SESSION 1 – THE FUTURE OF ACCESSIBLE TRAVEL

Moderator: Ivor Ambrose

Speakers: Andrea Andorno, Davide Drago, John Morris, Gianpiero Strisciuglio

The session "The Future of Accessible Travel" focused on the transport sector as the backbone of accessibility in tourism, highlighting the need for seamless mobility and universal design across all modes of travel.

Moderated by **Ivor Ambrose, Managing Director of ENAT**, the discussion gathered representatives from aviation, rail, and advocacy sectors to explore how innovation, policy, and user experience can converge toward an inclusive transport ecosystem.

Andrea Andorno, CEO of Torino Airport, presented the airport's long-term commitment to accessibility and its leadership within ACI Europe. He outlined recent initiatives such as the European Accessibility Act's implementation, the ACI Inclusion Charter, and case studies from Manchester and Turin airports, including sensory support kits, quiet rooms, and integrated train-to-plane assistance services. Andorno stressed that accessibility is both a right and a performance indicator for airport quality, linking it to passenger satisfaction and efficiency.

Davide Drago, representing ENAC, described Italy's progress in enforcing passenger rights and promoting the "Towards More Inclusive Airports" project, developed in collaboration with the Ministry for Disabilities, to ensure autonomy and dignity for all travellers.

Gianpiero Strisciuglio, CEO of Trenitalia, emphasised the importance of accessibility in public transport as a precondition for accessible tourism. He illustrated how Trenitalia has renewed its fleet with 1,000 new trains equipped with accessible spaces, implemented video assistance in sign language, and introduced "Blue Rooms" in over 400 stations to support passengers with disabilities.

Finally, **John Morris, founder of WheelchairTravel.org,** provided the perspective of travellers with disabilities, calling for global consistency, transparency, and honesty in accessibility standards and communication. He urged the tourism industry to adopt universal design principles, move beyond "baby steps," and prioritise independence and dignity for all passengers.

The session concluded with a shared commitment to cooperation between institutions, operators, and users to ensure that accessible travel becomes the norm rather than the exception.

Watch Session 1 on YouTube. (STARTS at minute 1:18:17 - run time 1:00:50)