



visits4u case studies:
Regional Ethnographic Museum
Plovdiv, Bulgaria

Plovdiv Regional Ethnographic Museum

Plovdiv, Bulgaria

Title: Improving accessibility in a heritage building

Plovdiv is the second-largest city in Bulgaria. It is an important economic, transport, cultural, and educational centre. Plovdiv has evidence of habitation since the 6th millennium BC when the first Neolithic settlements were established. It is said to be one of the oldest cities in Europe. Established to delight the eye, Plovdiv Regional Ethnographic museum has always been opened for those who are eager to learn and seek knowledge. The museum houses over 40 000 artefacts which mostly relate to the traditions of Plovdiv city population and its cultural and economic environment as well. The city hosts various cultural events throughout the year, and is a centre of attraction for business travellers and travellers who are interested in history and cultural heritage, wine tourism, fair tourism etc.

Becoming inclusive:

1. Description

The major challenge is to make the necessary improvements without disturbing the integrity of the building and not breaking its authenticity. The other is finding funding for innovation. Now the museum has a lift for people with disabilities. It allows people with mobility requirements to reach the second floor of the building. Further access improvements include a sanitary facility and a supplement entrance for disabled people without stairs. These works have been part of a project to provide an accessible environment and adapt the museum for people with mobility disabilities; the improvements eventually benefit anyone who visits the museum, young and elderly tourists, families visiting with children.

The project is funded by the Agency for People with Disabilities, Bulgaria.

After the access works people with difficulty in traveling now have better access to the Ethnographic Museum and actually be able to touch the rich world of Bulgarian life and culture through the ages.

The main goal is that other buildings in Plovdiv will also take on similar projects and implement improvements for the benefit of people with disabilities.

The building of the Ethnographic Museum, which is also a monument of culture of national importance, is 165 years old, but at its stand is thought with perspective and the innovations have not in any way violated the complexity of the complex.

For the needs of people with disabilities there is also an extension to the administrative building of REM with a sanitary room.

Thus, the museum meets all European requirements and standards. This is a European point, a place where Plovdiv can be proud because it meets all the requirements. This well-done work set an example for other cultural and public institutions to follow the example of the Ethnographic Museum.





Before installation



In process of installation



After installation

2. Description of steps taken, changes and progress

- Access by supplement entrance without stairs for disabled people in the corner of the main building
- Adaptation of a suitable space for the installation of a lift
- Implementation of a lift for disabled people to reach the second floor of the building
- Sanitary facility for disabled people

3. Main stakeholders / actors

Agency for People with disabilities - investment , dissemination activities

Union of the Disabled in Plovdiv- testing , dissemination activities

Municipality of Plovdiv- improvement, dissemination activities

Results and Impact

The Plovdiv Regional Ethnographic museum is the second largest specialized museum of this type in Bulgaria. It is an acknowledged scientific-educational institution and an attractive centre for cultural tourism. The museum is a permanent non-profit institution which investigates, collects, preserves, documents and popularizes movable artefacts in order to exhibit them with research, educational and promoting purposes. All improvements in it lead to ever-increasing interest and more visits.

The museum is a co-organizer and a host of popular traditional festivals such as the Folk Festival, the Annual Festival of Chamber Music, The Festival of Classic Guitar, etc., as well as concerts, biennials, fashion shows, theatrical plays, book presenting and performances. The demonstration of traditional crafts is another type of tourist attraction. With cited improvements the Museum covered European requirements for accessible tourism and allows the access of disabled people and their participation in cultural life in the city.

The project of Agency for People with disabilities is accepted as successful and they looking for improvements of other museums and tourist attractions in the country. It is a good example of further development for accessible tourism in Bulgaria.

Lessons learnt

- A successful project can become an example for future projects on the territory of the country
- Plovdiv needs to adapt more buildings
- Disabled devices can be designed without interfering with the design of the building and its historical value

Further information

Regional Ethnographic museum

<http://www.ethnograph.info/>

Agency for People with Disabilities

<http://ahu.mlsp.government.bg/en/portal/page/17>



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