



Accessible tourism on European greenways



#GreenWays4ALL



ASSOCIATION EUROPÉENNE DES VOIES VERTES
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Accessible tourism

A right recognized by the World Tourism Organization and the United Nations,

The prospect of direct and personal access to the discovery and enjoyment of the planet's resources constitutes a right equally open to all the world's inhabitants...Family, youth, student and senior tourism and tourism for people with disabilities, should be encouraged and facilitated

Global Code of Ethics for Tourism - Article 7. Resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly.

A business opportunity

Population ageing is a reality and the trend is clearly on the ascendant, especially in Western Europe. The interest of people with special access needs in travel is also on the increase ¹:

People with special access needs in the EU:

- ✓ **138.6 million (2011)**
- ✓ **United Kingdom, France, Germany, Italy and Spain** are the countries with the highest numbers of people, all with **over 10 million**.
- ✓ They made approximately 783 million trips within the EU (2012)
- ✓ , Demand is expected to grow to some 862 million trips by the year 2020.
- ✓ The total turnover of accessible tourism in Europe in 2012 amounted to some **€786 billion**.



People with special access needs in the EU

- ✓ tend to travel accompanied by an average of 1.9 people.
- ✓ They also have fewer restrictions in terms of travelling at any time of the year, which helps deseasonalize tourism and so sustain employment.
- ✓ They also tend to have the financial means to make their trips.

(1)© GfK Belgium 2014 | 6 June 2014, ECONOMIC IMPACT AND TRAVEL PATTERNS OF ACCESSIBLE TOURISM IN EUROPE. Presentation of the key study findings



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LIMITED CHOICE

However, people with disabilities or special access needs often have a limited choice when it comes to organizing their tourism and leisure activities, because a large percentage of the tourism offer is not accessible. This group, accounting for a significant section of today's society, has a right to equal access to tourist destinations.



ACCESSIBILITY BENEFITS US ALL

An accessible tourist destination is easier to use for everyone. It enables us to include all kinds of people, to share and enjoy trips together, whether in family or with friends, whatever their condition. Accessible tourism is an **added value for the tourism sector in general**. Accessible destinations can more easily become "smart destinations"



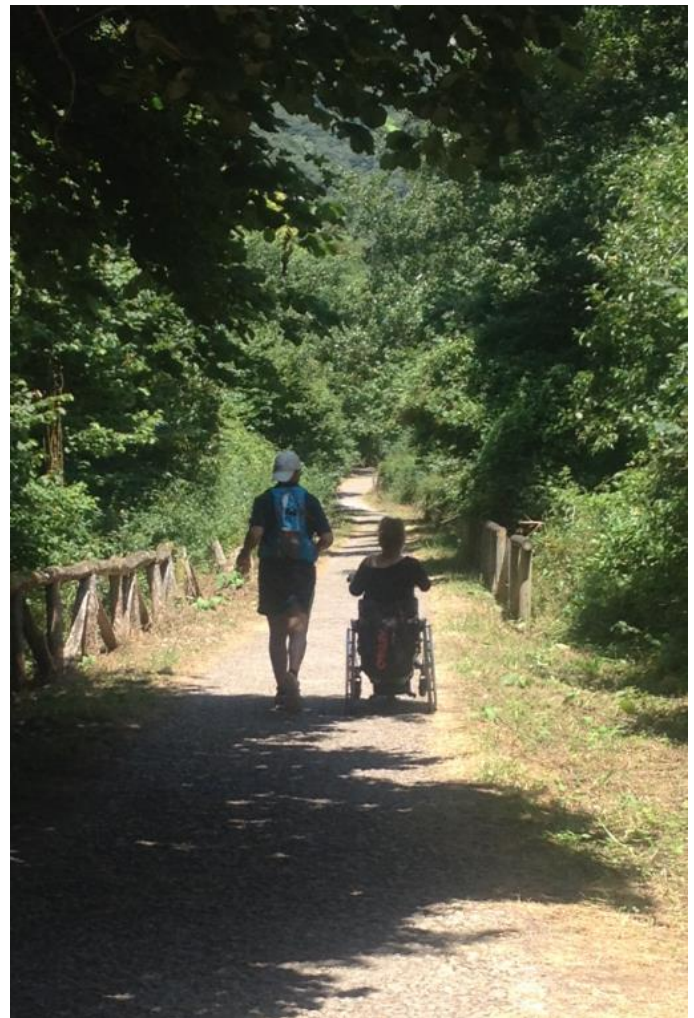


Accessible tourism on European greenways

Greenways are characterized by being one of the few nature tourism routes that are accessible to everyone: seniors, pregnant women, small children, and people with disabilities.

Any slopes encountered are rarely more than 3%, since most follow the routes of disused railway lines or canal towpaths. What is more, the engineering designs used to develop greenways tend to include technical measures to optimize accessibility levels, making many European greenways tourism resources that are accessible to everyone.

However, a greenway will only be truly accessible when not only the greenways but all the surrounding areas, services and products provided can be accessed, used and enjoyed by everyone, in a regulated, autonomous and safe manner. This is what is known as the accessibility chain.





ACCESSIBLE TOURISM HAS A MAJOR IMPACT ON MANY SECTORS AND ENTERPRISES.

However, enterprises on their own cannot remove the barriers that exist in public infrastructures. To a great extent the infrastructures that make a tourism destination attractive and accessible are in the hands of local, regional or state public administrations, so their support is crucial.

But it is no use having an accessible infrastructure if in parallel and in the vicinity there is no accommodation, restaurants, attractions, services, facilities, stores and transport that enable us to enjoy the trip as a whole.



THE ACCESSIBILITY CHAIN

The accessibility chain depends on the involvement and cooperation of all stakeholders, such as service providers, tourism companies, transport companies, local authorities and other public sector agencies, together with institutions which work in the social sphere and organizations representing people with disabilities.



CREATING AN ACCESSIBLE OFFER

The towns and villages closest to the most accessible greenways which have been adopting accessibility criteria now have a business opportunity to position themselves as "accessible tourism destinations". Meanwhile, local tourism enterprises have the chance to capture this new market segment of travellers with disabilities who wish to make use of European greenways. In order to create an accessible offer it is therefore essential to work on:

1. **The creation of complementary accessible services.** Among the measures most highly valued by people with reduced mobility who use greenways is the **availability of accessible toilets in the vicinity of the route**, and the possibility of using bicycles adapted to their needs (handbikes, electric cycles, charging points, etc.)
2. **Customer care.** It is important for the people attending greenway users and their facilities to be aware of the needs of people with disabilities and have the skills to attend to them properly. They should also be aware of the level of accessibility provided by each greenway, their services, and their surroundings, in order to be able to give customers accurate information.
3. **Dissemination of the accessible tourism offer:** The information that reaches tourists with disabilities must be clear, accurate and detailed. Public authorities and private sector enterprises must include this information on their websites and in their promotional material.



- ✓ Tour operators and especially SMEs can take advantage of the **great potential offered by greenway-based accessible tourism**, for which there is currently hardly any structured offer.
- ✓ **In Europe there are thousands of kilometres of easy, safe and accessible greenways, ideal infrastructures** for the development of leisure and **tourism for everyone**.
- ✓ To achieve accessibility to create **inclusive tourism is the job of every stakeholder**.
- ✓ **Public-private cooperation is the key** to improving infrastructures, facilities and services that can provide tourism for everyone. This is essential if we are to create accessible tourism products linked to greenways.
- ✓ **The Greenways4ALL project and its methodology will help more accessible tourism products to be developed on greenways in Europe.**





The EU funded project
Greenways4ALL aims to move
forward towards the creation of
accessible tourism products linked
to greenways.

www.greenways4all.org

The European Greenways Association (EGWA) is an international not-for-profit association which was created in 1998 in Namur (Belgium) with the aim of encouraging the creation and promotion of greenways in Europe. It brings together more than 50 different organizations from 16 European countries involved in the development of greenways. Since 2009 the General Secretary and executive office have been located in Madrid, at the headquarters of the Spanish Railways Foundation.

www.aevv-egwa.org

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