

How did the City and the Ruppin Lake District become more accessible through the creation of the accessible hotel and what impact did these developments have on the other hand on the hotel itself?

Presentation abstract

How did the City of Rheinsberg and the Ruppin Lake District become more accessible through the creation of the accessible hotel and what impact did these developments have on the other hand on the hotel itself?

The Fürst Donnersmarck Foundation in Berlin has been organising trips for people with disabilities for more than 60 years now. In doing so, it always aimed at increasing and strengthening the participation of people with disabilities, at promoting diversity in society and promoting cooperation on an equal footing.

In 1992, work began on a concept that would be unique in the hotel landscape in Germany, possibly even in Europe. The aim was to build a hotel that is completely accessible and, through the implementation of various room furnishings and the provision of technical aids, enables a carefree holiday for people with almost any form of disability.

With the opening of the Seehotel Rheinsberg in 2001, a hotel range was created which is not only unique in its functionality and its clever engineering down to the last detail, but also attracts attention with its timeless, high-quality design. The beautiful location directly on the lake in the middle of the romantic little town of Rheinsberg immediately conveys a holiday feeling. The Ruppin Lake District is part of Brandenburg, the federal state with the most waterways and 3,000 lakes located directly between Hamburg and Berlin.

With 104 rooms, the Seehotel Rheinsberg is the largest completely accessible 4-star hotel in Germany, unique in its construction and facilities for people with disabilities. Here people with and without disabilities can spend their holidays together. An in-house swimming pool, saunas, two bowling alleys and a sports hall invite you to an active holiday. At the same time, the hotel offers a modern conference area and a 500 m² multifunctional hall, making it the ideal setting for congresses, banquets and balls as well as national and international sports events. The Seehotel Rheinsberg and the Fürst Donnersmarck Foundation particularly promote sports for the disabled such as wheelchair dancing, wheelchair rugby or wheelchair table tennis.

People are always at the centre of the concept. At the Seehotel Rheinsberg, everyone, with or without disabilities, can enjoy a relaxed and varied holiday for every taste. Therefore, accessibility and striving for inclusion are also important goals for all employees of the hotel.

The opening of the hotel was a starting signal for the whole region in terms of accessibility. Soon talks with representatives from politics and the tourism industry were held, first cooperation partners in the region were found and recognized early on the opportunity to break completely new ground by focussing on accessible tourism. For example, the famous castle in Rheinsberg added an elevator to the historic building due to the expected disabled visitors, transport companies and taxis purchased vehicles converted for wheelchair users, a company for carriage rides had a special carriage built with a ramp, and an accessible ship was put into service. Even the shops and restaurants in Rheinsberg changed their building structures to make sure the hotel's guests had access.

The entire region and the state of Brandenburg used all this attention for the development of the hotel in Rheinsberg in order to achieve a marketing advantage and an image gain for the whole holiday

region through accessible tourism. Since then, the state government, the Tourism Marketing Brandenburg, the Tourism Association Ruppiner See District and many others have implemented projects which have secured Brandenburg's outstanding position in Germany.

The cooperation continued to develop and the Seehotel is constantly involved as a contact partner and advisor on the topic of accessibility in construction projects on footpaths, cycle paths or other projects.

These favourable conditions in terms of overall marketing and the adapted infrastructure also bring with them several advantages for the hotel, which can be seen in stable high numbers of overnight stays. Thus all sides benefit from the orientation on a constantly growing target group and the potential for the economic development of the region.

Last but not least, the hotel's many years of successful operation have created numerous jobs in and around Rheinsberg. Not only the hotel, but also many other branches of the economy benefit from the 40,000 overnight stays that are booked annually. In the areas of care and health, more jobs for our guests in need of care are created than ever before. Numerous service companies were able to expand their offers due to the demand of our guests.

Today we can look back at a success story that has made a whole region a role model in the field of tourism in Germany through the cooperation of many forces. The guarantee of accessibility and the creation of more offers in a tourism that can be used by all people.

Lead speaker : Peter Vogt

Organisation : Seehotel Rheinsberg

City (Country) : Rheinsberg(Germany)

Biography : Peter Vogt has been working in the hotel business for 35 years. After a position as deputy hotel director in his hometown, he started as Manager on Duty in the newly opened Grand Hotel Berlin. At the same time, he studied hotel management at the Leipzig Graduate School of Management. He founded his own company with 4 completely different restaurants. After a management course at McDonalds Germany, he worked for this company for 4 years. Since the opening of the Seehotel Rheinsberg in 2001, he has initially worked there as deputy hotel director and from 2016 as hotel director. With this largest completely accessible hotel in Germany, the development of tourism without barriers for people with disabilities in Brandenburg began. Peter Vogt was significantly involved in the successful implementation of this concept and is regarded as an expert in the field of accessible hotels.

2nd speaker :

Organisation :

City (Country) : ()

Biography :