



**visits4u Case Studies:
Developing an Accessible Destination
Bucharest, Romania**

Developing an Accessible Destination

Bucharest, Romania

Description

Bucharest is the capital and largest city of Romania, as well as its cultural, industrial, and financial centre. It is located in the southeast of the country, less than 60 km north of the Danube River and the Bulgarian border. The city has big convention facilities, educational institutes, cultural venues, traditional "shopping arcades", and recreational areas.

Becoming inclusive:

1. Description

Accessibility in Bucharest is very important since every person has the right to travel in a safe and reliable manner. One of the greatest challenges is accessibility to historic and heritage building, since a significant number of old buildings that would hardly be adapted for the purpose.

The city has embarked on a program designed to increase access to its disabled citizens and tourists alike. Sites such as the Cismigiu Gardens, Arcul de Triumf, Herăstrău Park, the National Museums of Art and History, the Palace of Parliament and the Village Museum have taken steps to improve physical access to their premises.

Accessible public transportation is also growing. Bucharest has embraced the worldwide movement to include persons with disabilities in everyday life. Actually Bucharest still faces many accessibility challenges, but public transport is partly adjusted to wheelchair users and blind people. Also public buildings get adjusted more and more.

2. Description of steps taken, changes and progress

Bucharest

- The Palace of Parliament- tailored accessible tours of the Palace are now provided.
- Village Museum Bucharest - accessible outdoor paths



Village Museum Bucharest - wheelchair-friendly paths



Village Museum Bucharest - wheelchair friendly paths

- Peles Castle - There is a step-free entrance to the Castle. All of its rooms provide step-free access, except for the weapons' room. Portable ramps are available and the castle staff is helpful to disabled visitors.
- National Museum of Natural History - Grigore Antipa underwent a renovation and added some access upgrades in 2011. Today access features include accessible parking, ramp access, elevator access to all floors and wheelchair-accessible restrooms.



National Museum of Natural History - Grigore Antipa - view of its wide corridors

Further accessible tours in Romania

Peles Castle - In case for travel in a wheelchair, the traveller can set arrangements to have a special tour of the castle using mobile ramps.

Sighisoara -Part of the cobbled streets of Sighisoara citadel were replaced by smoother dales, allowing for easier and safer circulation.

Cluj Napoca - Union Square, this area is friendliness for all. Its large banquettes, wide and smooth, are suitable for wheelchair users. The edges of the pathways are considerate mild, allowing good access for low mobility passersby. Bespoke tours for visually impaired tourists are available upon request.

4. Main stakeholders / actors

Ministry of Culture - renovation of National History Museum and support each activity for enrichment of the environment

Taxi Gratis - A volunteer group who provide free transportation services for people with disabilities

Sano Touring Romania- dedicated tour operator that provides itineraries for people with disabilities.

Results and Impact

Bucharest can be a more inclusive city, but till now many improvements have been introduced on spot.

- Some of the major museums in Bucharest provide special access for disabled persons like the National Art Gallery in the Royal Palace, the Palace of the Parliament and the Art Collection Museum in Romanit Palace. This will increase the attendance of the sites in a positive aspect. There are already blogs and private travel web-sites explaining in detail which landmarks and museums are available and what to expect on spot, according accessibility. The active dissemination of information about facilities to disabled people, strengthens the interest of local and foreign visitors.
- Some private companies and hotels are members of European Network for Accessible Tourism and promote the destination around the world. More similar companies affect possitively the popularity of destination and growing benefits for the tourist business.

Lessons learnt

Even the limited number of specialized cars still improves accessibility. Good practices from the private sector can be an example for others in this area. Bucharest is making efforts to develop inclusive tourism. This service will increase the visits and tours with this type of vehicles around biggest cities. It will increase the tourist interest to Romania and to private companies offering this type of service.

Further information

Ministry of Culture: www.cultura.ro

Taxi Gratis: www.taxigratis.ro

Sano Touring Romania: www.sanotouring.eu



visits4u is co-funded by the
COSME Programme of the European Union