SESSION 7 – IT AND TECHNOLOGIES

Moderator: Emiliano Deferrari

Speakers: Holger Kähler, Tatiana Alemán Selva, Florian Vallet, William Del Negro

The session "IT and Technologies" explored how digital innovation can enhance accessibility and transform the tourism experience into a more inclusive, data-driven, and connected ecosystem. Moderated by **Emiliano Deferrari, ENAT, Belgium**, the panel brought together entrepreneurs, researchers, and developers who presented innovative technological solutions designed to reduce barriers and promote independent travel for all.

Holger Kähler, from Delis Senior Reisen (Germany), introduced the Help Me Travel – Hilfmir.reisen project, a web-based platform designed to match travellers with disabilities to travel helpers. The system, developed with support from the National Foundation for Volunteering (DSEE), uses artificial intelligence and multilingual algorithms to connect users based on specific needs, preferences, and types of assistance required. The platform ensures data protection and scalability, enabling partnerships with transport, accommodation, and service providers, while promoting a vision of accessible travel built on solidarity and autonomy.

Tatiana Alemán Selva, from ILUNION (Spain), presented AccessData, a project funded by the European NextGeneration programme that integrates accessibility data collection into Spain's national Smart Destination Platform. The project pilots data-driven accessibility management in youth hostels by combining technologies such as NaviLens for navigation, Visualfy for visual alerts, and home automation systems for physical accessibility. Through user testing with travellers with diverse disabilities, the project demonstrated how real-time data and feedback loops can improve accommodation management, customer satisfaction, and overall accessibility. Alemán emphasised that accessibility data is essential not only for decision-making but also for measuring the social and economic impact of inclusion.

Florian Vallet, co-founder of Activhandi (France), showcased how geolocation and open data tools can map accessible outdoor itineraries and adaptive activities. Through partnerships with UNESCO Geoparks and regional authorities, Activhandi has created

over 300 inclusive routes and mobile tools providing real-time accessibility information on trails, rest areas, toilets, and transportation options. Vallet's work highlights the potential of technology to transform rural and natural tourism into accessible and sustainable experiences.

Finally, **William Del Negro, founder of WillEasy (Italy)**, introduced a pioneering initiative on open data for accessible transport. His project compares global standards (GTFS and NeTEx) and aims to establish Level 5 data for accessibility within European transport systems, integrating real-time information on elevators, ramps, and accessible routes. WillEasy's pilot projects in Lisbon and Turin illustrate how transparent data can empower citizens, foster innovation, and improve multimodal transport planning. Del Negro emphasised the role of civic participation and IoT systems in verifying and updating accessibility data, calling for a European-level framework to mandate open accessibility standards.

The session concluded that technology —when guided by human-centred design, open data, and collaboration— can be a transformative force for inclusive tourism, turning innovation into empowerment.

Watch Session 7 on YouTube. (run time 1:29:14)