



## PROJECT

# Accessible Nature and Culture: Sustainable Tourism (IN-HERITAGE)

In the context of the Cross-border Cooperation Programme Interreg Greece-Cyprus 2014-2020

## INTERNAL REPORT

### Report on the study visit in Luxemburg

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<b>Project Deliverable</b>	D6.3.1: International study visits
<b>Abstract</b>	<p>This document is an internal project document, made available by Beneficiary 3 (National Confederation of Disabled Persons, Greece), as a debriefing on the study visit conducted by staff members of the Project's Beneficiaries to Luxembourg City, which in 2022 won the 1<sup>st</sup> prize in the Access City Awards, in 2018 the 3<sup>rd</sup> prize and in 2015 it was distinguished with a "special mention".</p>

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## PROJECT BENEFICIARY RESPONSIBLE



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## Preface

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The National Confederation of Disabled Persons - Greece, hereinafter referred to as "ESAMEA" for short, as Beneficiary of the Project "Accessible nature and culture-Sustainable Tourism" with the acronym "IN-HERITAGE", which is implemented in the context of the Cross-Border Cooperation Program Interreg Greece-Cyprus 2014- 2020 and is co-financed by the European Union (ERDF) and by National Resources of Greece and Cyprus, following a *call for expressions of interest for the conclusion of a service contract* (ADAM 22PROC010570773 2022-05-18, Ref. No. 739/18.05.2022), commissioned the Association of Companies "EUROPRACTIS-INFALIA" to provide support services for the implementation of specific actions of the IN-HERITAGE Project.

In the context of the Contract with the Association of Companies "EUROPRACTIS-INFALIA", hereinafter referred to as "the Contractor" for short, ESAMEA assigned the Contractor the implementation of Deliverable "*D6.3.1: International study visits*" of the IN-HERITAGE Project, which concerned the organization and conduct of two (2) study visits with the aim of the transfer of executives of the Project Beneficiaries

abroad to exchange knowledge and implementation experiences with institutions and organizations that have successfully implemented similar projects in the past and which are able to present good practices in the fields of "inclusion of people with disabilities" and "accessible tourism", and in particular visits to two European cities which have been distinguished in this regard in the European Access City Awards competition.

Further to the Contract, the Contractor initially undertook to investigate and accordingly propose possible host destinations for the study visits and then, in consultation with ESAmA and the other Project Beneficiaries (the three municipalities from Greece and Cyprus), to specify the two cities and the local bodies to be visited. The cities that were finally chosen by the Project Beneficiaries were Ljubljana in Slovenia and the city of Luxembourg. Subsequently, the Contractor fully undertook to plan the visits, complete all communications necessary to schedule them, and coordinate all persons and bodies involved for the successful conduct of the requested study visits.

After the completion of the study visits, the Contractor undertook to prepare and deliver for each visit the relevant report ("Report of the study visit") in which the objective and plan of the visit are presented, along with brief minutes, the results/conclusions of the visit, photographic material, etc. This report concerns the study visit that was successfully completed in the city of Luxembourg between 05.06.2023 and 07.06.2023, with the participation of executives from all four Beneficiaries of the IN-HERITAGE Project.



# 1. Goal and objectives of the study visits

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The goal of the educational study visits of the IN-HERITAGE Project is to offer the participants from Greece and Cyprus, members of the ESAmEA and of the municipalities of Rethymno, Ayia Napa and Sotiras, the opportunity to visit places, infrastructures and services that are recognised as good examples of “accessible tourism” and to delve into the study of specific issues related to its development at the local level (e.g. definitions, design principles, processes, techniques and methods, etc.). In addition, the encouragement and support of new collaborations with the host organizations is another indirect purpose of the project’ study visits.

The Project’s study visits were intended to provide a platform for dialogue on issues of tourism and accessibility/inclusion for people with disabilities, which constitute a common area

of interest, contributing to the exchange of ideas and practices, as well as the promotion of new systems and policies. The study visits aim to promote the information and training of the participants, who in turn will contribute to the promotion of accessible tourism, as a concept and approach to tourism development, but also as an opportunity for local and social development and cohesion, in their homelands.

During each study visit, a key objective has been to present to the members of the visiting team the history, experience and good practices developed in each host organization. An important element for the success of each study visit was of course the visit to places where good accessibility practices have been implemented by the host bodies as well as the participation in demonstrations of conventional services and/or digital systems operated by the local authorities to serve disabled visitors and more generally for the management of accessible tourism. Also subject to discussion have been any funding

tools exploited and strategies developed by the organization under study in order to help realize their visions for tourism development based on the accessibility of disabled people, as well as any supportive or negative elements in the existing institutional context in their countries. Furthermore, the study visits sought to exchange views on effective practices applied in the context of accessible tourism to cultivate and develop appropriate attitudes and behaviours among citizens, businesses, etc., that ensure the development of inclusive tourism experiences for everyone (e.g., campaigns, special committees, special type seminars or others).

In summary, the program of each study visit was designed with the main objective of providing the opportunity for demonstration (demo), discussion, exchange of views/experiences and mutual learning on issues of common interest at European level for "accessible tourism".

In light of the above, for the planning and organization of the study visits of the Project,

ESAmEa focused on the transfer of members of the Project Beneficiaries to two cities abroad that have recently been distinguished in the European Access City Award competition, for the exchange of knowledge and experience with the local authorities and the organizations that have contributed to this achievement.

## 2. Access City Award European competition

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The Access City Award competition was created by the European Commission to reward cities that have prioritized accessibility for people with disabilities and older people and more generally for their work in trying to achieve a more accessible environment in all areas of life, creating inclusive cities, open to all.

The Access City award is part of the Union's wider efforts to create a Europe without barriers and to improve the lives of people with disabilities: the [Disability Strategy 2010-2020](#), in the logic of the [United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Disability](#).

Specifically, the Access City Award was established in 2010 by the European Commission to promote and recognize cities that take initiatives to improve accessibility in the urban environment, Information and Communication Technologies (ICT), citizen

services, transport, tourism infrastructure and other sectors. The Access City Award has a very wide range of initiatives and policies covered: from accessible housing policies, to play spaces, workplaces and public transport, every aspect of city life should take demographic changes into account.

The competition, organized by the European Commission in collaboration with the [European Disability Forum](#), is open to European Union cities with more than 50,000 inhabitants. Over the past five years, more than 200 cities have submitted nominations for the award. Cities awarded with the first 3 prizes receive a financial prize.

## **2.1 Distinctions of the City of Luxembourg in the competition**

In **2022**, the jury of accessibility experts awarded the city of **Luxembourg** first place among 40 participants for the wide range of innovative

solutions and improvements to improve accessibility for people with disabilities. The city of Helsinki in Finland and the city of Barcelona in Spain were the second and third places. Leuven in Belgium was recognized for its integration of accessibility, including in the digital space. Palma in Majorca, Spain won a special mention for improving access to the natural environment, including natural areas, beaches and parks to support inclusive tourism. The city of Porto, Portugal received a Special Mention for improving the accessibility of railway stations (Note: 2021 was the European Year of Rail Transport).

In **2018**, the city of Lyon in France was awarded the first prize. At the award ceremony, Lyon was praised for its public buses which are 100% accessible and for access to culture for all which is also ensured, thanks to the inclusion of accessible equipment in the libraries, such as reading machines, audio book readers and magnifying screens. The city has also developed

digital tools for people with disabilities and in terms of work inclusion, and 7.8% of civil servants are people with disabilities (a percentage significantly higher than the minimum quota of 6% required by French law). The European Commission also awarded the city of Ljubljana, Slovenia and the city of **Luxembourg** with second and third place respectively. Ljubljana has integrated accessibility into its overall policy, appointing a special advisory committee with elderly and disabled people to directly participate in the city's policy-making. **Luxembourg** city has put a lot of effort into raising awareness among citizens to avoid disability stigma and building a highly inclusive city where everyone feels comfortable. Finally, the city of Viborg in Denmark received a special mention for reconciling its historical heritage and hilly landscape with an accessible infrastructure. In 2017, 26 cities across the European Union participated in the competition.



In 2015, the winning city was Borås (Sweden). Helsinki (Finland) took the second prize and the third prize was awarded to Ljubljana (Slovenia). Logroño (Spain) was awarded a special mention in the category of built environment and public spaces, Budapest (Hungary) received a special mention for its work in the field of transport. Arona (Spain) and Luxembourg received a special mention for public facilities and services.

## **2.2 The city of Luxembourg**

It is the capital of country Luxembourg and the most populous community in the country. It is located at the confluence of the Alzette and Pétrusse rivers in southern Luxembourg. The city is located in the heart of Western Europe, at a distance of 213 km by road from Brussels.

The city contains the castle of Luxembourg, founded by the Franks in the Early Middle Ages, around which a settlement developed. Located on terrain with steep cliffs and deep valleys,

Luxembourg is not an easy place to make accessible. Despite this, the city municipality has been working continuously and successfully to improve accessibility for its citizens and visitors. The city's philosophy is to plan and carry out measures in direct consultation with the people affected by them. The city has as a motto "City for all".

### **2.3A reward as a result of a multi-year effort**

The city of Luxembourg has applied as candidate for many years in the Access City competition and in 2022 received its highest award, the 1<sup>st</sup> prize ([video](#)), having previously received 3<sup>rd</sup> prize in 2018, as well as a special mention in 2015.

In 2022, the jury praised Luxembourg City for taking into account all disabilities and for maintaining good accessibility in all areas. Thanks to its *design-for-all* approach, the city is inclusive not just of persons with disabilities, but also of older people, migrants and tourists. A

*design-for-all* approach means designing products and services to be accessible by those with and without disabilities or other limiting factors. The city is working on multiple levels to make this possible – from employment, education and culture, to tourism, leisure and transport. To this end, some municipal departments have a dedicated employee responsible for matters related to special needs. One example that illustrates Luxembourg's *design-for-all* approach is the Luxembourg City Art Museum, Villa Vauban, which has a recurring exhibition based on the concept of a 'museum for all'. Visitors can discover the exhibits in their own way, according to their motor or cognitive abilities. The exhibition includes hands-on sculptures and tactile models of some paintings, multilingual and plain language information, and more.

“This award provides important recognition of all the hard work done so far to make our city more accessible.

All this has only been made possible by the active participation of people living with disabilities, as well as the commitment and dedication of the associations working in the field of disabilities, the various municipal departments who got involved, and our political leaders.

We will continue every day to further this work together, with the aim of making all our infrastructure accessible to everyone and ensuring equal opportunities for all.”

*Lydie Polfer, Mayor of Luxembourg City*

## **2.4 Integration and Special Needs Department**

The city’s Integration and Special Needs Department acts as a point of contact for persons with disabilities and for all organisations in the disability sector. It works in close cooperation with disability organisations and other city departments to continuously improve

its accessibility services. Thanks to the city's participative committee, persons with disabilities can be involved in all city projects. The department also organises sign language interpreters for sessions of the municipal council, and the translation of relevant texts into German to help these interpreters prepare for sessions.

## **2.5 Raising awareness to break down stereotypes**

Luxembourg City puts effort into creating a dialogue between persons with and without disabilities. The aim is to familiarise people with the different types of disabilities and help to break down stereotypes and prejudices.

The city organises many different awareness-raising campaigns, activities, lectures, film screenings and exhibitions where people can learn more about the daily lives and varied needs of persons with disabilities. For example, every year, the Dinner in the Dark event is held to raise

awareness about the experiences and needs of people with visual impairments.

## **2.6 Employment and education**

Luxembourg City places particular emphasis on hiring persons with disabilities. As a result, nearly 6 % of all positions in public bodies in the city are filled by persons with disabilities.

In addition, as part of its efforts to support people with hearing impairments, the municipality organises sign language courses, and has awarded more than 900 diplomas.

Numerous training courses are organised to ensure that service staff (e.g. bus drivers and receptionists) can use the necessary equipment and can assist persons with disabilities.

## **2.7 Making public transport accessible**

Public transport in Luxembourg is free of charge and Luxembourg City's bus stops are systematically made accessible and equipped

with an iBeacon, providing valuable information to users of the municipality app, a service that is highly appreciated by people with visual impairments. When a person approaches a bus stop fitted with an iBeacon, they receive a notification informing them of the name of the stop, the number and destination of the next bus, and its expected time of arrival. The public transport vehicles have visual and voice announcements, and passengers can receive visual announcements at bus stops, online or via text messages.

In addition, persons with disabilities can request to be picked up from home by special minibuses, which also serve as shuttle buses for older people and parents with prams during events.

Signs at rail stations and on platforms in Luxembourg include pictograms that provide guidance toward handrails, elevators and reserved parking spaces. Displays often have a text-to-speech function, and important information is communicated through automated audio announcement systems. Luxembourg Railway Station has reserved

parking spaces and accessible toilet facilities for persons with reduced mobility.

## **2.8 Further plans for improvement**

Luxembourg City is working to create an action plan based on the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, taking into account residents' specific needs and suggestions.

The municipality is also planning to open a communication centre for people with hearing impairments in cooperation with the Ministry of Family and Integration.

And finally, the municipality is collaborating with the Commercial Union of the City of Luxembourg, the trade association HORESCA, and the participatory committee to improve the accessibility of shops and restaurants in the city.



### 3. Visit by the project team

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Following the final selection of Luxembourg as one of the two destinations for the Project's study visits, the Contractor, in accordance with the requirements of the Contract, undertook, on behalf of the Contracting Authority (ESAmA), to organize the travel of the members of the study team (the composition of the group was undertaken by the Beneficiaries themselves) in the city of Luxembourg.

#### 3.1 Visit's team (participants)

The following people participated in the Luxembourg visit group:

- From the lead partner, the Municipality of Rethymno, Mr. Vasilios Myriokefalitakis, advisor to the mayor and responsible for the project IN-HERITAGE in the Municipality.
- From the National Confederation of Disabled People (ESAmA), Mr. **Vasilios Koutsianos**, Secretary General, who as a wheelchair user

travelled with a personal companion/assistant.

- From the Municipality of Agia Napa, Mr. **Constantinos Constantinou**, Secretary Officer of the Municipality of Agia Napa.
- From the Municipality of Sotiras, Mr. **Konstantinos Petrou**, staff member of the Municipality's European Programs Office.

As coordinator of the mission, Mr. **Alexandros Mourouzis**, Accessibility Expert, associate of ESAmEA and communication manager of the IN-HERITAGE Project.

### 3.2 Travel planning

In consultation with the Beneficiaries, the following travel plan was finalized:

**Monday, 5/6/2023: Departure for Athens**

(from Thessaloniki for the Coordinator, from Chania for the member from the Municipality of Rethymno and from Larnaca for the

members from the Municipalities of Agia Napa and Sotiras)

- LCA: 07.35-09:20, Aegean Airlines A3 0911
- CHQ: 09:30-10:20, Aegean Airlines A3 0333
- SKG: 11:20-12:15, Aegean Airlines A3 0111

**Monday, 5/6/2023: Introductory meeting in Athens** (10.30-13.00)

**Monday, 5/6/2023: Departure for Luxemburg** (the whole team together)

- 14:20-18:15, Swiss LX 1831 and LX 0758 (through Zurich)

**Monday 5 to Wednesday 7/6/2023: Study visit in Luxemburg**

**Wednesday, 7/6/2023: Departure from Ljubljana** (the whole team together)

- 14:55-18:15, Swiss LX 0755 and LX 2276 (through Zurich)

**Wednesday 7 to Friday 9/6/2023: Study visit in Ljubljana**

**Friday, 9/6/2023: Return from Ljubljana**

- ATH (19:00-21:45), Aegean Airlines A3 0969 (the whole team together)
- CHA (22:35-23:25), Aegean Airlines A3 0344 (the member from the Municipality of Rethymno)
- SKG (23:10-00:05), Aegean Airlines A3 0136 (the coordinator)
- LCA (23:35-01:10), Aegean Airlines A3 0910 (the members from the Municipalities of Agia Napa and Sotiras)

Regarding the accommodation for the members of the visiting team, the Contractor undertook the bookings in the following hotels:

- **IBIS LUXEMBOURG AEROPORT** (Route De Treves, L-2632 Luxembourg, Tel: +352 43 88 01)
- **M Hotel Ljubljana** (Derceva Ulica 4, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia. Tel: +386-01-5137000).

### 3.3 Organization of meetings with host bodies

In accordance with the requirements of the Contract, for each study visit the Contractor made communications with potential host agencies in order to determine meetings with their executives. As a result of these communications, the following meeting was organized:

- With officials of the **City of Luxembourg** on Tuesday 6 June at 10:00, at the City Hall of Luxembourg.
  - Madeleine Kayser, Ville de Luxembourg, Intégration et Besoins spécifiques
  - Nico Bevilacqua, Rédacteur, Ville de Luxembourg, Intégration et Besoins spécifiques (T: +352 4796-4106, E: [nbevilacqua@vdl.lu](mailto:nbevilacqua@vdl.lu))
- With Mr. **Yannick Breuer** (Info-Handicap - Centre national d' information et de rencontre du handicap).
- With Mr. **Patrick Hurst**, president of the Association "[Nëmme Mat Eis](#)", the non-profit

association whose objective is to monitor the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities in Luxembourg and to promote it positively through various accompanying actions.

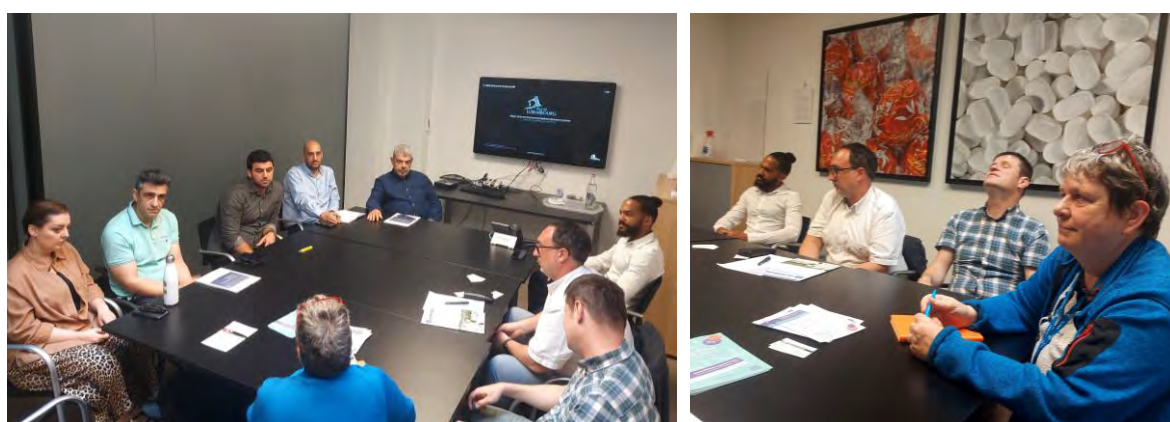


Figure 1. Meeting at the Luxembourg City Hall (Tuesday, 6 June 2023)

### **3.4 Guided tour of the city and Villa Vauban**

Also, a guided tour of the city and "Villa Vauban" was organized by officials of the Municipality.

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Figure 2. Tour of the city of Luxembourg by officials of the Municipality

"[Villa Vauban](#)" is the art museum of Luxembourg and has the *EureWelcome* accessibility label. All exhibitions presented are also accessible to people with disabilities. A sign language guided tour is provided and a visit for the visually impaired is supported as well as an *Easy Language* visit.



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Figure 3. Tour of the city of Luxembourg by officials of  
the Municipality



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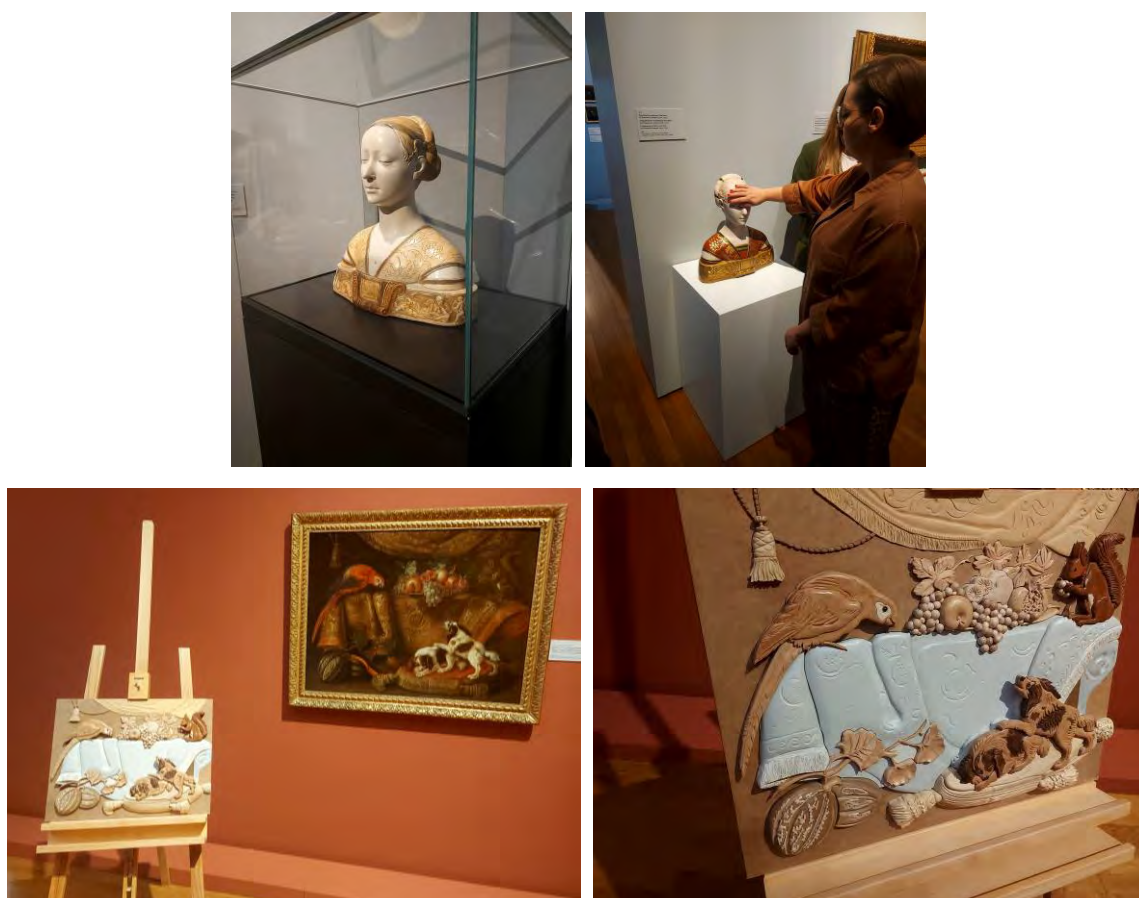


Figure 4. At Villa Vauban various sculptures and paintings are accompanied by tactile replicas that visually impaired visitors can touch and thus have the opportunity to "see" the works of art

### **3.5 Guided tours of important attractions – good practices in the city**

Finally, a tour was organized by the Contractor to important attractions of the city that present good accessibility practices:

## **Le Chemin de la Corniche**

(TripAdvisor #1). The Corniche, also called “the most beautiful balcony in Europe” (according to the Luxembourg writer Batty Weber), extends over the ramparts erected in the 17<sup>th</sup> century by the Spaniards and the French. While skirting the Alzette valley, the path leads from the Bock rock to the lower part of the Citadel of the Holy Spirit known as the washers.



## **Notre-Dame Cathedral** (TripAdvisor #3).

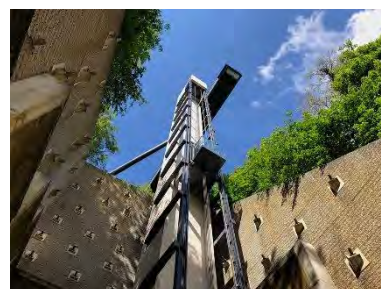
Construction of what is now the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Luxembourg began in 1613 as a Jesuit church. The church was originally designed with only one tower, but two more were added in an expansion carried out between 1935 and 1938. The cathedral’s wheelchair accessible entrance is located on the street, Rue Notre Dame. Due to



steps, it is not accessible via the main/front entrance.

### **Pfaffenthal Scenic Lift**

(TripAdvisor #5). Opened in 2016, the Pfaffenthal Panoramic Elevator was designed to connect the historic city center with the Alzette river valley below. Due to the amazing



views seen from the platform at an elevation of 197 feet, the lift has become a tourist attraction in its own right. The elevator is free to ride. At the bottom, you'll be able to connect with the funicular to reach other attractions including the Museum of Modern Art, Fort Thüngen and the Philharmonie, as well as the European Union's campus in Kirchberg.

### **National Museum of History and Art** (TripAdvisor #8). The National Museum of History



and Art traces its history to 1845, when a society of historians and archaeologists assembled a collection of historic artifacts. Today, the museum that has resulted from that work occupies a modern structure in the city center, opened in 2002. All floors of the museum are accessible via ramps between floors and an elevator.

### **Grand Ducal Palace**

(TripAdvisor #9). The Grand Ducal Palace is the official residence of the Grand Duke of Luxembourg. Construction of the building was completed in 1572, and it was used as the city hall for more than 200 years thereafter. The tour here is wheelchair accessible.



**Adolphe Bridge** (TripAdvisor #10). Named for Grand Duke Adolphe, the first to reign over an independent Luxembourg, the Adolphe Bridge has come to



represent the country's independence. The bridge was built between 1900 and 1903, and has a total length of 502 feet. The bridge has two decks, with the upper carrying vehicular traffic in one direction, out of the city. The lower deck, opened in 2018, is reserved for bicyclists and pedestrians. The suspended lower deck was a great place to escape a downpour on a rainy day, and it is wheelchair accessible, with a gently sloped access path on both ends.

## **Luxembourg City Museum**

(TripAdvisor #11). This museum covers more than a thousand years of history through dynamic exhibits that capture

one's attention. Spread across 6 floors, the Luxembourg City Museum is large, but manageable. Visitors of the museum enjoy its high level of wheelchair accessibility.



## **Place d' Armes**

(TripAdvisor #13). The most popular square in Luxembourg is the Place d'Armes. Tourists and locals alike are drawn to the many



restaurants, with tables on the sidewalks and in the square. Although many businesses here are not wheelchair accessible, there is a (free) accessible public toilet on the Southeast corner of the square, at Rue du Cure and Rue Chimay.

## **National Museum of Natural History**

Features permanent exhibitions across more than 10,000 square feet of space. The museum is accessible, with a wheelchair lift to access the galleries.



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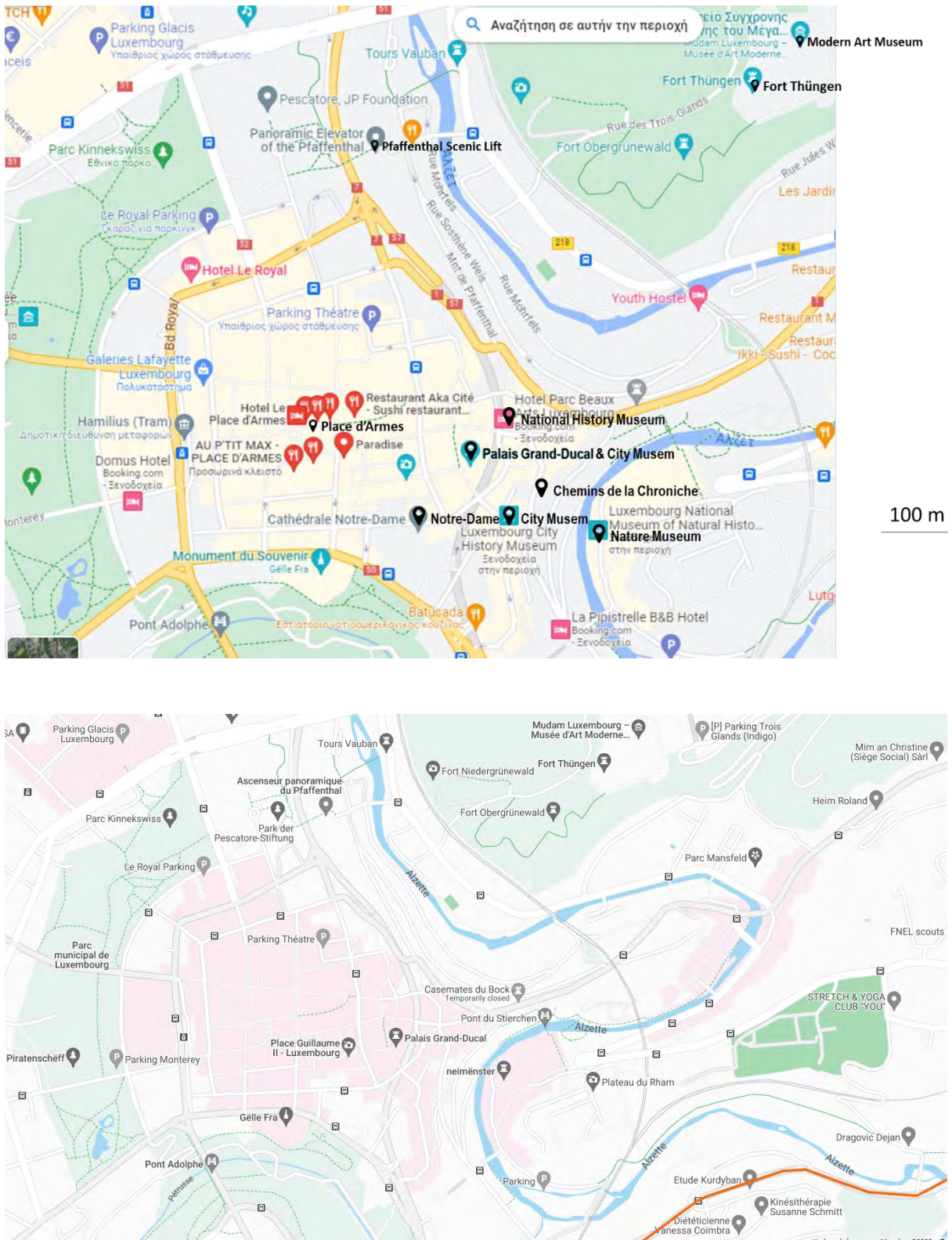


Figure 5. Overview on the map of the highlights of the visit to Luxembourg

# Highlights overview

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## Luxembourg Public Transportation

The public transportation system in Luxembourg City consists of buses, a tramway, a funicular and regional/ commuter trains. Wheelchair accessibility across the transport network is excellent, and it is easy and cost-effective to get around. During the group's stay in Luxembourg City, the group rode public transports exclusively and had no issues with wheelchair access.





## Luxembourg Sidewalk Accessibility

Luxembourg is known for its medieval historic quarter, but the city is modernizing at a rapid pace. The Grund district shows its age, with many cobblestone streets lacking sidewalks entirely. But large portions of the UNESCO-protected Ville Haute city center have been made accessible, with cement sidewalks, curb ramps and the like. The European Quarter in Kirchberg is more developed yet, with smooth sidewalks, high-visibility crosswalks and pedestrian signals. The Grund valley and historic quarter present the most accessibility challenges for wheelchair users. Cobblestone streets, broken sidewalks, uneven pavements and elevate changes are common. The squares at the city center, Place Guillaume II and Place d'Armes are easy to manage, despite well-worn sidewalks.

Crossing signals are installed at high traffic intersections, but many low-traffic side streets are not signal controlled. The city's newer districts, like Kirchberg, offer fantastic sidewalk accessibility, with well-defined crosswalks, traffic

signals, bicycle lanes and smooth sidewalk pavements. Sidewalks in high-traffic pedestrian areas are generally more accessible than what you'll find in primarily residential areas.



## Getting around: Without traffic lights

- **AUXILIARY LIGHTING.** Auxiliary lighting has been installed in the direction of traffic right before pedestrian crossings without overhead lights. This makes pedestrians more visible to motorists.
- **TACTILE PAVING.** Tactile paving guides the visually impaired and indicates the location and direction of a pedestrian crossing.
- **DIRECTION FIELDS.** Directional paving indicates the direction in which to cross.

- **WARNING LINES.** Warning lines alert the visually impaired about a dip in the pavement and the beginning of the roadway. This part of the pavement is for users of wheelchairs or any other wheeled device.
- **BLISTER PAVING.** Blister paving indicates a pedestrian crossing.
- **GUIDING LINES.** Guiding lines direct users towards a pedestrian crossing.
- **PAVEMENTS.** A dip in the pavement makes crossing easier for the visually impaired, wheelchair users, people with strollers, etc.
- **BUTTONS FOR THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED.** There is a push button for the visually impaired on the bottom of the button box. On this button, a raised-relief arrow points in the direction of the pedestrian crossing. A signal – either in the form of vibrations or a combination of vibrations and sounds – announces that the pedestrian light is green. At linked-button crossings, the mechanism on the other side of the walkway emits a special tone that not only tells you that the

light is green, but also guides you toward the other side of the road.

- Green lights for pedestrians. Pedestrian green light intervals conform to current international standards, which allow pedestrians to cross at least half the distance at a speed of 1.2 m/s before the light starts to turn red. Following the green light interval, pedestrians also have a clearance interval in which to safely reach the other side of the road before the light turns green for motorists. In this way, all direct conflict between pedestrians and motorists is avoided.



Figure 6. Map with the accessible routes for blind people in Luxemburg (i.e., routes on which a guiding system for the visually impaired is in place from start to finish)

## Participation committee

To better take account of different special needs and to give a forum to those affected, a

participative committee was approved on 7 May 2012 by the municipal council. This committee is made up of people with special needs who each represent their special need. Meetings are attended by:

- members with disabilities
- a member of the college of aldermen
- a representative of the Social Commission
- a representative of each political party with a member on the municipal council
- three expert associations, and
- a disability liaison officer.

## **Objectives**

- forum for dialogue and concrete proposals
- active participation of people with disabilities
- improvement of the services offered and daily lives of people with disabilities
- participation of qualified associations

There are four dimensions that are especially important to the college of aldermen:

- involvement of people with disabilities (brainstorming sessions, participative

committee, awareness week, etc.), joint setting of priorities;

- consideration of all special needs;
- actions to take in broad areas; and
- systematic implementation of policies.

## **Brainstorming sessions**

Brainstorming sessions have been held annually since June 2007. This tradition of getting together to share information and discuss views has become a popular event and offers a chance to address all topics relating to disability. No topics are left out, and the departments responsible for each field are present to recap the work they have done and discuss their priorities for the future with all the people and associations in attendance. These gatherings will continue to be offered annually so as to keep the conversation going between the City, its participative committee and the various associations.