



**visits4u case studies:
Accessible Holidays for All
Ayia Napa, Cyprus and
Rethimno, Greece**

Ayia Napa - Rethymno: Universally Accessible Cities

Ayia napa, Cyprus - Rethimno, Greece

Title: Accessible holidays for all - tourist guide with interactive maps

Description

The Municipality of Ayia Napa, from the Cypriot side, and the Municipality of Rethymno with the National Confederation of Disabled People (NCDP), from the Greek side, implemented - under the European Territorial Cooperation Programme "Greece - Cyprus 2007-2013", co-funded by the European Union (ERDF) by 80% and National Funds of Greece and Cyprus by 20%- the Project entitled "Ayia Napa - Rethymno: Universally Accessible Cities" (acronym "Accessible Cities").

The project, among others, concerned the development of a Guide which presents the twin municipalities of Ayia Napa in Cyprus and Rethymno in Greece, as to their accessibility to persons with disabilities.

Both cities are well known as very touristic areas mainly during summer season.

The Municipality of Ayia Napa is a coastal municipality located at the south-eastern part of Cyprus, south of the city of Famagusta. With a long history dating back to the 14th century and a population of 4.000 inhabitants today, Ayia Napa is famous worldwide for its unique sandy beaches and is a popular tourist destination. Nowadays, it has become the first tourist resort throughout Cyprus and has acquired international reputation. For those who love marine sports, the region's coasts provide infrastructure and services for activities such as sailing, diving, water skiing, numerous other marine sports, boat tours and even fishing.

The Municipality of Rethymno is located at the centre of the north coast of Crete, between the prefectures of Chania and Iraklion. Rethymno is rich in monuments such as temples, monasteries, Venetian villages and castles. Inhabited since the prehistoric age, as evidenced by the findings at Ideon Andron (the cave that is famous for being the birthplace of Zeus), it experienced growth between the 4th and the 3rd century BC. Today, Rethymno is one of the most modern towns in Crete, a popular summer destination featuring a high level of tourist facilities. In recognition of the old town's architectural character, it was declared a protected historical

monument in 1967 and a traditional settlement in 1985. Built around the impressive Fortezza castle, the town still retains, to a large extent, its particular character and its noble style: the Venetian type of town planning, the churches and minarets side by side, the arched passageways, the Venetian mansions, the Turkish fountains, the narrow alleys, the arched ground floors, and the old houses with heavy wooden doors and windows. The heart of the old town is the picturesque Venetian harbor.

Becoming inclusive:

1. Description

Both cities had established a fruitful cooperation a few years ago, together with their national disability movements, in order to improve the accessibility of the infrastructure and services they are offering especially in the domain of tourism. They were convinced that accessibility is the main tool needed to extend the touristic period and attract new quality touristic markets as those of persons with disabilities and the elderly in order to improve their economic growth.

As they had earlier made basic improvements of the infrastructure, the present Project interventions aimed at improving the overall accessibility of the two cities. Firstly, by attracting a big target group (persons with disabilities and their families) which has not yet been reached, and secondly by simultaneously improving the daily living conditions of people with disabilities since the new opportunities and services, will also be enjoyed by residents with disabilities and their families.

The project aimed also at better information and communication between citizens and visitors with the authorities as well as at raising awareness among the general public and businesses on issues related to the needs, preferences and rights of people with disabilities as both cities soon understood that the development of a fully accessible touristic guide of a both conventional/printed and digital form, in Greek and in English, was necessary to promote those accessible infrastructure and services among the interested parties.



The cover page of the printed form of the Guide
For the digital Guide please visit <http://www.prosvasimes-poleis.eu/en/>

2. Description of steps taken, changes and progress

The whole Project included following steps:

- a) The development of a strategic plan by each city in order to provide at the end a complete and accessible chain to their visitors and citizens.
- b) The investigation of the accessibility of each chain link and the definition of improvements needed concerning both infrastructure and services.
- c) The execution and audit of infrastructure improvements proposed.
- d) The development of a Guide of accessible infrastructure and services in multiple accessible formats in Greek and English. The relevant website that was developed complies with international standards and specifications W3C at the level AAA.

The available accessible formats are:

- Printed version (limited accessibility PDF)
- Printed version (accessible PDF)
- Accessible MS Word 2010
- Accessible MS Word 97-2003
- Accessible Open Document (ODT)
- Plain text format
- HTML format (WCAG2.0-AAA)
- Version for visually impairments
- Braille (PEF)
- Voice MP3 format
- Sign language in video format (m4v)

3. Main stakeholders

The Municipality of Ayia Napa, from the Cypriot side, and the Municipality of Rethymno with the National Confederation of Disabled People (NCDP), from the Greek side, were the 3 partners responsible for the Project. The expertise needed on accessibility/disability issues was provided by the National Confederation of Disabled People (NCDP) while the Technical Services of both cities implemented the improvements needed in their cities.

4. Costs of the changes

The project budget amounts to €1.050.000, out of which 80% comes from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and 20% by national funds in Greece and Cyprus.

Results and Impact

Both cities possess now a strong tool helping them to approach new tourist markets as well as reliable accessible infrastructure and services to serve them.

The citizens also of those cities can enjoy a higher quality of life and the entrepreneurs an extended touristic period which leads to higher income.

Lessons learnt

- The key success factors of the Project were
 - A) the involvement of the disability movement as the best accessibility/disability expert with critical presence during the design of the strategic plans and the audits. NCDP was the partner who implemented the accessible guide and relevant website.
 - B) the very good cooperation among 3 partners
 - C) the political willingness and support of the Authorities to improve accessibility in favour of disabled persons

- The key challenge in the process was the conversion of local communities' mentality concerning persons with disabilities, especially of local tourism entrepreneurs
- As a conclusion the infrastructure and services' accessibility can be a strong tool for the economic growth of touristic cities.

Further information

Municipality of Ayia Napa

www.ayianapa.org.cy

Municipality of Rethymno

www.rethymno.gr

National Confederation of Disabled People (NCDP)

www.esamea.gr



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