



International Networks to Collaborate on Sustainable, Accessible Tourism

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PORTLAND, Ore., and ATHENS, Greece -- Two leading organisations in the fields of sustainable tourism and accessible tourism have agreed to collaborate on new initiatives to improve the quality of tourist destinations and enterprises around the world. Sustainable Travel International (STI) and European Network for Accessible Tourism (ENAT) will align their work more closely toward a common goal of improving the long-term sustainability and accessibility of tourism offers in destinations around the world, while improving the quality of life for local resident communities.

STI works to enhance the sustainability of tourism destinations and tourism activities, while ENAT provides know-how and support for businesses and destinations to improve the access of facilities and services for older people and persons with disabilities. Recognising their highly complementary roles, the two global partners will explore new ways of combining the principles of economic, social and environmental sustainability with accessibility and inclusion for all.

The STI-ENAT collaboration will initially focus on developing projects for specific destinations as well as general guidance and training materials for managers and owners of tourism businesses.

STI's CEO Brian Mullis comments: "Sustainable Travel International's mission is to help destinations, organisations, businesses, and travellers develop innovative solutions to protect the environment, adapt to climate change, preserve cultural heritage, and generate economic benefits across the tourism value chain."

"We understand that social sustainability is integral to destination success," he adds. "We are committed to ensuring our work has positive outcomes for all tourism stakeholders, particularly women, children, and people with disabilities".

"Partnering with ENAT provides a wonderful opportunity to build upon our collective knowledge and networks to ensure that accessibility issues are an integral part of destination sustainability plans, tools, and actions."

ENAT's Managing Director, Ivor Ambrose agrees:

"We have admired, for a long time, the way STI reaches out to businesses and destinations around the world, giving them concrete tools and methods to act in more sustainable ways. We are very excited to start this new collaboration with STI."

"We are particularly aware that when it comes to having good access to buildings, the outdoor environment, transport and services, the interests of people with disabilities and elderly – whether they are local citizens or tourists - are very much the same."

“Making tourism *accessible for all* gives direct business benefits by opening up to a wider market, especially considering the rise in numbers of older travellers, and it can also mean a huge improvement to the life conditions of the locals. We hope that by working with STI we can reach more communities - also outside our base in Europe - and help to bring wider social benefits within the framework of sustainable tourism.”

For Editors:

The European Network on Accessible Tourism (ENAT) (www.accessibletourism.org) is a non-governmental association under Belgian law, created for an unlimited period with the aim of promoting accessible tourism on a non-profit basis. The purpose of ENAT is to further the development of accessible tourism at an international level, meaning *to make tourism everywhere possible, safe and comfortable for all people*, including elderly travellers, families with small children and people with disabilities. This improves the quality of the tourism offer and leads to greater social inclusion and socially sustainable tourism. ENAT’s mission is to make European tourism destinations, products and services accessible to all visitors and to help promote Accessible Tourism around the world.

Sustainable Travel International (STI) (www.sustainabletravelinternational.org). A global non-profit and thought leader in travel and tourism since 2002, Sustainable Travel International offers innovative programs designed to make sustainable solutions a reality. STI’s comprehensive portfolio of sustainability tools and strategies supports destinations and businesses of all sizes, while strengthening the positive impacts of tourism worldwide.

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