

PRESS RELEASE: 20 July 2018

Blue Flag International teams up with European Network for Accessible Tourism to promote Beaches, Marinas and Boat-based activities for All.

The Foundation for Environmental Education, through its Blue Flag certification, long recognised as the global benchmark for sustainable beaches, marinas and boat-based activities around the world, has signed an agreement with ENAT – The European Network for Accessible Tourism non-profit association to work together to promote access for all visitors to beaches, marinas and boat-based activities.

While the Blue Flag standard already includes a number of requirements related to access provisions for persons with disabilities, the partners recognise that destinations can do more to improve beach, marina and boat-based experiences for these and, indeed, all visitors by providing suitable technical measures and assistance, where needed.

ENAT will share its wide-ranging experience in accessible tourism with Blue Flag International/Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE), having worked over the last ten years to raise awareness, conduct research and develop solutions for better access in the tourism sector. ENAT's partners, clients and members include the UN World Tourism Organisation, the European Commission, European Parliament, ISO, national and regional tourism authorities, tourism enterprises and organisations of people with disabilities.

Speaking after signing their new Memorandum of Understanding, Blue Flag International acting Director, Johann Durand said: Destinations that hold the Blue Flag have accepted the challenge and have a positive attitude to do better, both for the environment and for their visitors.

Accessibility is a key area where good advice is needed – both for planning infrastructure in a sensitive but effective way and for providing services to ensure the health, comfort and safety of visitors with access requirements.

We see our new cooperation with ENAT as a positive step towards achieving full inclusion – not just in word but also in practice at every Blue Flag destination.

ENAT President, Anna Grazia Laura, remarked: We are especially proud and pleased to launch the cooperation with Blue Flag. It is our common view that access is a global issue, which must be a priority for all tourism destinations and communities.

We are looking forward to spreading this message and showing, with many good examples, how families, seniors, people with disabilities or with long-term health conditions - indeed, all visitors and citizens – can benefit from leisure experiences in sea and lakeside environments.

We recognise Blue Flag's reputation for authoritative and technical leadership in this area and we look forward to supporting the foundation and its global network in relation to policy, standards and education.

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For Editors

The **Blue Flag** (<http://www.blueflag.global/>) programme is a voluntary eco-label awarded to more than 4500 beaches, marinas and sustainable boating tourism operators in 45 countries, worldwide.

In order to qualify for this award, a series of stringent environmental, educational, and especially, safety- and access-related criteria must be met and maintained. The Blue Flag programme is owned and run by the non-governmental, non-profit organisation the Foundation for Environmental Education (FEE). FEE and ENAT have signed a Memorandum of understanding and ENAT is participating in the Blue Flag International Jury, providing its international accessibility expertise.

Contact: International Blue Flag Acting Director, Johann Durand

E-mail: johann@fee.global

Tel.: +45 6124 8086

ENAT (<http://www.accessibletourism.org/>) is a non-profit association with almost 100 member organisations in five continents, It is the world's leading network on accessible tourism, providing training and guidance to tourism authorities, businesses and destinations. working with the public sector, the tourism industry and NGOs to ensure universally accessible and inclusive tourism opportunities for all visitors.

ENAT and Blue Flag have signed an official Memorandum of Understanding and ENAT is participating in the Blue Flag Jury, contributing its expertise on accessibility policies, standards and best practice.

Contact: Managing Director, Ivor Ambrose

Email: enat@accessibletourism.org

Tel. +44 (0)7927581847

Accessible Beach. Photo: Blue Flag/FEE

