



**visits4u Case Studies:
Inclusive Tourism Destination
Sozopol, Bulgaria**

Sozopol: An Inclusive Tourism Destination

Sozopol, Bulgaria

Description

Sozopol is a town in south-eastern Bulgaria located on the Black Sea coast, situated on a few small peninsulas in the southern part of the Burgas Bay. The old town is wonderful with its cobbled streets and old houses. Sozopol is a place where the old, authentic atmosphere meets the new, modern feel of a summer destination. As it is the oldest town on the Bulgarian Black Sea coast, Sozopol has a lot to offer in terms of historical sites. The Southern Fortress Wall, the Archeological Museum and the churches all make it a special place for history enthusiasts.

Becoming inclusive:

1. Description

In Architectural-historic Reserve The Old Town of Sozopol, funded under Project Development of cultural tourism in Bulgaria - EU PHARE Programme and co-funded by Sozopol Foundation is made a restoration of the southern fortress wall and tower and construction of public tourist infrastructure for people with disabilities between 2003-2004. The site was chosen for its interest in foreign and local tourists. The main challenge is to preserve a specific and traditional style on spot.

The supported activities in the Old Town Architectural-historic Complex Southern Fortress Wall and Tower and in Municipal Ethnographic Museum include

- * Provision of access for people with disabilities from the parking in front of the town hall through all alleys in the Town Park, along the Southern panoramic alley, with access to the sea and to the Architectural-Historic Complex Southern Fortress Wall and Tower. The total length of the route is 970 meters
- * A toilet for people with disabilities has also been built.
- * Two ramps for people with disabilities to the Central Beach was created too.
- * The Town Park is fully accessible for people with disabilities
- * Southern panoramic alley is fully accessible for people with disabilities
- * Approaches to Architectural-historic Complex Southern Fortress Wall and Tower and to Municipal Ethnographic Museum are created.

* All of the halls of the Complex and the Municipal Ethnographic Museum are accessible for people with disabilities.

* The construction of a lift and a platform, providing access for people with disabilities to all levels of the museum to the Architectural-Historic Complex Southern Fortress Wall and Tower and to the Municipal Ethnographic Museum is the second stage of inclusive tourism services. The length of the route is 76 meters.

The project was implemented between 2010 and 2011.



Building of the Municipal Administration, located at the beginning of
Archaeological Reserve Ancient Town of Apollonia



Beginning of the accessible environment
in the Town Park of Sozopol



The Town Park is fully accessible for
people with disabilities



Ramp for people with disabilities to the Central Beach



Southern panoramic alley is fully accessible



The construction of a lift and a platform

2. Description of steps taken, changes and progress

- The primary access to building of the Municipal Administration was troubled by uneven terrain, now the access is improved.
- There is no ramps before, now by virtue of this project, till now 2 ramps are built.
- There is no a toilet for people with disabilities, now one has been built.
- Pavement improvements and the environment area was made in Town Park
- The southern panoramic access was a small country road, actually there is panoramic alley
- Building of approaches to Architectural-historic Complex Southern Fortress Wall and Tower and to Municipal Ethnographic Museum

- Construction of a lift and a platform, providing access for people with disabilities to all levels of the museum to the Architectural-Historic Complex Southern Fortress Wall and Tower and to the Municipal Ethnographic Museum.

3. Main stakeholders / actors

- Municipality of Sozopol- approves and coordinates all improvements
- Sozopol Foundation- main assistance in the construction, restoration, conservation and promotion of Architectural-historic Reserve and Sozopol as a destination
- Agency for People with Disabilities to Ministry of Labour and Social Policy- help in the field of counseling and testing

Results and Impact

The implementation of these improvements has gradually provided better infrastructure for people with disabilities to the Archaeological Reserve Ancient Town of Apollonia (the old town of Sozopol), which increased the visibility of the venues - and Sozopol in overall - and made them more popular. The improvements made sure that both Bulgarian citizens and tourists from abroad can visit and learn more about the local culture. Those improvements for inclusive tourism is also an important part of creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for citizens and visitors. The implementation of next phase of the project is imminent - installation of tactile markings.

Lessons learnt

- A close relationship between public authorities, private investors and non-governmental organizations is a positive outcome
- Accessible tourism is beneficial to the tourism business
- Accessible tourism leads to a positive image of a destination
- Enhancements help increase visits as well as small and medium businesses such as restaurants, souvenir shops, etc. to welcome more guests

Further information

Sozopol Foundation

<http://sozopol-foundation.com/>

Municipality of Sozopol

<http://www.sozopol.bg/>

Agency for people with disabilities

<http://ahu.mlsp.government.bg/en/home/>

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy

https://www.mlsp.government.bg/index.php?lang=_eng



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