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Ressort: Reise & Tourismus

Accessible Tourism for All

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A successful partnership continues to be built between the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), the Spanish ONCE Foundation and the European Network for Accessible Tourism (ENAT). The three parties are extending their partnership agreement for a further four years to guarantee that their work to improve accessibility, in every part of the tourism value chain, lasts during and beyond the pandemic.

The joint work will continue to focus on the promotion of good practices during the current crisis, the application of standards, the measurement of accessible tourism, as well as labour inclusion and institutional disability inclusive policies.

It is especially important to remove unnecessary barriers for the 1 billion people in the world who live with some kind of disability. Travellers with disabilities, specific access requirements and seniors wish to start travelling again just as any other citizen. This wide segment of the population, comprising millions of potential consumers worldwide, has been hit hard by COVID-19.

As the tourism sector is gradually

reopening, it should not impose unreasonable new obstacles and barriers that can often be avoided if we embrace the concept of

Accessible Tourism for All, in the recovery process. The three partners are now assembling success stories of destinations and companies which have implemented new sanitary protocols to facilitate access to travel and tourism for all, including both residents and visitors. In line with the key UNWTO Recommendations released early on during the pandemic, the Accessibility Champions initiative is still open for submissions showing how the guidelines to restart tourism without imposing new obstacles are being successfully applied.

The most prominent cases will be promoted by the partners through an e-publication and webinars. The three partners are also committed to raising awareness of the forthcoming ISO Standard on Tourism for All. All three have worked with the International Standardization Organization (ISO) on the new requirements and recommendations. The ISO standard will represent a milestone, being the first global standard aimed at implementing and improving accessibility throughout the tourism value chain. The awareness-raising work will sensitize institutions, governments and service providers on the importance of accessibility for all and inclusion.

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It will make clear that this is not only a question of human rights and equal opportunities, but also a major competitive advantage for destinations and the private sector.

UNWTO, the ONCE Foundation and ENAT jointly state: "Accessibility for all is about service quality, innovation and comfort for all tourists, new sources of revenue and new clients with disabilities, seniors and families with young children, among many other individuals, with specific access requirements. By adopting Universal Design principles in the development of environments and services, the tourism sector can fulfil its moral responsibility and, in many countries, legal obligations to cater to those with specific requirements, making tourism for all a reality."

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