SESSION 19 – KEY TECHNOLOGIES FOR ACCESSIBLE TOURISM

Moderator: Selvakumar Ramachandran

Speakers: Nadeja Anpilogova, Andrea Donda, Amiaud David, Andrea Boudeguer

The session "Key Technologies for Accessible Tourism" showcased innovative technological and methodological solutions aimed at improving accessibility in transport, urban environments, and building management. Moderated by **Selvakumar Ramachandran, Kerckhoffs Ltd., UK**, the panel featured experts and researchers whose work connects artificial intelligence, data systems, and universal design to promote independence and safety for travellers with disabilities.

Nadeja Anpilogova from Your Accessible Flight, Accessibility Department, Portugal, opened the discussion by presenting a pioneering AI-powered Trip Planner App that connects airlines, airports, and passengers with disabilities. Developed by an international team, the platform uses artificial intelligence to harmonise fragmented information and ensure consistency between airline policies and passenger needs. It allows users to verify whether their mobility devices meet airline requirements, prepare documentation, request assistance, and receive real-time guidance on accessible services. The system also trains AI using verified regulations, reducing misinformation and anxiety for both passengers and staff. Anpilogova emphasised that over 70% of travellers with disabilities avoid air travel due to procedural barriers, highlighting how digital tools can foster dignity and confidence.

Andrea Donda, Executive Director of ARGO and coordinator of the DANOVA NEXT Project, presented a transnational initiative improving accessibility across the Danube Region's transport network. Funded by the European Territorial Cooperation Program, DANOVA NEXT brings together 18 partners—from airports and ports to public transport companies and disability organizations—to develop a Strategic Framework for Accessible Transport, an Online Accessibility Widget, and a Smart Network connecting digital travel information systems. Donda stressed that the project's success lies in its co-creation model: solutions are not designed for, but with, people with disabilities, ensuring long-term impact and policy alignment.

David Amiaud, researcher at the University of La Rochelle (France), discussed the crucial role of standardised geospatial accessibility data in creating inclusive tourist areas. Through GIS-based analysis, Amiaud's team collects and processes pedestrian and mobility data to map accessible routes, identify barriers, and develop customised accessibility profiles. Examples from French destinations such as Lourdes and Cabourg demonstrate how data interoperability and user participation can inform both local tourism planning and national open-data systems.

Finally, **Andrea Boudeguer, architect and founder of BAU Accessibility (Chile)**, introduced AURA, a smart risk-assessment algorithm for universal accessibility management. AURA quantifies accessibility performance through a risk index, transforming qualitative observations into measurable, data-driven insights. By combining digital twins, user feedback, and algorithmic modelling, AURA enables organisations to prioritise investments, monitor progress, and translate accessibility from a compliance issue into a strategic management tool. Boudeguer emphasised that accessibility must evolve from static checklists to dynamic, evidence-based planning.

The session concluded that emerging technologies—AI, open data, GIS, and smart analytics—are redefining accessibility from a reactive compliance task into a proactive system for improving quality, safety, and inclusion in tourism and mobility.

We lost the footage for this session, but you can watch the rest on YouTube.