



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Enterprise and Industry Directorate-General
Tourism, CSR, Consumer Goods and International Regulatory Agreements



Call for Proposals

7/G/ENT/TOU/11/511A - Facilitating Transnational Low Season Exchanges in Europe through the Development of Social Tourism

Project Title: **Accessible Culture for All**

Acronym: **ACA**

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Project Summary

PARTNERS:

1. Malta Tourism Authority – Malta: (MTA) – Coordinator
2. Kainun ETU/Snowpolis – Finland: (KEO) – Co beneficiary
3. National Commission People with Disabilities – Malta: (NCPD) – Co beneficiary
4. Ministry for Tourism – Croatia: Non-beneficiary Observer

PROJECT:

The project is entirely planned on the principle that tourism is a leisure experience that should be offered and enabled to all. It aims to develop a culture which will facilitate social tourism and accessibility for people with disabilities. Appropriate structures will be set up to foster the idea of inclusion. The project will focus on ways to improve the accessibility dimension of the tourism product and the service offer for the benefit of social tourists in Europe. To address the seasonality problem of the tourism demand, the project's intention is to share best practices among the partner entities and to identify mechanisms which would eventually facilitate exchanges for social tourists during the off-peak season. Indeed this project will eventually lead to exchanges of people with disabilities to give the opportunity to experience other tourism products.

The project directly reflects the priorities laid out in the programme's call. The first priority of supporting the public authorities in setting up (and developing) the CALYPSO office infrastructures will be met through the first stage of the project. A working team will be set up to strengthen collaboration between partners and a focal point will be engaged to strengthen the culture of accessibility. The second priority of providing networking opportunities to enhance collaboration between public authorities will be met during the duration of the project. Best practices and the identification of accessible mechanisms will be shared between the partners. Finally the third priority, to conduct relevant studies that could improve the knowledge base and eventually facilitate low season exchanges will be met through the execution of a

national audit to identify the gaps between the requirements of people with disabilities and the tourism product offer. It will also assess what would instigate the supply stakeholders to offer or participate in the potential exchanges, which are essential to this project and to the CALYPSO programme.

Finland will have an active role in the project and will amongst others aim to identify the best practices being undertaken in the field of accessible tourism. Finland intends to share with Malta and Croatia the new market strategies that are currently developing in Finland. Furthermore, Kainuun ETU/Snowpolis (Finland) will support the development of the webpage and shall host a workshop on accessibility in Finland. The Ministry for Tourism in Croatia will have an active involvement in this project as well as they will host discussions with associations that work on disability matters and with other related stakeholders. They will identify the present gaps and tap opportunities that may be developed to improve the accessibility dimension of the tourism product and the service offer. Croatia will also host one of the 4 working groups and will provide assistance and ideas during the 4th stage of the project, the compilation of the website. The NCPD will on the other hand liaise with the Malta Tourism Authority and the respective partners on the current dynamics, trends, challenges and the requirements faced by disabled people when travelling abroad. Moreover, the NCPD will provide expert advice and highlight salient ideas that are to be taken into account throughout all the various implementation phases of the project. The role of the partners is crucial to encourage exchanges of social tourists among them.

OBJECTIVES:

This project is building on a previous, smaller accessibility audit conducted within the context of the CALYPSO work programme for 2010. One of the objectives of the 2010 project “URTS” – which included different partners - was to carry out a pilot study in a touristic area in Malta about the constraints and barriers social tourists face during travel. The project also researched and assessed the industry’s perception and knowledge about social tourism. “ACA” – the 2011 project – proposes amongst others an extension of the 2010 pilot study and will involve a national audit of the tourism product. People with disabilities face a number of challenges when travelling abroad, including lack of accessibility and extra costs to travel. The exercise will help to outline the current context of accessibility and propose improvements in the tourism sector. Moreover the results of the study will translate in a website helping social tourists make a better informed choice about their vacations. The final aim of the project, is to promote exchanges in low season in Europe, especially among people with disabilities.

ACTIVITIES:

In order to implement the ACA project, there are four stages which translate into the following activities:

- Setting up of a team within the participating National Authorities that will serve as a working group to promote social tourism and strengthening collaboration between tourism investors, including the employment of a focal point and an administrator;
- Enhancing collaboration between Project partners, specifically four workshops in which two will be hosted in Malta, one will be hosted in Finland and another one to be hosted in Croatia.
- Implementation of the relevant study that will improve the knowledge base to facilitate low season exchanges for people with disabilities. This audit will adhere to the procurement regulations as laid down in Maltese legislation. At the end of the study, the co-ordinating entity will have a database of established tourism zones and their accessibility measures.
- Creation of a Web portal as a link to the CALYPSO web platform. This will facilitate the continuation of social tourism projects beyond the co-financing period, whereby the co-beneficiaries and non-beneficiary observer will support the development of the website.
- Dissemination of information amongst tourists and local citizens who may be interested to travel and who fall under the category of social tourists.