

ACCESSIBILITY TO CULTURE AND HERITAGE: DESIGNING FOR ALL

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Abstract

This paper is based on the Guide that was elaborated in the context of the European INTERREG IVC programme CHARTS (Culture and Heritage Added Value to Regional Policies for Tourism Sustainability) project by the Laboratory for Tourism Planning, Research and Policy (University of Thessaly).

The Guide examines the Accessibility to Heritage for all people by defining three moments: a) physical accessibility: the visitor to / receiver of a cultural good uses his/her body structure and functions in order to move inside the product in its original material manifestation or experience sensorially its tangible or intangible reproductions, b) perceptual accessibility: the moment of understanding culture/heritage and it has to do with the perceptiveness of the receiver and is closely linked to the receiver's educational background, way of living and habitual mode of intellectual operation and finally c) appropriational accessibility: the apex of accessibility is the combination of the two previously acquired moments and it happens when the visitor/receiver may consider culture/heritage as part of himself/herself (familiarization) and use the adopted experience to intertwine his/her own story (narrational production).

The Guide supports the idea of a sustainable management of culture, heritage, tourism and it is inspired by the principles of Universal Design: all people should enjoy in the same way same benefits and high quality services offered. The Guide tries to clarify the misunderstandings connected to the notion of accessibility, proposes policies for achieving accessibility to all cultural activity and gives planning principles for the strategic management of accessibility to heritage.

1. Introduction

This paper presents both a theoretical and practical approach to the issue of “Accessibility to Heritage” and it is based on the homonymous Good Practice (GP) Guide written by the scientific team of LA.RE.TOUR (Laboratory of Tourism Planning, Research and Policy) at the University of Thessaly. The GP Guide “Accessibility to Heritage” was prepared within the framework of INTERREG IVC Culture and Heritage Added-value to Regional Policies for Tourism Sustainability Program (CHARTS) and it can be used as a toolkit for achieving accessibility to culture and heritage for all, as well as for exchanging experience amongst the partners on the sustainable management of culture, heritage and landscape through communication and collaboration, keeping in mind the effects of innovation and creating a knowledge base. In addition, always in respect to the basic principles of INTERREG IVC and the objectives of Lisbon and Gothenburg agendas, the areas of support are innovation and the knowledge economy, environment and risk prevention, aiming to contribute to the economic modernization and competitiveness of Europe in cultural matters.

The paper starts with conceptual definitions. Accessibility is invoked in a generic sense as initial prerequisite for anyone to be able to reach and appreciate sites and activities of collective interest; culture as a good, situation and activity imbued with symbolic value; and heritage as the percolation of past cultural elements into epoch defining legacy. Accessibility to culture and heritage thus involves a physical moment of material access to infrastructures and sites, a perceptual moment involving an understanding of the symbolic meanings inherent in cultural products and activities, and a culminant appropriational moment when such meanings are appropriated, consciously accepted or re-presented and re-worked by those in contact with them. Two questions arise: a) how does enhanced accessibility to culture and heritage impact on the breadth, quality and value-added potential of the tourism sector, and b) how does the multiplier effect on the tourism sector become apparent.

Finally, the paper presents referential evidence of the felicitous effects of accessibility to culture and heritage on the tourism sector and lists a number of good practices from across the European Union proving the point. It ends with a set of Do's and Don'ts attempting to guide implementation of accessibility projects in an all-inclusive direction involving all irrespective of physical, intellectual or social specificity.

2. Objectives

This paper depicts GP Guide's "Accessibility to Heritage" output and tries to communicate its results to the European scientific audience. In the context of the current text, accessibility is approached according to a broad definition, which includes both the physical and the perceptual accessing of culture and heritage. This is because, although the term 'accessibility' usually tends to be thought of in connection to physical disability, in the particular cases of culture and heritage it also crucially involves the ability to perceive ideas and understand meanings. At a symbolic level, central to all artistic expression, a piece of visual art is much more than paints on canvas or deformed stone shapes.

The objective of this paper is to illustrate the concepts related to the central motif of accessibility, promoting the relevant problematic, examining applied good practices and addressing policy implications. Thus, the paper aims to contribute to the debate concerning the accessibility to culture and heritage. It also aims to investigate the bidirectional relationship between cultural heritage and tourism, further highlighting those issues which can supply good practices. The examination of good, in contrast with less successful, practices is included in the targets so as to highlight transferrable good practices and propose efficient transfer processes. The final aim of this paper is to suggest a series of specific recommendations and suggestions aiming at the amelioration of both physical and perceptual accessibility conditions to culture and heritage for all.

3. Theoretical framework

The term 'accessibility' will be defined as a generic concept and interpreted in relation to its dual articulation as physical and perceptual accessibility. In general, accessibility means the ability of everyone to use a service or a product, regardless of specificity (disability, age) or context of use. In other words, accessibility is, by definition, a matter of usability. The point is that anything that is not accessible for a user is not user-friendly. Practically, accessibility is embedded in the broader scientific field of HCI (Human Interaction) with Object/Action Design.

The term 'accessibility', in its strict definition, denotes the state in which any characteristic of the domain at issue can be accessed by anyone without discrimination based on sex, age or other characteristics (physique, strength, perceptive ability etc.), i.e. when anyone can reach and use infrastructure autonomously, safely and comfortably.

However, 'accessibility' does not refer only to infrastructure. Other aspects of accessibility have to do with accessing services, facilities and goods, engaging in activities and partaking in experiences. All

these are interacting and can give a decent degree of autonomy and security to the individual, always in relation to the environment (natural, built or virtual) [Tzanavara, 2013]. Conclusively, accessibility should apply in all fields (e.g. culture, environmental and urban planning, transport, health and welfare, research and technological development, education, labour, health and safety) and at all levels (local, regional, national, European, global) so as to ensure its generic effectiveness (Christofi, 2010).

On the other hand, a comprehensive design (integrated planning), that takes from the outset into account the needs of all citizens, including citizens with disabilities, firstly enables them to participate equally in social activities and secondly increases the level of quality and safety for all. These should exist with consistency in the everyday sense of control, cross assurance and regular maintenance of any applications in order that the uninterrupted and safe operation of access-able chains and networks is insured. Damage to a link is so obvious that devalues the overall architecture.

Actually, the theory of ‘Universal Design’ describes exactly the complete access of different people to different services and products and that process means ‘Design for all’. The goal of universal design is accessibility for all, accessibility to buildings, structures, the classroom, internet. The application of the principles of universal design minimizes the use of assistive technologies and results in the production of products compatible with assistive technology that can be used by many groups of people, not just people with disabilities.

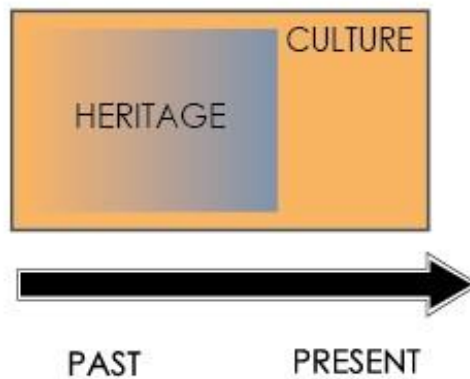
3.1 Accessibility to heritage: the phases of accessibility

The term ‘accessibility’ is usually presented as physical disability. Nonetheless, the term can refer to very different groups of people that can face insurmountable accessibility problems. The topic is getting even more complicated when speaking about accessibility to culture and heritage. What is culture and what is heritage? How can culture and heritage be accessible? What are the reasons that prevent someone from accessing culture? Is the process of accessing culture and heritage interactive? Does physical access to culture precede mental access or does the opposite apply?

This section will attempt answering such questions by venturing into the elaboration of a theoretical model. The model depicts the phases, or moments, of accessibility to culture and heritage and is setting the background on which these can be detected, studied and addressed by policy makers and regulators aiming at accessibility maximisation.

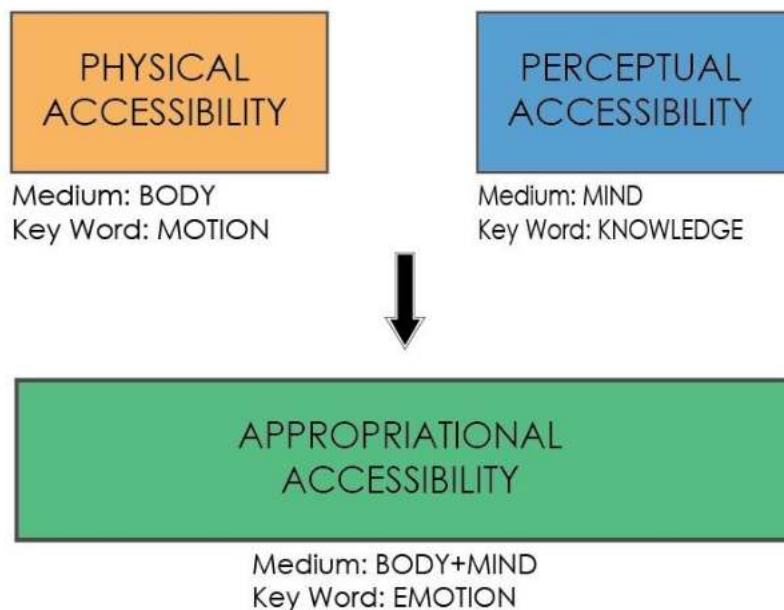
First of all, clear definitions of culture and heritage have to be given. Culture is, in this context, approached as an umbrella term including Heritage. Hence, the term Culture defined as “the arts and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively (through the timespan)” (<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com>), whereas Heritage stands for “the valued objects and qualities such as historic buildings and cultural traditions that have been passed down from previous generations” (<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com>). In other words, the difference between Culture and Heritage can be defined as temporal. On the one hand, Culture includes all the intellectual achievements of mankind from its beginnings to today; while, on the other, Heritage refers to non-contemporary intellectual achievements that have percolated through the ages as the past’s indubitable legacy (Figure 1). But who can have access to culture and heritage?

Figure 1: Culture and Heritage according to time



As declared at the European Round Table on ‘Human Rights and Cultural Policies in Europe’, held in Helsinki in 1993, everyone has the right to produce, participate and access cultural life (Fisher et al., 1993). Multiculturalism, pluralism and diversity are the key words that summarize the dominant discourse on accessibility to culture and heritage. No one can be excluded from either producing or accessing culture/heritage. Here, the focus is on the phases, or moments, involved in the process (Figure 2).

Figure 2: The Moments of Accessibility to Culture and Heritage



Thus, there are two main phases of accessibility that may either precede or succeed each other:

a) **Physical Accessibility:** In this phase, the visitor to/ receiver of a cultural good uses his/ her body structure and functions in order to move inside the product in its original material manifestation or experience sensorially its tangible or intangible reproductions. Hence, through the five senses (sight, hearing, taste, smell, touch) and their combination (kinesthesia), s/he can collect either stimuli for

further interference with culture/heritage (impulse) or experiences concerning the already adapted information (integration). A crucial sub-group that is facing effects during that moment of accessibility is physically disabled people. In addition, once we talk about visiting and experiencing culture/heritage with one's body (museums, archeological sites, cultural centers), there is also an exclusion of people from culture/heritage because of economic reasons (the price of tickets).

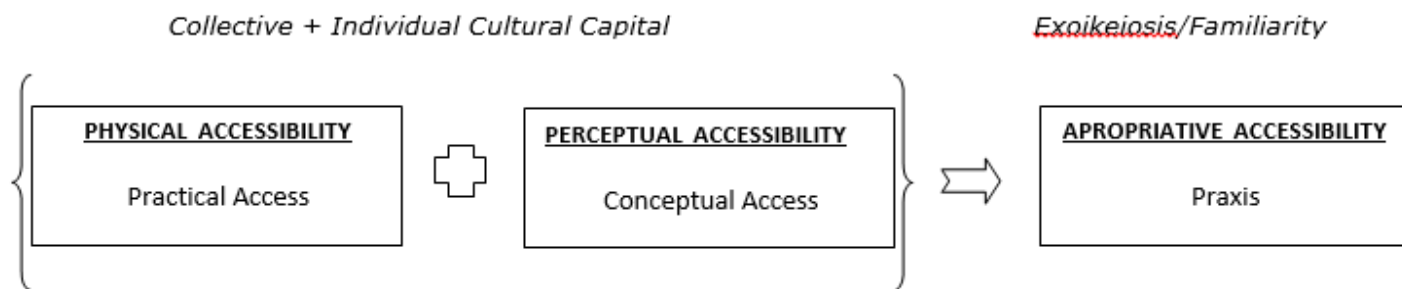
b) **Perceptual Accessibility:** This could be the definition of the phase of understanding culture and heritage and has to do with the perceptiveness of the receiver. The cornerstone is the human mind and its function. The levels of mental accessibility and perceptiveness are closely linked to the receiver's educational background, way of living and habitual mode of intellectual operation. The sub-groups that can possibly be kept out of that phase are people that are indifferent about accessing the types of culture/heritage products being offered and people with mental and learning disabilities.

The theoretical model of the moments of accessibility to culture/heritage is completed by the existence of a third phase referred to as "Appropriational Accessibility".

c) **Appropriational Accessibility:** That phase is the combination of the two previously acquired phases: those of Physical and Mental Accessibility. Firstly, the visitor/receiver may consider culture/heritage as part of himself/herself. S/he may feel emotionally attached and connected to the products of culture/heritage ("exoikeiosis" from the Greek word εξοικείωση meaning familiarization/emotional investment). At a second level, the body and the mind of the visitor/receiver use the adopted experience and knowledge in order to intertwine his/her own story (narrational production) and, in so doing, reproduce the cultural product in novel, appropriated form. This final moment represents the apex of accessibility, the ultimate goal to be aimed for by policy makers in the field, if accessibility to culture and heritage is perceived generically.

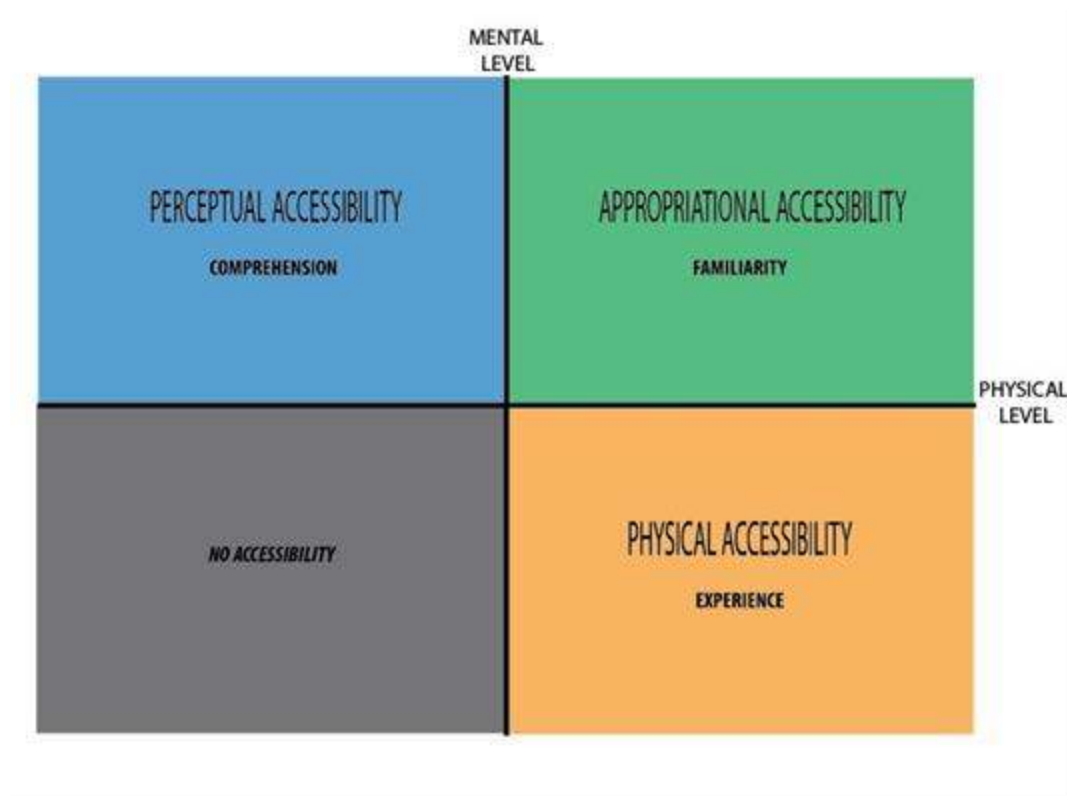
Using Pierre Bourdieu's syllogism, the theoretical model can be seen through the perspective of practice. Physical Accessibility has to do with the collective cultural capital and can be described as a matter of practical access, whereas Mental Accessibility is the individual cultural capital and can be described as a matter of practice theory (Bourdieu, 1972/1977). The third moment of accessibility (Appropriational Accessibility) indicates a continuous interaction between collective and individual cultural capital and offers the background for exercising Praxis (conscious reasonable practice) through the creative combination of practical and conceptual access (Figure 3).

Figure 3: The Moments of Accessibility to Culture and Heritage linked to Bourdieusian Syllogism



Combining the physical and perceptual level of accessibility for tracing the ultimate level of accessibility (Appropriative Accessibility), quadrants for depicting the three phases of accessibility and a fourth state of no accessibility can be used (Figure 4).

Figure 4: The Phases of Accessibility related to their Levels



During the phase of ‘Appropriational Accessibility’ (Physical Accessibility + Perceptual Accessibility), people get familiar with culture and heritage. They have experienced (Physical Accessibility) and comprehend (Perceptual Accessibility) culture and heritage. This guide aims to stress the importance of ‘Appropriational Accessibility’ and examines the practices that can promote it.

3.2 Accessibility impacts on tourism and key-knowledge for their management

Tourism is a very common and widespread medium of accessing culture and heritage. Hence, the existing level of accessibility to tourism facilities and activities plays an important role in experiencing (physical accessibility) and comprehending (perceptual accessibility) culture and heritage. A sufficient level of physical and perceptual accessibility to culture and heritage through tourism can lead to the ultimate moment of accessibility (appropriational accessibility).

But what are the positive and negative impacts of accessibility on tourism? Of course, there can be a categorization of positive and negative impacts according to their sphere of influence: economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts. A good level of accessibility leads to positive economic, social, cultural and environmental impacts on tourism, whereas low accessibility levels represent an undeniable impediment to tourism development. Hence, one can observe a pro rata relation between Accessibility and Tourism Impacts.

Table 1: Positive Impacts on Tourism [High/Good Accessibility => Positive Impacts]

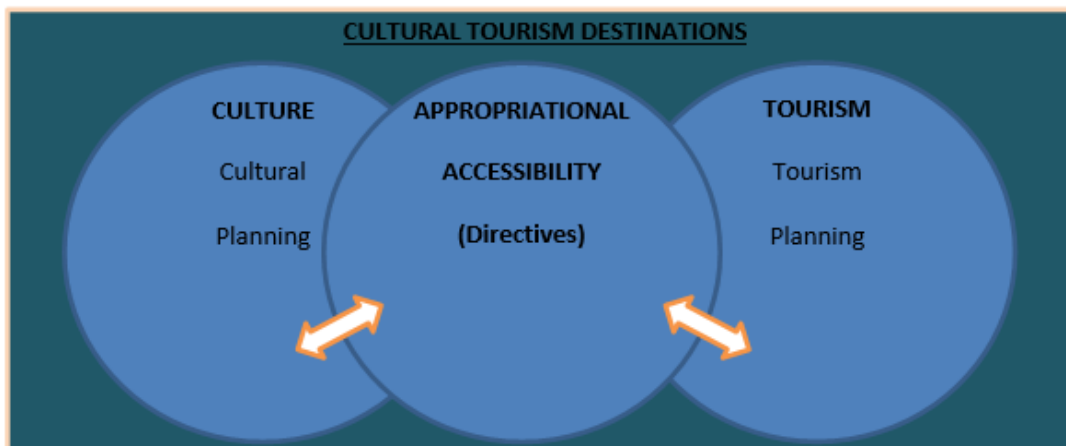
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>+ Economic Impacts</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Contributes to further tourism development ✓ Tones up local economy (zooms at investment and infrastructure development) ✓ Improves public utilities and transport infrastructure ✓ Creates new opportunities for employment for all 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>+Social Impacts</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Promotes social cohesion ✓ Improves quality of life ✓ Offers greater tolerance to social differences ✓ Reduces the feeling of social exclusion ✓ Satisfies psychological needs
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>+Cultural Impacts</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Offers the opportunity of gaining experience, knowledge concerning culture and heritage ✓ Broadens one’s horizons ✓ Offers the feeling of being part of the collective cultural capital ✓ Increases individual cultural capital ✓ Familiarizes people with the notions of culture and heritage 	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>+ Environmental Impacts</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Proper access for all to spaces of high cultural importance (preservation of natural and built heritage) ✓ Visual aesthetic improvement of cultural spaces (archaeological sites, libraries, museums etc) ✓ Increases aesthetic awareness of natural environments, of the threats to environmental balances and biodiversity

Table 2: Negative Impacts on Tourism [Low/No Accessibility => Negative Impacts]

<p><u>-Economic Impacts</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Fails to capture crucial segments of the tourist market (special needs visitors) ✓ The tourism economy fails to develop homogenously and specializes in specific types of service ✓ Limited target groups resulting to possible loss of revenues 	<p><u>-Social Impacts</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Treats people in a different way without supporting social cohesion ✓ Stresses social differences ✓ Promotes the feeling of social exclusion to certain groups ✓ Creates unfulfilled psychological needs
<p><u>-Cultural Impacts</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Puts barriers to expanding one’s individual cultural capital ✓ Cannot help oneself feel part of the collective cultural capital ✓ Cultivates indifference to cultural matters ✓ Drives people away from creativity 	<p><u>- Environmental Impacts</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Improper access to spaces of high cultural importance downgrades them aesthetically ✓ Limits aesthetic awareness of natural environments ✓ Precludes understanding of the environmental and socio-cultural specificities of rural spatial entities ✓ Poorly designed accessibility infrastructure can cause accidents

As it has been shown, there is a profound relation and interaction between accessibility to culture/heritage and accessibility of tourism. These pairs of relations and interactions constitute the core of the issue of Cultural Tourism Destinations and result to the three poles of the relevant key knowledge (Figure 5).

Figure 5: The Three Poles of Cultural Tourism Destinations (Prevention Phase)



The poles of Culture and Tourism can be studied through the concept of sustainability -main and crucial demand concerning Cultural Tourism Destinations- which can be achieved only through Planning (Cultural and Tourism Planning). Furthermore, Planning ought to be elaborated under the spectrum of accessibility and promote the ultimate moment of accessibility (Appropriational Accessibility). This phase of key knowledge can be named as “Prevention Phase”.

Table 3: Key-Knowledge for Cultural Tourism Destinations

KEY-KNOWLEDGE FOR CULTURAL TOURISM DESTINATIONS		
POLES	CULTURE	TOURIS
PREVENTION PHASE	Cultural Planning	TourismPlanning
Aims	I. Protecting Culture/Heritage II. Organizing Cultural Industries’ Services III. Providing Entertainment Choices	I. Defining the Characteristics of the Target Group(Tourists) II. Stressing the Comparative Advantage III. Promoting the Tourism Product
FILTERPOLE	ACCESSIBILITY TO CULTURE	ACCESSIBILITY TO TOURISM
Basic Directives	UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity(2001) Key-Concepts: Diversity, Pluralism, Creativity	UNWTO Declaration on the Facilitation of Tourist Travel Key-Concepts: Elimination of Tourist Travel Barriers, Facilitation of Travelling
	Equal Opportunities for People with Disabilities: A European Action Plan (2004-2010)	

During that phase, Cultural Planning and Tourism are trying to achieve their goals, while keeping in mind the basic directives concerning accessibility. Those basic directives are declarations and action plans by specialist organizations (UNESCO UNWTO, European Council). Consequently, one can observe that “Prevention Phase” can be considered as effective when it is influenced by the general principals of Universal Design (Design for All).

More specifically, the principles of Universal Design can appear as key-knowledge for accessibility planning to Cultural Tourism Destinations. The key knowledge includes (http://www.ncsu.edu/ncsu/design/cud/pubs_p/docs/poster.pdf):

- **Equitable Use:** The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities.
- **Flexibility in Use:** The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.
- **Simple and Intuitive Use:** Use of the design is easy to understand, regardless of the user’s experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration level.
- **Perceptible Information:** The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user’s sensory abilities.
- **Tolerance for Errors:** The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.
- **Low Physical Effort:** The design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.
- **Size and Space for Approach and Use:** Appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of user’s body size, posture, or mobility.

4. Policy in practice

As theoretical construct, accessibility has been defined in Section 2, to encompass physical, perceptual and appropriational moments, at which visitors and participants gain physical access to sites and activities, perception of official (given) narratives and appropriation of such narratives so that they can rationally accept, reinterpret or amend them according to their own cultural contextuality and aspirations. Yet the pertinence of the concept lies in its practical efficacy, in its application as enabler of cultural consumption, as revealer of the symbolic as productive activity. In this respect, significant progress has been made in the course of history. From the aristocratic culture of the Renaissance, where a painting in a private collection would be seen by as many in a hundred years as one can view it nowadays hanging in a major international museum in the course of a single day, huge strides in accessibility have been made. More recently, the infinite expansion of cyberspace broadens the horizon of both physical and perceptual accessibility, new technologies, and especially ICT, offering new tools, both material and symbolic, for the mass appreciation of culture and heritage. Significantly, over the past decades, increased awareness of difference, of pluralism as interpretative category, and an insistence on the access to culture and heritage as existential imperative, transformed the closed character of culture, broke through the binary divide between a high, elitist culture of the few and a low, deprecated culture of the many. Accessibility to culture thus becoming as essential as culture itself.

Policy, at European as well national level, has adjusted accordingly. It responded to a paradigm shift regarding otherness and the nature of culture, and, in turn, reciprocated upon the transition, legitimating and enhancing it. Some significant case studies involving lobbying efforts and policy applications with respect to cultural accessibility are here presented, the selection has being limited within the borders of Europe and including examples from both physical and cyber space. Some

examples of successful initiatives, promotional techniques (awards, official sites), mechanisms (databases), guides and site-located accessibility practices are listed below:

- **Access City Award:** An innovative competition between European cities which was launched in 2010 to promote accessibility in the urban environment for persons with disabilities and to fulfill the accessibility needs of ALL citizens. The Access City Award is open to all EU cities of over 50 000 inhabitants. In Member States with less than two of such cities, urban areas composed of two or more towns may also participate if their combined population exceeds 50,000 inhabitants. The award recognizes and celebrates cities which proactively support accessibility for persons with disabilities and take exemplary steps to improve accessibility in the urban environment. The 2014 Winner of the Award was Gothenburg (Sweden), Grenoble (France) took the second prize and Poznań (Poland) the third prize.
- **Pantou.org:** a website funded by the European Commission and developed by ENAT and partners. Its aim is the connection, free-of-charge, between suppliers of accessible tourism and Europe-inbound visitors. According to the Pantou directory the goals are: a) to make it easier for tourists with any kind of access needs to find what they are looking for when planning a visit, and b) to promote European accessible tourism suppliers, showing places to go and things to do – in safety and with convenience and comfort. The target groups are Tourism Suppliers (hotels / accommodation, restaurants, transportation services, equipment suppliers) and Tourists (people with different kinds of access needs, e.g. mobility/vision/hearing impairments, people with learning difficulties, people with allergies and families with small children).
- **ACA-Accessible Culture for All:** CA aims to develop a culture which will facilitate social tourism and accessibility for people with disabilities. Appropriate structures will be set up to foster the idea of inclusion. The project will focus on ways to improve the accessibility dimension of the tourism product and the service offer for the benefit of social tourists in Europe. To address the seasonality problem of tourism demand, the intention of the project is to share best practices among the partners and to identify mechanisms which would eventually facilitate exchanges for social tourists during the off-peak season. Eventually, it will lead to exchanges for people with disabilities giving them the opportunity to experience other tourism products. The ACA project involves the following activities: a) setting up of a team within the participating National Authorities that will serve as a working group to promote social tourism and strengthening collaboration between tourism investors, b) enhancing collaboration between project partners, c) implementation of relevant studies that will improve the knowledge base to facilitate low season exchanges for people with disabilities, d) creation of a web portal as a link to the CALYPSO web platform and e) dissemination of information amongst tourists and local citizens who may be interested to travel and who fall under the category of social tourists.
- **T-Guide:** The idea of that initiative is to give Tourist Guides an awareness of the requirements of persons with learning difficulties and intellectual impairments and to equip them with the skills to extend their guiding work to these groups of visitors, thus extending the offer of the tourism sector in Europe to a wider range of customers market. The aim of the project is to produce an EU training model and Manual for training Tourist Guides in guiding people who have learning difficulties or other intellectual impairments. The promotion of integration of people with intellectual and learning difficulties by enabling them to enjoy tourism experiences and the enhancement of the role of the third sector -especially organisations of people with disabilities and their families- in developing learning programmes and tools, in order to enable the delivery of higher quality tourism products is also an crucial expectation.
- **TD-Database for Access to Public:** a database that aims at: a) citizen information and consumer empowerment, b) the stressing of obstacles and impediments of accessibility and c) the explanation/motivation of what measures should be taken for achieving a high level of accessibility. The TD is also providing different stakeholders with valuable information and its

target groups are: people with physical disabilities (vision problems; hearing problems; mobility problems, allergy problems, processing, interpreting and communicating information problems), children, elder people, foreigners and people with special sexual and religious orientation.

- **CadW-Cad Wales:** CadW -a Welsh word meaning ‘to keep’ or ‘to protect’- is the name of the initiative for conserving Wales’s heritage, helping people understand and care about history and promoting the distinctive character of Wales. It proceeds by: identifying places of special historic significance, giving advice and guidance to planning authorities as part of the statutory planning process and to other public bodies on environmental assessments and providing grants for conservation and repair to the owners of the very best historic buildings, buildings in designated conservation areas and listed ancient monuments.
- **CLEAR- Cultural Values and Leisure Environments:** an international project that includes public institutions ONGs and research centers from 7 different countries. Twelve different partners are combining knowledge and personal to achieve project aims. The lead partner is Rimini Province from Italy. Its aim is to serve as a kick-start mechanism for generating a better attitude towards Cultural Values (CVs), making them accessible to all. The project wishes to make everyone aware of the possibilities represented by the increase in accessibility for people with disability. CLEAR will provide to different stakeholders (governments, tourist representatives, cultural operators) tools and practical experiences to improve the situation and will show them how to see the obligation of addressing accessibility issues as a new opportunity. CLEAR deals with all types of accessibility: a) physical accessibility to/and in CVs as intended in more than just legal terms, b) accessibility to knowledge and information on CVs, c) economic accessibility in both its dimensions (free services and paying for personalized services), d) psycho-social accessibility, considering all learning need typologies (from learning difficulties to intellectual people requiring specific in-depth info) and e) socio-cultural accessibility, at a personal level anyone can benefit from cultural values- knowledge regardless of cultural, social, religious or ethnic background.
- **Site-Located Practices [Tivoli Gardens and Athens’ Metro]:** Tivoli Gardens is an amusement park, located in Copenhagen, which in 2005 received the Accessibility Label. Tivoli Gardens provides ramps for easier access in all of the entrances, disabled parking spaces, wheelchairs without extra charge, charging points for electric wheelchairs, “show consideration” cards for children or adults with mental disabilities and also includes a Family Amenity Centre. However, there is an entrance fee that may be a reason for economic exclusion. In Greece, the Athens Metro Stations and trains are completely PSNs-friendly and they include accessibility infrastructure. There are features which are included in the Stations of Lines 2 and 3 of the Metro network, in order to accommodate Persons with Special Needs (facilities for Semi-Ambulant Users and Wheelchair Users). One of the most important characteristics of the Athens Metro is the public display of ancient artefacts and exhibits in its Stations. These information segments and ancient artifacts are inviting every rushing passenger, either Greek or foreigner, to examine and admire them. In these terms, the Athens Metro is both a physical and a perceptual accessibility practice as well as a structure with daily use that also provides access in ancient heritage.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

The conclusions and recommendations are consistent with some basic principles that should be followed and additionally by some common mistakes that arise from the application of these principles. The recommendations are organized in the three moments of accessibility: physical, perceptual and appropriational. The basic principles are referred as the “DO’s” that each cultural destination should follow and the common mistakes that they owed to avoid are referred as the “DON’Ts” (Table 4).

Table 4: DO's and DON'Ts concerning the ensuring the Three Moments of Accessibility

	DO'S	DON'TS
PHYSICAL	Ensuring connection to all cultural activity premises with disability friendly public transport networks as well as proper road signage	Establishing transport services exclusively for the cultural sites, unconnected to the broader urban network
	Ensuring full physical access for all to and within every cultural activity and exhibition premises	Obtruding aesthetic aspects of spaces and buildings
	Offering free or price-accessible entry for all	Depending the realization of cultural activities on private/sponsorship funds
PERCEPTUAL	Ensuring diffusion of information regarding cultural sites and activities	Providing either meager, out of date information or turgid and user unfriendly material
	Providing audiovisual information in situ in all relevant languages	Undermining the significance of exhibits with off scale information boards
	Providing different material for different types of audiences/visitors	Imposing visitor alienating information overdoses
APPROPRIATIONAL	Developing interactive comprehensive and user friendly supporting initiatives enabling the user's involvement	Developing supporting initiatives imposing dominant or conventional narratives

The transfer of good practices can convey fundamental benefits to different kind of target groups. However, the barriers to overcome are numerous and difficult to ignore. An initial assessment of the cultural assets in terms of accessibility may encounter difficulties which have to be fully comprehended by all partners. The reference to accessibility to heritage is connected to quality of life issues such as social inclusion, opportunity issues and knowledge enhancement (Laquirada et al., 2013). Lack of information is usually the cause associated to accessibility problems and actions concerning learning and broadening the horizons becomes necessary. Actions should focus on the transfer of good experience.

Governance structures appear to need reforms that should be introduced in three stages. The first stage should comprise awareness for public as well as understanding of the current situation regarding tourism industry and partnerships. In order to succeed, urban governance in any scale is necessary to understand the real need, as stage two regards the direction towards enhancement of accessibility from city planners applying successful practices and achieve growth with the introduction of guidelines for statutory planning process. The third stage comprises actions for participation and cooperation between authorities, institutions and enterprises; a collaboration that can be achieved through different scale decision makers in heritage accessibility sector such as local and regional authorities, national tourism organisation and every kind of cultural industries (Centre for Strategy and Evaluation Services, 2013).

In addition, heritage and culture are inextricably connected to the tourism sector. Appropriate structures could enable the creation of networks among tourism suppliers such as travel agencies, guides, hotels and restaurants that will transfer each other creative and innovative ideas. Know-how exchange can trigger processes and set mechanisms useful to achieve extension of the tourist period. Steps towards a re-branding of the tourism product, with focus on quality, provided that professional communication tools will be enforced to attract a more targeted audience, will likely increase the possibilities of tourist repeat visits (Shaw and Williams, 2009).

Accessibility in relation to economic availability is another sector in which good practices may have a beneficial effect on. Especially, during the current socio-economic crisis, education and leisure, are witnessing severe cuts. Accessibility concerns population groups characterized by their age, abilities or disabilities, religion, economic power, etc. These people may spark the appearance of new professions that can be brought to particular regions and cultural places (Centre for Strategy and Evaluation Services, 2013).

Another aspect of accessibility enhancement is the use of IT technologies as an instrument of promoting good practices. “Technophobia” may be a constrain of its own to this effort and has to be totally surpassed, as tourism and culture institutions and industries require use of innovative technologies to facilitate processes and expand tourism demand over off-peak season or create new tourism flows.

An environment that permits the transfer of good practices is hard to be sustained, as it needs an intense groundwork to attain the sharing of experiences as a way of resolving accessibility problems. The redesign of accessibility terms at national, trans-national and European level needs a programmed operation that is considered hard enough to be succeeded completely by a single company that acts at the best practices against all measurements (Shaw and Williams, 2009).

Sharing of good practices can be reinforced by efficient and continuous information forwarding, as communication helps to ensure that the goal is set and the needs are known by all stakeholders. IT infrastructure can diminish the distance and time factors that may hamper the sharing process. However, the problem of leadership and policy making constitutes a critical factor. Administration management in different scales has to resolve issues of competence and capacity building and set common goals and objectives.

6. References

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