



visits4u case studies:

Eria Resort

Chania, Greece

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Title: Accessible holidays in Crete, Greece

Description

Chania is the second largest city of Crete and the capital of the Chania regional unit. It lies along the north coast of the island, about 70 km west of Rethymno and 145 km west of Heraklion.

The city of Chania was slowly regaining its normal pace of development during the 1950s, trying to overcome the difficulties that the war had left as an aftermath. During the 1970s, Crete became a major tourist destination for Greek and international tourists, something that gave a significant boost to the city's economy and affected the everyday life and the overall culture of the locals. The capital of Crete was moved to Heraklion in 1971. Since the decade of 1990 the city of Chania entered a new era, because many constructions have been made, like a new airport, port, educational facilities and it is considered a prominent tourist resort in the Mediterranean Sea.

Two main sources of wealth in Chania are agriculture and tourism. A big portion of the city's residents (not necessarily farmers) own from few to many decades of agricultural land where several plants are being cultivated, the most popular ones being olive trees and citrus. Other important products include wine, avocados, dairy etc. Apart from the traditional ways of cultivation, some of the producers have concentrated on practicing new methods in order to promote organic food.

On the other hand, starting from the early 1970s, tourism has developed rapidly. Nowadays the tertiary sector is becoming more and more important for the locals, since an increasing number of them are participating in the business. Agrotourism and ecotourism are forms of tourism which are significantly developing lately.]

There is also some secondary industry with focus on the processing-packaging of agricultural products (some of them export oriented) or manufacture products that support the agricultural production.

Becoming inclusive:

1. Description

Eria resort is the first hotel in Greece, that has been designed to offer the most pleasant and comfortable holidays to people with accessibility needs, their families and their escorts.

Grigoris Archontakis is the owner and the person who had the inspiration to create ERIA RESORT. He studied pharmacy in the University of Bari, Italy. After he had completed his degree, he undertook his father's pharmacy which he turned into a modern and successful business in Chania. At the same time, he established Medical Shops, a chain of stores selling medical, paramedical and orthopaedic products and equipment. His daily contact with disabled people and their needs has led him to create Eria Resort, the only hotel in Greece that accommodates disabled tourists' access requirements by providing all necessary conveniences to ensure an enjoyable vacation in Crete, such as but not limited to a specially equipped bus, a functional Hotel with a wide range of activities, comfortably adapted rooms and bathrooms, adapted equipment, excursions with accessibility, physiotherapy, gym, and athletic facilities. Eria Resort is a model Hotel, exemplary in conception and function all over Greece and worldwide.

The Hotel first opened in June 2004. Since then, it has operated successfully and has helped many travellers with accessibility needs to realise their dream of visiting Crete and Greece in general.

2. Description of steps taken, changes and progress

Eria Resort has been specially designed from scratch with disabled guests in mind in strict compliance with all current specifications for disabled access.

The Resort is located in the coastal and historic village of Máleme, the prefecture of Chania, Crete.



Main Entrance

The area is easily accessible by wheelchair.

The landscape is renowned for its unparalleled natural beauty, as it combines the mountain and the sea harmoniously and is ideal for long walks to the traditional and hospitable village that is surrounded by olive and orange groves overlooking the endless Cretan blue sea!

All the hotel facilities are fully accessible to people with disabilities.

The fine furnishings and decoration of both the interior and exterior spaces of the Hotel, the high quality services and the hospitable, cosy environment of Eria Resort, guarantee a pleasant and comfortable stay for guests with accessibility needs, their families and/or escorts.

Rooms

At Eria Resort, all 11 twin/double rooms and 2 suites are characterised by a particularly elegant and unique decoration. All first floor rooms are accessible by lift.



Double Room

All corners of the rooms and suites are comfortable and easily accessible, while at the same time they feature a private bathroom and a balcony.

From the balcony the guests are able to enjoy a spectacular view of the Cretan sea and the endless olive groves embracing the Hotel.

Suites can accommodate up to four people, whereas some of the twin rooms can accommodate up to three people.

Each room features special amenities especially designed for disabled people, such as:

- Electrically adjustable bed.
- Trapeze bars (monkey poles)
- Emergency switch with safety cord
- Intercom

The bathrooms are comfortable and specially adapted with horizontal and vertical shower grab bars.



Bathroom

Recreation

There is much to do in and around Eria Resort. There is a large heated swimming pool of 28-32C⁰, featuring a sloping ramp for easy way in and out. The guests can also relax and enjoy the sun and a cocktail in the swimming pool hydro-massage.



The following mobility and safety aids, as well as activities are also offered free of charge:

- Waterproof chairs (with special small wheels)
- Life jackets
- Water fun-games
- Water sports
- Water polo
- Water volley
- Water basket

Gym -Sports

In the organized gym more than 15 activities are staged, most of which are suitable for wheelchair users.



Specialised personnel offers aerobic and yoga sessions on a weekly basis.

ERIA RESORT also features a:

- Boccia court.
- Basket court.
- Volley court.
- Ping-Pong table

There are [wheelchairs](#) suitable for participation in any desirable sport activity.

The area around the Resort is flat and ideal for pleasant strolls, as well as jogging.

The sea can be found at a distance of 250 to 700 metres from the Hotel. The path leading to it is also accessible and suitable for family walks.

Extra services are offered to the guests of the hotel such us:

- The Hotel collaborates with Medical Shops and enables guests to rent special equipment if needed.
- Medical services. An interdisciplinary team of physicians can be at the disposal of the guests when they need them.
- The hotel cooperates with a private clinic, where the guests can conduct their weekly check-ups or any other required examination. A new haemodialysis clinic is also at the disposal of the guests, situated at a distance of 18 kilometres from the Hotel.
- Nurse or Caregiver Service. If a guest wish to hire a nurse or a caregiver on a daily basis they can contact the Reservation Department of the Hotel. This service is charged per hour.
- Physiotherapy sessions can be conducted in a fully equipped, pleasant and functional space. These can also take place at the swimming pool.
- The hotel recommends an excursion programme carefully designed with disabled guests in mind.
- Eria Resort is located in the coastal and historical village of Máleme, in the north-western part of the prefecture of Chania. The Hotel offers free transfer to and from Máleme accessible beach by a special sea-wheelchair

3. Main stakeholders

Grigóris Archontákis, the owner is responsible for the Hotel.

Results and Impact

Approach of new tourist markets as well as reliable accessible infrastructure and services to provide to disable travellers. 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. That leads to overcome seasonality and maximise the benefits for local communities.

Lessons learnt

As a conclusion, it is verified that the infrastructure and services' towards disable travellers' accessibility can be a strong tool for the economic growth of tourism destinations worldwide.

Further information

Eria Resort

www.eria-resort.gr

Municipality of Chania

www.chaniatourism.com



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