

## Accessible cycling tourism along the Römer-Lippe-Route

### Presentation abstract

River cycling routes are highly popular among cyclists. At the same time, accessibility becomes an important role in inclusive social development, especially against the backdrop of demographic change. The same is true for tourism products, because both people with disabilities and seniors or families with small children are at least partially dependent on barrier-free holiday and leisure time and thus comfortable offers.

For long-distance cycle paths with their complex framework of infrastructure, signage, accommodation and catering services as well as bicycle services, the requirements of the specified target groups are again subject to special requirements.

The Römer-Lippe-Route accepts these challenges and will gradually make parts of its offer accessible.

The "Ruhr Tourismus GmbH (RTG)" in cooperation with the "Regionalverband Ruhr (RVR)" and the "Tourismus für Alle Deutschland e.V. (NatKo)" developed an interactive online map with information on accessibility along the Römer-Lippe-Route. This allows every guest an individual travel planning, according to the personal restrictions or needs and the route requirements. In the future, the map will be extended by further information on accessibility with corresponding images. Currently there is already information, e.g. on the condition of the road, including information on inclines and possible danger spots, as well as locations for disabled parking spaces and toilets.

In a second step, improvements are now made along the route, e.g. the displacement of bollards or the way improvement. In addition, rest areas are designed for disabled people at selected locations. This also includes the renovation of existing toilet facilities, but possibly also the construction of a new disabled toilet.

Further the public awareness and certification of tourism stakeholders is an important brick to look at accessible holiday experience in its entirety. As part of this, by summer 2018, numerous stakeholders will be sensitized to the topic in full-day classroom training and then certified. The tourist offer of both individual businesses and entire tourist destinations consists of various partial services. These are basically similar for all travelers. However, due to their individual needs, guests with limited mobility or activity often have higher or more specific requirements for the individual offer elements (e.g. web accessibility, level paths and access routes, audio solutions for visually impaired and the blind, etc.). Not only is an infrastructure tailored to the specific user requirements necessary, but also a high quality of service and experience. The accessible design of sections of the Römer-Lippe-Route should not only ensure the pure functional accessibility of hotels, attractions or means of transport, but also create value for adventure: for a barrier-free bathroom alone, no guest will travel to a specific region. With this claim, a standard for new freedom of movement, mobility, undisturbed quality of stay and a maximum of service for all (e.g. also for seniors or persons with temporary accident consequences) should be set.

In the further course of the project, Römer-Lippe-Route will be certified in autumn 2018 as the first long-distance cycle route in Germany, with a total length of 479 kilometers, according to the nationwide standard "Reisen für Alle" labeling system. Furthermore, in agreement with the initiative "Reisen für Alle", guidelines are to be defined that contribute to the removal of barriers in cycling tourism and to further develop existing accessibility standards in cycling tourism.



In the field of accessible cycling, the Römer-Lippe-Route now wants to be a pioneer and lighthouse project for other cycle paths.

**Lead speaker :** Pascal Tönnissen

**Organisation :** Ruhr Tourismus GmbH

**City (Country) :** Oberhausen(Germany)

**Biography :** In 2015, Pascal Tönnissen completed his bachelor's degree at the Rhein-Waal University of Applied Sciences in Kleve, in the study program "Alternative Tourism". In 2018, the master's degree is awarded at the German Sport University in Cologne, in the program "Sport Tourism and Recreation Management". Since 2017, he has been responsible for project management at Ruhr Tourismus GmbH on the subject of "Accessibility cycling tourism with an example of the Römer-Lippe-Route". It is always important to him that the equal participation of people with and without disabilities in tourism should not be a special offer, but a matter of course.

**2nd speaker :**

**Organisation :**

**City (Country) :** ( )

**Biography :**