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transport **I**nnovations:  
Sustainable **M**obility, **A**ccessibility and **R**esponsible **T**ravel

# Thematic Workshop C

Accessible Tourism: Accessibility for visitors with mobility problems



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*Improving transport and tourism policies at destinations by integrating strategies for sustainable mobility, accessibility and responsible travel in sustainable tourism development, and through efficiency, resilience, intermodality, novel transport systems, cycling and walking for visitors.*

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REGIONE AUTONOMA DE SARDIGNA  
REGIONE AUTONOMA DELLA SARDEGNA



## FOREWORD



Mallorca is one the most touristic island in the Mediterranean, receiving more than 14 million visitors every year. The impact on the environment is very important and the number of resources is reduced. Therefore, good management and planning of these resources are needed.

A lot of initiatives have been developed and implemented on the island to reduce CO2 emissions and encourage visitors to use public transport. The replacement of petrol by biogas in public buses fleet in the city and restrictions for rental car companies, are among them.

But Mallorca is not only sun and beach tourism, but also has a mountain range crossing the north-west of the island which is full of heritage sites, beautiful landscapes and picturesque villages. In fact, in 2011 Serra de Tramontana has been declared World Heritage by UNESCO. Many visitors come throughout the year in all seasons, to enjoy nature and practice hiking along more than 171 km of paths.

The Sustainability and Environment Department of Consell de Mallorca is the public entity managing this route. Our challenge is to preserve the sustainability of the site and at the same time make it accessible for all kind of visitors.

The study of the feasibility, trough DESTI-SMART project will permit to establish our goals concerning accessibility on the paths and refuges of the route, and also improve public transport stops. By achieving these goals, we will give the chance to visitors with disabilities to enjoy this beautiful side of the island and at the same time, we will try to avoid as maximum CO emission by improving and promote public transport to the main hiking paths and the surrounding villages.

We believe that our involvement in DESTI-SMART project will be a benefit for all. The exchange of experiences, actions and good practices with the rest of partners will provide us with tools to move towards a “smart” and more sustainable tourism.

Mr. Josep Manchado Rojas  
Director of Environment Department  
Consell de Mallorca

## 1. Executive summary

The 3<sup>rd</sup> Thematic Workshop of the DESTI-SMART project, titled “Accessible Tourism: Accessibility for visitors with mobility problems”, took place on March 10, 2020 through Videoconfernece. The Workshop was organised by the **Environment Department of the Mallorca Island Council, Spain** with the contribution of the **DESTI-SMART Project Management & Coordination Unit (MCU)**.

The purpose of the Workshop was the participants to exchange experience, present good practices, innovations and their own plans and priorities on initiatives on accessibility for visitors with mobility problem at partners’ destinations.

‘Accessible Tourism’ requires a holistic approach, ensuring overall accessibility at the destination and not only of individual services. It requires coordination of transport planning and creation of synergies between transport and tourism stakeholders.

Experiences and good practices were transferred among all partner destinations, including low-floor technology in buses and improvements in the bus stops, audio passenger information, tactile flooring and lift for wheelchairs in train stations, tourist information applications, automatic validation operations, even accessible ships, as well as good practices from the European Network for Accessible Tourism and the HANDISPORT Foundation which supports accessible tourism in the island of Mallorca.

Discussion followed among partners on potential accessible tourism actions that can be proposed in the project Action Plans and improvement of policy instruments, as well as capacity building in the field of accessibility.

The main conclusion of the workshop is that ‘accessibility’ is a very challenging and under research topic, let alone as for accessible tourism. ‘Accessibility’ is a main component of Smart Destinations, thus ‘Accessible Tourism’ which involves the concepts of ‘equal opportunities’, ‘social policy’ and ‘tourism’ needs to be addressed from several aspects. ‘Accessible Tourism’ requires a holistic approach, ensuring overall accessibility at the destination and not only of individual services. It also requires coordination of transport planning and creation of synergies between transport and tourism stakeholders, as DESTI-SMART initiates.

In the next Chapter the main points from the presentation are presented.

## 2. Proceedings of the presentations

**Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2020**

### **Session 1: Opening Session – Setting the Scene**

Opening by Mallorca Council

Mr. Josep Manchado Rojas, Director of Environment Department of the Mallorca Council, welcomed the participants in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Workshop of the DESTI-SMART project that was held through Videoconference, due the outbreak of coronavirus disease causing the disruption of travel around the world. Mr. Josep Manchado Rojas thanked the participants and expressed his regret for not holding the Workshop in Mallorca.

Address by lead partner MDAT Thessaloniki, Greece

The Managing Director of the Lead Partner Major Development Agency of Thessaloniki, Mr Chrysostomos Kalogirou, thanked the Environment Department of the Mallorca Island Council that organised the Workshop. He stated that despite the difficult situation of the pandemic crisis, it is really important that this Videoconference give the partnership the opportunity to keep sharing experiences and ideas.

Purpose of Thematic Workshop C in the frame of DESTI-SMART project: background, issues, aims, approach, activities and expected results, by Project Coordinator, Manos Vougioukas, Greece

Mr. Manos Vougioukas, DESTI-SMART Project Coordinator presented the purpose of the Thematic Workshop C, which is the third out of the four to be implemented within DESTI-SMART. The purpose of Workshop C is DESTI-SMART partners and their stakeholders to exchange experience, review the State of the Art, examine available solutions and their relative advantages and disadvantages regarding accessibility in tourist destinations.

DESTI-SMART's mission, among others, is to include smart mobility aspects into 'Smart Destinations' concepts, initiatives and actions. Mr Vougioukas highlighted that 'accessibility' is a strong feature of DESTI-SMART and a very important component of Smart Destinations. He stated that through DESTI-SMART, partners

should set their local/regional issues and priorities towards accessibility by introducing their plans on accessibility for visitors at tourist destinations, potentially to be included in their Action Plans.

Good practices need to be identified and give input to the partners Action Plans. Good practices might be adopted by projects such as DESTINATIONS (Horizon 2020) and other organisations' activities such as the European Network for Accessible Tourism, the HANDISPORT Foundation in Mallorca and the Mallorca Transport Consortium.

Discussion on potential accessible tourism actions that can be proposed in the project Action Plans and improvement of policy instruments, as well as capacity building in the field of accessibility will follow at the end of the workshop.

Mr Vougioukas highlighted that 'Accessibility' is already a main component of Smart Destinations: "A smart destination is one with a strategy for technology, innovation, sustainability, **accessibility** and inclusivity along the entire tourism cycle: before, during and after the trip". He also referred to the UNWTO's definition on smart systems for Smart Destinations, where 'accessibility' constitutes a key feature: "...smart systems shall be encouraged that serve to **improve accessibility** for people with different disabilities, ensuring that destinations and travellers' journeys are barrier-free and **accessible for all...**" (<https://www.unwto.org/smartdestinations>).

'Accessibility' is also one of the four (4) criteria for the European Capital of Smart Tourism (<https://smarttourismcapital.eu/>) and a key feature in the Tourism Manifesto for Jobs and Growth (<https://tourismmanifesto.eu/>).

- State of the Art on Accessibility for Visitors at tourist destinations, by advisory partner Bournemouth University, Derek Robbins, UK

Derek Robbins presented the State of the Art on accessibility for visitors with mobility problems at tourist destinations.

He referred to the UNWTO's definition of 'Accessible Tourism' which involves the concepts of 'equal opportunities', 'social policy' and 'tourism'. He highlighted the importance of analyzing and elaborating into 'accessible tourism', as 15% of the global population is estimated to live with some form of disability and it seems to face discrimination and barriers to exercising their rights on an equal basis with others.

He listed several categories of disabilities that show how difficult is to approach the concept of 'accessibility', as every different group need a different set of policies

and actions. In addition, it is estimated that people with reduced mobility over 60 years of age will be doubled by 2050 (22% of the total global population).

He also stated that good accessibility policies improve the public transport network for everybody, not just those with disabilities. He also added that at some point all people face some form of disability, not necessarily physical, but in terms of difficulty to move and/or use public transport.

He referred to the necessity of integrating accessibility in planning at tourist destinations not only for legal and ethical reasons but also to attract investments and create business opportunities. The last case is quite controversial, as accessible tourism seems to produce a huge economic impact on the tourism sector and significant raise of economic benefits, however, investment costs are high.

Mr. Robbins stated that, in travel and trip planning, reliable and timely data on the accessibility conditions at the destination is essential. Travelers, mainly those with mobility problems, seem to choose their destination according to the information on the accessibility conditions provided for the destination.

He continued, stating some facts about the use of transport means at destinations from people with disabilities, highlighting that 60% of visitors with disabilities rate transport at the destination as an important factor in their choice of destination. Disabled persons travel less and the preferred mode of transport is private car. A large percentage do not use the various forms of public transport at all, while the most use public transport is the bus.

Mr. Robbins, concluded that 'Accessible Tourism' requires a holistic approach, ensuring overall accessibility at the destination and not only of individual services. It also requires coordination of transport planning and creation of synergies between transport and tourism stakeholders, as DESTI-SMART initiates.

## **Session 2: Experience, good practices, innovations and plans/priorities on accessible tourism and accessibility for visitors at partners' destinations**

- Major Development Agency of **Thessaloniki** SA (MDAT SA), Greece

Ms Anthi Tsakiropoulou, Local Project Coordinator of DESTI-SMART project, in her presentation referred to the main Thessaloniki's priority strategies and activities which have been implemented in view to foster sustainable urban mobility and accessibility. She referred to main urban Regeneration projects at Thessaloniki's places of interest, such as the historic centre and traditional commercial center. Regeneration of main and neighbourhood streets have been pedestrianised and

measures of traffic calming and road safety have been applied in order to increase accessibility and facilitate the citizen's trips.

Ms Tsakiropoulou also presented the project 'Prospelasis' implemented by the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the 9<sup>th</sup> Ephorate of Byzantine Antiquities of Thessaloniki. 'Prospelasis's main aim was the development and implementation of an "exemplary methodology" for the improvement of accessibility of archaeological monuments and sites of Thessaloniki, by people with mobility impairments.

The project 'Prospelasis' is one of the good practises approved and uploading in DESTI-SMART's website.

□ **Sardinia Autonomous Region (SAR), Italy**

Mr Giaime Ginesu, project manager of DESTI-SMART on behalf of SAR, presented the project "Simple" which was implemented within the framework of the Regional Operational Programme FESR 2014/2020. 'Simple' investigates accessibility towards services, and more specifically the accessibility to information, accessibility as in promoting multi-modality and accessibility as in e-ticketing services. He elaborated further to the project, by presenting its main outputs, such as the '*poolbus app*', which is an online platform able to gather and organize on-demand transport alternatives by different transport operators and the '*BEEP4ME APP*' which aims to bring more people to use sustainable transport, performing automatic validation operations. Other applications, aiming at the improvement of accessibility were also mentioned.

□ **Bremerhaven Tourism Marketing and Events Company Ltd (EM), Germany**

Ms. Claudia Harms, presented Bremerhaven's actions to promote accessibility in the city. She mentioned that the city of Bremerhaven is actively committed to optimize accessibility according to the needs of different target groups. She presented measures that have applied to increase accessibility, including low-floor technology in buses, audio passenger information, tactile flooring and lift for wheelchairs in train stations. She also referred to future measures, such as a visitor routing system with Braille on places with high number of visitors.

A good practice of accessibility in such a place with high number of visitors, is the German Emigration Center, stakeholder of EM. Ms Ilka Seer, Deputy director of the German Emigration Center, presented the Center's projects for disabled people, such as visually handicapped, deaf visitors and visitors with mobility problems who use wheelchair. She elaborated on the information material that is provided to this specific group of visitors. She concluded that by addressing disabled people and

offering more barrier-free programmes, there is a positive effect, not only to the disabled visitors, but also to the other visitors of the Center.

□ Horarios do **Funchal**, Transportes Publicos, SA (HF), Portugal

Ms. Joana Gaudêncio presented the trends in Madeira regarding disabled people and mentioned the obstacles that disabled people face when visiting tourist destinations. She mentioned that HF in the framework of international projects have been developing and testing solutions to promote accessibility to public transport services that contribute to greater accessibility for tourists and residents, such as renovations in Madeira Urban Fleet, improvements of Information Systems, improved information to passengers, renovations of the selling points, and improvements in the bus stops.

□ **Hastings** Borough Council (HBC), United Kingdom

Ms Hannah Brookshow referred to the challenges HBC have to address in order to promote better accessibility along the seafront of Hastings. HBC proposes an east/west dedicated public transport link running the whole length of the seafront, by improving Route 66+ and introducing new innovative buses in their bus fleet, such as bi-directional bus and autonomous pods, referring also to the current position of their activities. She highlighted DESTI-SMART's great contribution to the promotion of sustainable mobility and the improvement of accessibility in Hastings, by funding HBC's feasibility study / business case addressing DESTI-SMART's topics, such as sustainability, tourism and transport, accessibility and connectivity.

□ **Mallorca** Island Council (MIC), Spain

Mr. Philippe Alvaro, in his presentation referred to the Laws and Rules concerning accessibility in Mallorca, highlighting also the role and contribution of the Social Affairs Majorcan Institute (IMAS) which is an institution of reference in Mallorca for managing social services, minors' protection and welfare resources. He presented cases of accessibility improvements in public spaces, as well as in tourist facilities, focusing further to accessibility in beaches and beach facilities. Mr. Alvaro also referred to the current projects and calls for accessibility improvements that run by several Departments of the Mallorca Council.

□ **Latvian** Greenways Association (LGWA), Latvia

Mr Raitis Sijats's presentation was focused on the extensive disused railway network lines of 300 km in Latvia that have been turned into paths and roads by Greenways, for non-motorised transport means, accessible, safe and easy-to-use for walkers and cyclists. This extended network of paths provide a series of

common characteristics, such as a) ease of passage, as their slopes, either low or zero gradient, allow their use by all types of users, including mobility impaired people and b) safety, as the network constitutes an separate network with appropriate safeguards at the intersections with other networks. Mr. Sijats highlighted that accessibility have turned into the main element of Greenway's tourism product, thus Greenways also consider the improvement of infrastructure for tourism purposes.

□ **Lake Balaton Development Coordination Agency (LB), Hungary**

Ms Zita Könczölné Egerszegi presented good practices and transferred LB's experience on accessible tourism and accessibility of the Lake Balaton Region. She mentioned that LB's aim is to provide barrier-free public transport to and from the Lake Balaton area, refereeing to some of the measures already applied for people with disabilities. Ticket discounts up to 90%, wheel chair accessible train carriages and portable wheelchair lifts, modernised passenger information system are some of the measures already applied. She also highlighted the supply of the first accessible ship on Lake Balaton in 2016, with barrier-free board, barrier-free toilet and special lift for people using wheelchair. Moreover, she referred to the installation of special hydraulic lift-chairs and ramps at 7 beaches on the northern shoreline, enabling access to disabled people into the water.

□ **Pafos Regional Board of Tourism (PRBT), Cyprus**

Mr Nicolas Tsifoutis in his presentation referred to the challenges that PRBT has to address regarding accessibility for visitors and tourist in Pafos tourist places, such as beaches, galleries, museums and archaeological parks. He described the current situation, mentioning that infrastructure and facilities in specific areas for aged and disable locals and visitors still need improvement. Awareness-raising for accessible tourism in destinations providing accurate information for the locals and the visitors are among the aims of PRBT within DESTI-SMART.

### **Session 3: Good practices and results from other projects and initiatives on accessibility at tourist destinations**

□ **ENAT European Network for Accessible Tourism. Emiliano Deferrari, Brussels**

Emiliano Deferrari presented ENAT's objectives focusing on the development of accessible tourism around the world and making all destinations accessible and inclusive.

Mr Deferrari stated that at the moment there is a lack of offers for accessible tourism; even if people with disabilities are considered to be a big market (approximately 1 billion people have disabilities).

He continued by presenting a brief chronology on treaties, reports, conventions and studies implemented on EU and International level. Firstly, he informed the participants about the United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD), which was developed in 2006, and refers to "Equal access to participation in cultural life, including leisure, tourism and sport". At the end of 2018, CRPD was ratified by all EU Member States. However, he explained that there are still many issues concerning its implementation, such as creating a solid legal basis for the organisation in charge of monitoring, insufficient funding and staff, etc.

He, then, presented initiative prizes by the European Union and in particular:

- The Access City award (since 2010) run by DG Employment and Social Affairs, where there is low coverage on the aspect of tourism and disabilities. Thus, ENAT shall participate in the relevant lobby in order to emphasise the need of focusing accessible tourism.
- The European Capital of Smart Tourism award (since 2018)
- The EU Disability Card (since 2016), which is still at a pilot stage.

Following that, Mr Deferrari referred to the Research for TRAN Committee of the European Parliament on Transport and tourism for persons with disabilities and persons with reduced mobility. He emphasised that the results so far show that there is a great need on training professionals and staff, along with the need of policy and destination planning.

He presented the European Accessibility Act, running since 2019, where unfortunately, tourism is not included and thus, many stakeholders from the tourism sector have strongly opposed to it. Furthermore, he emphasised that there is a need of a revision in the Act, as micro-small enterprises, that are the vast majority of tourism supplies are excluded, based on the principle that if making their services accessible to everyone will lead to a big economic impact.

He referred to the UNWTO's definition of 'Accessible Tourism' adopted by the General Assembly Resolution of August 2013. In 2016 UNWTO developed "Tourism for All" Brochure for the World Tourism Day.

He continued, presenting the new initiative by UNWTO, ILO, ENAT and other partners, entitled: Accessibility as a tool for reaching the UN Sustainable Development Goals. In addition, he presented the new initiative by ILO Global Business and Disability Network, which highlights the need of persons with disabilities to have decent jobs in the tourism sector.

He stated that the last EU policy "EU Green Deal" - "Accelerating the shift to sustainable and smart mobility", there is no mention either in tourism or disability. It only deals with sustainable transport and smart and sustainable mobility. In addition, in January 2020 a document published by EU Green Deal entitled "EU Green Deal Investment Plan" had no mention on accessibility or disability. On these terms, loads of lobbying is required in order to include all these crucial factors.

Mr Deferrari concluded by presenting two crucial lobbies for the next EU Framework Programme for Research and Innovation (2021-2027), as follows:

1. Tourism Manifesto, which is lobbying for the inclusion of dedicated budget on sustainable tourism in the budget of the European Union.
2. European Economic and Social Committee, which is lobbying in the inclusion of disability funds-issues-objectives

□ **HANDISPORT Foundation** Rafael Winckelmann, Good Practices in accessible Tourism in the island (Mallorca)

Rafael Winckelmann presented the '*Handisport Mallorca: Enjoy your abilities!*' initiative in Mallorca. He briefly presented what is Handisport and its activities, along with an explanation on why this foundation was settled in Mallorca.

He also referred to the several accessible activities that could be undertaken by people with reduced mobility. These kinds of activities are: sailing, hiking, golf, kayak, water skiing, etc. He clarified that accessible environment includes what is required for accommodation, transfers, cultural offers and technical needs for disabled people.

### 3. Conclusions Thematic Workshop C

The purpose of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Thematic Workshop organised by the Environment Department of the Mallorca Island Council, Spain, was to identify potential solutions for visitors with mobility problems for sustainable and accessible tourism, in terms of proposed actions to be included in the action plans at each partner region, in improving the respective policy instruments towards smart mobility destinations.

The project partnership aims to incorporate accessibility solutions in the smart destinations concept.

The main conclusions of the workshop, regarding the increase of accessibility at tourist destinations, were:

- 'Accessibility' is a main component of Smart Destinations
- 'Accessibility' is also one of the four (4) criteria for the European Capital of Smart Tourism and a key feature in the Tourism Manifesto for Jobs and Growth
- It is quite difficult to approach the concept of 'accessibility', as there are different groups of disabled people whose needs are different
- Good accessibility policies improve the public transport network for everybody, not just those with disabilities
- Integrating accessibility in planning at tourist destinations is essential not only for legal and ethical reasons but also to attract investments and create business opportunities
- There is lack of offers for accessible tourism, even if people with disabilities are considered to be a big market (approximately 1 billion people have disabilities)
- Reliable and timely data on the accessibility conditions at the destination is essential for trip planning for the disabled people
- 'Accessible Tourism' requires a holistic approach, ensuring overall accessibility at the destination and not only of individual services. It also requires coordination of transport planning and creation of synergies between transport and tourism stakeholders

## 4. Annexes

### ANNEX I

#### Workshop C Material

- **Thematic Workshop C Agenda**
- **Presentations and Handouts**

## INTERREG EUROPE PROGRAMME

The **Interreg Europe** Programme of interregional cooperation helps regional and local governments across Europe to develop and deliver better policy. By creating an environment and opportunities for sharing solutions, the aim is to ensure that government investment, innovation and implementation efforts all lead to integrated and sustainable impact for people and place.

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