Towards 2010: Disability Policy Challenges and Actions for the European Tourism Sector

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Working together to make tourism in Europe
Accessible for All

"Towards 2010: Disability Policy Challenges and Actions for the European Tourism Sector".

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Executive Summary

The title of this report, "Towards 2010: Disability Policy Challenges and Actions for the European Tourism Sector", draws attention to the year which was set as the end-point of the European Disability Action Plan – a plan which was conceived and launched in 2003, to combat discrimination and further the participation of disabled citizens in European society.

The report examines the targets that have been set in the policy domain and what still needs to be done within the travel and tourism sectors concerning the realisation of equal rights and accessibility for all in tourism.

This report lays out ENAT's proposition that:

- the quality of European tourism can and must be improved by both public authorities and tourism providers by taking into account the accessibility requirements of persons with disabilities and, indeed, all other visitors with access needs.

Three major factors underpin this proposition:

- Tourism destinations in Europe face increasing global competition in terms of price and quality. Tourism enterprises and organisations, often with the support of the public sector, are seeking ways to adapt to new market conditions, so as to renew their competitive advantage and gain market share. *Improving accessibility* holds major potential for enhancing the overall quality of tourism. Better accessibility can broaden the customer base, contribute to long-term sustainability and enhance the visitor experience significantly. These are facts which some tourism providers have realised (to their benefit) but most have overlooked, so far.

- The demographic ageing of western populations has major implications for the shape of the European tourism market now and, especially, in the future. In order to anticipate and meet the demands of this market evolution, tourism providers must address *accessibility for older and disabled tourists* as a primary strategic concern in every part of their business. Accessible tourism is not a niche market. Older people, (who still want and are able to travel), will soon make up 25% of the European population. Added to this are around 50 million people with disabilities in Europe who want to have holidays with family and friends. Thus, it is estimated that as many as 130 million people in Europe alone will benefit from improved access to travel and tourism services. Making tourism accessible for all is a rational response to a foreseeable demographic trend, and a massive economic opportunity for the tourism sector.

- The rights of persons with disabilities to equal participation in society are being strengthened throughout the world. This will inevitably bring increased

demand for accessible tourism offerings and it will necessitate changes in tourism products and services. The ratification of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2007), as well as recent initiatives at European level and by EU Member States are driving forward an equal access agenda, based on the principle of non-discrimination and equal participation of persons with disabilities. Providing equal access to goods and services will be a "must", also in the tourism sector. Therefore, public and private providers need to be equipped with the confidence and the ability to meet their legal responsibilities under existing and future legislation. Actions to support tourism providers must be taken at all levels and with the participation of all stakeholders.

The report is made up of four main sections:

Section 1. "Objectives for Accessible Tourism Policy"
Section 2. "Review of the policy background and tools for change"
Section 3. "Future needs and policy targets", and
Section 4. "A 'Road Map' for development of policies and the spread of good practices in Europe"

Section 1 presents a vision of accessible tourism for all and "Objectives for Accessible Tourism Policy", reflecting both the rights of needs and rights of customers and the challenges that tourism businesses are facing.

While the development of accessible tourism is clearly a necessity for tourists who are disabled, policy-making in this area is not only concerned with disability issues. The drive towards tourism accessibility must also take into account the conditions of the tourism industry and the interests of those who own and manage the millions of tourism enterprises in Europe. The tourism industry as a whole must be made aware of the necessity of making its offers accessible for everyone, and one of the major ways of doing this is to point out the business advantages which can be gained from improving access.

Policies must strengthen, on the one hand, the rights of disabled citizens to travel and enjoy tourism on an equal basis and, on the other hand, the ability of tourism providers to deliver accessible services and facilities in an effective and sustainable way.

Section 2 provides a "Review of the policy background and tools for change". Tracing a historical path over almost two decades, this policy review examines key events and policy shifts, focussing on the relevant international, EU and member states' actions in the areas of disability rights and tourism. The specific roles and responsibilities of the EU and the Member States are illustrated with examples. The section outlines the competences and activities of the various stakeholders and describes the policy instruments available to support action. It finishes by

emphasising the role of networking, as a tool for building consensus and transferring good practices, which are two of the primary aims of ENAT.

So far, in the Member States of the European Union, the prevailing legislation, market forces and individual initiatives by providers have not proved sufficient to remove the many access barriers in tourism which persist from earlier times or to prevent new access barriers from arising.

ENAT calls on policymakers to address the immediate and widespread need to remove access barriers in tourism. Where the public sector is responsible for these barriers, it must act decisively and in a coordinated fashion.

Private tourism enterprises must also be encouraged to bring about significant improvements in accessibility within as short a time-frame as possible by making general accessibility for customers a priority within the normal business cycle.

It should be noted that various countries, regions, public authorities and enterprises have taken significant steps towards making their tourism offers accessible. There are many examples of good practice (as described in the ENAT Study, "Services and Facilities for Accessible Tourism in Europe"[1] and in the ENAT online resource centre)[2] but these still represent a minute fraction of the offers that are present in the European tourism industry as a whole.

Better policies for promoting European accessible tourism are therefore required to help close the gap between the access needs of almost 130 million EU citizens[3] and the less-than-adequate offers that are currently available from tens of millions of tourism and travel providers.

Up until now tourism providers might have been unaware of the market demand for accessibility, or they might have felt no compulsion to make adaptations to suit disabled people if their order books were full. In 2007, one could still hear experienced European tourism professionals speak of the market of "disabled tourists", as a particular segment which may be left up to providers who specialise in services for "those people". We would predict that, in the foreseeable future, such a lack of awareness on the part of tourism providers, and their failure to meet the needs of customers who require accessible facilities and surroundings will become socially and economically unsustainable.

In recent years, policy-makers have begun to heed warnings of population ageing and its effect on the prevalence of disabilities. This will bring new challenges and opportunities to all areas of the tourism sector. Large swathes of today's older generation experienced the boom of mass tourism, which took hold in Europe the

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[1] ENAT Study Report no. 2. (2008) http://www.accessibletourism.org/?i=enat.en.reports.441

[2] ENAT Website: http://www.accessibletourism.org/?i=enat.en.enat_projects_and_good_practices

[3] OSSATE Accessibility and Stakeholder Market Analysis (2005) http://www.ossate.org/doc_resources/OSSATE_Market&Stakeholder%20Analysis_Public_Version_Fina..pdf

1960s, and many of them are not prepared to give up their travelling habit due to an assortment of ailments that come with old age. It is possible that these customers would not call themselves "disabled" but their needs often correspond closely to the needs of those persons who live with permanent or long-standing functional impairments. Equally, the access provisions required by the "senior" tourist will be similar in many respects to those for persons with disabilities.

Apart from economic arguments which might persuade providers to address tourism accessibility, new legislation at national, European and international level is increasingly bolstering the rights of persons with disabilities and "mobility impaired" persons in general to participate in social activities, and these rights encompass, quite logically, the right to enjoy tourism, travel and leisure activities. Obligations are thus being placed on service providers in certain countries to make reasonable adjustments to their offers, so as to meet the legitimate needs of the customer who may just as well be disabled or mobility impaired, as not.

An integrated policy approach strategy is required which provides a clear political direction for improvements, incentives to enterprises, appropriate information for customers and monitoring mechanisms that can reliably measure progress across Europe.

Section 3, "Future needs and policy targets", is concerned with identifying the future policy needs and targets for accessible tourism.

Thirty-nine policy targets are presented based on the results of workshops, Conferences and analyses of the ENAT project team and ENAT members. Analysis of the prevailing policy background, legislation, structural constraints and market trends has also influenced the selection of policy targets. The wide range of policy targets reflects, therefore, the diverse backgrounds and perspectives of the tourism industry and various stakeholders, including public sector organisations and NGOs.

Fundamentally, the targets for accessible tourism must serve to position Europe as an accessible tourism destination, equipped to compete effectively in the global, marketplace. Policy targets are listed according to their respective areas of application.

Section 4, "A 'Road Map' for development of policies and the spread of good practices", sketches a plan of what needs to be done to fulfil the stated targets in a coherent and targetted manner. Eight actions are foreseen to strengthen coordination and planning, to raise awareness and shape public opinion, as well as to engage the tourism sector more firmly in proposed actions. The Road Map proposes integrated actions at EU, National, Regional, local and enterprise/SME levels, leveraging a range of EU funding programmes in order to finance the actions. As part of the Road Map, ENAT proposes to use its network to address the (2007) proposals of DG Enterprise and the European Parliament for Accessible Tourism, with actions to develop, *inter alia*, a European label, accessible tourism standards, and to disseminate good practices.

1. Objectives of Accessible Tourism Policy

1.1 Accessibility in Tourism – A Challenge for Europe

The title of this report, "Towards 2010: Disability Policy Challenges and Actions for the European Tourism Sector", draws attention to the year which was set as a milestone for the "European Disability Action Plan". The action plan was launched in 2003, the "European Year of People with Disabilities" as a concerted attempt to make significant improvements in the lives of disabled citizens.[4] The plan addresses non-discrimination and equal opportunities for disabled people in daily life, in the labour market, in education, in transport and other areas. One of its main targets is to ensure equal participation by promoting *accessibility* of the built environment and services.

The ENAT project was co-funded through a budget line of the Disability Action Plan, as a pilot action to mainstream disability policies, in particular in relation to tourism. It is therefore appropriate, in this report, to examine to current accessible tourism policies and actions in Europe, and what might be achieved in the area of access to tourism by 2010 – and beyond.

During the course of the ENAT project (2006-2007), over 400 members from more than 50 countries joined the network to share their experience and to learn more about accessible tourism in Europe. From these members and many other sources, the ENAT website has built up a collection of online resources spanning over ten years of publications, examples of good practices, links and other references. ENAT also brought together over 350 tourism specialists, public servants and representatives of NGOs and academia in three international events, where tourism accessibility issues, policies, legislation, standards and good practices were presented and discussed.

ENAT Study Report no. 1 has presented the analysis of disabled people's rights in the context of tourism, and ENAT Study Report No. 2 has described the ways in which tourism services can be provided for disabled people and others who need higher levels of accessibility.[5]

This third ENAT Study Report considers the need for improvements to the policy framework and possible new policies and actions which need to be taken, targeting accessible tourism for everyone in Europe.

Better policies for promoting accessible tourism are certainly required on a much wider scale in Europe to help close the gap between the access needs of almost 130

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[4] Disability Action Plan: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=430&langId=en See also Section 2 of the present report.
[5] ENAT Study Report no. 1. (2008) http://www.accessibletourism.org/?i=enat.en.reports.444 and ENAT Study Report no. 2. (2008) http://www.accessibletourism.org/?i=enat.en.reports.441

million EU citizens[6] and the less-than-adequate offers that are currently available from tens of millions of tourism and travel providers. The speed at which infrastructure and services are being adapted is generally slow, while demand is speeding up.

The demographics of population ageing and the correlation between advancing years and the greater prevalence of disabilities make accessibility a "must" for the tourism sector. Today's older generation, which experienced the boom of mass tourism in Europe starting in the 1960s, is not prepared to give up travelling due to an assortment of ailments that come with old age. It is possible that these senior customers would not call themselves "disabled" but their access needs when travelling will invariably correspond closely to the access requirements of persons with disabilities – that is, those who have permanent or long-term functional impairments. The ageing population is rapidly leading to the transformation of "accessibility" from what was considered a niche market issue to a mass market phenomenon.

Up until now most tourism providers might have been unaware of the market demand for accessibility or, if they were aware, they might have felt no compulsion to adapt their premises or services to suit disabled people as long as their order books were full. In 2007, one could still hear experienced European tourism professionals speak of the market of "disabled tourists", as a particular segment which may be left up to "…providers who specialise in services for those people". The sub-text of this statement, (coming from a national hoteliers' organisation) may be paraphrased as: 'Most of our hotels do not have accessible rooms but hotel owners are not interested in having disabled guests, so they are not likely to make any changes to improve accessibility…'

In contrast to this position, ENAT is reaching out to hoteliers to guide them in how to welcome disabled tourists and others, for example by making appropriate improvements in their facilities and introducing disability awareness training for staff. We would predict that, within very few years, mainstream tourism providers could find their businesses becoming economically unsustainable if they fail to meet the needs of customers who require accessible facilities and services.

Apart from economic arguments which might persuade providers to address tourism accessibility, new legislation at national, European and international level is increasingly bolstering the rights of persons with disabilities and "mobility impaired" persons in general to participate in social activities, and these rights encompass, quite logically, the right to enjoy tourism, travel and leisure activities. Obligations are thus being placed on service providers to make reasonable adjustments to their offers, so as to meet the legitimate needs of the customer who may be disabled or mobility impaired.

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[6] OSSATE Accessibility and Stakeholder Market Analysis (2005)
http://www.ossate.org/doc_resources/OSSATE_Market&Stakeholder%20Analysis_Public_Version_Fina..pdf

ENAT's studies show that, until now, the prevailing legislation, market forces and individual initiatives by providers have only brought sporadic and slow improvements. Accessible tourism facilities are still the exception rather than the rule. Greater efforts are required to remove the many access barriers in tourism which persist from earlier times or to prevent new access barriers from arising.

Nevertheless, various countries, regions, public authorities and enterprises have taken significant steps towards making their tourism offers accessible. There are many examples of good practice in accessible tourism, as described in the ENAT Study Reports and in the ENAT online resource centre[7] although these still represent a minute fraction of the offers that are present in the European tourism industry as a whole. Among these good examples, it is instructive to note how certain forward-looking and effectively managed public policies in some regions and members states have contributed to the growth of accessible tourism provisions and the improvement of the tourist economy.

The purpose of ENAT is not only to make analyses and inform its members and the general public about accessible tourism but also to contribute to consensus-building, to stimulate the uptake of measures which will enhance tourism for all, and to provide tools for the development of appropriate and effective actions in the tourism sector.

Through the work of ENAT members we want to help make Europe an accessible destination, where all travellers can move freely, enjoy new experiences and be sure of getting the service they need and expect. We believe that accessible tourism must be made a priority - for the good of the tourists and for the long-term sustainability of the European tourist industry.

1.2   A Vision of European Tourism: Accessible for Everyone, Everywhere

Seen from the perspective of a tourist with a disability, Europe, like other parts of the world, has many barriers which prevent or hinder access to places, activities and services that can be enjoyed by non-disabled people. This is a problem that affects many millions of people, both in their daily lives and also as tourists.

The term disability is a broad one. It includes people with physical, sensory or mental impairment; at a conservative estimate between 12 and 13 per cent of the population have some degree of impairment. There are many other people not who also encounter barriers to movement and access, including people with small children, people carrying heavy shopping or luggage, people with temporary injuries, older people and those with long-term health problems. All of these can benefit directly from accessible tourism.

Today, Europe has the opportunity to become the world leader in accessible tourism. So far, it is not too late to realise such an ambition. European tourist destinations

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[7] ENAT Website: http://www.accessibletourism.org/?i=enat.en.enat_projects_and_good_practices

include exceptional cultural, heritage, natural, architectural, sporting and other attractions, attracting over 460 million inbound tourists in 2006. Broadly speaking, all regions of the world have a long way to go to achieve accessibility for all, and those which move quickest in meeting the demand are likely to reap the benefits earlier. It is also quite possibly that the "early adopters", with the best policy frameworks, will maintain their lead over the long-term.

EU countries have certain advantages over otherworld regions in that accessibility standards are developed to some degree in all member states but regulations need to be improved and enforced, and there must be significant progress 'on the ground' in tourist accommodation, venues and attractions before one can speak of all Europe as a truly 'accessible destination'.

To achieve the lead, tourist boards and enterprises must first recognise that they are in the "accessible tourism race" and that this race has, in fact, already begun. Taking just one example, the cruise industry is currently expanding rapidly in Europe, and here the core market is made up of older people with larger disposable incomes. The accessibility of shore-side transport and attractions within striking distance of cruise ports is of key significance for the cruise passengers who may have reduced mobility. This makes good access and the availability of suitable services a critical factor for the local tourism economy around cruise ports.

In order for European destinations to succeed in accessible tourism, the tourism sector as a whole must be made aware of the necessity of making its offers accessible for everyone. Public policies have an important role to play in this task by pointing to the visitors' needs and showing the business advantages which improved access will bring. Public policies must direct resources and information to all those who deliver tourism products and services.

Beyond this, it is also important to point out that the public sector must ensure that public buildings, spaces, infrastructure and services are accessible, as these are used by both locals and tourists alike. An access upgrade of public transport vehicles and infrastructure, will benefit all travellers whether they are local commuters or visitors. For example, taxis and minicabs that are accessible to wheelchair users are still quite rare in most European towns and cities. The public authorities which issue taxi licences should take into consideration the need for a greater proportion of accessible taxis, to serve both local citizens and tourists with reduced mobility.

ENAT's vision highlights two areas where policies on accessible tourism must be focussed and coordinated. These are:

Rights: the protection of citizens' and especially disabled and elderly persons' rights to enjoy tourism,

and

Access: the promotion of accessibility measures and guaranteed standards of access quality in the tourism sector.

Regarding rights, public authorities are ultimately responsible for promoting and safeguarding the rights of citizens and tourists, at home or abroad. Organisations of disabled people and individuals can cite a multitude of examples of discrimination against disabled tourists, including unavailability or refusal of service, poor levels of service and difficulties of obtaining redress when a service is denied or inadequate. The policy objective on rights is:

- to strengthen existing policies related to the rights of disabled people and the rights of consumers, as tourists.

These rights should include the right of access to tourism venues, facilities and services, and full legal protection for disabled as well as non-disabled tourists.

Regarding *access*, greater efforts are required within the tourism sector to deliver truly accessible facilities and services. The policy objective on access is:

- to support the implementation of measures to meet the access requirements of persons with disabilities and others, in information provision, in transport, at destinations and at the level of the individual tourism enterprise.

Given the general lack of access provisions, improvements in all areas are needed within as short a time-frame as possible. Public agencies have the authority and the means to promote accessibility measures, for example, by:

- Developing and distributing information on access requirements to tourism enterprises;
- Planning, setting priorities;
- Coordinating the implementation of accessibility measures, actions and projects;
- Establishing financial support programmes for enterprises targeting the removal of access barriers;
- Applying regulations which govern minimum access requirements and framework standards in public and private sector tourism enterprises;
- Promoting staff training programmes;
- Developing employment-support measures addressing accessibility;

- Benchmarking progress.

In addition to improving access in general, policies are required for certain *positive actions* for disabled tourists, (such as specific support services at airports or disability guides for cities), to enable them to participate easily - and without additional cost - in tourist activities. There will also be a continuing need for dedicated tourism options for people who are severely disabled or have long-term, serious illnesses requiring medical or other support services at the venue.

These and other measures are discussed in the later sections of this report.

1.2.1 Coordination of Accessible Tourism Policies in Europe

When setting objectives for accessible tourism policies in Europe it is necessary to consider the policy frameworks under which such policies might be addressed. One of the major difficulties for introducing change in the area of tourism is that "tourism policies" in Europe are not clearly defined as a single area of action with a fixed scope. The term, "tourism sector" is a slippery concept with moveable components and boundaries. It is sometimes characterised as a "sector of sectors", and as such it may be subject to many areas of policymaking. One consequence of this is that businesses and other actors in tourism are not always consulted in advance of changes to policy or legislation which may directly affect them. This may cause unintended hardship to businesses which must already heed many regulations.

In addition, many, if not most, of the policies which impact on tourism are devised and regulated at the level of the 27 EU Member States and not at EU level. Correspondingly, with a few notable exceptions, the policies which impact on accessibility in tourism are *not* set at European level, falling instead under the legislative powers of individual EU Member States and levels of authority within these states.

ENAT concludes that the policy objectives for accessible tourism must be pursued through a "twin-track" approach, where "disability rights" and "access in the tourism sector" are addressed in parallel. ENAT takes the view that these policy areas must be far better coordinated in future, and actions must be maintained through a long-term and continuous plan, across the Member States, in order to deliver significant and measurable advantages to all tourists in Europe.

Only by establishing commonly agreed policy objectives and coordinating certain accessibility measures across the internal borders of the EU can tourists with disabilities and others enjoy the levels of service they require in *all* the Member States. The issue of coordinating and developing pan-European policies and actions for accessible tourism is taken up in more detail in the later sections of this report.

Furthermore, in consideration of policy objectives for accessible tourism in Europe, ENAT firmly believes that that *policy-making cannot take place in isolation from those who are affected by it.* At all levels from local planning to EU-wide regulation,

policy-making frameworks and procedures must allow both providers and consumers to contribute to policy development. Input from stakeholders is essential, both with regard to the assessment of the present situation and in setting targets and implementation mechanisms for the future.

We believe that ENAT can contribute to such a policy framework at European level, by gathering the views of stakeholders, and by encouraging a fruitful dialogue between the many parties – a process which has already begun. Physical access and access to information are often less than adequate in transport, at tourist destinations, in accommodation and all kinds of venues and attractions. This lack of accessibility has been found to deter disabled tourists from travelling, which reduces both inbound tourism to Europe and tourism within Europe. Many tourists and would-be travellers experience access problems, especially those with physical or sensory disabilities, people who are older and perhaps a little more frail, as well as pregnant women, families with small children and people with a chronic health condition or a temporary disability. All of these people need "accessible tourism".

Some of the access difficulties we find today are due to many years of ignorance about access requirements when planning, designing and managing buildings, transport systems and infrastructure. For a long time, customers' needs were not known or understood, and even today – despite improvements - these needs are not being taken sufficiently into account in the tourism sector.

Planning laws and policies, building norms and standards in accessibility vary widely between the regions and Member States of the European Union, and among neighbouring countries. The availability of expertise in planning and designing accessible infrastructure and services also varies considerably. This situation gives rise to some confusion and lack of certainty when planning and developing accessible tourism facilities and services. - either when upgrading or starting from scratch.

It is important to underline that tourism depends to a large degree on supporting the diversity and richness of local and regional cultures. Policies for tourism must embrace this fact and ensure the sustainability of Europe's tourism, following the maxim:

"Do not let tourism destroy what tourists come to enjoy".

Accessibility improvements have been shown to make a positive contribution to environmental, economic and social sustainability. As in all things, it is the quality of the work which determines whether a given solution is god or bad, and not the introduction of better access *per se*. Sensitive spatial planning following design for all principles *and* respecting the environment is a well-established strategy in a growing number of countries and regions. The economic sustainability of tourism destinations is strengthened by widening the customer base to include persons with disabilities and others who need better accessibility. Investments in access improvements can be spread by incorporating costs in periodic maintenance and renovation

programmes. Social sustainability refers to tourism's ability to support the wellbeing and life quality of individuals and communities, based on equity, good governance and democracy. Social sustainability may be promoted through inclusive management and employment practices which take into account the diversity of both employees and customers.

ENAT has set its focus on helping public and private enterprises make Europe as a whole an accessible destination, where all travellers can move freely, enjoy new experiences and be sure of getting the service they need and expect. We believe that accessible tourism must be made an urgent priority - for the good of the tourists and for the long-term sustainability of the European tourist industry. Accessible tourism is, quite simply, better for visitors, better for business; and will make Europe a better place for all citizens to live, work and enjoy their leisure time.

2.   Review of the Policy Background and Tools for Change

This section reviews the recent advances – and some hindrances – related to policies for accessible tourism in the EU and at international level. Instances of accessible tourism policies and actions in individual EU member states are mentioned, where certain initiatives have been taken. The analysis traces, primarily, how the two "tracks" of *disability rights policies* and *accessible tourism policies* have developed. Noticeably, the links between the two have generally been rather weak and the practical implementation of plans for accessible tourism has frequently fallen short of the ambitions. While there have been numerous profound statements and plans from policy-makers, disabled consumers are still waiting for many of the good intentions to bear fruit.

This leads to the conclusion that the two policy tracks must be more firmly linked together, with a joint policy-making structures and targetted mechanisms to strengthen industry commitment to disability rights. There is also a general need for more effective tools for policy implementation and monitoring. This is only likely to take place if new and decisive coordination measures are put in place. The section finishes with a discussion of how the ENAT network can help to contribute to policymaking and implementation of targets for accessible tourism.

2.1   Accessible Tourism Policy Review: 1990 - 2007

2.1.1   1990 The European Year of Tourism

The problem of inadequate access to tourism for disabled persons was recognised as a Europe-wide issue in 1990, which was declared "The European Year of Tourism". In that year, examples of best practice were identified, and prizes were awarded for facilities that showed how access barriers could be overcome and how the tourist industry could cater better for disabled citizens.
The "Tourism for All in Europe" Conference held in that same year concluded:
> *"- Direct interface between tourism organisations and representatives of disabled people's groups will be a major step forward in this area, shifting emphasis from 'social needs provision' and allowing people with disabilities (and their families) to enjoy the same access as able-bodied people to a full range of tourism resources"*
>
> (Tourism for All Conference Report 1990).

It is notable, now 17 years on, that this recommendation has not been implemented in a systematic way at European level and therefore remains strikingly relevant today. In 2007, the only standing mechanism for Pan-European dialogue on disability access to tourism between policy-makers, tourism enterprises, public sector agencies and disability organisations is that provided by the 'European Network for Accessible Tourism' - ENAT, which includes members from these four groups of actors from over 40 countries. As a project organisation, ENAT has, however, no mandatory functions or recognised position in the EU policy framework. The ENAT

partners have therefore resolved to form a non-profit association to continue networking and lobbying in Europe and further afield, after the project period ends in 2007.

The quotation from the "Tourism for All Conference" (above) also places emphasis on the then emerging concept of equal treatment of people with disabilities - *having the right to participate on equal terms as non-disabled* - as opposed to being the objects of 'charity', which was widely regarded as the appropriate societal response to functional impairments and handicaps. In connection with the gradual rise of the 'rights based approach' in disability policies, national organisations of disabled people embraced the social model of disability and rejected the prevailing medical model.

The social model of disability maintains that society disables people who have functional impairments by constructing social and environmental barriers which prevent their participation. As such it is society's obligation to remove barriers which hinder the full participation of disabled people. This is both a moral and practical imperative, which lies at the heart of awareness-raising about disability – whether in tourism or in any other sector. The social model of disability became a foundation stone of the newly emerging European disability movement, which became established as the European Disability Forum in 1996. It also guided the new International Definition of Disability, Functioning and Health (IDF) which was published in 2001. (See below).

2.1.2   1990 – 1996 HELIOS I and II and Other Community Initiatives

During the period 1990 - 1996, European actions including HELIOS I and II initiatives and "Tourism for All" produced a number of guidelines and handbooks which further stimulated improvements in accessibility around Europe, as did several projects funded by EU programmes such as HORIZON and the "Telematics Applications Programme". Some of these results are mentioned below. (A complete, digitized collection of the results of this wide range of work has not been gathered in one single library, to the best of our knowledge).

HELIOS I honoured a number of organisations around Europe with awards for excellence in providing facilities for disabled people, addressing many areas of life. HELIOS II focussed on the social integration of disabled people in society: in education, work and economic integration, functional rehabilitation, transport and accessibility to the built environment. This transnational action used a novel approach of bringing together representatives of public bodies and disabled people's organisations from different countries to form working groups addressing the main themes. These groups then defined their own objectives and work plans with a 3-year series meetings and study visits, gathering and analysing experiences. Each group completed it work with a report recording good practices and action plans to address the observed problems and future challenges. The reports on "Transport"

and "Accessibility to the Built Environment"[8] were partially relevant to tourism. The HELIOS action was not followed up with the EC programme that had been hoped for and the proposals of its working groups were not addressed systematically by the European Commission. However, although some impetus was lost, the experience of networking among HELIOS partner organisations planted seeds which later bore fruit in other transnational projects and initiatives funded by a variety of EC and national programmes.

2.1.3   1992 Barcelona Paralympic Games: "Sport Without Limits"

Policy-making can move society towards certain objectives by steady and diligent planning, yet from time to time major events can have an invigorating effect on the pace of change. The Olympic and Paralympic Games came to the City of Barcelona, Spain in 1992. This was the first Olympics in Europe since Rome hosted the Games in 1960. This was only the second Paralympics to be held in conjunction with the Olympic Games (after Seoul 1988). The Barcelona Paralympics events were attended by over 2 million spectators and seen by another 7 million television viewers. ONCE, the Spanish national lottery owned by the federation of blind people, paid for and marketed the games, providing approximately 75 million US dollars in funding. The Barcelona Paralympics set new standards for participation and acceptance of disabled people in sport and in tourism. The city's transport, infrastructure and venues underwent extensive adaptations to make the Games accessible to disabled as well as non-disabled visitors. After the success of the Games, Barcelona's city authorities launched a ten-year programme of accessibility improvements in 1995, making it today one of the foremost accessible tourist destinations in Europe. While Barcelona reaps the benefits of its public and private investments in infrastructure and human capital, other cities and regions may learn from its example in the field of accessible tourism.

2.1.4   1993 UN Standard Rules

A major stimulus for establishing policies to integrate people with disabilities fully into society came in 1993 with the adoption by UN member states of the UN Standard Rules on Equalization of Opportunities for Disabled People.[9] At that time, signatories to the agreement – including the then 12 Member States of the European Community - committed themselves morally and politically to establish national action plans for achieving, amongst other things, physical accessibility (rule 5), access to recreation and sports (rule 11), access to information and research (rule 13) and policymaking and planning (rule 14). The Standard Rules made up a detailed checklist and guidelines for enabling a cultural and environmental and legislative transformation that would ensure the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities.

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[8] Ambrose, I., Ewart, K. and Nolte, E.(eds.) (1996) "Accessibility of the built environment. The way ahead". HELIOS II Thematic group no.2. Hørsholm: Statens Byggeforskningsinstitut, SBI, Denmark.

[9] UN Standard Rules, see: http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/dissre00.htm

Rule 11 includes the following statements, closely related to tourism:

"States will take measures to ensure that persons with disabilities have equal opportunities for recreation and sports.

States should initiate measures to make places for recreation and sports, hotels, beaches, sports arenas, gym halls, etc., accessible to persons with disabilities.

Such measures should encompass support for staff in recreation and sports programmes, including projects to develop methods of accessibility, and participation, information and training programmes.

Tourist authorities, travel agencies, hotels, voluntary organizations and others involved in organizing recreational activities or travel opportunities should offer their services to all, taking into account the special needs of persons with disabilities. Suitable training should be provided to assist that process."

The UN Standard Rules set out not only target areas for implementation, such as recreation and sports, but also implementation measures. Rule 14 (Policy-making and Planning) is of particular interest in this respect, stating:

"States will ensure that disability aspects are included in all relevant policy-making and national planning.

States should initiate and plan adequate policies for persons with disabilities at the national level, and stimulate and support action at regional and local levels.

States should involve organizations of persons with disabilities in all decision-making relating to plans and programmes concerning persons with disabilities or affecting their economic and social status.

The needs and concerns of persons with disabilities should be incorporated into general development plans and not be treated separately.

The ultimate responsibility of States for the situation of persons with disabilities does not relieve others of their responsibility. Anyone in charge of services, activities or the provision of information in society should be encouraged to accept responsibility for making such programmes available to persons with disabilities.

States should facilitate the development by local communities of programmes and measures for persons with disabilities. One way of doing this could be to develop manuals or check-lists and provide training programmes for local staff."

The principles laid out in Rule 14 indicate the need for what later became known as the "mainstreaming" of disability requirements in all sectors of policymaking and practice. In particular, the sentence: *The needs and concerns of persons with*

disabilities should be incorporated into general development plans and not be treated separately is of fundamental importance.

Mainstreaming disability considerations in public policy has the aim of ensuring that persons with disabilities have the same possibilities as all those who are not disabled. The method for achieving equality is to examine and integrate the needs of disabled people in all policies and planning so that provisions for disabled persons become part of everyday practice.

Disability mainstreaming across different policy sectors began to take place more strategically and systematically in the 1990s, especially in the Nordic countries, and this is being followed up, particularly in the European Disability Action Plan, initiated by the European Commission in 2003.

2.1.5   1996   Handbook for the Tourism Industry

In 1996 a European *"Handbook for the tourism industry: making Europe accessible for tourists with disabilities"* was published by the Tourism Unit of The European Commission's Enterprise and Industry Directorate.[10] The principal aim of this handbook was to demonstrate that existing facilities can often be easily adapted to suit disabled tourists. The book highlights that research and modest expenditure would enable most of Europe's tourism firms to offer acceptable levels of service to disabled people.

Another European action produced, in November 1996, a draft proposal by the "Tourism for All" working group to the European Commission on *Certified Levels of Accessibility for EU Tourism Accommodation*. This was a set of technical specifications and dimensional requirements for buildings, so as to make them accessible for people with different levels of disabilities, including persons with ambulatory disabilities, wheelchair users and persons with sensory impairments. This draft proposal was intended to be the basis for a voluntary scheme to be adopted by the tourism industry to promote accessible premises and to advertise these facilities to disabled users in a coherent and transparent way. It was suggested that the scheme should be implemented through national agencies, and special training should be given to staff who would assess and monitor the accessibility of tourist accommodation. The scheme did not take into account the National Building Regulations of each Member State, nor was it intended specifically as an instrument for guiding the possible upgrading of facilities to make them more accessible or even fully accessible.

Neither the proposed technical standards, nor the accessibility scheme have been implemented at EU level. With hindsight, this may be attributed partly to Member States' rejection of a concerted tourism policy framework for Europe, which was being encouraged by the European Commission during this period. The approach, which aimed to set certified levels of access was, however, used as a model for some national and regional accessibility schemes in Europe, including the 'Tourism

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[10]   Available from Office for Official Publications of the European Communities. ISBN 92-827-7300-0.

for All UK' scheme. That scheme has since developed into the present 'UK National Accessible Scheme'.

2.1.6   1996 The Amsterdam Treaty

The Amsterdam Treaty introduced for the first time in European legislation the concept of a social model of disability. The revision of the Treaty on the European Union included a new article, number 13, which allowed actions to prevent discrimination, which takes place on grounds of disability, age, gender, racial origin, etc. The Treaty recognises the rights of disabled people to use and enjoy their surroundings just as non-disabled people do (i.e. without discrimination). By virtue of this, it is no longer a question of *whether to* include accessibility requirements when designing buildings, facilities and tourism facilities but *how to* include them. To ignore the requirements of disabled users may be discriminating against a significant number of citizens, who have a right to enjoy the public facilities and spaces which other people use. The Treaty thus recognises that disabled persons wish to be treated first as people, and to have access on equal terms – that is, as independently as possible and in ways which respect their freedom and dignity.

The Amsterdam Treaty marked the beginning of EU efforts to achieve greater accessibility by both regulation and other means of encouragement, in accordance with Article 13. Lack of accessibility for disabled people has come to be recognised as *discriminating* against this group of citizens, in the sense that they are prevented from enjoying activities and using places as other citizens do.

Since the Amsterdam Treaty, many EU Member States have enacted laws which make discrimination of disabled people illegal. Examples of centralised legislation (the United Kingdom) and decentralised legislation (Spain) in this area are described in ENAT Study Report No. 1.[11]

2.1.7   1997 EC Travel Guides for Tourists with Disabilities

One of the means to improve access for tourists with disabilities is to provide information on the existing tourism facilities which can meet their demands and expectations satisfactorily. To meet the information demand of this potential group of tourists the European Commission produced a series of *Travel Guides for tourists with disabilities*. These Travel Guides, prepared in 1997, cover 18 European countries, all the members of the European Economic Area.[12] This was, however, a 'one-off' effort and the Guides have not been updated.

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[11] See: ENAT Study Report No. 1. pp. 13-15.
http://www.accessibletourism.org/?i=enat.en.reports.444
[12] See *Travel Guides for Tourists with Disabilities* at:
http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/enterprise/services/tourism/tourism-publications/documents/guides.htm

2.1.8   1999   Improving Transport for People with Mobility Handicaps

The Council of Europe's conference of Ministers of Transport issued the report, " Improving Transport for People with Mobility Handicaps: A guide to good practice" in 1999. The wording of the summary conclusions is indicative of a sense of profound anxiety concerning the abilities of states to deliver on the statements they had agreed:

> "The improvement of access to all means of public transport by persons with reduced mobility is one of the stated goals of the ECMT and its member countries. We can only note with a feeling of satisfaction that none of the relevant proposals has met with fundamental opposition. In Europe therefore, as in other parts of the world, there has been a distinct increase in awareness of these issues, with the result that the improvement of access conditions and the final goal of barrier-free access to transport services have become basic elements of transport policy in many countries. Nevertheless, as so often in life, an evident gap opens up here between objectives and reality. While on the one hand it must be recognised that on a broader level significant progress can be achieved, on the other hand it must be admitted that this progress is very unevenly distributed between countries and different modes of transport. In this respect therefore a great deal still remains to be done. Even today it is by no means easy for a person with reduced mobility to travel from home to a given destination with dignity, confidence, and a minimum level of comfort. Individual sections of the journey may well be judged satisfactory, but changing from one mode of transport to another and coping with the modal "interface" points is often very arduous; and on top of everything else, the information provided is quite insufficient. For the future therefore it is of prime importance to consider a better integrated arrangement with a harmonised system of barrier-free access standards. In this respect present-day transport of persons with reduced mobility perfectly exemplifies the fact that a chain is only as strong as its weakest link."

2.1.9   2000   EU: 'Towards a Barrier Free Europe for People with Disabilities'

The Commission Communication "Towards a barrier free Europe for people with disabilities", published in June 2000 addressed issues such as mobility, accessibility, harnessing the Information Society, assistive technologies, protecting the rights and interest of consumers with disabilities, etc.[13] This well-crafted document has provided a framework for the Commission's "roll-out" of access policies in a range of sectors, although tourism was not explicitly mentioned (as it was not considered an area of EC competence). The Communication was followed by studies and plans to address accessibility issues, and also signalled the preparation of a proposal make

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[13] COM (2000) 284 final.
http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2000:0284:FIN:EN:PDF

2003 the European Year of People with Disabilities 2003. The Communications concluded:

2.1.10 2000   Non-discrimination at the Workplace and in Employment

In 2000 the European Parliament passed a Directive "Establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation".[14] This Directive makes it illegal to discriminate against disabled people who are seeking a job, or who are in work. Employers shall make reasonable accommodation to disabled employees – which may include adaptations to the workplace and equipment used by the employee, or a case may be brought before an Industrial court of law by the disabled person or an organisation which represents him/her. This Directive has been transposed into national legislation in all EU Member States. However, in 2007 its effect has been somewhat limited in terms of bringing more disabled people into work or retaining workers who become disabled in employment. Renewed efforts are necessary to make this policy a success in all countries and in all sectors of the economy, including the tourism sector.

The UK *"Employers Forum on Disability"* is an example of a well-coordinated effort by employers to improve awareness of disability issues both with regard to the obligations of employers, the rights of disabled employees and how to serve disabled customers.[15] Adapting workplaces for disabled persons and staff training are addressed in reports and guidelines by the Employers' Forum.

2.1.11 2001 European Ministers' "Tourism for All" Statement, Bruges

At the beginning of the Belgian Presidency of the European Union on 1st July 2001, an informal meeting of the European Ministers of Tourism was convened in Bruges, Belgium. The focus of the meeting was "Tourism for All". Ministers and officials from candidate countries were also present at the meeting. The Presidency concluded that there was a clear need to make tourist activities accessible to certain target groups, in particular young people, old people, those living on the threshold of poverty, the unemployed and disabled people. As regards the disabled people in particular, ministers expressed their desire for indications of accessibility to facilities and services to be simplified and harmonised. This resulted in the Conclusions of the Presidency on "Tourism for all", which were ratified at the meeting of the Council on 27 September 2001.

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[14] See: Council Directive 2000/78/EC establishing a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation (27/11/00).

[15] See the Web site of the Employers' Forum on Disability: http://www.efd.org.uk/

2.1.12 2001 International Classification of Functioning, Disability & Health

The International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health, known more commonly as ICF, is a classification of health and health-related domains.[16] These domains are classified from body, individual and societal perspectives by means of two lists: a list of body functions and structure, and a list of domains of activity and participation. Since an individual's functioning and disability occurs in a context, the ICF also includes a list of environmental factors.

The ICF is WHO's framework for measuring health and disability at both individual and population levels. The ICF was officially endorsed by all 191 WHO Member States in the Fifty-fourth World Health Assembly on 22 May 2001(resolution WHA 54.21). Unlike its predecessor, which was endorsed for field trail purposes only, the ICF was endorsed for use in Member States as the international standard to describe and measure health and disability.

The ICF puts the notions of 'health' and 'disability' in a new light. It acknowledges that every human being can experience a decrement in health and thereby experience some degree of disability. Disability is not something that only happens to a minority of humanity. The ICF thus 'mainstreams' the experience of disability and recognises it as a universal human experience. By shifting the focus from cause to impact it places all health conditions on an equal footing allowing them to be compared using a common metric – the ruler of health and disability. Furthermore ICF takes into account the social aspects of disability and does not see disability only as a 'medical' or 'biological' dysfunction. By including Contextual Factors, in which environmental factors are listed, ICF makes it possible to record the impact of the environment on the person's functioning. In this respect the physical surroundings, facilities and services related to tourism fall within the scope of 'contextual factors' and, as such, the ICF framework provides a useful definitional system for defining, understanding and developing accessible tourism for all.

2.1.13 2001 Agenda 22 Disability Policy Strategy

Agenda 22 is a strategy developed by the Swedish Disability Federation to be used when drawing up local disability policy plans. The strategy addresses the implementation of the UN Standard Rules, closely following their structure and matching their objectives to the definition of policies and actions. Agenda 22 consists of three parts:

      1. Characteristics of a good disability policy plan
      2. Equal partners
      3. From idea to disability policy plan.

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[16] ICF, see: http://www.who.int/classifications/icf/en/

The agenda targets local authorities as actors that are often responsible for policy areas affecting citizens' everyday lives. The organisations of people with disabilities are necessary partners in the process of drawing up disability policy plans.[17]

The concepts and methods of Agenda 22 provide a useful framework for planning and developing accessibility measures for local communities, and there is an obvious relevance for considering tourism development within this approach. The model, suitable adapted, could possibly prove useful at regional and national levels.

2.1.14 2001   EC: 'Working Together for the Future of European Tourism'

In the absence of agreement between member states on a formal European Tourism Policy, the European Commission published a Communication on "Working together for the future of European tourism" in which it outlined its ideas on how best to exploit the European tourism sector's competitive potential.[18] The Commission spoke again of the need to enhance co-operation on and the consistency of tourism policies among the stakeholders involved in tourism. These include the European Commission, Member States, regional and local authorities, industry, associations, and tourist destinations.

With a view to providing the tourism industry with a political platform and improving co-operation and co-ordination, an *annual European Tourism Forum* was proposed as a key interface with stakeholder groups.

Measure 9 of the EC Communication's plan was:
> "Depending on how needs develop, European, national, regional and local authorities promote and support the production of guidance documents on general subjects of social and economic interest. They will ensure technical co-operation for this purpose. Initially two manuals will be drawn up. One will contribute to harmonising the accessibility criteria of sites for disabled people and the other the definition of Learning Areas for tourism. The Commission intends, after consulting the representative organisations of the tourism industry and disabled people, to start work on drawing up harmonised criteria for the accessibility of tourist sites and facilities to disabled tourists. They should result in the simplification of the relevant signposting and should be used to raise the awareness of stakeholders, particularly in the context of the European Year of People with Disabilities, 2003."

2.1.15 2002 Council Resolution on the Future of European Tourism

On 21 May 2002, the Council of Ministers unanimously adopted a resolution, based on the (above) Commission Communication, presenting an important step further in the new co-operative approach for the European tourism sector. For the first time the

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[17] Agenda 22, see: http://www.hso.se/start.asp?sida=7052

[18] (COM(2001) 665 final) of 13.11.2001

Council adopted a resolution specifically on tourism, in which it urges closer monitoring of the impact of EU legislation on the tourism sector, suggests further examination of promoting Europe as a destination, and invites the industry to support the efforts undertaken by the European Community and the Member States.

Notably, in relation to this review of accessibility policies in tourism, the Council of Ministers also made the specific "invitation" to the Commission, the member states and the other stakeholders to:

1. encourage the interaction and partnership between both destinations and local stakeholders across Europe;

2. work towards tools and an approach of quality benchmarking and their implementation on a voluntary basis in tourist destinations and enterprises with a view to improve competitiveness and quality in the European tourism sector;

3. strengthen their efforts to facilitate disabled persons' accessibility to tourism;

4. reflect upon the different means to strengthen the position and image of Europe as a diverse and attractive set of destinations and on the future sustainable growth of tourism in Europe;

5. make best possible use of the Information and Communication Technologies for the implementation of the aforementioned initiatives.

2.1.16 2003 European Year of People with Disabilities: Experts' Report

The European Union named 2003 as the European Year of People with Disabilities. This was a "watershed" year in many ways, with many successful campaigns, events and happenings all over Europe. In this context, a Group of Experts was set up by Mrs. Anna Diamantopoulou, Member of the Commission in charge of Employment and Social Affairs, with the mandate to prepare a report with concrete proposals for how to address accessibility within an increasingly diverse and ageing society.[19]
The report focussed on *promoting accessibility* as a means to contribute to the success of the European strategy of "economic and social renewal" launched three years previously at the Lisbon European Council. The European Union committed itself to modernising and reinforcing social cohesion and social protection as a key to deliver more and better growth by 2010. And to make Europe a better place to live. The report was thus linked closely to addressing disability issues as key elements of the "Lisbon strategy", based on the four strategic goals: raising competitiveness, achieving full employment, strengthening social cohesion and promoting sustainable development.

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[19] See: 2010: A Europe Accessible For All. Report from expert group set up by European Commission (2003) http://www.accessibletourism.org/?i=enat.en.reports.442

The Experts' Report included analyses and recommendations on several fields that have an impact on accessible tourism policies and actions, including:

- Promoting responsibility by public authorities
- Making the built environment accessible for all by 2010
- Public procurement
- EU regional policy
- Involving all actors
- Raising awareness and strengthening co-ordination
- Education and training
- Involving businesses and private owners
- Strengthening EU-level co-ordination.

2.1.17 2003 EESC: 'Accessible and Socially Sustainable Tourism for All'

In 2003, a ruling of the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) was published on the subject "For an accessible and socially sustainable tourism for all." In this ruling the EESC invites NGOs of people with disabilities, European authorities, national governments, regional and local administrations as well as private operators on the field of tourism to join efforts to make of Europe an effective centre of world tourism, a barrier free and sustainable space open to all. This ruling contains a series of measures to implement the rights of people with disabilities to enjoy their leisure and tourism fully and for that, to make sustainable and accessible tourism for a reality some changes in mentality, information, awareness and management are needed, the ruling says.

Among the initiatives proposed by the European Economic and Social Council to achieve an accessible tourism we can highlight the following:

- To ensure that people with disabilities have real and effective right to regular and standardized access to tourist goods and services.

- To ensure that mobility or communication problems may not ever serve as a basis to prohibit, deny, limit or condition their access to goods and tourists services on an equal basis with the rest of citizens.

- Public authorities at different levels shall establish and ensure compliance with uniform legal and technical standards which ensure free access of people with disabilities to goods and tourist services.

- Besides, the authorities will promote programmes and activities aimed at encouraging accessibility and the gradual elimination of all kinds of barriers and obstacles which prevent or hinder people with disabilities to access to satisfactory tourist services in comfort and safely.

- To favour that accessible tourism or tourism for all is not an issue that corresponds exclusively to public authorities but to all private bodies operating in this socio-economic area.

- Public authorities and private agents operating in the tourist area should really take into account, for the purposes of providing advantages in

pricing and in the hiring of tourist products and services, the objective disadvantage that people with disabilities have, especially those who need the aid or assistance of others.

- The ability to access and to use tourist goods and services freely by people with disabilities will be one of the elements to be taken into consideration when it the time comes to credit, grant and recognize quality ratings to tourist establishments and facilities.

The ruling also emphasised the importance of accessibility information being available for tourists, stating that all materials or tourist information services will collect references to the terms of accessibility of tourist goods and services offered so that people with disabilities can know exactly and in advance the possibilities regarding the free access to tourist offers.

2.1.18 2004 EU Directives on Public Procurement

The revised Public Procurement Directives offer scope for contracting authorities to consider social and accessibility issues.[20] The directives allow public authorities and economic operators to choose to include accessibility aspects in the procurement process. The Public Procurement Directives do not oblige Contracting Authorities to include accessibility criteria in calls for tender but some countries have recognised the value of doing so, and are adopting more binding legislation, insisting on a systematic and structured implementation of the design-for-all principles. The EC funded project "Build-for-All" has published a Handbook for public authorities on how to include accessibility requirements in their tendering procedures.[21]

2.1.19 2004 EC Study on Accessible Tourism Information

A study commissioned by DG Enterprise Tourism Unit produced a guidance document addressed to tourism providers and destination managers advising them on how to inform disabled people and others who will benefit from better accessibility about the quality of their facilities.[22] The study was prompted by the long-standing observation that disabled visitors in Europe find venue accessibility information is often hard to obtain, it may be inaccurate or unreliable, and it is often based on idiosyncratic methods of measurement, labelling and description. The problem of lacking and unreliable information is particularly acute for persons with disabilities, who may require very detailed information about facilities in advance, especially in accommodation but also in other types of venues.

The guidance document gives concise lists of the basic kinds of information which disabled visitors require. As such it is also a useful tool for raising the awareness of providers about the access needs of disabled customers.

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[20] Directive 2004/17/EC and Directive 2004/18/EC
[21] See: www.build-for-all.net
[22] See:
http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/tourism/docs/studies/improving_information_on_accessibility/improving_accessibility_en.pdf

However, when the guidance document was published and presented at a conference of stakeholders in Brussels, organised by the Tourism Unit, the European Disability Forum (EDF) firmly and publicly rejected the premise on which the guide was based: that venue owners could or even should "self assess" the accessibility of their venues and facilities with reliability. The EDF argued that access auditing is a specialised field and venue information should be gathered by expert auditors, including disabled people; the fear being that venue owners would either fail to recognise the weaknesses of their facilities or perhaps overstate their merits. This could pose a danger or at least inconvenience disabled visitors, said EDF. The extent of the Guidance document's practical application today is unknown, as there is no clear assignment of responsibility to tourism organisations or others to apply the guide's information formats, nor has any effort been made to organise the delivery of this access information to customers across Europe in a uniform way. (These two factors might be regarded as additional weaknesses, which appear to have left the Study and the Guide in something of a "policy vacuum").

2.1.20 2004   The EU Disability Action Plan

The objective of the Commission's disability strategy since 2003 has been to make equal opportunities for disabled people a reality. The EU Disability Action Plan (DAP) 2004-2010 has three operational objectives:
- full implementation of the Employment Equality Directive,
- successful mainstreaming of disability issues in relevant Community policies, and
- improving accessibility for all.

The Commission has described "Mainstreaming of disability issues" as follows:

> "Mainstreaming of disability issues means that disability issues and interests should not be isolated and treated separately, but should be addressed into general provisions, legislation and society as a whole, recognising the needs, as well as the contribution, of people with disabilities. Mainstreaming involves analysing the relevant policy areas from the disability perspective, understanding the diverse needs of people with disabilities and taking them into account when developing policy. Various instruments are used to encourage fully integrated measures which meet the individual needs of people with disabilities and those of people without disabilities in the same way."

The DAP is developed in two-year phases with policy priorities that aim to tackle the equality gaps faced by disabled people. The achievements of the plan are recorded and published every two years, showing progress on the selected range of targets.

The ENAT project was funded under an EC Budget Line related to the DAP under the heading: ""Pilot Actions for Mainstreaming Disability". The subject of accessible tourism was not specifically targeted in the call for proposals but this project was accepted as a potentially useful contribution to the advancement of accessibility.

See also **section 2.1.30** of this report, where the 2008-2010 planning period is presented and discussed.

2.1.21 2005 UNWTO Resolution on Accessible Tourism for All

The United Nations World Tourism Organization adopted on 28 November - 2 December 2005, a resolution on "Accessible Tourism for All" on the recommendation of the Quality Support and Trade Committee.

The text of the resolution updated the Annex to General Assembly resolution A/RES/284(IX) adopted at the ninth session (Buenos Aires, Argentina, 30 September - 4 October 1991) entitled Creating Tourism Opportunities for Handicapped People in the Nineties. The resolution was prepared with the help of experts provided to the Organization by the Spanish ONCE Foundation.

Considering the importance of this resolution to the present analysis and the policy actions which are proposed in later sections of this report, the full text of the UNWTO resolution is provided in Annex 1 of this report, for reference.

2.1.22 2006 EC Regulation: Disabled Air Passengers' Rights

Regulation (EC) No 1107/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 5 July 2006 concerning the rights of disabled persons and persons with reduced mobility when travelling by air was a landmark piece of legislation. It created, for the first time, a European legal framework for access provisions in air travel for disabled travellers, both in airports and on board aeroplanes.[23] The regulation covers both arrival and departure points, the organisation of assistance, funding the access measures at airports (by spreading the cost among all airport customers), service onboard planes, carriage of wheelchairs and guide dogs, customer information, oversight by the National regulatory authorities, customer complaints procedures and right of redress. The regulation comes into full effect on 26 July 2008 in all European passenger airports.

2.1.23 2006 EC Communication: A Renewed EU Tourism Policy

The renewed tourism policy, proposed by the Commission in 2006, aims to help the industry meet a number of challenges while promoting overall competitiveness. The document highlights "facing up to" Europe's ageing population; growing external competition, consumer demands for more specialised tourism, and the need to develop more sustainable and environmentally friendly practices. The revised policy seeks to produce more and better jobs by nurturing conditions that will help tourism grow strongly in the coming years.

In this Communication, the target group of disabled visitors has slipped out of the vocabulary, being replaced by the term: "accessibility and mobility…". Thus the only reference related to disabled people appears in this recommendation:

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[23] See http://www.accessibletourism.org/resources/ec_reg_1107_2006_5_july_en.pdf

"ERDF [the European Regional Development Fund] shall support more sustainable patterns of tourism to enhance cultural and natural heritage, develop *accessibility and mobility related infrastructure* [our emphasis] and to promote ICT, innovative SMEs, business networks and clusters, higher value added services, joint cross-border tourism strategies and inter-regional exchange of experience."

It is perhaps surprising after a more than a decade of policy statements recommending and supporting a wide range of measures that would improve tourism for disabled and elderly visitors that the subject is treated so briefly, as a matter only of "infrastructure" development.

The Commission proposes a combination of 'Better Regulation', 'Policy Coordination' and 'Improved use of available European financial instruments' to target the *sustainable growth and jobs* targets of the Lisbon Agenda. Partnership and consultation with tourism stakeholders at all levels of government are seen as an essential factor. If successful, this strategy would seem to bring about a kind of *de facto* European Tourism Policy, despite the lack of a formal legal framework for EU-level intervention in tourism. With EU funding programmes in relation to job creation, farming, fisheries, research, regional development and others, the tourism sector in Europe has perhaps many opportunities to access funds to develop its activities. Whether accessible tourism initiatives can benefit from this proposed strategy will be interesting to follow.

2.1.24 2006 European Social Funds 2007-2013 Programming Period

The European Social Fund, created in 1957, is the European Union's main financial instrument for investing in people.[24] It supports employment and helps people enhance their education and skills. This improves their job prospects. Member States and regions devise their own ESF Operational Programmes in order to respond to the real needs 'on the ground'.

Among the General Provisions of the ESF regulation is the statement:

"(30) In the context of its effort in favour of economic and social cohesion, the Community, at all stages of implementation of the Funds, has as its goals to eliminate inequalities and to promote equality between men and women as enshrined in Articles 2 and 3 of the Treaty, as well as combating discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation."

Article 16 states:
"The Member States and the Commission shall take appropriate steps to prevent any discrimination based on sex, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age or sexual orientation during the various stages of

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[24] European Social Funds http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/esf/index_en.htm

implementation of the Funds and, in particular, in the access to them. In particular, accessibility for disabled persons shall be one of the criteria to be observed in defining operations co-financed by the Funds and to be taken into account during the various stages of implementation."

ESF is thus a policy tool to "fight discrimination" but the main targets lie in the fields related to the Lisbon Agenda. Without a mandate for a European tourism policy, coherent, coordinated and effective actions on accessible tourism may be difficult to attain.

A first draft of a "toolkit" to support Member States in making ESF projects more accessible for people with disabilities was presented at the conference organised by the Commission on the ESF and accessibility with stakeholders on 21 September 2006, where examples of good practices were presented as well as different practices in the Member States.[25]

2.1.25 2006 The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities

The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006 (article 30 in particular, referring to participation in cultural life, recreation and sport) has added particular importance to the need for all parts of the tourism industry in all parts of the world to address the requirements of disabled visitors in their facilities, services and offers.

The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol was adopted on 13 December 2006 at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, and was opened for signature on 30 March 2007. There were 82 signatories to the Convention, 44 signatories to the Optional Protocol, and 1 ratification of the Convention. This is the highest number of signatories in history to a UN Convention on its opening day. It is the first comprehensive human rights treaty of the 21st century and is the first human rights convention to be open for signature by regional integration organizations. The UN website states:

> "The Convention marks a "paradigm shift" in attitudes and approaches to persons with disabilities. It takes to a new height the movement from viewing persons with disabilities as "objects of charity, medical treatment and social protection" towards viewing persons with disabilities as "subjects" with rights, who are capable of claiming those rights and making decisions for their lives based on their free and informed consent as well as being active members of society.
>
> The Convention is intended as a human rights instrument with an explicit, social development dimension. It adopts a broad categorization of persons with disabilities and reaffirms that all persons with all types of disabilities must

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[25] See: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/emplweb/events/event_en.cfm?id=645

enjoy all human rights and fundamental freedoms. It clarifies and qualifies how all categories of rights apply to persons with disabilities and identifies areas where adaptations have to be made for persons with disabilities to effectively exercise their rights and areas where their rights have been violated, and where protection of rights must be reinforced."

The Convention text continues:
"The principles of the Convention shall be:
(*a*) Respect for inherent dignity, individual autonomy including the freedom to make one's own choices, and independence of persons;
(*b*) Non-discrimination;
(*c*) Full and effective participation and inclusion in society;
(*d*) Respect for difference and acceptance of persons with disabilities as part of human diversity and humanity;
(*e*) Equality of opportunity;
(*f*) Accessibility;
(*g*) Equality between men and women;
(*h*) Respect for the evolving capacities of children with disabilities and respect for the right of children with disabilities to preserve their identities.

Article 30 of the Convention makes particular reference to participation in cultural life, leisure, recreation and sport:

"5. With a view to enabling persons with disabilities to participate on an equal basis with others in recreational, leisure and sporting activities, States Parties shall take appropriate measures:
(a) To encourage and promote the participation, to the fullest extent possible, of persons with disabilities in mainstream sporting activities at all levels;
(b) To ensure that persons with disabilities have an opportunity to organize, develop and participate in disability-specific sporting and recreational activities and, to this end, encourage the provision, on an equal basis with others, of appropriate instruction, training and resources;
(c) To ensure that persons with disabilities have access to sporting, recreational and tourism venues;
(d) To ensure that children with disabilities have equal access with other children to participation in play, recreation and leisure and sporting activities, including those activities in the school system;
(e) To ensure that persons with disabilities have access to services from those involved in the organization of recreational, tourism, leisure and sporting activities.' [26]

Countries are to promote participation in cultural life, recreation, leisure and sport by ensuring provision of television programmes, films, theatre and cultural material in

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[26] http://www.accessibletourism.org/?i=enat.en.reports.365

accessible formats, by making theatres, museums, cinemas and libraries accessible, and by guaranteeing that persons with disabilities have the opportunity to develop and utilize their creative potential not only for their own benefit, but also for the enrichment of society. Countries are to ensure their participation in mainstream and disability-specific sports" (Article 30).

"To ensure implementation and monitoring of the Convention, countries are to designate a focal point in the government and create a national mechanism to promote and monitor implementation" (Article 33).

It now remains to be seen whether the UN member states will live up the ambitions set in this binding Convention. The policy statements for tourism are clear but implementation must be pursued rigorously and with a high priority in order to achieve success on the ground. The efforts of member states and the length of time for implementation to take effect will certainly be closely watched by the disability movement.

2.1.26 2007 UN Progress Report on the Standard Rules

The UN-appointed Special Rapporteur on the Standard Rules made her annual report in 2007 on the implementation of the Rules. This report was based on visits, interviews, and – for the first time - questionnaires sent to all governments and national NGOs of disabled people. From the "self-reports" by 114 national governments (gathered in 2003-2004) it can be seen that UN member states can only report partial success in fulfilling the Standard Rules. (77 countries did not reply to the 2003-2004 Global Survey). The report is quoted here, at length:

> "This is the first time that the Special Rapporteur on Disability monitors the Standard Rules in the presence of a Convention of the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. This new reality begs the question regarding the similarities and differences between the two documents and the their relationship to one another.
>
> A comparative look at both documents reveals a complementary relationship between the two. On the one hand, the Convention, with its 50 Articles, represents the unified vision and presents the legal framework for a universal response to the issues of disability. The Standard Rules, on the other hand, has functioned, since its adoption, as a detailed checklist and guidelines for affecting a cultural and environmental and legislative transformation that would ensure the equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities. Therefore, the existence of a Convention on the Rights of persons with disabilities alongside the Standard Rules, will serve to augment the Rules and provide a legal base for the measures that need to be taken to implement the Rules. The Standard Rules with its procedural clarity and detailed implementation measures, still solicit from the international community, development agencies and organizations a moral and political obligation

toward the issues of persons with disabilities, while the Convention solicits a legal commitment to deal with those issues as rights. Therefore, the existence of both documents invites us to use both in order to improve conditions for persons with disabilities worldwide".[27]

The Rapporteurs' results revealed that, in the areas of policies, legislations and consulting with disabled persons organizations, more than half the responding countries answered positively: in other words, progress is being made. The shortfall was observed at the level of *implementation* of programmes and awareness-raising where only 40 to 49 countries responded positively.

The following passages are quoted in full from the report:

"Results on accessibility show that the intention is present in most of the responding countries to make the physical environment accessible and that many do understand the importance of this aspect in effecting equalization of opportunities for persons with disabilities. While accessibility is expressed as a priority by governments in all discussions about disability at international fora, it is obvious that when it comes to implementation at the national level - which requires the spending of resources - it is a priority that competes with many others. Education, health, security…etc. often take precedence over disability issues where governments are concerned. Therefore, the alarming number of 49 countries that have taken no action on accessibility for persons with disabilities is a serious matters that requires awareness raising and advocacy.

In effect, this means that the physical environment is not as accessible as it should be. Even in the countries that stated they have accessibility, not all spaces are accessible and in only 64 of them the spaces related to services, which may or may not be legislated for, are accessible, such as government buildings. On the whole both housing and transportation remain major issues of concern in terms of accessibility in most of the responding countries.

This means that social commitment is not widely shared or backed by the necessary resources in order to restructure the environment to suit the needs of all persons with disabilities.

Responses relating to Rule 14, Policies were higher than those relating to change on the ground in accordance with these policies. The fact that the intention is clearly present seems to indicate that the obstacle to implementation could be the availability of financial resources which is responsible for the gap between theory (intention) and practice (implementation).

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[27] Statement of the Special Rapporteur on Disability to the 45th Session of the Commission for Social Development (2007) http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/enable/srcsocd45.htm

Considering that more than 10 years have passed since the adoption of the Standard Rules (at the time of the administration of this questionnaire), the responses given to the issue of accessibility are far from satisfactory. Political commitments need to be translated into actions, and the community at every level needs to be involved in this because communities are where people spend their lives and interact, and where the equalization of opportunities counts the most.

While monitoring bodies on accessibility do exist in one form or another in many countries, little is known at this time about their programmes and methodology, or their levels of coverage and whether they are related to government policies and legislations or whether they provide information to governments leading to change.

Monitoring and reporting without an effective mechanism that translates into real change, remain intellectual exercises that have little effect on the actual lives of persons with disabilities.

The regular reviews of the UN Standard Rules have consistently pointed to the need for government monitoring and reporting across all areas of the rules.

It is also obvious that there is a need for greater involvement on the part of disabled persons organizations in assessing the accessibility situation in their countries, identifying the needs, and advising governments on the best course of action to achieve full accessibility and thereby move one step closer to full participation in society for persons with disabilities.

"Notably, in 2007, 13 years after their adoption, no country had fully implemented the entire set of UN Standard Rules." [our emphasis]**.**

2.1.27 2007   The European Year of Equal Opportunities For All

The European Year of Equal Opportunities for All 2007 targetted awareness-raising about European citizens' rights to non-discrimination.[28] With more than 430 national actions and over 600 events spreading the messages of the Year and directly reaching approximately 400.000 people, the European Year is judged to have achieved its goal. Public debate on the benefits of diversity in Europe has been launched. An estimated 328 million citizens were additionally reached by articles published in newspapers and magazines on the Year's activities.

The EU Member States officially recognised the numerous achievements of the European Year and, most importantly, took on many new commitments in early December 2007. For example, they committed to strengthening their efforts to

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[28] 2007 European Year of Equal Opportunities for All:
http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/eyeq/index.cfm?page_id=18

combat discrimination inside and outside the labour market, while fully incorporating civil society and social partners in the process. They have also recognised the importance of dealing with multiple discrimination and using tools such as mainstreaming, positive action, and data collection to make equality a reality.

At the end of 2007, further national awareness raising activities were selected for funding by the EU's PROGRESS programme in 2008. All the projects aim to improve understanding of equality issues and challenge stereotypes and prejudices.[29] However, none of these, as far as we can ascertain, is specifically concerned with measures to promote equal opportunities in relation to accessible tourism.

2.1.28 2007   EC Stakeholder Conference on Accessible Tourism

Policies and actions for the improvement of accessibility in tourism were placed in the spotlight at a two-day Stakeholders' Conference held in Brussels in January 2007, organised in support of the "European Year of Equal Opportunities for All" by the Tourism Unit of the European Commission DG Enterprise. The main objective of the conference was to raise the awareness of all stakeholders about the impact and the business opportunities of demographic ageing that will lead to a growing proportion of tourists with needs for improved accessibility and higher service quality. The conference was organised with the technical support of OSSATE, the Toegankelijkheidsbureau and Toerisme Vlaanderen. The conference presented best practices and engaged the delegates in focussed discussions about the future directions for accessible tourism.

Four themes were addressed:
- Accessibility in Transport
- Information and Marketing on Accessibility
- Accessibility within Training and Employment
- Accessible Infrastructure in Destinations.

Each theme was introduced with presentations of good practices, projects and initiatives, followed by plenary discussions.
The summary and conclusions of the conference were presented by Mr. Pedro Ortún, Director of the EC Enterprise and Industry Directorate General, and are reproduced here in full:

- **"Accessibility is a rights issue** – a right of access to goods, facilities and services – and everybody should have the right to travel and to enjoy their leisure experiences
- Accessibility is often limited to a certain group of people but it should be seen in a more **holistic approach**
- **Design for All** – accessibility should be useable for as many people as possible – the needs of as many people as possible should be taken on board

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29   See: National anti-discrimination projects supported by the Progress Programme, 2007-2008: http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/fundamental_rights/policy/awrais/nap08_en.htm

- Keyword: **mainstreaming** - The need to mainstream disability and accessibility into all relevant policy areas. The Commission pays particular attention to disability aspects in its socio-economic policies, programmes and projects. The Unit for the Integration of People with Disabilities is responsible for mainstreaming disability matters within the Commission
- All key actors at international, EU, national and destination (reg., local) level should be involved – but also the **tourism industry**!
- Accessibility is an important **economic element** and can be a real "**business case**" – it is a matter of competition (ageing population – new target groups!)
- But: the timeframe to reach accessibility is very long – even with legislation, also because the industry has to adapt, which also means to invest"

"What does DG ENTERPRISE and INDUSTRY?
References to **accessibility in the TSG report**:

Aim 2b: To provide a safe, satisfying and fulfilling experience for visitors, **available to all** without discrimination by gender, race, religion, disability or in other ways -> **Fair access to tourism for all**

Challenge 2: Addressing the impact of **tourism transport**:

"In addition, however, tourism planners and businesses should work together to promote a modal shift towards the use of more environmentally friendly forms of transport for tourism (train, coach/bus, water, cycle, foot), both to and within the tourist destination, through (amongst others):
*Careful location of new tourism development **with respect to accessibility**."* (Sustainable transport is also a key challenge of the SDS.)

Challenge 7: **Making holidays available to all**

"Social inclusion and equity are important principles of sustainable development. A specific aim (2b) is to ensure that tourism experiences are available to all without discrimination. This will also bring additional economic benefits (Aims 1a, 1b)."

Two principal challenges to address are:

Physical disability. This includes the high proportion of European citizens affected by mobility or sensory impairment, either personally or indirectly through a member of their family or group. This may increase, owing to demographic changes.

Economic disadvantage, which exists in all countries but is especially prevalent in some of the newer EU member states and among immigrant populations.

Relevant action includes:

Encouraging policies and actions to support social tourism at all levels.
Raising enterprise awareness of the size of the market and the economic advantages as well as social benefits.
Ensuring universal adherence to workers' leave entitlement, safeguarding this aspect of social security guaranteed by the European social model
Designing and adapting tourism facilities and sites to meet requirements for physical disability.

Improving information relevant to disabled people and under-privileged groups.
Encouraging a broad price range in tourism facilities and experiences
Pursuing specific schemes to facilitate and encourage holiday taking by people on low incomes, such as the holiday voucher systems run in some countries based on tax incentives and involving governments and operators.

Relating to competitiveness to sustainability:
*"The key challenges of delivering quality jobs, minimising resource use, supporting communities, promoting sustainable transport and **improving accessibility** are all partly dependent on a response from business."*

Education and capacity building:
"Much can be achieved through delivery of targeted advice and training. This could include among others:
*- Providing specific courses for existing businesses and employees. Courses should be short, focused and **easily accessible**."*

In the **Action Framework** accessibility is the major theme in point 7: *"**Making holidays available to all**, e.g. Local authorities are asked to provide good information on accessibility and tourism businesses are asked to improve accessibility to their facilities."*

Also in the table of **indicators** accessibility is one of the indicators on destination level – *e.g. % tourism enterprises accessible by public transport or % tourism enterprises meeting specified criteria on accessibility*

- Ask the audience to participate in the open web-based consultation and give their contributions in regard to accessibility
- The Commission will then work on an Agenda 21 for sustainable tourism in Europe taking into account the outcome of the consultation
- Future challenge: Now we talk about accessibility, we raise awareness, we provide people with information – the next step should be to **implement accessibility**.
- Commission renews commitment to the subject of 'Accessible Tourism' and proposes to develop a solid body of on-line information on accessibility for the sector."

The conclusions cited above gave a positive signal to the conference and to the tourism sector that the European Commission is setting new targets and providing the means to follow them up with actions, so as to ensure that the sector is capable of meeting the challenge of demographic ageing by, "implementing accessibility".

Clearly these final statements are the most concrete evidence so far that the Commission means to act firmly in promoting accessible tourism for all. ENAT regards this commitment as very promising for the future of European accessible tourism, and looks forward to engaging with the Commission's Tourism Unit to assist, where possible, in attaining these objectives.

2.1.29 2007 EDF: Need for a Disability Specific Directive

EDF – The European Disability Forum, has argued for some years for the need for a "Disability Specific Directive" as part of EU legislation. The purpose of such a Directive is to safeguard the rights of disabled citizens in all areas of life, and not only in the few areas such as employment and the specific case of air transport, that are currently covered.

The EDF argues, in a policy paper published in October 2007:

"Disabled people should have the opportunity to participate in all areas of life. Whether it is employment, the provision of goods and services, transport, education, the rental of accommodation or telecommunications, disabled people have a right to access that needs to be recognised in the legislation. The starting point for any legislation has to be that it does not make sense to outlaw discrimination in one area whilst allowing it in another. A disabled person may find it easier to get a job because of non-discrimination legislation in that area. That will be of little use if he or she is unable to get to work because of a lack of accessible transport. Hence, the objective should be for non-discrimination legislation to be as comprehensive as possible".[30]

The paper also points out that "…the end of 2006 saw the adoption of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. If, as expected, the EC and the 27 Members States ratify the Convention, it will be necessary to consider what additional Community (legal) instruments need to be adopted in order to comply with the Convention".

With the UN Convention now 'pressing' policy-makers in Europe, and the EDF having run a successful campaign which gathered over 1.2 million signatures supporting the rights of disabled people (in October 2007), the stage is set for further vigorous lobbying by the disability organisations to make accessibility a reality for all. Tourism policy may not present itself as an immediate target of such lobbying, given that tourism is outside the EU policy remit. EDF is nonetheless pushing for a 'disability specific EU Directive' which could cover non-discrimination of disabled people in the provision of goods and services. Such a Directive would certainly lead to significant changes to the travel and tourism sector, with stronger legal requirements on enterprises to provide access for all.

2.1.30 2007 The European Disability Action Plan 2008 - 2010

The EU Disability Action Plan (2004 -2010), was devised after consultations with stakeholders and experts in 2003, the European Year of People with Disabilities. It is managed by the European Commission, and was last updated in November 2007. It is monitored in collaboration with the high level Group on Disability. The plan runs to 2010. The Commission's plans for a follow-up activity will start to be formulated in 2008.

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[30] "Promoting Equality and Combating Disability Discrimination: The Need for a Disability Specific Non-Discrimination Directive Going Beyond Employment". EDF, October 2007.
See: http://www.edf-feph.org/Page_Generale.asp?DocID=13854&thebloc=13856

In its updated European Disability Action Plan 2008-2009, published on 26 November 2007, the European Commission notes the formation of ENAT as a targetted action to improve accessibility to tourism for people with disabilities.[31] The EC also makes proposals to improve access to goods and services by developing statistical services for monitoring accessibility and encouraging new standards.

The Action Plan points out that European Cohesion Policy plays an important role in supporting the employment and social inclusion of disabled persons, as well as accessibility, through the operational programmes prepared and implemented by Member States, regions and the wider partnerships in cooperation with the Commission. These activities are funded by the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and European Social Fund (ESF).The General Regulation for the 2007-2013 funding period provides that
"accessibility for disabled persons shall be one of the criteria to be observed in defining operations co-financed by the Funds and to be taken into account during the various stages of implementation".

The Commission's Communication highlights that it has supported several pilot projects and research on accessibility to the built environment during 2006 - 2007. The results include a guide for public administration to consider accessibility in public tendering for buildings, training materials on accessibility for professionals, and the creation of a European network on accessible tourism (ENAT).

The communication continues: "The Commission is developing legislative frameworks on accessibility in the areas of transport and ICT. Building on recent European legislation concerning air transport and in the Regulation on international rail sector on the rights of disabled people and people with reduced mobility, the Commission plans to propose legislation in the areas of maritime transport and bus and coach transport". The Commission's action plan also points to new actions to support standards for the built environment and infrastructure.

Of special interest to this policy analysis are the EC's plans to assist member states and regions in implementing the UN convention on the rights of disabled people. Plans include a policy review and new annual meetings of European disability ministers to strengthen the European disability strategy.

The Disability Action Plan 2008-2009 and annexes describe the achievements of the previous action plan and aspects of the new plan. The following plans are outlined for the final period of the DAP:

> "The 2008-2009 DAP focuses on accessibility. The aim is to stimulate inclusive participation of people with disabilities and to work towards full enjoyment of fundamental rights. This is done through:
> - fostering accessibility of the labour market (through flexicurity, supported employment and working with Public Employment Services);

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[31] See: http://www.accessibletourism.org/?i=enat.en.news.328

- boosting accessibility of goods, services and infrastructures;
- consolidating the Commission's analytical capacity to support accessibility (through studies, etc.); facilitating the implementation of the UN Convention;
- complementing the Community legislative framework of protection against discrimination."

<div align="right">- European Commission Website[32]</div>

It remains to be seen to what extent specific actions addressing accessibility in tourism may form part of the DAP in 2008-2009.

2.1.31 2007 European Parliament Resolution on European Tourism

On 29 November 2007, European Members of Parliament passed a resolution on a renewed EU Tourism Policy: "Towards a stronger partnership for European Tourism"[33], calling for Member States to make a united effort to support Accessible Tourism.

MEPs gave their backing to the report of Italian MEP Paola Costa, who provided a wide-ranging report on the challenges faced by the European Tourism sector, and a set of twenty-two concrete proposals for renewed action. The keyword which runs throughout the report is "partnership" - for only by working together, says Paolo Costa, can EU Member States tackle the fragmented policies and practices which currently frustrate efforts in the tourism sector.

Actions for the future of accessible tourism in Europe are called for in six specific paragraphs, declaring that the European Parliament:

"...Welcomes initiatives to coordinate at European level the information on accessible tourism that would allow tourists with reduced mobility and their families to find information about the accessibility of tourist destinations; calls on all Member States, tourism providers and national and local tourist organisations to join and/or to support this kind of initiative;

- At the same time, calls on the Commission and the Member States to consider the feasibility of drawing up a charter of the rights and obligations of European tourists, in view of the riotous and violent incidents caused by European tourists in European tourist destinations , and also a European code of conduct for tourist businesses;

- Calls on the Commission and the Member States to initialise an "Access for all " EC label that would guarantee core accessibility facilities for tourists with reduced mobility and would cover offers such as accommodation, restaurants, leisure and natural sites, auditoriums, monuments, museums, etc.;

- Stresses, furthermore, the need to protect, conserve and restore the European cultural heritage; and calls for more stringent management of such sites and of the conditions under which they are visited, and for greater efforts

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[32] See: http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=430&langId=en

[33] See: http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?type=REPORT&reference=A6-2007-0399&language=EN&mode=XML

to improve access for people with disabilities, growing numbers of whom now travel for leisure purposes;

- Calls on the Commission to draft a Communication with an action plan on the enhancement of such a label based on the work it has already carried out , on experiences and best practices at national and local level and taking stock of what has been achieved at EU level in the transport field;

- Notes that the accessibility of tourist destinations is a matter that also has to do with the transport services provided or available; calls, therefore, on the Commission, for the purposes of the new European tourism policy and of developing European transport policy, to take due account of the accessibility handicap affecting regions with specific natural or geographical characteristics, such as the outermost regions, island and mountain regions, and the sparsely populated northernmost regions..."

Moreover, the Parliamentary Report presents twenty-two suggestions for actions by the Members States, Regional and Local authorities, including the need to:
"... protect, preserve and restore European cultural heritage assets and [calls for] more rigorous management of cultural sites and their visiting arrangements, as well as for greater efforts to improve access for disabled people, an increasing number of whom are travelling for tourist purposes;..."

Responding to the Tourism Report on the European Day of People with Disabilities, ENAT Coordinator Ivor Ambrose stated: "We welcome this firm and forward-looking resolution by the Members of the European Parliament , as it gives a timely and much-needed message for public authorities and the tourism industry. All parties must work together across national and regional borders to make accessible tourism a reality, both for European consumers and international visitors. ENAT and its members are ready to play their part in fulfilling the ambitions that are contained in this resolution".

2.1.32 2007 ENAT International Congress, Marina d'Or

From the results of a policy evaluation questionnaire distributed at the ENAT International Conference, November 2007, it was found that participants tended to see the problems of promoting accessible tourism not in terms of a lack of policy, though this may be under-funded, nor in the management of policy. Instead, they saw problems more in terms of a lack of physical infrastructure and poor levels of awareness of industry and a lack of funding to make improvements.[34]

The ENAT Study Report no. 1, "Rights of Tourists with Disabilities in the European Union Framework", presents an overview of the key legislation and the way in which the rights of people with disabilities are being extended and safeguarded.[35]

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[34] This finding is reported in the ENAT Project Evaluation Report.

[35] ENAT Study Report no. 1. http://www.accessibletourism.org/?i=enat.en.reports.444

2.2 Policy Tools for Accessible Tourism

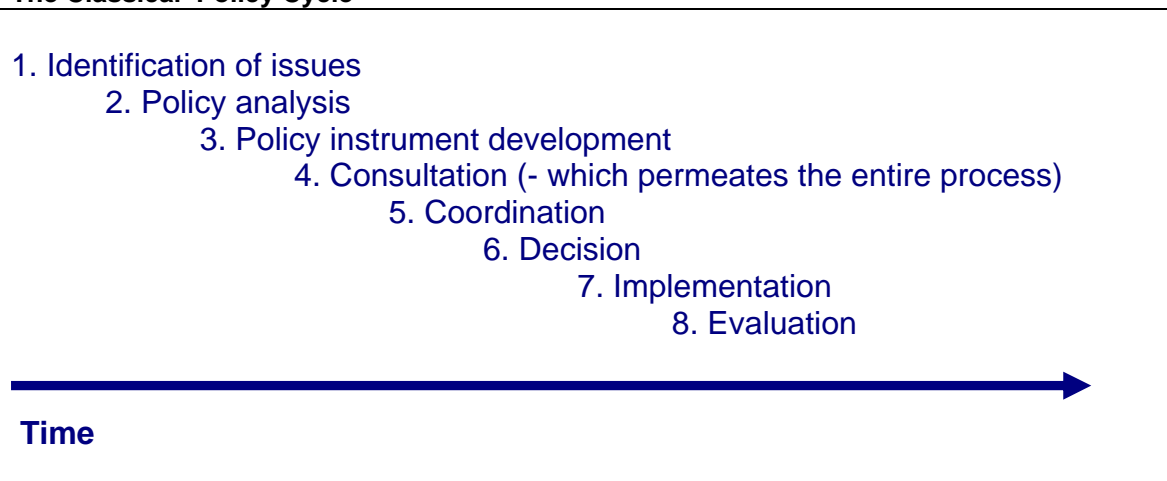### 2.2.1 *From Policy Statements to Policy Implementation*

As the policy review (above) shows, policy recommendations for improving tourism accessibility have been made over the years by major global and European bodies including the United Nations and World Tourism Organisation, The Council of Europe, the EU Council of Ministers, the European Parliament, European Commission, EU Member States and others. From ENAT's perspective as an advocate of accessible tourism (and, indeed, an outspoken lobbyist for this cause), we find it very disappointing that - given the illustrious status and influence of the policymakers - there has not been much greater progress towards *implementation* of accessibility measures in the tourism sector.

We can note that the UN Rapporteur on the Standard Rules has declared (in 2007) that large numbers of countries have *policies for improving accessibility* but they are not implementing these with sufficient speed. It is of little comfort to know that the European tourism sector is also suffering from a similar failure of implementation when it comes to accessibility.

Since policy implementation for accessible tourism has not yet succeeded on the wider European scale, it is important to identify at least some of the reasons for this failure and then seek to change the conditions which are holding back progress.

To begin with, the analysis needs to examine how policies are formulated and put into effect. In political science, the cycle of policy development is characterised in "classical" theory as a series of phases. A simplified example is shown below:

The Classical 'Policy Cycle'

1. Identification of issues
   2. Policy analysis
      3. Policy instrument development
         4. Consultation (- which permeates the entire process)
            5. Coordination
               6. Decision
                  7. Implementation
                     8. Evaluation

Time →

In this model, policies are designed, built and put into practice in successive stages. The model may be used by policy-makers as a practical guide or, as here, as a heuristic device to analyse where the problem of lack of policy implementation (failure) arises.

Following the model, looking back over the period since 1990, it can be seen that efforts to develop European accessible tourism policies have fluctuated considerably between phases *identification* (1), *policy analysis* (2) and *policy instrument development* (3), with some efforts in relation to *consultation* (4) and *coordination* (5). The later stages of *policy decisions(*with corresponding action plans) (6), *implementation* (7) and *evaluation* (8) have yet to be realised at EU level.

Over time, a strong consensus about the need for accessible tourism, has clearly emerged among those bodies that lead public policy-making in Europe. However, policy identification and analysis has been predominantly focussed on *customer needs and demands,* and much less effort has been expended to examine *conditions in the tourism industry* and *the capacity of enterprises to change and adapt to make their offers and facilities accessible.* As a simple example of this relative lack of attention to industry needs, it can be noted that no EU study has been commissioned to quantify the economic costs and benefits of implementing accessibility measures in tourism enterprises of a given size or type across the whole of Europe. Such studies are surely of vital interest when creating equitable and fair policies for the EU tourism sector.

It appears, then, that *tourism policy makers* have become sensitized to the needs of disabled and other visitors for accessibility in tourism, and have taken up the call for access improvements in the supply chain. But there has been much less deep and lasting engagement with the tourism enterprises and their representative organisations in Europe to inform and debate about access issues. This has given rise to a fundamental weakness in the policy sphere, with the tourism industry perhaps feeling that its needs were being ignored, and being forced to take the role of the "villain", not delivering access and always on the defensive.

A more productive policy approach is needed, requiring balance and inclusion of the provider's perspective. In the analysis stage of the policy cycle it is necessary to identify, analyse and illustrate how the tourism providers can also benefit in concrete terms from engaging in accessible tourism, and policies must encourage changes which will enable the industry to move in this direction for compelling economic reasons.

Some efforts at such analyses have been made recently, especially in the 2007 EC Stakeholders' Conference and the 2007 ENAT International Congress (both referred to above), where good practices of accessible tourism measures carried out by public and private enterprises were presented and held up as examples for others to follow. Importantly, several of the private businesses were not only "doing the right thing" morally and politically, but they were also proud to be *turning a profit* as a result of their companies' accessibility policies and actions.

The 17-year record shows that policies for accessible tourism in Europe have been slowed or stalled in several ways:

- Without a political mandate for tourism, EU policy-makers have been unable to make decisions that are binding on the tourism sector across Europe. This has reduced the effectiveness of actions to support accessible tourism.
- Community resources could not therefore be allocated directly for sustained EU actions on tourism accessibility.
- Policy analysis and modelling for accessible tourism development has been only partial due to a lack of appropriate market statistics and analysis at EU level.
- Good practices (e.g. at Member State, Regional or local levels) have frequently been used as reference points or examples of good practice for tourism providers to follow but these examples have only given a partial view of the tourism sector's capacity to adapt. There is no systematic approach to using good practice in enterprises as a means to inform the development of policy instruments. (Only ENAT has a regularly updated EU database of "Projects and Good Practices" in accessible tourism).
- Consultation on accessible tourism policies has lacked an overall framework and incentives to encourage the long-term engagement of stakeholders. Industry stakeholders have been introduced to the ideas of accessible tourism in a somewhat *ad hoc* fashion, and the lack of policy follow-through after some consultations has left certain issues (or perhaps the whole issue of accessible tourism, for some) "open" or unresolved.
- The formal committees and advisory organs on EU tourism policy lack formal and qualified representatives of disabled people and experts with in-depth knowledge of accessible tourism provisions. This perpetuates an unfortunate distance between the tourism sector and the disability community which must be bridged if there is to be progress towards finding common ground.
- Lack of agreed minimum standards for accessible tourism facilities, tourism services and customer information is a key factor inhibiting the development of common approaches to accessible tourism in Europe. Without such standards, EU countries and regions will continue to create or re-invent a multitude of idiosyncratic definitions of accessibility, which confounds rational attempts at policy-making, implementation and evaluation of accessibility measures across the EU.

As referred to previously, *the European policy vision of tourism for all*, which was formulated at the 1990 EU Tourism for All conference, is still unrealised today, more than 17 years later.

In the absence of a European legal framework for tourism, implementation of most of the relevant access measures in tourism remains a responsibility of national and regional governments and their respective agencies. Generally, public authorities operating in the tourism sector (e.g. National and Regional Tourist Boards, Ministries and agencies) have not given a high priority to the accessibility objectives put forward by organisations of disabled people or even their national governments.

Several, (perhaps even the majority), of the National Tourism Authorities of the EU Member States do not have a declared policy or action plan for encouraging accessible tourism within their country. Only about half of the EU Member States' National Tourist Boards offer regularly updated accessibility information for disabled tourists on their websites.[36] There are some notable exceptions, such as the Danish Tourist Board, The French Ministry of Tourism, Tourism Flanders and VisitBritain which have all developed information services for disabled tourists as well as programmes for businesses to improve the accessibility of their venues, as part of their activities.

We should not ignore, of course, the advances in practical tourism accessibility that have taken place in projects and initiatives, especially at regional and local levels, in destinations and in venues in many EU Members States.[37] Although it is difficult to measure, it is most probably the case that the many high-level policy statements on 'tourism for all' have influenced the direction of local policies over the years and, indeed, have contributed to a positive climate of change towards more inclusive and accessible tourism.

It is also certainly the case that organisations of disabled people, NGOs, self-help groups, non-profits, social cooperatives, private businesses, public authorities and destination management organisations have been the driving force behind hundreds if not thousands of projects to improve accessibility and activities for disabled visitors in local tourist destinations. Many of these initiatives have targeted the provision of "specialised" services for disabled tourists and their families – which is a favoured option for many customers in this diverse market. Good results have been achieved (usually with no European intervention) but one of the weaknesses of these typically smaller projects is their limited marketing reach. Foreign customers can be an attractive but elusive market if the owner has no means of advertising his or her service abroad, and varying physical access standards between countries may present a barrier to customers' understanding of the offer and freedom of choice. For these reasons a 'trans-national' dimension can be an important asset to local tourism initiatives but this is not easily achieved in the absence of European coordination mechanisms and specific funding programmes.

2.2.2   Disability Policies – Towards the Tourism Mainstream

During the period 1990 - 1997, the policy review (above) has shown that European policies concerning the *rights of disabled people* have undoubtedly been strengthened. Disability rights policies have led to concrete implementation of laws in policy areas where Europe-wide legal authority is firmly established, such as in employment. Moreover, the recent UN Declaration on Rights of Persons with

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[36] See a listing of disability information webpages at the European Travel Commission website: http://www.visiteurope.com/redirect/?oid=%5Bcom.tiscover.etdp.contenttypes.Interest%3A%7Bid%3D2390570%7D%5D&lang=en_GL

[37] Examples of good practices have been cited in the ENAT Study Reports no. 1 and No. 2, *q.v.* and at: http://www.accessibletourism.org/?i=enat.en.enat_projects_and_good_practices

Disabilities is expected to have the effect of extending the areas in which disability rights are recognised in EU policy-making and regulation, as EU member states have committed to ratify the Declaration, with its binding consequences for governments.

Despite the "push" which may be felt by policy-makers from the rising influence of disability rights, the tourism sector has been shielded somewhat from this, due to the EU's lack of jurisdiction over tourism. Although the EU regulates certain activities closely related to tourism, e.g. transport, (by air, rail, buses and coaches, and lately maritime transport – which is under consideration), it is the member states that exert their influence over tourism policies. So far, there is no comprehensive proposal for the application of disability rights in tourism at EU level.

It may be observed, nevertheless, that some member states, such as the United Kingdom are already well ahead of others in implementing non-discrimination legislation in the area of disabled people's access to premises, goods and services, including tourism facilities and offers.

Whether or not the force of EU law is used to bring about the implementation of accessible tourism measures, mainstreaming disability considerations in tourism policy is the key method for ensuring that persons with disabilities have the same possibilities and access to services as those who are not disabled. The mainstreaming method for achieving equality involves thinking through and integrating the needs of disabled people in all policies and planning so that provisions for disabled persons become part of everyday practice.

Achieving 'sector responsibility' is widely regarded as the key to disability mainstreaming. The term implies that each 'sector' of the public authorities must formulate and implement policies which include provisions for people with disabilities. This entails that services must be developed and delivered in ways that are appropriate to all users, (and all kinds of disabilities). Furthermore, where sector responsibility is practiced, it is an established principle that where there are additional costs related to the provision of equipment or services to overcome access barriers experienced by people with disabilities, these costs should be borne by the customers or users as a whole, rather than being passed on to the customers with the disabilities.

Experience shows that public authorities typically take a considerable length of time to adjust their thinking and their processes to this approach, and they require a large body of information about the needs of disabled customers in order to meet the challenges of disability mainstreaming. Authorities also require the expertise of professionals who can advise on how to meet the defined user needs, using technical, managerial and other means. Sector responsibility typically requires both organisational change and the integration of a substantive body of knowledge about disabled people's needs and requirements. It should also be said that there is a continuing need for research of all kinds (socio-economic, humanities and technology) in order to develop and update knowledge that is relevant to the operations of each policy sector.

Disability mainstreaming across policy sectors has developed gradually, starting in the mid-1990s, especially in the Nordic countries, and this has set a trend which EU member states have followed to varying degrees. An example of disability mainstreaming in tourism can be found in Denmark, where the Ministry responsible for tourism established an action plan in 2002 including initial financial support for a tourism access label and information system for disabled visitors. The information scheme was designed and implemented by a new association (the "Danish Accessibility Association"), established by three founding partners: VisitDenmark, the Hotel, Restaurant and Catering Employers' Federation and the Danish Disability Organisation.[38] The Association conducts access audits, advises public and private enterprises on accessibility measures, conducts research and development (including EU projects) and informs foreign and domestic visitors about accessible tourism and accessible venues.

The mainstreaming approach has been endorsed by the European Commission, in policies concerning disabled citizens, for example in the European Disability Strategy.[39]

2.2.3 Policy Coordination for Accessible Tourism Development

Mainstreaming requires that the public authorities takes up their responsibilities to initiate and coordinate actions to make their services accessible. As the successful Danish example shows, the practical implementation of this approach may well be entrusted to partners with the relevant expertise, under the right conditions. But it should be remembered that tourism authorities also need to act as catalysts for local accessibility development and improvement, working together with regional and local municipalities in order to coordinate disability mainstreaming efforts.

For example, ENAT knows of many instances around Europe where owners of tourist enterprises are firmly convinced that they can adjust their business to serve more disabled or elderly tourists; but without the practical support of the local municipality to make access improvements to local pavements or other infrastructure or public transport services, these owners will not take the risk to invest in adaptations. This simple example illustrates that *partnership* and *a plan for local development* will often be required to ensure return on investment for both public and private enterprises. As in any other tourism investment decision, the economic viability of a scheme must be reasonably assured if accessible tourism is to work. Mainstreaming therefore requires funds to be set aside for the particular purpose of establishing access for all, as access improvements are not "optional extras" but an integral part of the tourism offer.

The overview of International and European equal rights and accessibility policies outlined above, indicates that achieving 'tourism for all' is a long and difficult process. It is evident that accessible tourism for all has not yet been delivered by means of the "classic" mechanism of market response to customers' demands. Moreover,

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[38] See: www.godadgang.dk

[39] http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=429&langId=en

providers and public authorities have not yet fully anticipated and responded to the future needs for better accessibility across all the service areas of the mainstream tourism sector.

ENAT sees its role as contributing to policy definition and implementation, particularly though its networking capabilities, by bringing together different stakeholders (e.g. user and provider organisations) within one network. Networking has the function of bringing parties together, building consensus and, especially, transferring good practices.

2.3   Policy Tools - Summary Table

A wide range of policy tools (or instruments) that may be used for promoting accessible tourism have been referred to throughout the previous sections and in the policy review. Essentially, each policy tool is used to solve a problem of policy-making. In the following summary table a list of policy tools is given. The   tools are characterised according to their purpose, to whom they are mainly addressed, and their effects.

Policy Tools for Accessible Tourism:

Policy Tool	Application Area / Target group	Effect
1. Information / References	Information needs of policy-makers	Quality Assurance (QA) of policy process and content
Policy Review	Information needs of policy-makers	QA
Examples of Good Practice	Information needs of policy-makers and enterprises	Innovation. Validation of objectives & targets
Business cases	Information needs of enterprises	Understanding the relation between accessibility measures and ROI
Statistics & finance analysis	Policy-makers	Impact assessment
Stakeholder consultations	Policy-makers	Gain all-round view, consensus- building
UN Standard Rules	Policy-makers	QA
Agenda 22 process	Policy-makers	QA
UN Convention art 30.	Policy-makers	QA
Universal Design Principles (Design-for-All)	Enterprises, suppliers	QA
2. Policy Status and Monitoring tools		
Open method of coordination	Member states/ policymakers	Comparative analysis, target-setting, tracking performance, evaluation.
Accessibility benchmarking: - baseline, targets and achievements	Stakeholders / policymakers	Comparative analysis, target-setting, tracking performance, evaluation.
3. Information and Marketing tools	Enterprises, customers	Engaging with the market for accessible tourism
Access auditing	Enterprises	QA of tourism services
Accessibility action plans	Enterprises	QA of tourism services
4. Standards		
Physical access standards	Enterprises, designers	QA of tourism venues
Service standards for tourism facilities	Enterprises, service partners	QA of tourism services
Research & Development	Project partners	Innovation, new solutions, products and services
5. Awareness & Training		
Awareness campaign. / Training	General public, actors and stakeholders / Enterprises	Raise awareness, acquire skills, give confidence.
Networking (ENAT)	All stakeholders	Raise awareness, share expertise, partnerships
6. Local & Regional plans	Public authorities	
7. Regulation	Enterprises, suppliers	
Public procurement	Public authorities, enterprises.	Procurement of accessible infrastructure and services
Certification of services	Enterprises	Service level compliance.
Enforcement / Redress	Enterprises / Customers	Compliance / Guarantee

2.4   The Role of Accessible Tourism Standards

ENAT recognises and supports the use of existing authorised standards for accessibility of the built environment, for transport and for ICTs in countries and regions where these exist. These various standards may form the basis of future European or International standards for tourism and transport. But even these may be improved, as can their accompanying guidelines.

Industry standards for products and services have the direct purpose of safeguarding the health and safety of consumers, and protecting the rights of consumers. Good standards enable markets to function efficiently and fairly by providing industry with a reliable frame of reference for the design and delivery of products and services. Where new standards are introduced by legislation or other mandatory enforcement, enterprises must commonly adapt or modify their existing products or services in order to comply. Thus, the introduction of standards can necessitate significant changes in the way an enterprise works and does its business. Standards can also help enterprises to deliver accurate information about products and services to users, including both workers and consumers.

ENAT is well aware of the arguments from some quarters of the tourism industry that European standards can be a threat to tourism providers, their products, services and ways of working, especially if such standards are imposed without due care and consideration for local conditions or other factors that are specific to the tourism sector. Such criticism needs to be taken seriously and, we believe, areas of agreement need to be explored and carefully developed to find workable solutions.

As we have pointed out, the mainstream tourism sector is far from achieving 'accessible tourism' and we do not doubt that there is a clear and urgent need for accessibility guidelines in the area of tourism and transport and the adoption of such guidelines by industry, (which may be voluntary), so as to bring about better services and greater transparency both in the countries of Europe and across the globe.

In the mid- to long-term, however, we see the need for minimum standards for accessible tourism service quality to be established at European level in order to ensure that customers can be *informed clearly* about access facilities and services at the venue and that *their visit will be guaranteed by a specified level of accessible service.* Requirements for staff training in disability awareness and disability relevant skills relevant to the task should also form a part of the service standards.

Without European accessible tourism standards, (as today), ENAT has observed that the urge to meet market demands for accessibility can lead enterprises and others to initiatives along the lines of standard-setting, some which may be useful and others less so. There is certainly a growth in the design of unofficial or 'proprietary' standards and practices for accessible tourism in many countries and regions – and even, to some extent, in individual venues. Mostly, these efforts tend not to have any national or international access standard as a frame of reference. Such developments, in isolation, although they are well-meaning, may compose a

threat to the development of inclusive, accessible tourism, as they may too easily create confusion and a false sense of certainty for the travel agent, the tour operator and the tourist who needs an assured level of accessibility .

It remains to be said that a European accessible tourism standard would not only be valuable for the European tourism and its customers. Such a standard could eventually provide the basis for an international accessible tourism standard – which has not yet been developed. Many tourism actors and stakeholders around the world are seeking the guidance and assurance that such a standard could produce.

This policy review section concludes by highlighting once more the need to focus on *policy implementation* as an essential outcome of policy formulation. Visionary statements, such as have been delivered on numerous occasions, must lead to a broad and significant improvement in the provision of accessible tourism offers of all kinds in Europe, and without undue delay. There is a moral need for equal access, to fulfil the rights of disabled citizens to participate in tourism. There is also a justification for implementing better access based on economic grounds, as accessible tourism can undoubtedly open up new markets and generate much-needed income for providers.

In other words, enabling better access to tourism for more citizens can produce a more healthy, competitive and sustainable tourism industry, which can help maintain Europe's leading position in the world tourism league. Both consumers and providers stand to benefit from tourism offers which are made more accessible for all visitors.

3.   Future Needs and Policy Targets

ENAT's vision is that all tourists, including persons with disabilities, should be able to travel and participate in tourism on equal terms. Principally this means there should be no barriers to access; or if barriers cannot be removed, then suitable provisions and services to enable access should be available. ENAT members share the view that making tourism accessible for everyone requires that every link in the visitor experience must be taken into account: from accessible information search and booking, to transport, access at the destination or venue, in accommodation and in activities and customer services. Therefore, a wide range of actions must be directed towards removing access barriers and delivering tourism experiences that are accessible for everyone.

To realise the vision of accessible tourism for all visitors, targets must be set in a range of policy sectors. Accessibility for disabled people and other citizens applies across all policy sectors and, for this reason, it is often characterised as a "horizontal" issue in policy-making. As discussed earlier, tourism is a "sector of sectors" and, as such, the targets for accessible tourism must cover all of these, including: service delivery, transport, building standards, environment, employment, and others.

This section lists thirty-nine targets for accessible tourism in Europe. The list is gathered from the ENAT project workshops, conferences and research activities and reflects the experiences and knowledge of users and providers in all parts of the travel and tourism sector. The targets also refer to a number of expectations about what will be needed in tourism now and in the coming years, taking into account the anticipated demographic changes in Europe and the Western economies, trends in tourism demand, the need for sustainable solutions and the take-up of the Internet and ICTs in many aspects of travel and tourism.

The proposed policy targets are all considered *essential* and are not weighted or prioritised. It is also important to note that many of the stated targets can apply at local, regional, national and at European levels. Effective policies at the "subsidiary" levels are of course essential to the development of pan-European policies. How to achieve coherence between all policy levels, and effective action from local to European and indeed international levels, is discussed in the final section of this report.

Table 1. Mapping of Policy Sectors, Themes and Targets for Accessible Tourism Policies

Policy Sectors	Themes	Targets for Accessible Tourism Policy
Economic Development	Fostering tourism development as a major contributor to economic growth, respecting principles of environmental, economic and social sustainability.	1. Identifying and disseminating information on **the contribution of accessible tourism measures** to tourism development which is environmentally, economically and socially sustainable. 2. Applying principles of accessibility and inclusion in all development strategies and plans.
Tourism Development	Establishing strategic goals and implementation mechanisms for tourism development and coordination in Europe.	3. Developing accessible tourism strategies within National, Regional and City Tourism Organisations and setting up mechanisms for pan-European coordination of policies and actions in all aspects of accessible tourism.
	Maintaining and increasing European share of the global tourism market.	4. Marketing Europe to the world as the leading accessible tourism destination.
	Improving tourism quality and standards.	5. Developing quality tourism by applying accessibility measures, including: a). raising sector awareness, b). sharing good practices and methods for the removal of access barriers c). establishing transparent, consensual guidelines and/or standards for accessible tourism venues, facilities, equipment and services, d). supporting a European accessible tourism labelling system for tourism providers, e). encouraging tourism providers to declare, in detail, the accessibility of their premises and services, using a common, pan-European, accessible tourism information system. 6. Monitoring accessibility in tourism and supporting the uptake of good practices across the tourism sector.

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Policy Sectors	Themes	Targets for Accessible Tourism Policy
Tourism Development (continued)	Improving tourism quality and standards.	5. Developing quality tourism by applying accessibility measures, including: a). raising sector awareness, b). sharing good practices and methods for the removal of access barriers c). establishing transparent, consensual guidelines and/or standards for accessible tourism venues, facilities, equipment and services, d). supporting a European accessible tourism labelling system for tourism providers, e). encouraging tourism providers to declare, in detail, the accessibility of their premises and services, using a common, pan-European, accessible tourism information system. 6. Monitoring accessibility in tourism and supporting the uptake of good practices across the tourism sector.
	Stimulating innovation and diversification in tourism offers and products.	7. Adapting existing tourism destinations, attractions, offers and products through innovative means to make them accessible for all. 8. Creating new tourism offers and products tailored to tourists with severe disabilities, who have particular access needs. (See also: Target 25. "Care Tourism")
	Developing National and EU Systems of Tourism Statistics.	9. Improving statistics on visitors, visitor consumption and the actual provision of accessible goods and services.
	Supporting Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (SMEs) in the European tourism sector with integrated support mechanisms for competitive and sustainable tourism policy	10. Providing targetted guidance, incentives and support for SMEs, enabling effective uptake and/or development of accessibility measures by tourism providers.

Policy Sectors	Themes	Targets for Accessible Tourism Policy
Regional Development	Strategic use of tourism development as a means for ensuring sustainable community development (including actions supported by European Social Funds)	11. Introducing accessibility measures in existing tourist destinations/sites as a means of improving and enriching local communities. 12. Ensuring that all future tourism provisions are accessible and inclusive of the requirements of people with disabilities.
	Supporting and preserving the unique cultural, social and environmental assets of tourism destinations in the regions of Europe.	13. Gathering and disseminating information on how accessible tourism measures can contribute to the sustainable management and development of sensitive tourism sites, without degradation or loss of amenity.
Environment, Urban Development, Spatial Planning and Design	Supporting conditions for tourism development through sustainable planning and management of the natural and built environment.	14. Demonstrating how 'Design-for-All' or "Universal Design" principles can contribute to the planning, design and management of inclusive, accessible tourist venues, sites, facilities and equipment, leading to social, economic and environmental sustainability.
Public procurement	Procurement of goods and services related to tourist activities.	15. Advocating and stimulating the inclusion of accessibility requirements in public tenders for tourism related developments (buildings, infrastructure, facilities, services and equipment) .
Human Rights and Social Development	Enable all citizens to benefit from and contribute to economic and social progress; - strengthen social inclusion and social cohesion, combat discrimination and promote equal opportunities for all.	16. Promoting the rights of EU citizens and non-EU visitors with disabilities to equal participation in tourism in the European Union. 17. Enacting in national and European legislation the articles of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in particular Article 30, related to leisure and tourism.
Goods and Services	Ensure the provision and receipt of goods and services across the borders of EU Member States.	18. Ensuring that goods and services are accessible and usable by all tourists, regardless of disabilities or access needs. 19. Stimulating the development of new products and services for tourists with particular access needs and for tourism providers.
Consumer protection	Protect customers' health and safety in relation to tourism. Ensure guarantees and rights of	20. Promoting measures in the tourism industry to safeguard the health and safety of disabled tourists. 21. Providing guarantees for tourism services, taking into account

Policy Sectors	Themes	Targets for Accessible Tourism Policy
	redress for tourists.	the requirements of disabled tourists.
Employment	Increased employment rates, reduced premature retirement (e.g. due to ill-health), and improvements in the quality of working life in tourism sector trades and businesses.	22. Reducing the rates of work-related accidents and long-term illness in the tourism sector by preventive education and training programmes; and improve return-to-work policies and practices . 23. Promoting conditions for diversity in recruitment and employment, including persons with disabilities, in the tourism sector.
Health	Health tourism Care tourism Wellness tourism, therapies and spas	24. Promoting health-related tourism products and services. 25. Promoting accessible and affordable tourism offers for those in need of nursing and/or medical care when on holiday. 26. Promoting accessibility for all in spas, wellness and therapeutic tourism.
Education, Training and Research	Development of higher educational curricula and standards	27. Developing higher education curricula on disability awareness and all aspects of accessible tourism, and implementing these courses within relevant areas of study (e.g. in architecture and design, tourism and hotel management, transport planning, public relations,…).
	Mutual recognition of academic qualifications in the tourism sector.	28. Establishing transferable academic qualifications within the field of accessible tourism management.
	Development and deployment of professional training for service workers in the tourism sector.	29. Developing and implementing professional training courses on disability awareness, accessible tourism and customer care for service workers in the travel and tourism industries. 30. Establishment of certified standards for professional training in accessible tourism, including holiday care assistance, assistance at airports and transport terminals, building and facility access auditing, and tour arrangements.

Policy Sectors	Themes	Targets for Accessible Tourism Policy
Education, Training and Research (continued)	Development of research agendas and R & D projects addressing tourism development, both at pan-European and EU Member State level.	31. Developing research agendas for accessible tourism studies at macro- and micro-levels, addressing customer experiences and service, infrastructure development, design, economics, marketing, staff training, use of new technologies, cross-sector analysis, etc. 32. Developing and implementing a coherent European cross-national programme of R & D projects and support actions addressing the need for and introduction of accessibility measures in tourism.
	Maintenance of libraries and resource centres; knowledge management and dissemination of information to students and to the tourism sector.	33. Supporting the development of knowledge centres on accessible tourism and enabling access to these for students and professionals.
Communications and ICTs	Use of the Internet in tourism marketing; Tourism websites & publications; Travel and accommodation booking systems; Development of location-based services; Customer relationship management.	34. Ensuring accessibility of ICT-enabled services and accessible Web Content of tourism websites for persons with disabilities (e.g. online travel guides, booking sites, location-based services…) 35. Stimulating the development of new, accessible ICT-based products and services for tourists and tourism providers, e.g. mobile and portable tour guides, orientation and navigation aids… 36. Developing and applying relevant nomenclature and booking codes at international level for passengers and tourists requiring access, assistance or special facilities in transport modes and at destinations.
Culture	Improving access to culture for all tourists.	37. Applying accessibility measures at tourist venues to ensure that all tourists may visit, understand and enjoy cultural artefacts, venues and events.
Transport	Modernisation of existing transport infrastructure. Development of services targetted	38. Upgrading transport infrastructure and facilities at passenger terminals (and other boarding points), and in vehicles or other transport modes to accessible standards. To include: a). air passenger transport, b). rail passenger transport, c). trams, light railways, d). bus and coach passenger transport, e). maritime passenger transport,

Policy Sectors	Themes	Targets for Accessible Tourism Policy
	towards passengers in need of assistance.	f). taxis and hire cabs, g). cable cars, h). other transport systems. - and information on all the above. 39. Providing assistance services to disabled passengers and passengers with reduced mobility using all forms of transport: a). air passenger transport, b). rail passenger transport, c). trams, light railways, etc., d). bus and coach passenger transport, e). maritime passenger transport, f). taxis and hire cabs, g). other transport systems. (See also point 30. "Professional Training").

The above list of targets for accessible tourism policy, all of which are considered "major", presents a somewhat daunting view of what is necessary to transform Europe into the accessible tourism destination "par excellence".

Certainly, all stakeholders agree that there is no single "quick fix" either for decision makers, public servants or tourism providers, whereby one or two policy areas can be singled out as potentially "making all the difference". Experience has shown that policies to ensure participation of people with disabilities and others with special access needs takes efforts in all sectors, and where one sector fails to take on its commitments, these citizens will be excluded.

It should be observed that the above targets include points which directly address the conclusions of the *EC Stakeholder Conference on Accessible Tourism*, January 2007, delivered by Mr. Pedro Ortún, (see **section 2.1.28, above**).

Furthermore, ENAT plans to prepare actions in the 2008 – 2009 ENAT Workplan to address the following recommendations of the *European Parliament Resolution, November 2007*, (as described in **section 2.1.31, above**):

"1). to support "initiatives to coordinate at European level the information on accessible tourism that would allow tourists with reduced mobility and their families to find information about the accessibility of tourist destinations..."

"2). to support the examination of "... the feasibility of drawing up a charter of the rights and obligations of European tourists..."

"3). to prepare "...a European code of conduct for tourist businesses"

"4). to support efforts (by the Commission and the Member States) "... to initialise an 'Access for all' EC label that would guarantee core accessibility facilities for tourists with reduced mobility and would cover offers such as accommodation, restaurants, leisure and natural sites, auditoriums, monuments, museums, etc.;

"5). to support actions "...to protect, conserve and restore the European cultural heritage; and calls for more stringent management of such sites and of the conditions under which they are visited, and for greater efforts to improve access for people with disabilities, growing numbers of whom now travel for leisure purposes..."

"6). to support the Commission in "... the enhancement of such a label based on the work it has already carried out , on experiences and best practices at national and local level and taking stock of what has been achieved at EU level in the transport field".

The ENAT 2008-2009 Workplan will be published on the ENAT webpage at: http://www.accessibletourism.org/?i=enat.en.workplan

4.   A 'Road Map' for Development of Policies and the Spread of Good Practices in Europe"

This Roadmap outlines eight priority areas for EU and Member States' actions on accessible tourism. No fixed timeframe for implementation can reasonably be given without appropriate consultation with the relevant bodies who may engage in this plan. However, it seems reasonable to assume that a 5-year period, 2008 – 2012 would be necessary to achieve significant progress in all areas. It must be said, with reference to the date, 2010…. (which figures in the title of this report), that it would take a remarkable feat of concentrated effort from policy-makers and the tourism sector to complete the road map in just 3 years.

1. High-Level Policy Group for Accessible Tourism
    -   Engage the EU institutions, DG ENTR, DG EMPL, DG REGIO… and the tourism industry, specialists (ENAT, BITS, UNWTO…), consumer representatives, (including EDF, AGE…) in strategic planning and guidance for the future of European Accessible Tourism Policy.
    -   Mainstream accessible tourism as a primary responsibility of every public (tourism) authority and agency in Europe. (Establish action plans…).
    -   Establish an Accessible Tourism Benchmarking Action for Member States, using the Open Method of Coordination, engaging national *and regional* tourism authorities and relevant stakeholder groups .

2. Awareness-raising Campaign
    (Online/ TV / EUTUBE/ Press) in all EU Member States on Accessible Tourism for All, in collaboration with ENAT, European Travel Commission, European Commission and National Tourist Boards
    -   Show *what consumers need* and *what providers can deliver* in Accessible Tourism across Europe.
    -   Make 'accessible tourism' visible and valued within the tourism industry and among the general public.

3. Mobilise EU funding programmes and agencies (ESF, ERDF, PROGRESS, LEONARDO 2, RTD, ENTR, SANCO, TREN, EUROFOUND, EUROSTAT…) to support projects/initiatives for accessible tourism destinations, services. Financing for example:
    -   Annual tourism statistics/ satellite accounts: "Accessible tourism demand and supply in EU-27".
    -   An EU Training Curricula for a). Tourism Managers and b). Front-line Personnel.
    -   eLearning programmes and Accessible Tourism Toolkit for Enterprises.
    -   Local, regional and city initiatives for accessible tourism with transnational participation.
    -   Studies and development projects: e.g.
    -   Impact assessment of UK Disability Discrimination Act on the UK Tourism Sector.
    -   Impact assessment of EU Regulation on Rights of Disabled and Mobility Impaired Air Passengers.
    -   Diversity Management toolkit for the Owners/HR Managers in Tourism.

- ICT projects (e.g. Accessible Tourism in eInclusion Workprogramme).
- Targetted actions for SMEs in Accessible Tourism.

4. European Accessible Tourism Marketing
   - Registration of accessible venues with www.EuropeforAll.com
   - National and City Guides support grants.
   - Travelling "Accessible Europe" Theme Stand, publicity and presentations at major European and International Tourism Fairs.
   - European Airports Access Guide.
   - Cruise Europe – Access Guides to Ports and Attractions.

5. Targetted National Campaigns (EU-27) for stimulating Accessible Tourism provisions in mainstream tourism, (for example):
   - At least one wheelchair accessible room in every 4 & 5 star hotel in EU-27.
   - Adapted hire cabs (taxis) for wheelchair users in all EU cities over 250,000 citizens.
   - 'Disabled Access Action Plan' for top 5 National Heritage Sites in all EU-27. states (- to be continued over a second 5-year period).
   - London Olympics and Paralympics 2012. Study of 'spin-offs' for Accessible Tourism.
   - "Exchange of Good Practices in Accessible Tourism": Dissemination and take-up actions between cities, regions and countries.

6. Employment Actions
   - Targeting jobs in the tourism sector for people with disabilities: analysis of job profiles, requirements, recruitment.
   - Return-to-Work measures to support long-term ill and disabled staff in the tourism industries.

7. Targetted actions to create a knowledge base and actions for "Specialised" Accessible Tourism offers for severely disabled visitors.

8. ENAT-led actions: Building the Accessible Tourism Network.
   - ENAT "Code of Good Conduct" label for tourism enterprises (ENAT members).
   - CEN Workshop Agreement: "Consensus Document on Standards for Accessible Tourism Services" (18 month project with all stakeholders).
   - Proposal for an audited European Label for Accessible Tourism (following on from the CEN workshop).
   - ENAT International Congress on Accessible Tourism for All: 2008, 2010, 2012…(various venues in the EU).

ENAT can certainly not achieve these seven objectives alone, as in many areas the centre of gravity for action lies with the EU, Member States, Regional or Municipal levels or among players in the tourism industry. Partnership between all actors and stakeholders, based on common interest must drive future actions.

With a view to ensuring the best possible *vertical coordination* of actions under this Road Map, special attention should be paid to the composition of working groups, committees and projects, with representatives from different levels of authority and action (EU, National, Regional, Local and Enterprise levels) working together

wherever possible. The formal competences of representatives and their informal networking capabilities should be employed to move the actions forward, gather information and disseminate results at all levels.

We maintain that future policies for accessible tourism in Europe, its member states, regions and cities must be *bolder, more concrete and better coordinated*, so as to ensure the implementation of a critical mass of activities, thus bringing accessible tourism within reach of all citizens. The 'Policy Road Map for Accessible Tourism in Europe' is proposed as a contribution to this process.

Annex 1.   United Nations World Tourism Organization 2005 Resolution

Adopted by resolution A/RES/492(XVI)/10 at the sixteen session of the General Assembly of the World Tourism Organization (Dakar, Senegal, 28 November - 2 December 2005), on the recommendation of the Quality Support and Trade Committee.

The present text updates the Annex to General Assembly resolution A/RES/284(IX) adopted at the ninth session (Buenos Aires, Argentina, 30 September - 4 October 1991) entitled Creating Tourism Opportunities for Handicapped People in the Nineties. It has been prepared with the help of experts provided to the Organization by the Spanish ONCE Foundation.

ACCESSIBLE TOURISM FOR ALL

I. DEFINITION OF THE TERM "Persons with disabilities"

For the purpose of this document the term "persons with disabilities" includes all persons who, owing to the environment being encountered, suffer a limitation in their relational ability and have special needs during travel, in accommodations, and other tourism services, particularly individuals with physical, sensory and intellectual disabilities or other medical conditions requiring special care, such as elderly persons and others in need of temporary assistance.

II. TOURISM INFORMATION AND PUBLICITY

1. Tourism literature and other promotional material employed in tourism should provide a clear indication of accessible services and facilities, preferably accompanied by easily understandable international symbols.

2. Tourist reception areas (tourist destinations) should provide a listing of support services for tourists with disabilities. Listings of such services should include, as a rule, repair and replacement facilities for prostheses and equipment, veterinary clinics for guide dogs, and suppliers and distributors of specialized medical services.

3. Reservation systems should include unequivocal data on the level of accessibility of facilities and services advertised to persons with disabilities, in order to ensure correct information and facilitate booking procedures.

4. Reservation systems should be accessible so that any tourist can interact with them independently. To this end, websites and other reservation systems should be designed in such a way as to be usable by everyone.

5. Those entrusted with receiving and following up on tourism consumer complaints should register and resolve complaints concerning the failure to provide services and facilities promoted or advertised as accessible, by a clearly designated procedure.

III. PREPARATION OF STAFF

1. The staff of tourism establishments and tourism-related services should be prepared to understand and deal with the problems facing customers with disabilities.

2. Staff should receive adequate training in the control and provision of services and the operation of facilities designated for customers with disabilities.

3. Among the staff there should be persons familiar with means of communicating with persons with sensory impairments.

4. Staff should be trained to deal with persons with disabilities courteously and expeditiously, to provide complete information on services and facilities available to them, and to offer assistance to facilitate their access to non-accessible services.

5. Safety officers or their equivalents in tourist establishments and vehicles accommodating and carrying persons with disabilities should, as a rule and at all times, have a list of rooms and compartment numbers occupied by such persons, in case of emergencies.

IV. COMMON REQUIREMENTS

The following should be considered common requirements in tourism facilities and sites:

1. Parking areas

(a) Special parking areas should be available for the vehicles of persons with reduced mobility bearing proper identification as near to the entrance/exit of the building or sites as possible. Such areas should be monitored so that they are not used by non-disabled persons.

(b) Specially designated set-down and pick-up points should be situated as near as possible to the entrance/exit of the building or site for the arrival and departure of passengers with disabilities. Such points should be monitored so that they are not encumbered by other vehicles or objects.

(c) Individual parking spaces should be sufficiently large to enable passengers with disabilities to move comfortably between cars and wheelchairs and be situated so that persons using wheelchairs, crutches or braces are not compelled to move behind cars. To the extent possible, the access route to the site or building should be sheltered.

2. Signing

(a) Information, check-in and ticketing desks should be clearly indicated and have an accessible customer-service area reserved for use by persons with reduced mobility and as near as possible to the entrance.

(b) Announcements should be both visual (clear-type on electronic notice-boards or large video screens) and acoustic (preceded by a tone).

(c) Accessible services and facilities should be clearly indicated easily understood symbols of adequate size and in chromatic contrast with the background.

3. Elevators

In multi-storey structures an adequate number of elevators should be large enough for a person using a wheelchair to enter and turn easily. They should be especially designated and equipped for easy operation by such persons and by those who are blind (i.e., placement of controls, indications in Braille, acoustic and written information).

4. Public telephones

Public telephones should be designed and laid out for public use in such a way that they can be used by everyone regardless of height, mobility problems, or sensory problems. To this end, height, approach clearances, sound amplification, formats in which information is provided, etc., should be taken into account.

5. Public toilets

Accessible toilet stalls and washbasins should be installed at the same location as the standard toilets. Both the dimensional aspects and the technical aids needed to move from the wheelchair to the water closet and vice versa shall be taken into account in such toilet stalls. Consideration should also be given to the approach clearances to the water closet and washbasin, as well as to faucets and flushing mechanisms.

6. Pricing

Regardless of additional expenditures which may be necessary to obtain accessible services and facilities, such services and facilities shall not give rise to an increase in rates for customers with disabilities.

V. REQUIREMENTS CONCERNING SPECIFIC FACILITIES

A. Terminals, stations and related facilities

1. Shuttle services to and from all terminals, stations and related facilities for the various modes of transport should be readily accessible to passengers with reduced mobility, particularly those using wheelchairs.

2. Terminals should, where possible, be on one level and should be equipped with ramps where there is a change in elevation. Accessible ramps, elevators or platform lifts should be provided when necessary.

3. All information provided shall take into account the special needs of persons with sensory problems. Therefore, all information should be in visual and acoustic format. Both formats shall be made available to the public in such a way as to ensure that the information is perceived under the best possible conditions, in terms of ambient noise as well as lighting and figure-background contrast.

4. In order to allow those with sight impairments and those with hearing loss to cross all roads of access safely, these should be provided with traffic lights with acoustic and visual signals.

5. Access to modes of transport should be as simple as possible, with assistance available when requested.

6. Persons in wheelchairs who are required to transfer to special boarding chairs should be able to do so as near to the mode of transport as possible, with their wheelchairs being handled, stowed, and transported so as to be immediately available undamaged on arrival at their destination or transfer point.

B. Accommodation facilities

1. A reasonable number of rooms in an accommodation establishment should be fully accessible to a person in a wheelchair without assistance.

2. Such rooms should be designed in such a way as to allow all users to carry out the actions of moving, grasping, locating, and communicating easily and independently. This shall apply also to bathrooms and terraces if the room is so equipped.

3. To this end, the space and technical aids needed to allow any manoeuvre to be carried out easily and safely shall be taken into account. The needs of persons with impaired dexterity, blind persons, and deaf persons shall be taken into account in the design of all devices and actuators.

4. Such rooms in an establishment should be fitted with alarm systems suitable for deaf visitors and a system of communication between the reception desk and the room that is suitable for such persons.

5. Corridors and passageways should be of a width to allow the passage of two wheelchairs so they are not blocked in normal traffic; otherwise, crossing zones should be provided.

6. The foregoing recommendations should also apply to camping facilities, particularly in respect of accessible bathrooms and toilets as well as alarm systems.

C. Catering facilities

A representative number of restaurants, cafeterias, cafes and bars in the area should provide accessible facilities which take into account ease of exterior access, furniture designed to enable their utilization by users in wheelchairs, bars at different heights, menus in Braille and with easily readable type, accessible bathrooms, etc. Such establishments should be clearly marked to make them easy to find.

D. Museums and other buildings of tourist interest

1. Museums and other buildings of historic, cultural and religious interest, which are available for tourist visits, should resolve problems that may be encountered by

visitors with reduced mobility in their horizontal or vertical movement, by providing ramps or elevators as the case may be.

2. The information provided shall take into account the needs of deaf or blind visitors. To this end, all information shall be provided in both written and acoustic form.

3. Visitor relations staff shall have the necessary training to attend to visitors with disabilities. They shall also have the necessary training to be able to communicate with deaf persons.

4. There should be a suitable service for loaning out wheelchairs or other devices for visitors with reduced mobility.

E. Excursions

1. Sightseeing buses should be able to accommodate tourists with physical disabilities and should provide both audio and visual information and other assistance to blind and deaf people en route.

2. Wherever possible sightseeing companies should employ sign language interpreters for deaf and hearing-impaired tourists and/or printed descriptive material at all visit sites.

F. Conference facilities

In addition to the other characteristics mentioned earlier and applying to buildings (entrances, telephones, toilets, signing, elevators, parking facilities, etc.), conference facilities should be equipped with adequate seating facilities or reserved areas for persons in wheelchairs as well as special hearing devices and/or magnetic induction loops for persons with hearing impairments.

G. Major roads

Facilities and installations available to travellers on major through roads, including toll roads, should feature accessible facilities and services for travellers with disabilities.