

**ENAT Press Release: 27 September 2006**

**“Accessible Tourism is the way forward for businesses and customers alike”**

**The 27<sup>th</sup> of September is World Tourism Day.** This is the time when world tourism statistics are announced, such as the numbers of tourists travelling to destinations each year. Among the travellers to and within Europe, there are tens of millions of people with disabilities, older people and others who experience problems in getting around, due to physical and communication barriers in transport, in buildings and attractions.

Parts of the tourist industry are now making great efforts to ensure that tourism is possible and pleasurable for **all customers**. Tourism providers are making their offers and related services accessible – because it is good for business. Applying the concept of **Design for All**, tourist facilities are being upgraded and designed to cover the general needs of all the population, so as to guarantee equal access and enjoyment of goods and services for all. Better accessibility can increase absolute numbers of tourists, extend the tourism season and enhance return on investment.

2006 saw the formation of ENAT, the “European Network for Accessible Tourism”, a membership organisation where tourist

providers and suppliers can share and learn about good practices in accessible tourism from across Europe. The network receives financial support from the European Commission during 2006-2007. The Hellenic Ministry of Tourism, together with the Hellenic non-governmental organisation, "Disability Now" and EWORX S.A. are co-sponsors of the first **ENAT International Workshop on Accessible Tourism**, which will take place on 23 October in Athens. Members of ENAT will present and discuss new approaches in the tourism sector, designed to meet the needs of this significant market.

According to EU figures, there are 50 million people with disabilities, or about 10% of the resident population. Added to this there are some 80 million older people, many of whom – despite health or mobility problems – love to travel. The 55+ age group of "inbound" tourists is also the fastest growing tourism market in the UK, according to one of the ENAT partners, "VisitBritain". Altogether, the market trend points to an enormous potential for accessible tourism in European countries, regions and cities.

According to European Travel Commission, in 2005 there were 444 million international tourists, which represent almost 55% of total arrivals in the world and a 4.3% increase with respect to the previous year. The tourist market needs to take into account the right of disabled people and people with special needs to the pleasures of travelling and enjoying holidays. Unfortunately, this is

not generally the case, due primarily to the lack of adequate facilities.

### **ENAT, a European Network for Accessible Tourism**

ENAT held its inaugural General Meeting in Brussels on the 11<sup>th</sup> May 2006. ENAT is a growing network of over 70 tourist companies and organisations that promote tourism for all European customers.

ENAT was created by nine founding organisations from Greece, Spain, Ireland, Sweden, Belgium and Great Britain. The network is headed by the Information and Communication Technology Company, [EWORX S.A.](#), located in Athens, Greece.

### **Further information**

Link to

[ENAT Secretariat and ENAT Membership:](#)

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ENAT International Workshop, Athens, 23 October 2006

Link:

[http://www.accessibletourism.org/pages/events\\_international\\_meeting.jsp](http://www.accessibletourism.org/pages/events_international_meeting.jsp)

## **ENAT Flyer**

Download the ENAT Flyer (PDF Format)

[http://www.accessibletourism.org/pdfs/flyers/en\\_enat\\_flyer\\_A4.pdf](http://www.accessibletourism.org/pdfs/flyers/en_enat_flyer_A4.pdf)

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