

Shaping the future of Accessible Tourism

Dear Friends,

Just over a month ago the Annual General Assembly of the association performed one of the most important tasks in the life of any organisation: the election, for the next 4-year term of the members of the ENAT Board of Directors.

During the meeting of the new Board, the new Executive Board has been elected.

I was re-elected as President, and I take this opportunity to thank all my colleagues in the Board for the confidence they have in me.

I would like to welcome to the Board the re-elected members and the two newly-elected: Katerina Papamichail and Emiliano Deferrari.

Both have been supporting ENAT for several years and their commitment towards the association will be even greater from now on.

Let me also thank the former Board of Directors and the two members who decided not to put forward their candidature for a new term, Lilian Müller and Paudie Healy.

I am sure you all remember the great work that Lilian Müller did for ENAT; she has been our first President and a member of the Board since the foundation of the Association. I am particularly pleased to announce that Lilian Muller accepted to become an Honorary Member of the Board so that we will all continue to count on her commitment and long experience in the development of Tourism for All.

As you will notice I am addressing you in the new and revised version of the ENAT website.

The structure of the website has been revised to improve navigation, and new agile functions are introduced. The next step will be to open an interactive platform to facilitate the exchange of experience among the members and to give every member a voice regarding all the activities, events and proposals for the recovery of Tourism for All after the pandemic.

I would like to draw your attention to a few important issues that were discussed and approved by the new ENAT Board.

Our strategic plan for the next 4 years foresees a strong focus on the major problems that tourists with specific access requirements continue to face in planning and fully enjoying their leisure time.

1. **Lack of information:** to improve this issue we will be cooperating with our members to unify terminology and methodologies, while relaunching, under new perspectives, our World Quality Programme. It will involve refining

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objectives and strategies to achieve the maximum of consensus to improve management of accessibility information in the short and medium-term.

2. **Lack of knowledge, skills and a proper attitude:** we are planning to take advantage of the wide training experience, gained in the participation in many EU funded projects, to improve skills for the staff involved in the supply of Tourism Services. This might be achieved through the organisation of webinars, the wider dissemination of training products and a possibility to certify the acquired competences with a system similar to the one used for Tourist Guides in cooperation with the Federation of European Tourist Guide Associations (FEG).
3. **An environment not yet fully user-friendly:** our participation as a liaison organisation in the development of ISO Standard 21902 "Tourism and related services. Accessible Tourism for All", published in 2021, has provided a baseline which will assist travel providers and their suppliers in addressing their current accessibility provisions. We will promote this voluntary Standard available to all countries of the world that will support the goal of overcoming barriers, fostering inclusion and equity.

The whole Board and all our members will be committed to support these goals to make sure that the status quo might and will be changed.

In this respect, ENAT will also support the European Commission's initiative, "[Transition Pathway for Tourism](#)" with a number of commitments addressing, amongst others, the topic of "Enhancing accessible tourism services" by setting up Exchange Groups among various stakeholders to gather and share best practices.

As I said, the support of our Members is essential: we have reached the figure of 350 members and we hope that they will continue to participate and benefit from membership, also when the COVID-19 fee waiver period comes to an end, most probably in January 2023.

To be sure to have an open and frank dialogue with our members, we decided to prepare and launch, within a short time, a survey which will allow all of you to provide your point of view on ENAT and shape future strategies of the Association. I strongly invite you to participate since your opinion will be important for all of us to listen and respond to all our members.

We are still facing hard times from the political and economic point of view. This is why I want to close this message with a re-affirmation that we stand by the Ukrainian people, in defence of their country and their freedom.

Anna Grazia Laura, Rome.