

Introduction Accessibility and Liberty

Accessible tourism enables all people to participate in and enjoy tourism experiences. More people have access needs, whether or not related to a physical condition. For example, older and less mobile people have access needs, which can become a huge obstacle when traveling or touring.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2023), “an estimated 1.3 billion people - about 16% of the global population - currently experience significant disability”.

Accessibility for all tourism facilities, products, and services should be a central part of any responsible and sustainable tourism policy. Accessibility is not only about human rights. It is a business opportunity for destinations and companies to embrace all visitors and enhance their revenues.

Accessibility and sustainability

The UNWTO (United Nations World Tourism Organization) defines the promotion of responsible, sustainable and universally accessible tourism as follows:

(...) as a driver of economic growth, inclusive development and environmental sustainability and offers leadership and support to the sector in advancing knowledge and tourism policies worldwide.

(...) Supporting sustainable tourism policies and practices

Fostering knowledge, education and capacity building (...)

Improving tourism competitiveness (...)

Advancing tourism’s contribution to poverty reduction and development (...)

Building partnerships (...)

Accessibility is a central element of any responsible and sustainable tourism policy.

It is both a human rights imperative, and an exceptional business opportunity.

UNWTO (2013)

Learn more about directive (EU) 2019/882 on the accessibility requirements for products and services <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32019L0882>

Accessibility

Accessibility in its different forms is an important prerequisite for a just society: it is needed so everyone has the ability to live independently and participate fully in all aspects of society.

Physical accessibility means equal consideration of all people in physical environments, entailing the design and construction of built environments. Accessible buildings and structures offer services to more customer groups, such as

- people with disabilities
- families with children
- people using a walker.

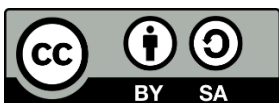
Social accessibility means taking all visitors into account equally regardless of their appearance, religion, sexual orientation (LGBTQ+ community), gender, disability, age or background.

In practice, this applies to customer service situations where, for instance, prejudices and attitudes can affect the staff's behaviour.

Digital accessibility often refers to digital environments, but accessibility also applies to information, services and applications. This aspect of accessibility aims to make sure that everyone can use your website and understand its contents equally. The accessibility of websites depends on the clarity of content, visual design, technical implementation and usability, among other things.

Accessibility in its different forms must be integrated into the entire service chain, from travel and destinations to accommodation, ancillary and program services and communication. The chain is only as strong as its weakest link: if the destination has accessible trails but the information about them is not accessible, the chain is broken from the outset.

(https://www.visitfinland.fi/4af121/globalassets/julkaisut/visi-finland/tutkimukset/2021/guide_to_inclusive_travel_2021.pdf)



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