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MATERIALS



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LIBERTY

Liberty represents the universal understanding of ethical values that apply to all humans, irrespective of the diversity in their religion, philosophy, or moral beliefs. Those involved in tourism development, including stakeholders and tourists, share the responsibility to protect the social and cultural traditions of various communities, including those of minority groups. One way to achieve this is for the host country and local professionals to show respect for visitors, become acquainted with their preferences and expectations, and employ trained personnel who can contribute to a warm and hospitable welcome.

Key points:

- Ethical values apply to all humans.
- Safeguarding social and cultural traditions in people's practices.
- Respecting visitors.
- Familiarizing themselves with travelers' expectations.
- Employing trained personnel to enhance a hospitable welcome.
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It is crucial for tourists to feel a sense of security when visiting any country. Therefore, it becomes the duty of public authorities to provide protection for travellers, offer adequate information, implement preventive measures, and mitigate any threats that might infringe on an individual's liberty. Furthermore, visitors are also responsible for familiarizing themselves with the characteristics of the countries they plan to visit to be aware of any health or security risks they might encounter.

Article 8 of the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) states that “tourists must have access to places of transit, accommodations, and attraction sites without discrimination or excessive formalities or discrimination”.



Additionally, it is worth noting that Malta was ranked as the number one country for being the safest holiday destination for LGBTQ+ holidaymakers in 2022. More recently, Malta won a European Travel Award 2023 as the best LGBT Tourism Guide in the Mediterranean.



THE IDEA OF LIBERTY

The concept of Liberty has a long and complex history. In ancient Greece, the idea of individual freedom was tied to the concept of citizenship. In the Roman Empire, freedom was closely associated with the rights and privileges of Roman citizenship. Moving on to the 18th century, stemming from the establishment of the enlightenment period after the French Revolution, the concept of Liberty evolved into a more philosophical concept, where renowned philosophers stated that freedom was an inherent right of all human beings, where the purpose of the government was to protect and preserve these rights.



The notion of liberty comprises two dynamics: positive and negative liberty.

Positive liberty is the opportunity to act in accordance with one's wishes and needs, as well as to take control of one's life without violating legal or social rules.

On the other hand, negative liberty refers to the absence of social barriers, constraints, and other legal impositions. Negative liberty can give rise to negative sanctions, such as legally enforced punishments or social disapproval.



LIBERTY AND TOURISM

Stakeholders in the tourism industry have an obligation to safeguard the social and cultural traditions of all individuals, including those from minority groups. One way to achieve this is for the host country and local professionals to show respect for visitors, familiarize themselves with their preferences and expectations, and employ trained personnel who can contribute to a welcoming environment. This, in turn, enhances liberty. It is of utmost importance that tourists feel a sense of security when visiting any country. Thus, it is the duty of public authorities to provide protection for travellers, offer adequate information, implement preventive measures, and mitigate any threats that could impede an individual's liberty.

ACCOMMODATION

Malta's tourism industry has been evolving since the early 1900s and has boomed since the 2000s. As a result of this tourism boom, many hotels are focusing on enhancing accessibility and upholding the principles of liberty. It is a legal requirement for accommodation providers to provide accessibility assistance, such as a ramp to go into the lobby, and a lift to go upstairs to the rooms.

Apart from installing lifts and ramps, a number of hotels are also ensuring that people with other impairments are catered for and feel welcome, thus ensuring that they are free and independent.

All hotel staff members must do CPR training, and a course on how to help people with certain health conditions.

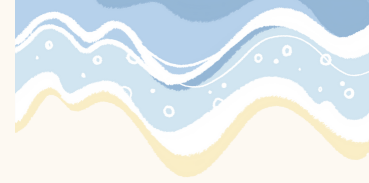
Many hotels have also installed Braille signs, especially close to the main door, close to the lifts, and in restaurants.

In addition, some hotels have also included special smoke detectors equipped with distinctive flashes and patterns for easy detection.

When the accommodation provider is aware of certain conditions, they can do their utmost to ensure that the guest feels safe and welcome at all times. The guest can also enjoy their stay even more, knowing that in case of an emergency, the hotel staff are knowledgeable about the situation and thus, can provide the care that is needed.



BEACHES IN MALTA



Although Malta is very small, there are numerous beaches which offer remarkable diversity in their setting. The Maltese archipelago consists of the main island of Malta, the island of Gozo, and the smallest island of them all, Comino. Other islets include Cominotto and Filfla.

Coastal water quality is crucial for both Maltese and tourists alike, and therefore, the authorities are investing a lot of money in certain organisations which are tasked with ensuring that the beaches are clean and safe.

Furthermore, to ensure that everyone feels welcome, the Maltese authorities with the help of these organisations have implemented certain features which ensure that people with certain mobility difficulties can also access the beaches.

Some of the features include:

- Walkways,
- Accessible toilets
- Access hoists



BLUE FLAG BEACHES

The Blue Flag's mission centres on advancing sustainability within the tourism industry by means of environmental education, environmental preservation, and the adoption of sustainable development practices. Additionally, the Blue Flag actively advocates against issues such as inequality, unemployment, health risks, the depletion of natural resources, environmental hazards, pollution, and overall environmental deterioration.

The Blue Flag designation is an international quality award granted to beaches that meet sustainable beach management qualifications and maintain excellent conditions. In 2019, over 4,500 beaches worldwide received this award, including twelve in the Maltese Islands.

Malta joined the world's Blue Flag map in 2009 when St. George's Bay in Paceville became the first beach in Malta to achieve Blue Flag status. It has retained this status every year since. The Blue Flag has also been awarded to Hondoq ir-Rummien and Marsalforn bays in Gozo.



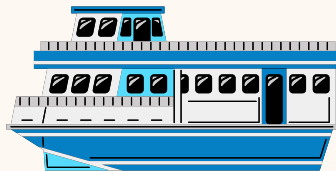
TRANSPORTATION

Another way to enjoy the beaches in Malta is by using sea transportation. Several companies offer day cruises that include excursions to prominent areas like the Grand Harbour, Sliema Front, Comino, Gozo, and the Three Cities. Importantly, specific boats are designed to be wheelchair-friendly, and equipped with facilities to accommodate individuals with limited mobility.

These accommodations include:

- The boat's cockpit features a flat, non-slippery floor made of a material with good adhesion.
- The entrance is marked with distinctive colours and materials to assist individuals with impaired vision.
- The gap between the gangway and the boat's entry is minimized to facilitate a smoother entrance.
- Handrails and handles are positioned at a convenient height for easy access and use.
- Sufficient space is available for a wheelchair user to perform a full rotation.
- Users have the option to store their wheelchairs aside.

This highlights Malta's commitment to safeguarding liberty for all tourists visiting the country. Regardless of any impairment, every individual has an equal right to access specific places and engage in various activities. This principle extends to native residents as well.



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