SESSION 11 – MOBILITY AND TRANSPORT

Moderator: Ivor Ambrose

Speakers: Alba Ramírez-Saiz, Sarah Engelhardt, Consuelo Agnesi, Carlo di Biase, Alina Zajadacz and Pawel Sowa

The session “Mobility and Transport” explored how inclusive mobility systems, universal design, and collaborative innovation can ensure equal travel opportunities for all. Moderated by **Ivor Ambrose, Managing Director of ENAT (European Network for Accessible Tourism)**, the discussion gathered experts and practitioners from Europe who shared research, pilot projects, and practical solutions addressing the persistent barriers in transportation and mobility.

Ambrose opened by presenting INCLAVI.EU, a newly launched free online training programme developed through the Inclusive Aviation Project. The course provides 40 modules covering the full passenger journey—from online booking to baggage collection—designed to train airport and airline staff in supporting passengers with reduced mobility. The initiative, developed with Istanbul Airport, IATA, and several European universities, exemplifies how cross-sector collaboration can embed accessibility into the travel chain.

Alba Ramírez-Saiz, from the Polytechnic University of Madrid, introduced the UNIQUE Project, a participatory urban planning model using an interactive tool called the Proximity Flower. This co-designed instrument enables citizens—including persons with disabilities and older adults—to engage in urban planning by mapping the accessibility and usability of local services. Through tactile and Braille versions, the tool facilitates inclusive participation and informs policy decisions for more walkable and equitable cities.

Sarah Engelhardt, representing Delis Senior Reisen (Germany), addressed accessibility in cruise tourism. She presented an innovative model for fully accessible shore excursions using specially equipped buses that accompany ships along their routes, ensuring consistent accessibility across all stops. The initiative, already implemented on the Danube and soon to launch along the Norwegian coast, demonstrates how logistical

planning, staff training, and adaptive technology can overcome the mobility barriers in cruise travel for seniors and wheelchair users.

Consuelo Agnesi and Carlo Di Biase, Deaf architects and consultants for the City of Padova, showcased the Padova LIS Heritage Project, the first initiative to make a city's cultural heritage accessible through Italian Sign Language. The project produced 60 videos in LIS, available via QR codes at monuments and museums, and introduced visual vernacular—an expressive art form rooted in Deaf culture—to enhance storytelling and inclusion. Their methodology exemplifies inclusive communication and co-design between Deaf and hearing professionals.

Finally, **Alina Zajadacz and Pawel Sowa, from Adam Mickiewicz University in Poland**, presented results from the international research project INNOCAT (Innovative Communication and Accessible Tourism in Europe), involving 1,175 respondents with disabilities from five countries. The study identified six key accessibility gaps in transport and tourism: infrastructure, information, staff training, policy enforcement, technology, and awareness. Findings emphasised that inadequate data and inconsistent communication remain the greatest obstacles to equal travel experiences.

The session concluded with a collective call to integrate accessibility into transport governance and workforce training, recognising mobility as both a right and an essential condition for inclusive tourism.

Watch Session 11 on YouTube. (run time 1:30:04)