

ACCESSIBLE TOURISM IN NEED OF MAJOR BOOST



There are a lot of people with disabilities around the globe and while many long to travel and explore, the provided services worldwide are not sufficient for them. Experts are raising the issue in the hope of improving the chances for disabled tourists to have a better traveling experience.

While the travel industry is growing, countries are fighting for more tourist interest and an increasing number of economies largely depend on income generated by the industry, there are still many gaps to fill. There is a large group of people who long to travel more, yet their special needs are not catered for thus preventing them from exploring the world on their own. **There are 650 million disabled people around the globe and those who have tried traveling admit it is incredibly challenging and often discouraging.** The service providers are simply not meeting their needs.

Bournemouth University tourism expert Mr Dimitrios Buhalis has been interested in the issue and believes the industry simply does not pay enough attention and thus misses out on the opportunity. According to Mr Buhalis especially now when countries are emerging from the crisis, **a more proactive approach would be very beneficial and would clearly help to open up an entirely new market.**

People with disabilities agree they often struggle with finding a hotel, not to mention there are countries where getting from the airport becomes a major obstacle for their travel plans. **Many service providers agree the necessary equipment is pricy and countries where tourism is only starting to develop do not have the means yet to cater for special needs.** However, many disabled point out that many countries with well-established tourism industry lack behind as well. The potential is vast and as the industry branches out, it needs to explore the opportunities of a market which for many years has been severely underserved.

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