SESSION 17 – ACCESSIBLE TOURISM BUSINESS

Moderator: Francesca Carmagnola

Speakers: Martin Lobert, Giovanni Minucci, Pankaj Pradhananga and Suman Raj Timsina, Claudia Lorena Peralta Antiga

The session "Accessible Tourism Business" highlighted innovative practises and success stories from three continents, demonstrating how accessibility can drive inclusion, sustainability, and competitiveness in tourism.

Moderated by **Francesca Carmagnola (Director, ITS Piemonte, Italy)**, the discussion opened with **Martin Lobert**, **founder and manager of Tromsø Accessible Tours (Norway)**, who described how his social enterprise has transformed Arctic travel into an inclusive experience. Founded in 2020, the company offers tours designed according to universal design principles, integrating accessible vehicles, trained staff, and adaptive equipment for winter activities such as dog sledding and reindeer encounters. Lobert emphasised that accessibility is not charity but a viable business model that enhances both customer satisfaction and regional innovation. He also shared insights from collaborations with Nordic projects on tourism accessibility and digital mapping.

Instead of **Giovanni Minucci representing BLIT**, we had **Francesco Chiodaroli, representing Fondazione Danelli (Italy)**, reflected on the intersection between culture, beauty, and inclusion, introducing BILT – Beauty, Inclusion, Labour and Talents, a national network connecting museums, schools, and enterprises to promote accessible cultural tourism and employment for people with disabilities. She described Italy's unique potential to turn its artistic heritage into an engine for social innovation, where "beauty" becomes a shared right and an opportunity for community well-being.

Finally, **Claudia Lorena Peralta Antiga, Director of Tourism for the Municipality of San Luis Potosí (Mexico)**, presented the city's comprehensive strategy for accessible tourism. Recognised internationally as the most inclusive destination in Latin America, San Luis Potosí has implemented tactile signage, accessible apps, braille menus, and training programmes for tourism professionals. Its flagship initiatives, such as the "Feel to See" sensory tours guided by blind people and the inclusive Spring Festival, exemplify how accessibility can enhance cultural identity and economic growth.

Unfortunately **Pankaj Pradhananga and Suman Raj Timsina, from IMPACT Adventure DMC, Kathmandu, Nepal**, couldn't participate in the session.

The session concluded with a shared conviction: accessibility is not a technical adjustment but a human-centred transformation — one that connects social responsibility, innovation, and the universal right to travel.

Watch Session 17 on YouTube. (run time 1:11:38)