



THE POSSIBILITIES TO CREATE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN TOURISM FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

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Abstract *People with disabilities are receiving more and more attention in tourism; so do physically disabled persons who need to overcome many barriers not only during a journey but also in the preparation phase. The rising life expectancies and the development in the area of motorization contribute to more and more people eventually becoming physically disabled, which render creating equality of opportunities and developing accessible tourism an absolute necessity, thus, anyone can use the built environment and receive genuine, usable information. The study highlights the importance of accessibility, of non-governmental organizations, the participants of accessible tourism, with special focus on physically disabled persons, and the possibilities they have in the tourism industry. In addition to the literature review, the study contains the analysis of the results of the research that has been conducted.*

Key words:
people with disabilities, physically disabled persons, non-governmental organizations, accessibility, accessible tourism

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1. INTRODUCTION

The essence of the sustainable development of human society is given by the current and future management, and this include the objectives of economic growth and ensuring a better quality of life for all people (Stanciulescu & Molnar, 2018).

The research reveals that people with disabilities like to travel, so the same opportunities and possibilities must be provided for them as for non-disabled people making it a social expectation towards tourism operators. Thus, development of barrier-free environment becomes increasingly important because a larger than expected number of people can resort to it. „Apart from the integration of

disability, access, and inclusion within organizational practice, the plethora of disability-specific events does require an accessible venue, an investment in staff training to provide an appropriate level of customer service” (Darcy, 2012)

In what follows, the national and international statistics and forecasts are presented which highlight the importance and relevance of dealing with people with disabilities and stimulating their presence in tourism.

For the present study I prepared a primary and a secondary research, an interview with leaders of non-governmental organizations and processed the results of the questionnaire on travelling habits of physically disabled persons. The study presents the

research results which support the idea that it is worthwhile focusing on the segment of people with disabilities because they like to travel, they do not do that alone, and if they like a certain place, they would return to it. These researches may provide information to the tourism operators as well as reference points as to the necessary changes.

2. PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES - INTERNATIONAL OVERVIEW

Before dealing with accessible tourism and its importance, we need to ascertain why it is worthwhile to invest in accessible tourism. The following numbers support the statement because the numbers of both the elderly and that of disabled people is increasing worldwide and in Hungary as well.

At this time there 962 million people who are over the age of 60, which is 13% of the global population and this number will continue to grow in the forthcoming years (McCarthy, 2017). There are 1 billion people who live with disability worldwide, which is 15% of the world population. (World Tourism Organization, 2016). The UN's Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities which took effect on 2 May 2008 contains the following definition of people with disabilities: "Persons with disabilities include those who have long-term physical, mental, intellectual or sensory impairments which in interaction with various barriers may hinder their full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others" (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, Article 1). According to forecasts, in 2030 there will be 1.4 billion people over

60 years old, and by 2050 the number will increase to 2 billion, 20% of the population. (World Tourism Organization, 2016). By 2100 the number of people over 60 may grow to 3.1 billion. These numbers are important because it is this generation that is mostly affected by physical disability due to musculoskeletal diseases (McCarthy, 2017).

According to UN forecasts by 2025, 14% of the Asian-ocean region population will be over 60, while half of the West-Australian population over 60, and 46% of Canadians over 65 will be affected by some sort of disability [Asia - Pacific Economic Cooperation, Best practices in tourism accessibility for travellers with restricted physical ability, Final report APEC tourism working group, online, (2003)]. The average age of the European population will rise from 39 to 46 years in the forthcoming 40 years; the rate of the population over 60 will grow from 21% to 33% while that of the population below 15 will decrease from 23% to 19%; by 2020 the population of over 80 will grow by 300% compared to 1960 in the European Union (Iván, 2000). In the European Union almost 80 million people live some kind of disabilities, i.e. every sixth person (COM(2010) 636 final). With the ageing of the population this number will increase, and so will the rate of persons of over 75 with disabilities, which at present is only a third of the population, of which disability severely restricts the everyday life of 20% (COM(2010) 636 final). In the next decades the number of those concerned will increase significantly, which necessitates proper accessibility in all areas (e.g. transport, information, built attraction, accommodations, restaurants, etc.)

to the disabled, or person with weakened abilities as well.

An important aim of the European Disability Strategy is that people with disability participate fully in society and economy; furthermore it concentrates on abolishing barriers in the following areas: accessibility, participation, equality, employment, education and training, social protection, health, and external action (COM(2010) 636 final).

Due to special transport and accessibility conditions, tourism industry too faces a challenge, and must bring to the fore accessibility for special needs target groups, for example ensuring barrier-free access.

3. PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES IN HUNGARY

According to data from the latest Mikrocensus survey conducted in Hungary in 2016, 408.000 individuals (4.3%) profess to be people with disability, which means that between 2011 and 2016 the number of people with disability decreased significantly (with 82.000). The reason for the decrease may be the reform of social security scheme, e.g. the invalidity pension is terminated, the conditions of eligibility criteria for healthcare systems and the development of medical procedures are changed. The numbers of partially sighted, hard of hearing, mentally feeble as well as those with serious internal-organ disability has also dropped by 13-17%. At the same time, between 2011 and 2016 the number of mentally disabled and autistic people increased (by 11.000 people, i.e. 25%, and by 3800 people, 74% respectively) - which is a significant

increase. Between 2011 and 2016 the people with physical disabilities form the largest group, almost half, but the number dropped by 16% , over 30.000 people (Vukovich, ed., 2018). The present research focuses on the group of physically disabled persons, - the definition of physical disability is the following: *a mozgás az aktív (izom és idegrendszer) és passzív (ízület és csontrendszer) szervrendszereit érintő maradandó károsodások a hely- és helyváltoztatási, illetve a manipulációs készség korlátozottságához, mozgáskorlátozottság kialakulásához vezethetnek / the damages affecting the active (muscle and nervous system) and passive (joint and bonesystem) organ systems are irreversible and may lead to the restraint of skill of locomotion and manipulation as well as to physically disability (Kemény 2009, 36).*

According to the 2011 census 490.578 grown-ups have some form of disability, which is almost 5% of the Hungarian population (82.000 more individuals than in 2016). According to forecasts based on international surveys, their number will exceed even 1 million because the number of people with permanent conditions is great (1.6 million). Almost half of the people with disabilities are physically disabled persons (Vukovich, ed., 2018).

4. THE ROLE, IMPORTANCE AND INVOLVEMENT OF NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN TOURISM

Non-governmental organizations, voluntary organizations of citizens, are important building blocks of social and cultural life because through their activities and engagement they contribute to a great extent to the management of social issues.

Thus, these organizations are virtually present in all areas of life and assert the interests of a given group. Greater attention to the civil society triggers the increase of the number of NGOs, also that of their role (they have economic response to current and future issues) and their importance. "Civil initiative represent institutional links between members and the political structure" (Nárai, 2004). They are a kind of a missing link which is an intermediary between state, market, and individuals, households; furthermore, they alter the balance of power between state and society to the benefit of the latter. These organizations wield civil control to a certain extent on the state (Nárai, 2004).

Among the functions of Civil Society Organizations and Non-governmental ones are ensuring the possibility of social integration, social participation, self-organization, innovation, influence decision-making, stand as employers. All these are relevant from the point of view of the topic of the present research. Creating CSOs/NGOs is crucial most importantly in order to ensure the necessary framework and make self-organization possible, so they can also exercise their rights. These organizations influence and form opinion, value systems and attitudes, furthermore, they have an active policy-making role because they have mediate and communicate between state and citizens as far as exchange of information and opinion (expertise, standpoint) is concerned. In issues regarding labour market not only are they employers, but also by offering various labour-market services (counseling, training, professional training, mentoring activities) (Nárai & Reisinger, 2016). Being innovatory means

on the one hand, that the organizations themselves introduce new services; on the other hand, it means that by introducing a new topic they contribute to the development of society. The engagement of CSOs in offering public services may serve as an expansion of resources as well because in addition to the public funds and budget allocations they can also use other resources, such as donations (Nárai, 2004).

From the point of view of the research, we need to mention the National Federation of (Physically) Disabled Persons' Associations (MEOSZ) and the Camelot Association of Young People with Impaired Mobility as representatives of the demand-side participants in tourism (potential visitors). MEOSZ was founded in 1981; its members are the local associations of physically disabled persons, counting over 200.000 people altogether (211.091, according to data from 2015). The aim of the federation is to protect the interests of physically disabled persons and their families, thus they contributed to the law regarding the rights and equal opportunities of disabled persons (Hungarian legislation Act XXVI of 1998 on the Rights and Equal Opportunities of Persons with Disabilities) be passed in 1998, which stands as a milestone in Hungary as far as the issue of disabled persons in concerned. Besides lobbying, the aim of the federation is to maintain and operate institutions, deal with employment and offer services that meet the needs and requirements of physically disabled persons, such as support service, accessibility, sensitization, organizing community programmes, maintaining resorts (<http://www.meosz.hu/>).

Camelot Association of Young People with Impaired Mobility was founded in 2002 with the aim to help those who become physically disabled cope with the changes in their lives more easily, facilitate their social integration, organize outdoor and sport activities, help them with their efforts to study and be employed (<http://www.camelotgyor.hu>). Representatives of Camelot Association provide their opinion on draft bills and join major actions such as creating employment possibilities. Camelot Association of Young People with Impaired Mobility is member of MEOSZ.

CSOs, irrespective of representing people with disabilities or tourism operators, can have a role in turning tourist services accessible. The former ones may provide tourism operators with information on the services they should provide and the design of the place so that people with disabilities can also use it.

Nowadays the presence of persons with disabilities in tourism is not a rarity anymore because service providers also recognize the possibilities lying in the new segment. They do not travel alone, but at least with one attendant, thus it is favourable from the point of view income as well. By now there are developments in our country as well, an increasing number of hotels have accessible rooms, more and more sites/attractions are adjusted so that tourists with special needs can also visit them, and thus they also participate in the journey (Gondos &Nárai, 2019).

5. ACCESSIBLE TOURISM

The target group of accessible tourism is not only that of people with disabilities but anyone who is temporarily or constantly incapacitated. It may be due to age-related difficulty, old-age mobility impairment, or wearing glasses with high dioptric power due to poor eyesight or even travelling with a stroller (Gondos-Nárai, 2019); therefore, equal opportunities need to be created for everyone by devising barrier-free environment and services.

The requirements of accessible tourism are four pivotal elements: information, service, mobility and experience. Information is necessary so that the journey/the holidays can be planned and realized. In the case of service, people with disabilities must be considered a tourist target group with equal rights; however, depending on the degree of their disability they might need individual help. Mobility refers to accessible public spaces, infrastructure and public transport, as well as the accessibility of tourist attractions. Experience means the tourist services that one can benefit from, which includes accessible hotel and gastronomy experiences, access to tourist and leisure facilities. In order to have accessible holiday, openness and the knowledge of visitors' possible problems, granting access to basic information as well as access to the entire tourist service on behalf of the staff is mandatory.

Regarding the research conducted by Mirosław Furmanek "A tendency in the trips of the disabled is the high number in the months immediately preceding the summer holiday months, and in those following. In those months, attractive tourism destinations are not yet crowded providing

convenience and sightseeing. The lower cost of trips during this period is also important.” (Furamek, 2014)

Prior to travelling, preparing for the journey and possession of appropriate information by people with disabilities is far more important than in the case of any able-bodied person - because should one piece of information be misleading such as the width of the door, they cannot enter the hotel room. On the website of the given tourist operator, accessible, genuine information must be displayed, regarding accessibility, opening hours, and information regarding accessibility should be displayed on a separate menu entry. To arrive at destination and during the time spend there, accessible transport and the infrastructure related to that, as well as reliable information sources are absolutely mandatory. For those who travel by car or by bus creating accessible parking lots is necessary. As far as accommodation and restaurants are concerned, it is important that they be accessible, devoid of any barrier inside and the staff should have a positive attitude and be competent. In order to spend quality time on holiday, it is of paramount importance that tourist attractions and various programmes be accessible and enjoyable by all, especially by people with disabilities. It is important to have accessible infrastructure, transport, attractions, services and amusement facilities, personalized services, such as special guided tour (BMWA Dokumentation , 2003)

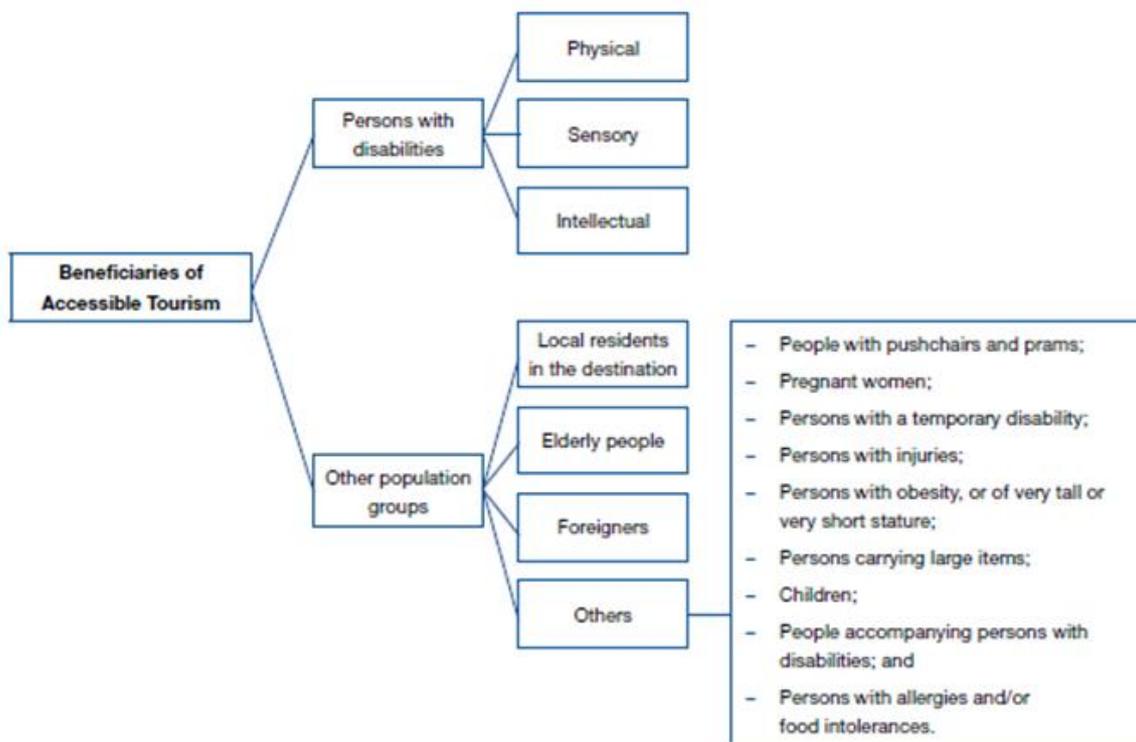
When planning built environments it is worth having in mind to create them accessible and usable for everyone. In connection with this, in Hungary, the term “complex accessibility” has spread which means rendering buildings and products accessible

from several points of view, while in international literature the term “equal access” is used. For this reason a new approach in universal design has also been adopted, a concept introduced by the UN Convention: “*Universal design*” means the design of products, environments, programmes and services to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design. „Universal design” shall not exclude assistive devices for particular groups of persons with disabilities where this is needed (Hungarian legislation Act XXVI of 1998 on the Rights and Equal Opportunities of Persons with Disabilities) The greatest innovation of the document is a shift of focus from having accessibility in mind during the planning process to a *priori* design facilities accessible to and usable by everyone thus creating equal opportunities for persons with disabilities as well.

6. BENEFICIARIES OF ACCESSIBLE TOURISM

A 2016 study by UNWTO (World Tourism Organization,2016) also deals with beneficiaries of the advantages of accessible tourism, among which people with disabilities is a dominating but not exclusive group. Figure 1. names many other groups as well, besides the seemingly evident groups of elderly individuals, people with strollers, or persons with temporary injuries, there are the obese, small or tall people, those carrying big objects or the increasing number of people sensitive to various items.

Figure 1.
Beneficiaries of Accessible Tourism



Source: UNWTO (2016): Manual on Accessible Tourism for All, pp. 36.

Figure 1. summarizes why it is important to plan accessible locations, whom it concerns, who benefit from that. It shows that virtually anyone may be considered potential target market, thus the income of the countries may also increase through this segment. At the same time, it also shows that both non-disabled people and the ones with disabilities are equally affected from the point of view creating, developing and participating in accessible tourism, thus creating equal opportunities for everyone.

7. SURVEY REGARDING TRAVEL HABITS OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ABROAD AND IN HUNGARY

At international level accessibility and travel habits of people with disabilities is an increasingly

frequent research area. In Hungary as well, nowadays the role, the possibilities and participation in tourism of people with disabilities is a topic that emerges more and more frequently.

Research conducted on the European and the American market shows that the segment of people with disabilities is a vast market, displaying ability to pay, willingness to travel, therefore it is worthwhile focusing on it not only at the present but in the future as well. Besides the financial factors, positive attitude and hospitality are also important points of view in the case of services offered to physically disabled persons, something which representatives of tourism industry should also recognize and consider.

In the United States of America several researches have been conducted in the past two

decades regarding the travel habits of people with disabilities, the size of the segment, and the economic effects it yields. The results of the research in general indicate that more than 26 million people with disability travelled and spent 17.3 billion dollars a year (13.6 billion dollars in 2002), they travelled accompanied by one or more adults, which resulted in 34.6 billion dollars income (Open Doors Organization, 2015)

As far as gathering information is concerned the internet emerges as a major source of information (58%), almost half of the respondents drew upon their previous experience, 38% on the opinion of friends and family (brand loyalty and information passed down by word of mouth is very important to them). They travelled first of all by personal vehicle (79%), then airplane, 26% hire a vehicle, 12% travel by bus or train, 10%-10% go on organized trips or on voyages. Almost half of the respondents (46%) encounter obstacles upon checking in their accommodation (e.g. inadequate location of rooms within the hotel, doors difficult to open, inconvenient shower facilities) - in 2005 the rate was 60%. Almost one third of these travelled outside the USA, most popular places being the Caribbean, Europe (Germany, England, France), Central America or South America, Canada (Lipp & Van Horn, 2015).

According to other research, they are willing to spend more on a hotel room (they are not price sensitive) if that ensures accessible rooms at their disposal. Hotels have rooms for the disabled person, information is available when they check in and they are informed about accessibility as well (e.g.

furnishing). They favour rooms with access to the internet, which they are willing to pay for, even if it is free in public spaces; they use the services offered by accommodations, such as restaurants, spa, shops. They are faithful customers because if they had a good time at a given place and received the services they expected, they would return to that accommodation - they do not experiment with other places even if other facilities are cheaper and have the same conditions. Researches also reveal that although they very often experience harm of some kind during their journey, they are less likely to complain than non-disabled tourists (Brettapproved, 2015).

Research conducted in Europe reveals that visitors from developed countries like travelling more in the European Union than those who come from the BRICS countries. In 2012 those who have some sort of allowance made 17.6 million journeys in the UE altogether, of these 7.2 million journeys are associated with people with disabilities while 10.4 million with the senior age group. USA, Switzerland, Russia are the most important source countries. According to the forecast in the research, there will be 862 million journeys within the UE by 2020, while the source market will generate 21 million journeys (EU Service Contract SI2.ACPROCE052481700, 2014)

Research also reveals that prior to their journeys little information is available for people with disabilities who wish to travel, which could represent the greatest hindrance for those with disabilities who wish to travel. Furthermore, flying with low-cost airlines may pose problems (check-in, narrow space

between seats). People with disabilities and senior citizens spent on average 80 Euros a day in Europe, if they had a longer holiday, they spent 700 Euros in their home countries whereas in other UE countries the sum was 1100. This segment contributed to the economy of the UE with 352 billion euros in the 2012-2013 period. Having in mind the direct and indirect effects, this means 786 billion euros for the UE economy. (EU Service Contract SI2.ACPROCE052481700, 2014)

8. HUNGARY

In Hungary the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment had a research conducted which revealed that the possibilities, habits and needs/demands of people with disabilities are different from those of non-disabled individuals. Until the research in 2009 there was no data available to support the statement. Almost half of the disabled persons had travelled abroad, mostly to Europe and had been predominantly on one-day trips. More respondents, three quarters, had travelled domestically, half of them more than once, mostly on one-day trips. Most of them were interested in Balaton, but there is no definite answer as to which region excels in accommodating them. Besides their disability, visiting their relatives and friends and their financial situation are factors influencing their choices of tourist programmes. Irrespective of travelling abroad or domestically, waterside holidays are the decisive motivation, and in addition to that, in the case of domestic travel, visiting relatives and friends, and city breaks abroad respectively. They always spare time for city breaks, passive recreation,

going on trips (visiting natural and cultural values).

They travel mostly with their friends and acquaintances and they would like to do that in the future as well. On domestic travels they stay at relatives, acquaintances first of all, as well as in hotels, rent apartments, while abroad they stay at hotels. The most important vehicle to travel is their personal car, as well as public transport in the country, while abroad it is the personal car and charter bus. As a source of information, relatives' and friends' opinion is decisive in domestic travels, while abroad it is the internet and flyers in addition to the opinion of peers, organizations that matters.

They cannot participate in active recreation like going on the beach, on trips, sightseeing (activities they avoid due to disability, however, this contradicts statement above according to which they always spare time for city breaks). When choosing accommodation, the most important factor is the degree of the respondent's disability. On domestic trips problems with the accommodation were likely to appear as far as accessibility is concerned (the same is the situation with means of transport). Accessibility implies ramps, handrails, barriers, shower seats, walking sticks as well as electric wheelchairs, accessible taps, and support service. Two thirds of the respondents were planning going on a trip the following year first of all on domestic travels ideally for 5-10 days, but the most common plans were the one-day trips (Revita Alapítvány –Motiváció Alapítvány, 2009).

In 2018 the Hungarian Tourism Agency also conducted a survey on the habits of people with disabilities, but the results have not been published

yet. In the Tourism Academy Road show they had been planning to do they would present the results, conclusions and in addition to that, specialists would talk about their experiences on 19 different locations.

9. TRAVEL HABITS OF PHYSICALLY DISABLED PERSONS - RESEARCH RESULTS

Within the research conducted supply side, the respondents were the hotels and restaurants members of Hungarian Hotel and Restaurant Association (MSZÉSZ) (57 answers were sent in), while in the case of the demand-side members of the National Federation of (Physically) Disabled Persons' Associations (MEOSZ) (138 answer sheets). Due to the small number of answer sheets, the research does not offer reliable information, but it is instructive and it is a stopgap given that it is an area researched to a lesser degree in our country. Besides the research that contained questionnaires and interviews, I have also travelled with people who use wheelchair for three days and participated in a trip around Kaposvár, in the region that was designated number one place in terms of accessibility in 2013.

The research methods above focused on the preparedness and attitudes of tourism operators, the

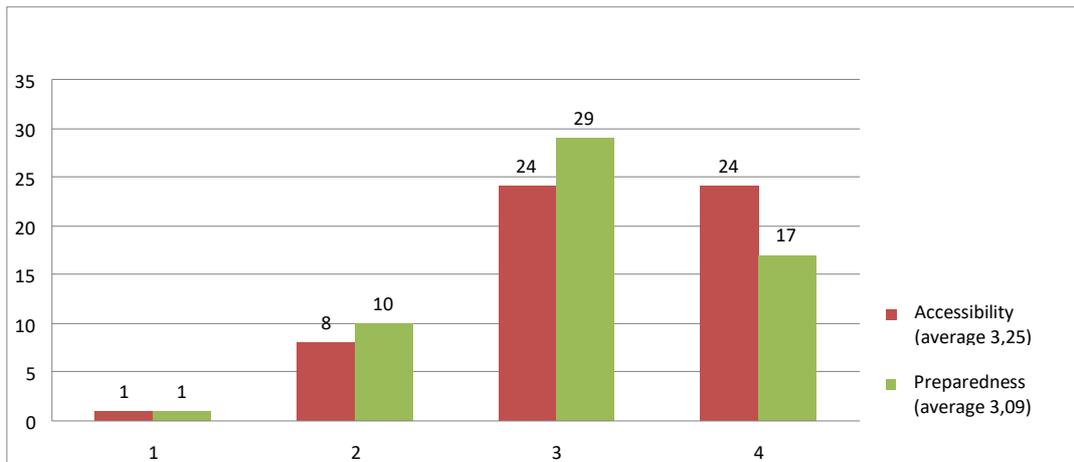
travel habits of physically disabled persons as well as on the opinion of federations, organizations related to the topic.

10. RESEARCH RESULTS

One of my hypotheses was that the reason why tourist services are challenging items for physically disabled persons is that basically service providers are not prepared yet. In the opinion of the respondents, there are only few service providers and attractions which can entirely cater for the needs of physically disabled persons. Accessibility and the assessment of preparedness, the attitude and the degree of attendance were reflected upon. Furthermore, the majority of physically disabled persons do not travel because not many providers can cater for their special needs. In case of statements, answers were assessed with the help of the four-point Likert scale. Most providers aim to comply with only the minimum requirements as far as accessibility is concerned - agreement in the case of this statement on behalf of providers is 3.14, while the mean value in the case of disabled persons is 3.18. Service providers rated their own accessibility 3.25 and their preparedness 3.09.

Figure 2.

Assessment of grade of accessibility and preparedness of given hotel - opinion of accommodation (piece)



Source: own editing

Perhaps the supply side would not perceive these deficiencies as problems, as those concerned would; those, who - on a daily basis, - face the problem of not being able to enter restaurants, cafes, or go near an attraction, are more likely to experience frustration than the staff working there who do help as much as they can. The result unequivocally shows that there is a lot to be done in tourism industry so that these mean values would increase.

In the case of issues regarding physically disabled persons, providers of accommodation rated the degree of catering for the needs of physically disabled persons at 3.11, the degree of attitude to 3.67, while the physically disabled persons rated the level of their needs being catered for (mean value 2.59) and the attitude (mean value 2.85) much lower. Based on the two surveys (of the supply side and the demand one) we may conclude that providers rate both the accessibility of their facilities and their attitude higher than the physically disabled

persons. The interviews reveal that tourism industry in Hungary is not prepared to cater for physically disabled persons; it is a matter of years, even decades until it can catch up on Western and Northern European mindset and standards because there the “design for all” approach prevails, which means that they design facilities so that these are accessible and usable by anybody, they do not think in terms of segments.

As far as accessibility is concerned, physically disabled guests are important to hotels, but almost half of the respondents would not like to make changes due to the character of the building, in addition to the small number of disabled guests; they would rather not invest in alterations because that might not return on the investment. However, these are necessary so that physically disabled persons can also benefit from their services. The demand-side (people with disabilities) shares the belief that providers consider physically disabled guests important. In their opinion, the reason why it

may seem that providers do not deem accessibility important might be that few disabled people travel, the investment would be too much money, therefore, providers prefer not to spend money on that. The results show that the two groups (supply and demand sides) see accessibility and its importance differently and it might indicate that in the future tourism operators from Hungary will be unlikely to invest in accessibility. In case of the statement “the majority of physically disabled persons does not travel because only few providers can cater for the special needs properly,” both providers and physically disabled persons mostly agree, reflected in the close mean values (2.81; 2.93).

Both groups answered the question what measures need to be taken to make accessibility possible roughly the same way; in their view what is needed is: money, shift in mindset, tendering opportunities (e.g. support of tourism enterprises that are open in this regard), regulations, rules, training, competent planning and execution of accessibility works, communication with those concerned. Providers also mentioned will, social attitude and participation, development of infrastructure (e.g. easy access to sidewalks, public institutions, shops, recreational opportunities). Disabled persons mentioned checking regulations and sanctioning if the latter are not respected, sensitization, education, “accessibility” that start “in the mind.” As we can see, both sides think the same way in the matter, and the physically disabled persons focus on the human aspect of accessibility as well, not only on the physical one.

The fact that regulations are not strongly observed is what both groups agree with to the same degree - in this regard the difference between the mean values of providers and the demand side is very little (providers: 3.14; physically disabled persons: 3.18).

The greatest difference to the benefit of providers is in assessing the necessity of preparedness for special needs; tourism operators believe that special measures are needed to receive disabled guests while the physically disabled persons do not consider this an important factor. According to physically disabled persons equality of opportunities is not prevalent in tourism industry.

Answers in both cases are very similar, which indicates that they travel first of all with family, and friends and/or acquaintances respectively (the accompanying person in the view of the providers). The opinion of the association / organization / federation is also important besides travelling with peers.

Results regarding on the way they travel show the automobile on the first place, followed by bus with train on the third place. On average, they usually spend 1 to 3 nights in a place when travelling.

According to providers of accommodation, there is no difference between disabled visitors and non-disabled ones as far as expenditure are concerned, most responding tourism operators marked the 30-50 and 50-70 euros/ day category. The answers of physically disabled persons, however, indicate that they spend even less than that per day, they checked the 0-20 euros and the 20-30 euros box, respectively. The explanation behind the

small expenses could be that many of the physically disabled persons leave their hometown only for a few hours, they do not need accommodation; therefore, they do not appear in providers' clientele.

Around half of the accommodations have faithful disabled customers who like going back due to the attitude of the staff and the services that are provided. Most disabled persons could name a provider where they like to return, the reasons being firstly accessibility and location, followed by the attitude of the staff and services provided as well as the furnishing of the given place. The attitude of the staff is an important and decisive factor on both sides.

On the whole, the opinions of both the supply and the demand side are not entirely different because they agreed in some questions while in others to a lesser degree; nevertheless, there were similarities. Substantial difference between the answers is exactly in the matter of accessibility and preparedness, services provided to the physically disabled persons and the attitude towards them were relevant mainly when obstacles appeared while servicing them. These are the areas in which careful attention, proper attitude, developments and with appropriate financial resources of course, conditions can be improved.

11. CONCLUSIONS

The study presented national and international statistical data and forecast regarding people with disabilities and physically disabled persons in particular, the role and importance of non-governmental organizations as well as their

participation in tourism industry, the importance of accessible tourism and accessibility, as well as local and international researches. I have complemented this with personal research result analysis regarding accessibility focusing on the travel habits of the disabled.

It revealed that people with disabilities and physically disabled persons like travelling in case the infrastructure is appropriate or if the lack is compensated for by the willingness of the staff to help. From an economic point of view, it is not insignificant the fact that they travel accompanied by at least one person, therefore they could be willing to spend more during a trip, hence this is a solvent segment (even more so if we include senior citizens).

As a consequence, accessibility is of paramount importance, which may seem a special area of accessible tourism despite it being a natural requisite. Creating accessibility in transport or tourism is absolutely necessary for the participation of persons with disabilities, but as we have seen, this regards a larger spectrum as well and offers accessibility and convenience to the entire society. CSOs, irrespective of representing people with disabilities or tourism operators, can have a role in rendering tourist services accessible. The former ones, representatives of the demand-side, may provide the supply side, i.e., tourism operators with information on the services they should provide and the design of the place so that persons with disabilities can also use it. The latter are the representatives of the supply side, whose significant task is to be able to satisfy the needs of physically disabled persons by means of right mindset and

attitude that enables them to function as providers who can cater for any special need.

Accessible tourism is important for everyone and it is in the interest of the tourism operators to win over a segment of the market that is much larger than it may seem at first sight. „If you are not inclusive of people with disability or those who are ageing, you not only lose their business but also the business of those who travel with them.” (Darcy, 2012)

My study reveals that the demand-side deems accessibility and preparedness of tourism operators in Hungary to be worse than providers do, which means that tourism industry has a task to complete.

The idea of “accessibility starts in the mind” surfaced both in the surveys and the interviews is important from the point of view of attitude and mindset so that the services provided can cater for a wide range of customers which will be reflected in the financials as well. In view of the forecasts, we may conclude that the physically disabled persons will grow as a market, thus tourism operators will need to make the necessary adjustments to make their services accessible to physically disabled persons, senior citizens and to all to whom the accessible infrastructure is what enables them to participate in tourism.

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