

**For Immediate Release**  
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**European Associations In Partnership To Improve Tourist Guiding to Visitors with Disabilities**

Athens, 7 December 2015.

ENAT, the European Network for Accessible Tourism and FEG, the European Federation of Tourist Guide Associations, have signed a Partnership Agreement, aiming to improve the skills of professional tourist guides, who guide visitors with disabilities.

ENAT and FEG worked closely together as partners over the past three years with a number of European organisations, developing the “T-Guide” project, which is aimed to be continuous professional development for tourist guides across Europe for “Guiding people with intellectual disabilities and/or learning difficulties”. The project was co-financed by the EU Lifelong Learning Programme and completed in the summer of 2015.

Under their new partnership agreement, FEG and ENAT will work closely together on several areas of common interest. Their first initiative will be to establish a supplementary training course for professional qualified tourist guides, focusing on skills and techniques that are needed when guiding people with learning difficulties or intellectual disabilities.

Signing the new agreement at a meeting in Athens, Greece, FEG President Ms. Efi Kalampoukidou stated:

“FEG’s member associations, representing 70,000 qualified tourist guides in Europe, are continually striving to ensure the highest quality of tourist guiding for visitors from all countries and backgrounds. We need to develop Tourism for All in Europe and in our own countries as destinations”.

She went on to say: “In our profession, *Continuous Professional Development* is a must. We have to adapt to the changing demands of groups or individual visitors, as well as keeping up to date with the latest knowledge and refining our guiding skills. By partnering with ENAT we will be able to deliver a world class life –long training to tourist guides in disability awareness and tourist guiding”.

Welcoming the agreement, Mr. Ivor Ambrose, ENAT’s Managing Director, remarked: “Nowadays, tourists of all ages and abilities are looking for inclusive experiences. Tour groups are often mixed and are very likely to include visitors with various disabilities or access needs and tourist guides must know how to prepare and cope with the different needs they may encounter. We are pleased to support FEG in rolling out training courses that can help tourist guides meet the demands of visitors with disabilities. The qualified tourist guides who have these skills will be an asset to destinations and attractions of a country or city that are looking to offer a better, more inclusive welcome to their guests and this, in turn, will make European tourism more attractive and competitive”.

Working with ENAT, FEG plans to offer the first “T-Guide” training course for its London Blue Badge tourist guides in March 2016, in the Houses of Parliament in London, UK.

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**Further information:**

**About ENAT**

ENAT, the European Network for Accessible Tourism, is a Belgian non-profit association, founded in 2008, which promotes accessibility to tourism for all visitors. It is a multi-stakeholder

network of member organisations, comprising public bodies, tourism suppliers *and* consumer organisations, with 100 members from over 30 countries worldwide. ENAT promotes Accessible Tourism around the world through its website and social media network. It provides research based advice, consultancy and training on accessible tourism development to destinations and businesses. ENAT has established cooperative agreements with leading players in the tourism sector, including the UNWTO, Lonely Planet, disability NGOs, National and Regional Tourist Boards and City Marketing departments.

### **About FEG**

FEG is the Professional Tourist Guides' voice in Europe. It provides expertise where needed to ensure that the qualified Tourist Guide's role is understood and promoted. FEG is consulted by European institutions and speaks for Tourist Guides on issues, such as recognition of professional qualifications, standards in guiding and in tourist guide training, as well as promoting Europe as a whole destination. It is well placed to establish common criteria for high quality services in all areas of tourist guiding. It is able help to the industry and consumers greater understand what they can expect of a professional tourist guide in Europe. FEG brings together the Tourist Guide national associations for mutual benefit and provides an opportunity for networking between associations and individuals through its meetings, seminars and website.

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