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European Network for Accessible Tourism begins new phase

The European Network for Accessible Tourism (ENAT) has registered this week as a non-profit organisation in Belgium. This marks an exciting new phase in its European and international operations.

The ENAT network started two years ago as a pilot project, co-funded by the European Commission and nine sponsoring organisations from six EU countries. Over 400 members from 50 countries have joined up.

The network's principal aim is to help tourism businesses meet the access needs of the growing market of seniors and disabled visitors, as well as families with small children. Good access is seen as a key part of quality that benefits everyone, rather than as an 'extra'.

"What makes ENAT so attractive is that our network contains a good mix of tourism businesses, policy-makers, educators and consumer groups all sharing their expertise and ideas" says ENAT's newly-elected Swedish President, Lilian Müller. "By networking, we help to create the optimum conditions for business innovation and improvement."

"ENAT's on-line Resource Centre plays a key part in delivering knowledge to where it is needed. Those who can respond quickly and effectively with improved access are already seeing the positive effect on the company's bottom-line," says Lilian Müller.

Ongoing and future concerns include:

- Introducing an 'Accessible Tourism Compliance Label' as part of a quality assurance scheme for tourism providers.
- Introducing a 'Code of Good Conduct' and 'Good Practice Guidelines' for members who wish to use this label.
- Encouraging members to create partnerships and share good practices, both through e-networking and at regular conferences and workshops.

ENAT national coordinators are signed up in Austria, Belgium, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Sweden, and others are expected to follow soon.

ENAT's coordination offices will give information and support to the tourism sector at the national and local levels, working in their respective languages.

For further information or to join the network or become a sponsor, please visit

www.accessibletourism.org.

You can also send an email to Monica Guy at press@accessibletourism.org or contact ENAT's Managing Director, Ivor Ambrose at enat@accessibletourism.org (telephone 0030 210 6148380).

European Network for Accessible Tourism - ENAT

Secretariat: c/o EWORX S.A. Jean Moreas St. 66, GR-15231 Halandri, Athens, Greece.
Tel. +30 210 614 8380 Fax. +30 210 614 8381 Email: enat@accessibletourism.org