

Accessible tourism – Tourism for all in Catalonia

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Catalonia welcomes over 20 million tourists a year, of which more than 50% from abroad. At roughly 12% of GDP, tourism is one of Catalonia's main sources of wealth, making it a strategic priority.

The Catalan Tourist Board's main aim is to promote Catalonia as a tourist destination, therefore the concept of accessible tourism must be conceived as a factor that is intrinsic to the "Quality of tourism products". The Government of Catalonia has therefore expressed its commitment to working to position Catalonia as an accessible tourist destination. That is why since late 2007 Catalonia as an accessible tourist destination, has become part of the strategic lines of action of the entity.

The main goals:

- To identify accessible tourism destinations (ATD)
Destinations that fulfil the criteria for a holistic tourism experience in terms of accessible tourism: transportation, tourism resources (cultural and natural), accommodation, restaurants, health and personal care (medical centres, mobility aids and equipment, etc.).
- To manage and grant the distinctive ATD
- To promote accessible tourism
- To raise the awareness of the tourism industry

Approach and/or methodology

From the beginning the Catalan Tourist Board has implemented the technical standards of the actual law concerning accessibility and architectural barrier removal of Catalonia¹ in the ATD project, additionally including other relevant criteria for sensory disability.

This methodology identified the global accessibility level of each analyzed equipment, resource or tourist service and its approach to each different disability or special need.

The main goal has been to work on an inclusive basis, not just generating a list of accessible products, but trying to include accessibility as an intrinsic part of any tourist product and service.

Results

Since 2007 there has been a considerable increase in the number of ATDs (21 to 27) and the number of combined resources from 617 to 1190. Part of the outcome has been creating the website www.tourismforallcatalonia.com

During this period of time the CTB has joined the ENAT (European Network for Accessible Tourism) and the taskforce in accessible tourism of NECSTouR (Network of European Region for a Sustainable and Competitive Tourism).

¹ In Spain the competences concerning accessibility are transferred to each Autonomous Region