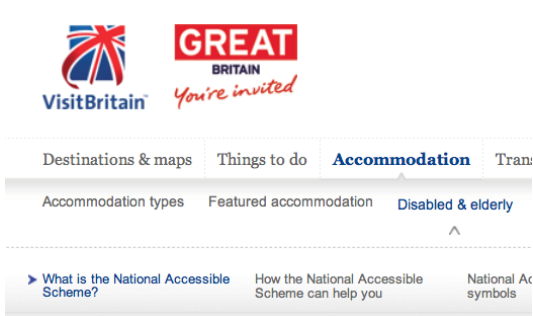
# Manual Check for Access Information

Words or fragments of words were used as search terms:

- access
- barrier
- blind
- deaf
- disabled
- handicap
- hear
- impair
- mobility
- wheelchair

# Is there **access information** on NTO websites?

Only 19 out of 41 NTO websites in Europe were found to provide some accessibility information for disabled visitors and other people with specific access requirements

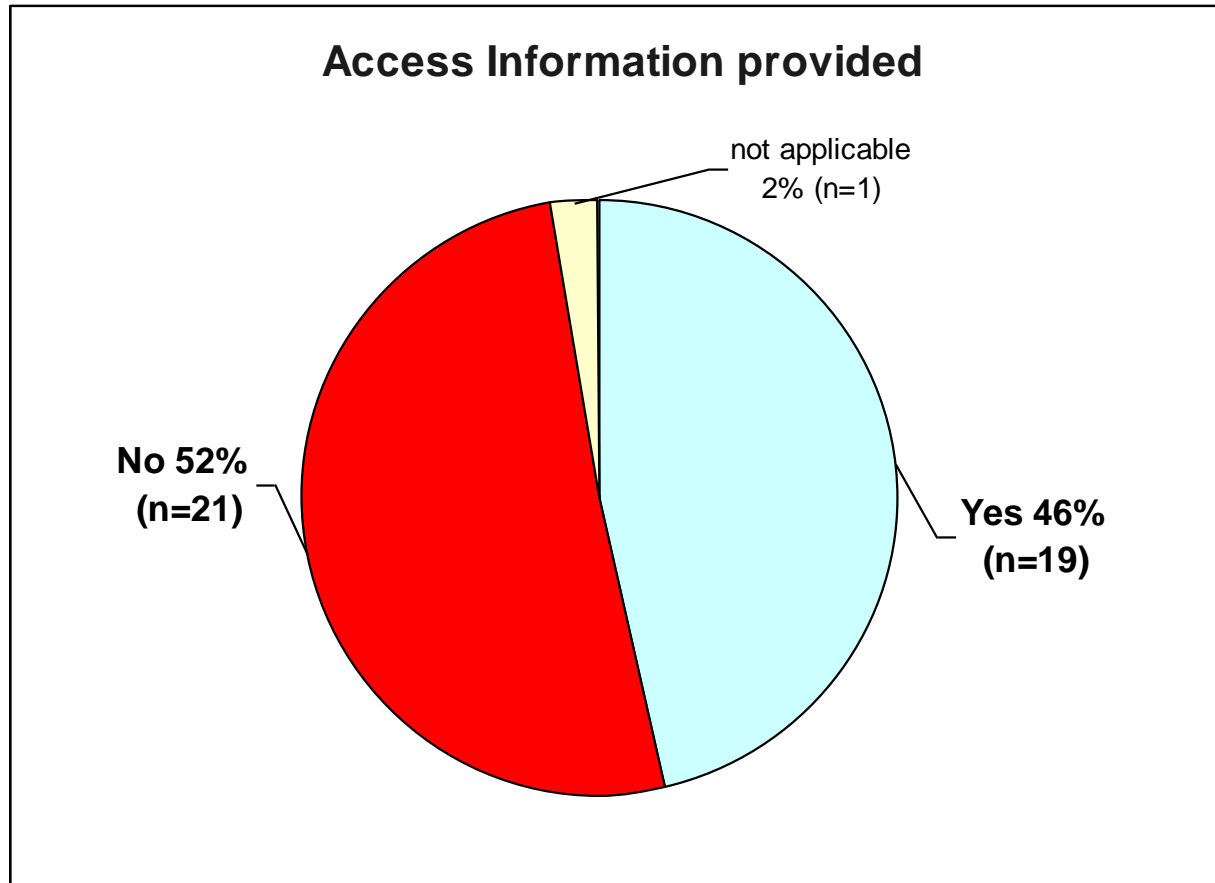


# How to find access information?

Frequently used keywords for menus:

- Practical information
  - Tips
  - Travel/Travellers
  - Info
  - Accommodation
  - Planning your trip
- 
- Some countries have their own access labelling system
  - No specification for different users' access needs
  - Some information and links for disabled travellers are only in the National language.

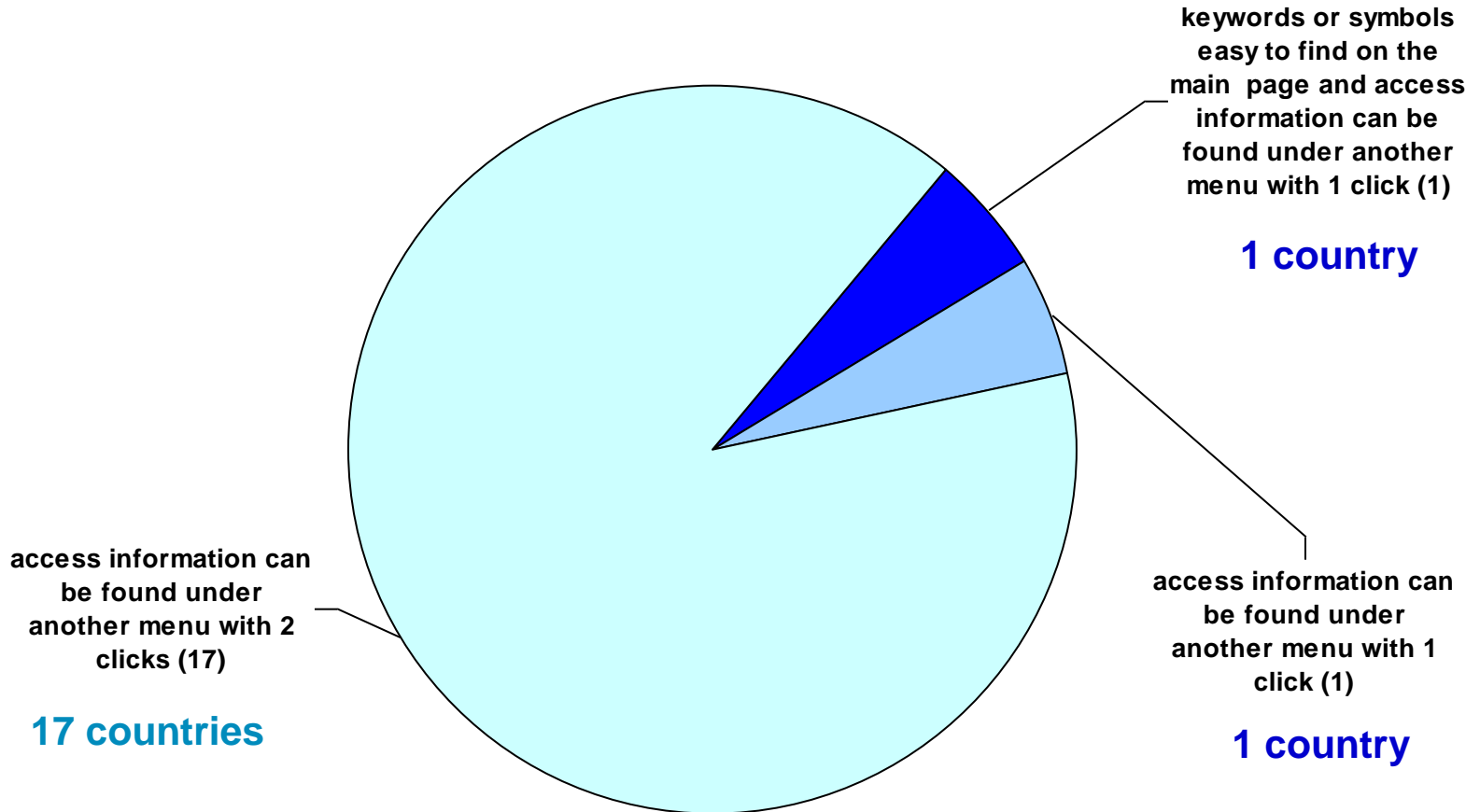
# Accessible Tourism Information













- None of the countries has an “accessibility information section’ on the home page.
- Accessible tourism information can be found under a variety of sub-menus, e.g. “accommodation” or “practical information”.

## How many clicks does it take to find access information?









### Access-Information found with # of clicks 1)



# When there IS accessibility information, WHERE is it exactly?

Country	Access info provided Y=Yes N=No	Access info section on main (start) page	Keywords or symbols easy to find	Access information can be found under another menu	Number of clicks	Links to related sites
Austria 	Y	No	No	<u>Search and Book</u> > How to get there > <b>Holidays without Barriers</b>	2	yes
Belgium-Flanders	Y	No	No	<u>Practical information</u> > <b>People with disabilities</b>	2	yes
Belgium-Brussels/Wallonia 	Y	No	No	<u>Accommodation</u> > <b>People with reduced mobility</b>	2	yes
Cyprus 	Y	No	No	<u>Accommodation</u> > <b>Accessible Cyprus</b>	1	No
Denmark 	Y	No	No	<u>Practical tips</u> > Special travel > <b>Disabled travel</b>	2	General information & links to different websites
Estonia 	Y	No	No	<u>Things to see and do</u> > People like you - <b>Estonia for People with special needs</b> , and Accommodation > <b>Disabled access</b>	2	General information & links to different websites
France 	Y	No	No	Yes (Practical information)	2	Yes (e.g. Paris-info)
Germany 	Y	No	Germany for barrier-free travel		1	yes
Ireland 	Y	No	No	Plan your visit > <b>Disabled travellers</b>	2	yes
Italy 	Y	No	No	Useful info > <b>Accessibility</b>	2	yes
Latvia 	Y	No	No	Where to go and what to see > Latvia for you > <b>People with special needs</b>	2	yes

# When there IS accessibility information, WHERE is it exactly?

Country	Access info provided Y=Yes N=No	Access info section on main (start) page	Keywords or symbols easy to find	Access information can be found under another menu	Number of clicks	Links to related sites
Malta	 Y	Yes, but only about web-accessibility and how to read website		<u>Practical info</u> > <b>Accessibility</b>	2	Yes
Monaco	 Y	No	No	<u>Plan your stay</u> > Hotel > <b>Rooms adapted</b>	2	
Portugal	 Y	No	No	<u>All about Portugal</u> > <b>Disabled Access</b>	2	Yes
Slovenia	 Y	No	No	<u>Facts about Slovenia</u> > Practical information > <b>Tourism for people with special needs</b>	2	
Spain	 Y	Yes, but just about web-accessibility and how to read the website	No	<u>Enjoy</u> > <b>“accessible tourism“</b>	2	
Sweden	 Y	No	No	<u>Sweden facts</u> > <b>Disabled travellers</b>	2	Yes
Switzerland	 Y	No	No	<u>Transport</u> > <b>Guests with special needs</b>	2	Yes
United Kingdom	 Y	No	No	<u>Accessibility</u> (web-information) / Accommodation > <b>Disabled &amp; Elderly</b>	2	

## Information - easy to find.

- As of October 2012, not one of the NTO-sites studied had a special section, a symbol or a button for access information on the home page
- There are just 2 websites with easy to understand buttons:  
**Denmark** with „Special travel“ (- which, however, covers information for disabled travellers and for gay people) and  
**Germany** with „Germany for ...“ (there you'll find information for young people, people with disabilities, for gay people, for honeymoon and people aged 50+)...  
*- Disability is treated as a special segment, not part of every market...*
- To reach the page with the access information in most of the cases two clicks are necessary.
  - Other (drop-down-) menus where accessible information is to be found are titled with phrases like
  - „Practical info“ (Malta) or „Practical information“ (Belgium-Flanders; France) and „Useful info“ (Italy). That still could be difficult to understand for inexperienced users..

# Lack of consistency, mixed messages

The study shows that among the NTO websites:

- There is no conventional way to indicate that accessibility information is present
- There is no clear indication of how or where to find this information (if present)
- There is no standard approach for the kind of accessibility information that is presented

# Quality criteria for presentation of accessibility information

## **Accessible Tourism information must be....**

1. Easy to find - directly from the Home Page and above the fold
2. Covering the requirements of visitors with different disabilities and the services that can support them
3. Offered in several languages
4. Preferably viewable on the NTO website itself – not only as a link to an off-site service provider

# Conclusions

- The market for accessible tourism is not functioning equally well in all countries and regions of Europe
- This is due to
  - Lack of accessible websites and
  - Lack of accessibility information

Most NTOs are not providing information in an accessible way, which diminishes the value of their content for many users
- The choice of destinations and products is severely limited by lack of information for those people who need good access at the destination

# NTOs' checklist for Ensuring Web Accessibility:

- Make your website accessible to communicate with **all** your customers!
- Use accessibility guidelines: WAI / WCAG2.0 when designing, building and maintaining sites
- Include an accessibility statement on web pages
- Use web accessibility evaluation tools
- Visit [www.eaccessplus.eu](http://www.eaccessplus.eu) for more advice



# Is your tourism website accessible for all?

For more information visit  
<http://hub.eaccessplus.eu>



Some people simply need an accessible website. Accessible websites are easier and faster to use

## Quick & easy tips to make accessible websites

- Images and animations. Use the alt attribute to describe the function of each image.
- Image maps. Use client-side MAP and text for hotspots.
- Multimedia. Provide captioning and transcripts of audio, and descriptions of video.
- Hypertext links. Use text that makes sense when read out of context. For example, avoid "click here".
- Page organisation. Use headings, lists and consistent structure. Use Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) for layout and style where possible.
- Graphs & charts. Summarize or use the longdesc attribute.
- Scripts, applets & plug-ins. Provide alternative content in case active features are inaccessible or unsupported.
- Frames. Use NOFRAMES and meaningful titles.
- Tables. Make line-by-line reading sensible. Summarise.
- Check your work. Validate. Use tools, checklist and guidelines at <http://www.w3.org/TR/WCAG20/>

For complete Guidelines / Checklist: [www.w3.org/WAI](http://www.w3.org/WAI)



Download this poster in A4 format from:

[http://www.accessibletourism.org/?i=enat.en.enat\\_projects\\_and\\_good\\_practices.1038](http://www.accessibletourism.org/?i=enat.en.enat_projects_and_good_practices.1038)

# NTOs' checklist for Including Accessibility Information on websites:

- Research your accessible tourism supply chains:
  - Transport, destinations, accommodation, venues, attractions and things to do... for all ages and abilities
- Publish accessibility information in a dedicated section of your website with a named link: **“Accessible Tourism”** on the home page
- Provide downloadable documents in accessible formats to let visitors plan, save and share information for their trip
- Use social media tools to collect and display visitor experiences and feedback on accessible tourism

# Is your website attractive to all your customers?

For more information visit  
<http://hub.eaccessplus.eu>



All kinds of customers are looking for Accessible Tourism information that can help them choose and enjoy YOUR destination



Provide accessibility information on your Tourism Website

- Gather objective and reliable accessibility information for venues, accommodation, attractions, transport and other tourism services, using an accredited accessibility audit partner where possible.
- Publish accessibility information routinely in your mainstream marketing.
- Include access as part of every promotion, whether it about events, special offers or things to do. Access information should always be present.
- Create an easily identifiable button or section on your Home Page for "Accessible Tourism" information. (Do not bury the information in a deep level of the site).
- Include user-generated content such as testimonials, photos and perhaps videos which show disabled people and others with access requirements enjoying the services you offer.
- Provide downloadable documents with summaries of accessibility information where possible.
- Use alternative accessible formats, e.g. audio books and video guides, to get your information out to all customers.
- Have a dedicated help-line for enquiries about access, with trained staff that are aware of the needs of customers with access requirements.
- Set up social media links on your website so that customers can bookmark, share and recommend you to others.
- Seek out access guide books, mobile apps, blogs and websites that refer to your destination, region or locality and link to these from your website. This will enable visitors to find accessible things to do and increase the chances that they will choose to visit.



Download this poster in A4 format from:

[http://www.accessibletourism.org/?i=enat.en.enat\\_projects\\_and\\_good\\_practices.1038](http://www.accessibletourism.org/?i=enat.en.enat_projects_and_good_practices.1038)

## **ENAT 2012 NTO Accessibility Review Team:**

Mr. Ivor Ambrose, ENAT, Greece

Dr. Angelika Laburda, IBFT, Austria

Mr. Simon Laburda, IBFT, Austria

Ms. Katerina Papamichail, ENAT, Greece

Mr. Chris Veitch, AccessNew Business, UK

## **For further information about the study and where to get advice, contact:**

### **Mr. Ivor Ambrose**

Managing Director

**European Network for Accessible Tourism asbl.**

ENAT Secretariat c/o EWORX S.A.,

Jean Moreas St. 66

GR-15231 Halandri, Athens

Greece.

Tel. 0030 210 614 8380

Fax. 0030 210 672 9312

E-mail: [enat@accessibletourism.org](mailto:enat@accessibletourism.org)

Web: [www.accessibletourism.org](http://www.accessibletourism.org)