

Providing Reliable Information on the Accessibility of Tourism Products and Destinations - The German Information and Labelling System "Tourism For All"

Presentation abstract

The presentation focusses on the new German information, labelling, and certification system „Tourism For All“ (www.reisen-fuer-alle.de) which does not only comprise tourism products but will be extended in 2018 to audit also the accessibility of cities and destinations with regard to the needs of tourists with disabilities. Embrace-Hotels applied the system already in hotels of the group in Italy and intends to apply it in Greece as well.

The development of this information and certification system was commissioned by the German Ministry for Economic Affairs. It is operated by two NGOs, the German Seminar for Tourism Affairs r.a. (www.dsft-berlin.de) in cooperation with Tourism For All Germany r.a. (www.natko.de).

Main Goals:

Substituting the various labelling systems in Germany by an universal standard concerning the accessibility of tourism products and destinations,

Providing reliable/audited information on accessibility to enable tourists with disabilities to take informed decisions on their journeys,

Motivating tourism establishments along the tourist service chain to adapt their products to the accessibility needs of their customers shown in the new information and certification system,

Facilitating and increasing the travel intensity of persons with disabilities to improve social participation and inclusion.

The main principles:

The two organisers developed accessibility criteria in close cooperation with an advisory board in which the German tourism industry and several disability organisations were represented.

The criteria cover the accessibility needs of seven groups of travelers, namely:

- Tourists with walking impairments, wheelchair users,
- blind, partially sighted tourists
- deaf, hearing impaired persons
- people with cognitive impairments.

the information presented is not based on self-assessment of the operators of tourism establishments but on external audits. The system and its criteria sets are not specified with regard to certain tourism establishments such as accommodation establishments or museums. They refer to specific modules such as „door“, „elevator“, „corridor“, „exhibit“ that have to be combined by the auditor to describe a certain establishment or service.

Because of its modular structure the information and labelling system can cover all parts of the tourist service chain, hotels and museums as well as train stations, cycle and walk ways, and cruise ships.

Every auditor has to complete a three days training carried out by the organisers of the system. An audit can with regard to each group of customers lead to three results:

- The establishment meets all the criteria (Certificate Grade 2: „Accessible“),
- the establishment meets only a set of minimum accessibility requirements (Certificate Grade 1: „Partly accessible“)
- The establishment does not even meet the minimum requirements (Certificate: „Audited information on accessibility is available“). The certificates „Grade 1“ or „Grade 2“ do not have to cover the accessibility needs of all seven customer groups. Information collected by the auditors is always presented for all seven customer groups to enable the customer to take its individual decision independent of the evaluation of the auditors.

At least one person of a certified establishment has to complete a one-day training by the organisers.

A certificate (around € 450 including the auditing) is valid for three years. Many German Länder supported the introduction of the system in their area.

Results and Work in progress 2018:

More than 2000 tourism establishments (around 40 % accommodation) are audited.

The first tourist destination requested to be certified according to the accessibility criteria for destinations

NatKo started to adapt the accessibility criteria to provide audited information on the accessibility of doctors' offices.

Lead speaker : Ruediger Leidner

Organisation : Tourism For All Germany r.a.

City (Country) : Berlin(Germany)

Biography : Ruediger Leidner, born 1950, completed his studies of economic policy with a doctoral degree. From 1980 to 2015 he worked in the German Federal Ministry of Economics charged with various tasks such as European and international policy, tourism policy and healthcare policy. From 2003 to 2007 he worked as Seconded National Expert in the tourism unit of the European Commission. Since 2003 Ruediger Leidner has been engaged honorarily in the German Federation for the Blind and Partially Sighted as responsible for accessible tourism. 2010 he was elected president of Tourism For All Germany r.a. In 2017 he became member of the board of directors of the European Network Of Accessible Tourism (ENAT).

2nd speaker :

Organisation :

City (Country) : ()

Biography :