

# PERSONS WITH SENSORY DISABILITIES AS A TARGET GROUP FOR THE TOURISM INDUSTRY – EXCHANGE OF GOOD PRACTICES

## Research Greece

### About the research

- Date of research: November to December 2019
- Method of selecting companies: Greek Travel Pages
- Sample size: Forty (40) travel agencies
- Research method: Reviewing the websites content. Asking for specific practices by telephone or email

### Preliminary research results

According to the research through internet websites, nine (9) from a total of forty (40) travel agencies (22,5%) declare to have services (accommodation) for people with disabilities. From these travel agencies five (5) (56%) mention services only for wheelchair users and four (4) (44%) mention disability in general.

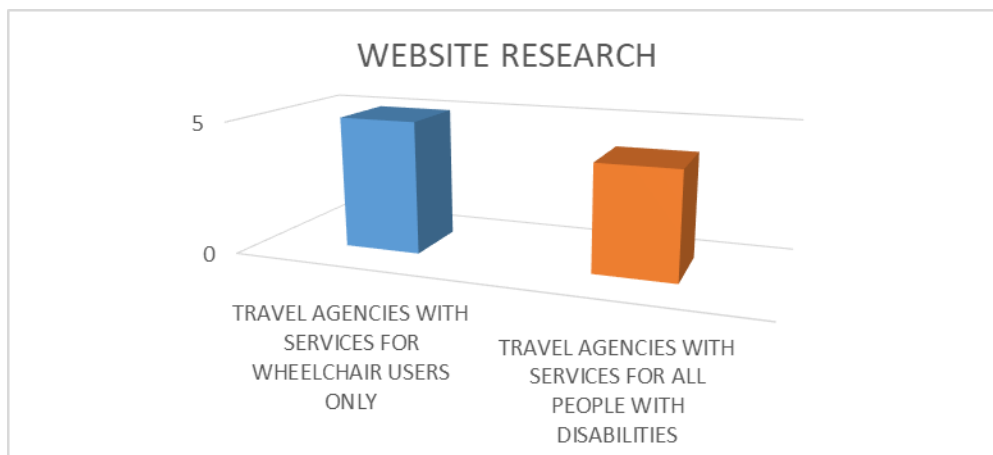
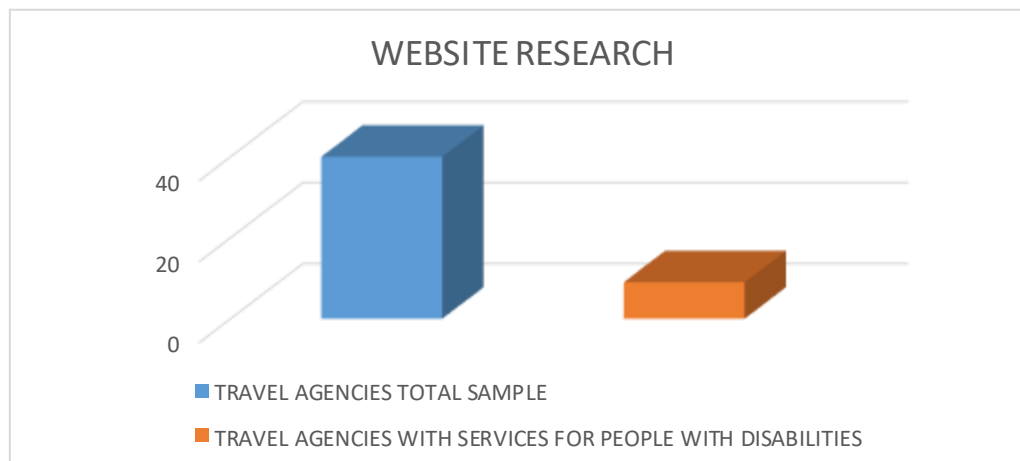


Table 1. Detailed results for travel agencies mentioning on their website accessible tourism services

TRAVEL AGENCIES	RESULTS OF RESEARCH
1.	They have experience for wheel chair users only. Positive to check it and try to accommodate people with sensory disabilities.
2.	They no longer have services for people with disabilities.
3.	They specialize in people with motor disabilities. Positive to check the possibility to serve people with sensory disabilities.
4.	They had an assistant who was responsible but he no longer works with them. They don't have services.
5.	They have services for all people with disabilities. They have contact and cooperation with National Confederation of People with Disabilities and Hellenic Federation for the Deaf. On their site they also have a link to disability guide by NCP.
6.	Specializing in tours for the disabled with a fleet of accessible vehicles.
7.	Their site mentions Paralympics and great experience. They haven't accommodate people with sensory disabilities but they could check the possibility.
8.	They don't have services for people with disabilities. They only have packages for specific periods of the year. They didn't explain if they can provide services for people with sensory disabilities.
9.	Only wheel chair users.

Out of nine (9) companies which declare on their websites they could offer services to people with disabilities, only one (1) can accommodate people with sensory disabilities and has experience. Two (2) travel agencies no longer offer services and six (6) of them apply mainly to wheel chair users.

The only company which have offers for people with disabilities is travel agency no 5. They cooperate with National Confederation of people with disabilities and they knew how to accommodate all type of disabilities. They immediately mentioned Hellenic Federation of the Deaf and the presence of sign language interpreter.

Encouraging is the fact that almost all of the other travel agencies were positive to search and try to accommodate people with sensory disabilities. However, there is a question mark over the quality of their services since they have lack of knowledge.

Furthermore, positive to investigate the possibility of accommodating people with sensory disabilities were some travel agencies that didn't have specific services for them mentioned to their websites.

Table 2. Detailed results for travel agencies without services for people with disabilities mentioned on their websites

TRAVEL AGENCIES	RESULTS OF RESEARCH
1.	No services for people with disabilities
2.	No services for people with disabilities
3.	No services for people with disabilities
4.	No services for people with disabilities
5.	No services for people with disabilities
6.	No services for people with disabilities but positive to check in order to provide accessibility
7.	No services for people with disabilities
8.	No answer (email – telephone)
9.	No services for people with disabilities
10.	No answer (email – telephone)
11.	No answer (email – telephone)
12.	No services for people with disabilities
13.	No services for people with disabilities
14.	No services for people with disabilities

15.	No services for people with disabilities
16.	No answer (telephone – email)
17.	No services for people with sensory disabilities. They can accommodate wheel chair users only.
18.	No services but positive to check. They asked if people with sensory disabilities can find a guide by themselves.
19.	No services for people with disabilities
20.	No answer (email – telephone)
21.	They have experience from groups of people with vision loss. They can provide tickets etc but not a guide
22.	The employee didn't have information about services for people with sensory disabilities. They will check and call back.
23.	They don't have specific packages for people with disabilities. If a request arise they will try to accommodate.
24.	I left a message in order to call me back. Their email is not valid.
25.	No services for people with disabilities
26.	They don't have packages for people with disabilities. They asked if a guide could accompany the group in order to have accessibility.
27.	They have services for people with motor disabilities only.
28.	They don't have services for people with disabilities but they liked the idea!
29.	No answer (telephone)
30.	They don't have services for people with disabilities
31.	No answer (telephone)

## Summary

In conclusion of this research, it is obvious that there is lack of services for people with disabilities and especially with sensory disabilities. Only one (1) travel agency has experience and knowledge of both Deaf and Blind clients, and another one (1) has experience of accommodating people with vision loss.

Unfortunately, the majority of agencies declaring offers for people with disabilities refer only to people with physical disabilities.

What is interesting is how some travel agencies deal with sensory disabilities. The ones that are positive about providing services for people with disabilities can be divided into two categories. The one is travel agencies willing to search and present an accessible solution for them. In particular, they said that they will try to provide a complete package of services, meaning tickets, carriage, accessibility in tours, hotels etc. The other category is travel agencies which are willing to provide only tickets and carriage, as a matter of fact they are asking from people with sensory disabilities to find themselves a solution for accessibility.

Accessibility seems to be considered as a responsibility of people with sensory disabilities. This probably happens because physical disabilities need reasonable accommodation (adjustments) in order to achieve equal access. On the other hand, sensory disabilities require services to be accessible, which is more complicated to cope.