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**Guidelines for accessibility and safety in  
the organization of agrotouristic and  
sporting activities in rural areas**

**ORGANIZATION: Association of People with  
Mobility Problems and Friends of Rodopi  
'PERPATO'**

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## Prologue

The aim of this study is to create an accessibility and safety guide to the organization of agrotourism and sports activities in rural areas by analyzing accessibility to agrotourism and taking into account an inclusive approach to tourism development in natural areas, perceiving the *countryside* as the starting space that incorporates full diversity of the human species.

The increasing demands for activity-based tourism in rural areas are reshaping the travel lifestyle and resulting from:

- ✚ the need of people living in urban centers to meet nature, and
- ✚ the growing interest in climate change.

The negative impact on tourism from the Covid-19 pandemic is an additional factor that has developed a new sense of freedom, based on the desire to flee urban environments and seek more immersive and sustainable experience in the countryside.

Although we are still a long way from seeing enough accessible destinations that offer these kinds of solutions with this study there will be an attempt to categorise instructions for organizing these activities. These can provide better guidance to destination managers, regional and national policy makers, as well as other tourism actors for a more inclusive tourism development in rural areas.



## 1. DEFINITIONS – CATEGORIZATION OF PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

### 1.1 General information

There are different theoretical approaches, which examine the term "disability" and its effects on people with disabilities. Giving a clear definition of disability is not simple from the outset, since everyone understands the concept of disability differently. This is because disability is a social reality, where different people, with completely different experiences of interaction and with a completely different development, were classified as disabled.

Disability is difficult to define and delineate, as it is a term that cannot be explained simply. Any attempt at demarcation is related to the totality of the functions of the individual, to the overall image that society has of man, to the existing social and productive relations, the way of social organization, the models that dominate society, the social position of the individual. Conceptual definitions of disability arise either from the medical model or from the biopsychosocial model.

The Medical Model is the term created by the psychiatrist RD Laing in "The politics of the family and other essays" (1971) and disability is defined as the physical, mental, sensory, or psychological "deviation" from what is considered "normal". It is a "dysfunction" due to illness, accident or other medical reasons. This approach places the problems that accompany disability in the person himself, since it argues that the difficulties faced by people with disabilities in their daily lives are a natural consequence of their own functional constraints, completely ignoring the interaction that exists between the individual and the environment.

The Biopsychosocial Model is a philosophical view that takes for granted the importance and interaction of biological, psychological, and social factors in determining health (DiMatteo & Martin, 2006) and disability can only be understood through the interaction of biological, psychological, and social factors. It is not only a medical or biological "dysfunction" of the organism, but also has important social implications since it affects the participation of the individual in daily activities and in general in his social life.

For this reason, the World Health Organization has created the International Classification of Functioning, Disability and Health (ICF). The International Classification for Functionality and Health was adopted in the year 2001 at the 54th General Assembly of the World Health Organization. It is a system that takes into account on the one hand the problems that disability causes to the functionality of the individual in the real environment he lives and moves daily on the other hand the factors of the environment (e.g. building infrastructure, aids, assistive technology, attitudes of the social environment towards disability, behaviors, etc.), which affect in a positive or negative way his participation in daily activities.



The complexity, vagueness, generality, and difficulties that exist in defining the concept of disability do not contribute to the clarification of the term. Therefore, for disability there are many different definitions, which stem from different ideological-political perceptions but also from different perspectives of the problem.

## 1.2 Definition of disability

Despite the above, the community of people with disabilities can only be characterized by some common element. Thus, to define disability by the World Health Organization (WHO), the following emerged:

Disability is the result of organic or environmental causes, which create a set of obstacles to important aspects of life, such as self-service, employment, education, leisure, and general social participation. [World Health Organization, 2002] More specifically, People with Disabilities are considered all persons who have severe impairment, resulting from physical or mental impairment. In relation to this visa, the following classification was proposed:

- The disadvantage/ deficiency, which the WHO defines as "any loss of substance or alteration of a structure or a psychological, physiological or anatomical function".
- The incapacity, which corresponds to "any partial or total decrease (a result of the disadvantage) of the ability to perform an activity in a certain way or within the limits considered normal for a human being".
- The defect/ disadvantage that comes to a given person as a result of an inadequacy or a disability that limits or prohibits the fulfillment of a normal role that is normal (depending on gender, age, social or cultural factors) for that person.

It follows from the above that:

A) The disability is either congenital or acquired.

B) It is a functional impairment that makes the life of the disabled person especially difficult.

C) This condition may come from deformities, from damage to growth or from injuries to the drive system.



### 1.3 Definition of people with disabilities

Therefore, according to the above defined concept, people with disabilities are people who have a disadvantage, an incapacity, or a defect. According to the Decision of the Council of Ministers of the European Union (Sc. 93/136/EEC), as it is mentioned in the Journal of the European Communities (9/3/93):

'The term PWD includes people with serious deficiencies or disabilities due to bodily injury, including unconsciousness or mental or mental impairments, which limit or exclude the performance of an activity or function which is considered normal for a person.'

As has been made clear from what has already been mentioned, people with disabilities are those people who have permanent or transient damage, disabilities, weaknesses, disabilities, or a combination of the above, coming from physical, mental or mental impairment. According to the World Health Organization (WHO):

- People with permanent disability are the motor disabled, the blind and generally the blunt, the deaf, those who have difficulty in perception, communication, and adaptation, as well as patients with arteriosclerosis, epilepsy, kidney failure, rheumatic diseases, heart disease, etc.
- People with transient disability may be injured, transiently ill, etc.

It should be noted that the term disabled, as mentioned above, is a subcategory of a wider group of people, who are hindered by misplanning and other barriers in the city, in all areas of their daily life. These are the "Hindered Individuals". The term "Obstructed Persons" includes not only people with disabilities but also people with reduced abilities:

- the elderly,
- young children under 5 years of age,
- women in the late stages of pregnancy,
- people suffering from arthritis, asthma, and heart problems,
- people who are addicted to alcohol or drugs,
- persons suffering from a partial or total loss of communication ability,
- people in a panic under emergency conditions,
- individuals exposed to high temperatures, poisonous or toxic conditions,



- those who use or drive any type of wheelchair,
- people with abnormal physical dimensions,
- those addicted to harmful substances,
- those who carry weights, etc.

#### 1.4 Categories of people with disabilities

However, a general definition of all People with Disabilities does not lead to a full understanding of their problems, because as has been mentioned above, the social group of disabled people is characterized by great heterogeneity. It is therefore necessary to further categorise these individuals according to their handicaps or inadequacies.

Based on such a separation, the following groups arise:

- People with difficulty in movement
- People with difficulty in vision
- People with hearing difficulties
- People with difficulty in perception and communication





*i. People with difficulty in movement:*



Difficulty in movement have people with weak or paralyzed limbs, with stiffness or relative lack of limb or all parts of the body, the elderly, people with cardiorespiratory problems, the temporarily injured, etc.

These people have a slower pace in their movement and to move they use auxiliary means (wheelchair, walkers, crutches, sticks, etc.).

*ii. People with difficulty in vision:*



These individuals see little or no. For their autonomous movement they make use of a cane or a specially trained dog.



iii. *People with hearing difficulties:*



This category includes people with impaired hearing or people with absolute hearing impairment. The movement of these people is facilitated by the presence of clear and strong signs, or sometimes a specially trained dog.

iv. *People with difficulty in perception and communication:*

This category includes people with permanently reduced perception (e.g. people with various mental or organic diseases), people with temporarily reduced perception (e.g. the elderly, children, drunks, drug addicts, etc.). Also individuals:

- ✚ with speech and speech disorders
- ✚ with specific learning difficulties (dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysanagnosia, dysorthography, dysgraphia)
- ✚ with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, with pervasive developmental disorders (autistic spectrum)
- ✚ with mental and neuropsychic disorders, with multiple disabilities
- ✚ with complex cognitive, social, and emotional difficulties in delinquent behavior.

These individuals have limited contact with the environment and surrounding objects, unable to act autonomously or even react to obstacles and dangers.



## 2. THE IMPORTANCE OF ACCESSIBILITY IN PUBLIC PLACES AND PLACES OF ATHLETIC AND CULTURAL INTEREST

### 2.1 Accessibility

According to what has been mentioned above regarding the particularities of people with disabilities, it is easily understood that, sometimes because of their individual weaknesses and sometimes because of the inadequate design of public spaces, it becomes almost impossible for them to live independently. This results in their dependence on their social environment and their absence from the social and productive relations of their environment. This has led to the marginalization of people with disabilities and in many cases has fueled a caotic behavior of the rest of society towards them. However, during the last few years, social forces have emerged that demand the emancipation of people with disabilities and the guarantee of autonomous movement and living, aiming at their equal participation in social life. Equal participation, however, implies ensuring the ability of every PWD to take part in all components of human activity. The key to achieving this goal lies in the concept of accessibility and accessibility of public space.

More specifically, the term Accessibility means that characteristic of the environment (natural, structured, or electronic), a service or a good that ensures an autonomous, safe, and comfortable approach and use by all users without discrimination of gender, age, disability, and other characteristics (physique, strength, perception, etc.) (Defined by the National Confederation of People with Disabilities, 2005).

Accessibility is seen as the "key" to equalizing the opportunities of all citizens including citizens with disabilities.

Accessibility is intertwined with the deeper concept of participation in society and life, as it is synonymous with the holiest human right, personal choice and therefore privacy. That is, the ability of each individual to make his own choices, without the obstacles, exclusions and discrimination that make him a pariahi of social and cultural reality. We conclude, therefore, that accessibility is an inalienable right of every human being.

At the same time, to be able to talk about equal treatment of people with disabilities, every society should ensure access, not only to the spaces that serve the immediate needs of citizens, but also to those spaces that promote the healthy and complete development of their personality, their physical training, their spiritual cultivation and above all the spaces that make their living pleasant.



Among the sites mentioned above can be classified cultural halls (e.g., museums, exhibition halls, theatres, etc.) as well as sights and activities carried out in the countryside (archaeological sites, sports activities, etc.).

The term 'access' in this case refers to two areas. The first area relates to physical access to the above areas, including both the built environment and existing equipment. The second area concerns the accessibility of the provided sports - cultural programs, events, and activities.

## 2.2 Importance of accessibility

Given that in the past, the independent living of people with disabilities was an unrealizable dream, in recent years, as mentioned above, emphasis has been placed on improving this image, both by state agencies and by non-state organizations. The fact is, however, that despite any efforts already made in this direction, accessibility in cultural spaces and generally in places of tourist interest has not been fully ensured. Most cultural sites are accessible in some parts of them, most hotel complexes ensure access to the rooms, but do not facilitate the use of communal facilities, etc. However, it is indisputable that such a practice lacks many benefits that may not have been taken into account by the relevant bodies. A plethora of statistical studies indicate that there are 50,000,000 people with disabilities travelling annually in Europe, and if this figure includes their escorts, it becomes clear how much each country could benefit if even a part of this population had the opportunity to visit its tourist destinations and infrastructure. In addition, a significant proportion of people with disabilities could be actively employed in accessible cultural or tourism programmes, which currently face the phenomenon of unemployment and exclusion. Moreover, the accessibility of cultural sites is an incentive for people with disabilities to engage in the arts and culture, which promotes the artistic and intellectual development of the society as a whole. Let's not forget, after all, famous artists with disabilities who have contributed worldwide to cultural heritage and artistic diversity (e.g. Frida Kaylo, L.V.Beethoven, Luis Borges, Ray Charles, etc.). By their example they proved that disability is not an obstacle to artistic practice.

At the same time, it is noteworthy that buildings and outdoor spaces that have the specifications for their access by people with disabilities, benefit at the same time the entire population. For example, the introduction of texts with easy-to-read characters and adequate lighting certainly helps the visually impaired, but it also offers more comfortable reading to the entire audience. This logic applies to other cases: an elevator is useful to everyone, not just wheelchair users. Rest areas are essential for people who get tired easily, but in a large museum, where the journey is often long, everyone will benefit from them. At the same time, at an artistic level, people with disabilities provide the opportunity for a new enriched approach to works. Thus, touching, for example, a work of art, one perceives other sides of the sculpture, like the texture of the stone. Moreover, in the field of tourism and recreation, the conversion of accommodation and spaces addressed to the public into fully accessible, based on specifications, allows owners-managers to make various changes, according to the needs of the users. For example, a building that ensures horizontal access (specifications of corridors, floors, doors) and vertical access (specifications of entrance ramp, lift, elevator, elevator)



Guidelines for accessibility and safety in the organization of agrotouristic and sporting activities in rural areas as well as other services for people with mobility difficulties, becomes automatically accessible to groups of elderly people, without the need for further adaptations. This is particularly important if

one considers the trend towards an ageing of Europe's population. According to the above, it is understandable how important it is to ensure an accessible tourist and cultural environment. Each site must be structured in such a way as to meet the needs of all users. Only in this way will we talk about a truly sustainable city and its development, for a safe and accessible environment for and for all. In conclusion, it should be noted that free and unhindered access for people with disabilities to all areas addressed to the public is the ideal means of preventing the wall of prejudices against them from being hit hard and transformed from recipients of compassion into self-reactive and assertive cells of society. Moreover, it is only through such an approach that we will be allowed not to stand on the unpleasant side of disability and turn it into a vehicle for a better one. approach to culture.

### 3. People with disabilities and TOURISM

People with disabilities represent a large and growing market for tourism businesses. According to the European Programme "European Network for Accessible Tourism", it is estimated that at European level alone, there are more than 50 million consumers with disabilities, not counting their escorts.

Since 1987, the Greek National Tourism Organization has instituted a series of measures concerning hotels of all types, which are obliged to adapt specifically for people with disabilities 5% of their rooms - with a lower limit of 2 rooms and a maximum of 10 - and to ensure the free horizontal and vertical movement of wheelchairs in all areas. Similarly, the equipment of these areas (information counters, reception, etc.) is formed. Systematic and institutionalized accessibility for people with disabilities began in 2002 with Presidential Decree 43, which imposes on all newly established hotel accommodation, in order to be licensed, to meet the basic standards of accessibility. At the same time, GNTO placed particular emphasis on smaller hotel units and mainly on lower category units, through renovation and modernization programs, establishing quotas for the number of rooms that must have been specially renovated and configured to be accessible to people with disabilities.<sup>1</sup>

P.D. 43/2002 "Classification of the main hotel accommodations in categories with star system and technical specifications". Law 2160/1993 (A' 118) "Regulations for Tourism and other provisions".



## 4. People with disabilities AND ALTERNATIVE FORMS OF TOURISM

### 4.1 Beaches for all

Swimming is a unique experience for every person with disabilities and especially for people with reduced mobility or people with impaired vision. Gravity, which has largely determined the way of life on our planet is one of the greatest enemies of people with disabilities. The contact with the sea gives these people a sense of freedom, as in it they are not limited by machinery, while the water with the help of buoyancy keeps them on the surface and indeed the healing properties of water are important for every human body. On the organization of the Paralympic Games, the study "Beaches for all" was implemented, under the supervision of the Ministry of Development, at the end of 2003. In the summer of 2004, the first two accessible beaches operated, around PIKPA Voula and agia Triada, Thessaloniki.







### 4.2.1 Downhill river with canoe - kayak

Water is the ultimate equalizer. Canoeing and kayaking are activities that emphasize competence. Ability is determined by ability and attitude, and people at all skill levels, with and without disabilities, can find enjoyment in canoeing and kayaking. All rowers need is a willingness to accept instructions and adapt to new situations. Canoeing and kayaking for people with disabilities give people the opportunity of all the skills to discover challenge and freedom by paddling.

Rowing provides unique opportunities for people of all abilities to overcome personal challenges, acquire new skills, experience the outdoors, and enjoy physical activity with other rowers.



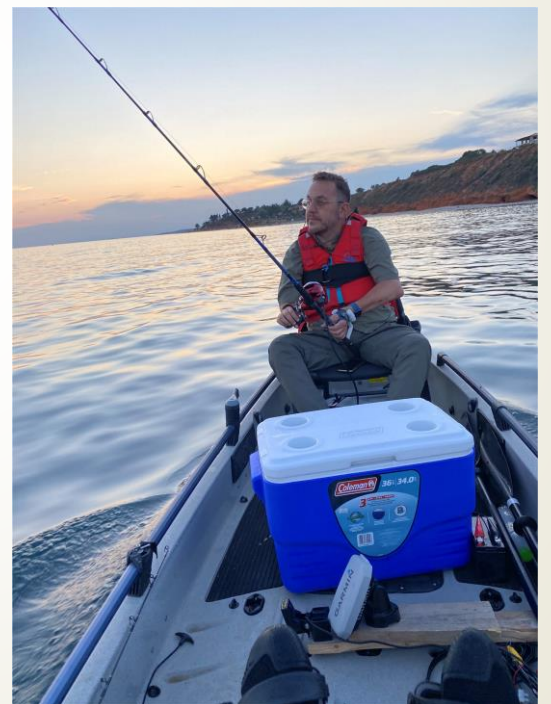


## 4.2.2 Sea excursions by canoe - kayak

Kayaking is one of the most popular boat activities and offers fun, light exercise, well-being, and proven peace of mind. It is addressed to lovers of the sea and, to those who seek an easy sea experience. Kayaking gives you easy access to the sea and gives you the opportunity to explore in secluded places. In recent years there has been a lot of development both in the design of vessels - which give greater stability and safer navigation - and in propulsion systems (pedals, fins, propellers, etc.). This development makes their use even easier as minimal physical abilities are now required for a short sea ride. Even more, this development makes kayaks accessible to people with disabilities, giving the opportunity to sit safely in special seats and to use the means of propulsion that they can depending on their ability to move their hands or feet. Thus, with the use of specially designed kayaks, people with mobility problems can enjoy together with an escort either a sea excursion to explore inaccessible beaches or to fish them, taking advantage of the accessories and accessories of a modern kayak.

Especially for people with disabilities, participation in such an activity is beneficial on a physical, social, and psychological level.

In recent years, the Association PROTO in collaboration with the company of marine recreational equipment KOUPI organize on a weekly basis sea excursion around Maroneia in Rodopi, with specially designed kayaks.







## 4.2 Mountain Routes

### ACTIVITIES IN MOUNTAIN-FOREST-NATURAL ECOSYSTEMS

Beneficial can be characterized any excursion in the countryside, *which is the* original space that incorporates the full diversity of the human species and serves the need of people living in urban centers to meet nature. Some of these activities are cycling, horseback riding, shooting, archery, skiing, camping and more.





### 4.3 Guidelines for the organization and safety of sports activities in the countryside

The first thing that will be needed is the willingness of people with disabilities to accept instructions and adapt to new situations, always within the framework of safety rules and thus they will discover the challenge and freedom.

All sports activities are accompanied with the appropriate equipment which must meet all safety standards and be in excellent condition. The routes should be recorded in printed and electronic form. Participants must wear the appropriate clothing - shoes and be able to move with the help of a companion-assistant. Auxiliary personnel must know the route and be trained even in emergency situations with the prerequisite of knowledge of First Aid.

Before starting, an update should be provided regarding both the equipment and its use and the route, pointing out its particularities and difficulties.

Access for the start-up should meet accessibility standards and the route should be marked (land-based activities on roads and trails).



## 5. AGROTOURISM AND PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

### 5.1 Agrotourism - Definition

**Agrotourism is a special form of Rural Tourism**, which consists of all activities associated with agricultural production and the cultural environment of rural areas, rural occupations, local products, traditional cuisine, and local gastronomy, as well as the provision of hospitality and dining services in areas unified or not with rural facilities.

### 5.2 Advantages and benefits

Agrotourism seeks to create positive social, cultural, and environmental impacts and responds to the need of farmers to obtain additional income by working in the service sector as well as to the need of urban residents to return to nature.

Agrotourism develops the local community, contributes to the continuity of the production of traditional products, preserves arts that would otherwise have disappeared, contributes to the revival of customs and traditional events, to the preservation of the architectural heritage, is a means of communication between isolated areas and large urban centers, but also offers new life prospects to the young people of these areas. Agrotourism showcases the cultural heritage and uniqueness of each region.

Agrotourism offers the visitor the opportunity to get to know the rural areas, the rural occupations, the local products, the traditional cuisine and the daily life of the residents, the cultural heritage of each region, with respect to the environment and tradition. It enables the visitor to meet nature and with the activities in the countryside, in which he can participate.

### 5.3 In general, Agrotourism contributes to(s)

1. supplementing and improving farm income
2. improving the quality of life and work of the rural population
3. containment of the rural population in their place of residence
4. improvement and distribution of local agricultural and artisanal products
5. protection of the environment
6. preservation, promotion, and exploitation of the architectural and cultural heritage
7. improving the attractiveness of rural areas
8. enhancing entrepreneurship



#### 5.4 Agrotourism for people with disabilities

Accessible tourism has recently been at the forefront of the agenda for sustainable tourism development, as numerous research reports have seen an increase in demand for accessibility. This trend is supported by statistics on the growing number of people with disabilities and the increasing ageing of the population in Europe and among incoming travellers to European destinations.

It was also noted that:

- One billion people or 15% of the world's population live with some form of disability (WHO, 2011).
- People with disabilities or other access needs, including the elderly, pregnant women, and families with children, tend to travel as much as people without special access requirements (ONCE Foundation, 2016).
- However, the supply of tourism products and services is extremely low. Only around 9% of all tourism services promoted their offers as being accessible to people with disabilities or the elderly in 2014. (European Commission report on the audit of the supply and performance of accessible tourism services in Europe, 2015).
- People with disabilities and the elderly are in great demand for nature-based leisure activities. However, accessibility to natural and rural areas is a challenge. Even in well-equipped accessible tourist destinations, attractions are often inaccessible (European Commission report on the economic impact and travel patterns of accessible tourism in Europe, 2014).

The European tourism sector is dominated by micro, small and medium-sized enterprises. Managers of tourist resorts tend to be unaware of their customers' access needs and lack sufficient skills to develop and implement innovative, sustainable solutions that could help them increase their market by taking advantage of the opportunities offered by the growing market of accessible tourism.

This is particularly true for natural and rural areas, where opportunities for professional development and training are limited (Mapping and performance audit of tourism education and training supply, EC, 2016).



### 5.4.1. Training in accessibility in the tourism sector

Despite the growing demand for accessible tourism services, so far relatively little attention has been paid to the need to educate and train management and staff in the tourism sector, on issues relating to the quality of services and how to accommodate visitors with access needs.

Employment in the tourism sector is usually sensitive to seasonal demand and economic factors. Therefore, workers need professional qualifications that are recognised which should include accessible tourism qualifications.

Tourism training programs can play a vital role in preparing managers and employees to provide their services in appropriate ways, respecting the diversity of customers' access needs.

With proper training, frontline staff can make guests with special needs and senior guests feel welcome and, in some cases, even overcome some of the physical and functional barriers that still exist in older buildings and environments. Accessible tourism training can help change the barriers persistently faced by people with disabilities by tourism sector staff. Such behaviors are largely due to a lack of knowledge. Accessibility training provides staff with the necessary knowledge, skills and skills to address different customer situations and needs. With greater confidence, managers and frontline staff can handle situations that might otherwise be considered difficult or threatening.

At present, Europe lacks tradition or broad practical training in accessible tourism skills. Where there is some commitment to this training, it is largely due to short-term initiatives, such as EU-funded projects for lifelong learning (Leonardo and recently ERASMUS+) and national human resources programs.

On the part of visitors, tourists with special access requirements can face difficulties at any point of their trip, from the early stages of seeking information (through internet websites or traditional means), to reservations, travel, and modes of transport to accommodation, attractions and cultural sites.

Therefore, it is important that people employed in any part of the tourism chain understand these obstacles. They need to be trained to acquire certain skills so that they can help and serve all guests with the same care, respect and support when required.

### 5.4.2 Guidelines on the accessibility of accommodation

Key aspects of accessibility should be considered to:

1. are barrier-free (infrastructure and facilities)
2. is accessible by means of transport suitable for all
3. has high quality services provided by trained staff



4. has activities, exhibits, attractions in which everyone can participate.
5. has marketing, reservation systems, websites and other information services that are accessible to all.

### 5.4.3 Ensuring visitor safety - Risk management

The introduction of agritourism also implies incentives for both business owners and visitors. Depending on the level of investment, the interests should be effectively identified and managed. The first step in managing the risks is to know the existence of their and the options to be avoided or reduced.

#### 5.4.3.1 Risks to visitors

The potential risks for visitors due to injuries or safety issues should be investigated before the farm joins an agrotourism program. Guests will move through the accommodation and be exposed to the farm's products and surroundings. Once all possible risks to visitors, especially agricultural activities, have been identified, the following will be considered below:

- ✚ Contingency plan that is known to employees and communicated to visitors.
- ✚ Existence of a full first aid kit and first aid staff trained in First Aid.
- ✚ Recommendation to guests to wear the appropriate shoes and clothes.
- ✚ Inform visitors that agricultural work has certain risks (insects, rough terrain, farm odors).

#### 5.4.3.2 Dangers on the farm

There are many possible and powerful people lurking in our accommodation and for this reason the following actions should be taken:

- ✚ Installation of all agricultural machinery away from the places where the visitor operates.
- ✚ All pesticides and other agricultural products should be stored away from visitors. Repair facilities should be locked while there are visitors on the farm.
- ✚ If there are places or facilities on the farm where there is cause for concern for safety, an entry ban sign should be affixed to unauthorized personnel.

Once the risks have been identified, it must be decided how they are to be managed.

- ✚ A first option is to avoid them. This simply means that some risks pose an excessive threat to the operation of the farm or to visitors, so these activities must be changed or not offered as possible options for agrotourism.



Guidelines for accessibility and safety in the organization of agrotouristic and sporting activities in rural areas

- ✚ A second option is to reduce risks. This means that the activity is offered, but every element must be thoroughly checked and steps taken to reduce the potential number of people. For example, labelling is necessary to educate visitors about the dangers on the farm or to train on the ground prior to an activity. It is equally necessary to number the activities in an insurance agency, to minimize the inherent risks and to have adequate insurance coverage.
- ✚ A third option is to accept the risks. Many risks are highly unlikely, and it can simply be accepted that they may occur, but it should be prepared for the moment they occur. This may include the marking the risks to visitors and educating them about the emergency procedures on the farm. It should also be ensured that staff are trained to manage them.
- ✚ The last option for managing risks is to transfer them. Risks can be transferred and shared with guests using liability exemption forms. The transfer of the owners is made to third parties for compensation through an insurance scheme.

## 6. Epilogue

The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) has set guidelines for integrating accessibility in the tourism sector, which focus on the experience of travelers with disabilities.

These guidelines are divided into the following main pillars:

1. Development of an integrated and accessible system
2. Creation of safe spaces
3. Design an attractive system

Highlights from these guidelines include providing training to staff on disability awareness and how to support travellers with disabilities, as well as working with other businesses in areas where there are gaps in knowledge, experience and accessibility services. In its report, the

World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) also stresses the importance of strengthening an environment with respect for all locations and for all activities, reminding staff that their attitude towards people with disabilities play an important role in feeling welcome.

Importance is also attached to the development of accessibility features that are clear, visible and for which travellers will not need special assistance from staff to use them.

In addition, the guidelines make it clear that businesses should regularly and proactively involve travellers with disabilities in creating accessible products and services so that they can properly meet their needs. They should also include accessibility features from the booking process, enabling travellers with disabilities to engage in business before booking their travel service or product.

Staff should also be empowered to address customer concerns when other staff members appear or engage, if and where necessary, and inclusive marketing should be developed to decently represent all people and represent them authentically.





## 7. Institutional Framework

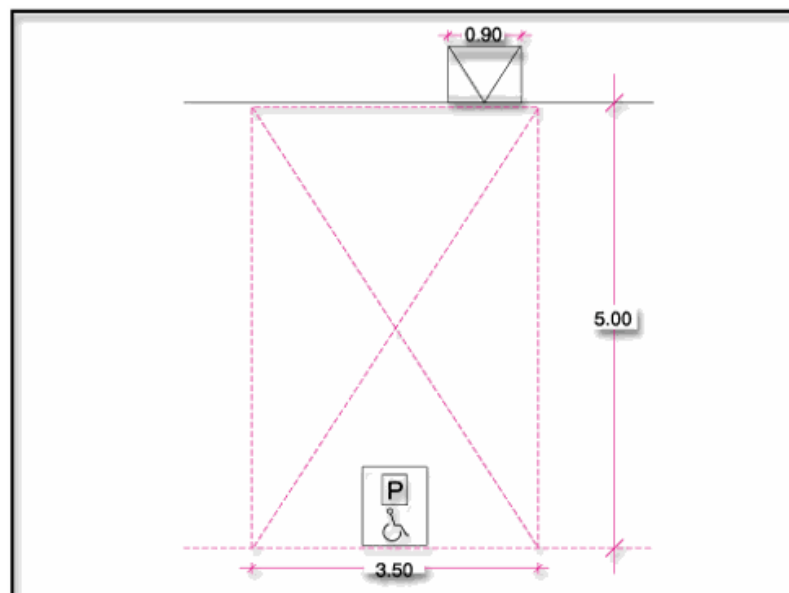
### 7.1 Institutional framework and specifications of public buildings for access to people with disabilities

According to no. 28 of Law 2831/2000 provides for the obligation of public bodies to ensure the unhindered and safe access of people with disabilities, both to new buildings and to existing ones.

The Ministry of Interior has issued a series of circulars, addressed to public bodies, to give them instructions on ensuring accessibility. Through circulars DIAP/B/7887/22-4-03, of the DIAP/B/11536/4-5-2004 of the Ministry of Interior and Energy and Climate Change, the need for mandatory application of the provisions of article 28 of Law 2831/2000 and article 26 of Law 4067/2012 as revised by Law 4759/2020 as well as the decision (Technical Specifications of the Accessibility Study-Government Gazette 5045/B'/01/11/2021) are called all public services to implement the requirements of the current legislation concerning socially vulnerable groups of the population and especially people with disabilities in order to ensure the provision of equal services for all citizens as well as the implementation of accessibility to both public and private buildings.

#### *a. Special parking space for vehicles*

The first element under consideration which ensures the autonomous approach of a disabled person to the building of an Agency is the provision of suitable parking spaces in the vicinity of the building and, if not, the existence or not of the possibility of creating at least one suitable standard location. For a parking space to be classified as a "special parking space for disabled persons" it should be located as close as possible to the entrance of the building, at less than or equal to 50,00m and should be reserved for use by persons with disabilities, having for this purpose appropriate marking on the floor and on a pole with the International Access Symbol.



Floor marking of a parking space for people with disabilities (Office of Studies for people with disabilities – Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Public Works, 1996)





It should have dimensions of at least 3,50mx5,00m for ordinary passenger vehicles and 4,50mx6,60m in the case of VAN type vehicles (Fig. 1). Spaces measuring 2,50mx5,00m with an intermediate free lane of at least 1.00m wide and connected to the adjacent pavement level with a ramp at least 1.50m wide are also accepted. In any case, at least one special parking space for a disabled person's vehicle is required.

#### *b. Accessible route*

Then, the existence of an accessible route from the roadway and the special parking spaces for disabled persons to an accessible entrance must be ensured (Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Public Works, 1996). For a route to qualify as an 'accessible route for persons with disabilities' it must meet the following conditions:

- It should have a width of at least 1.30m, a maximum inclination of 5% and follow a simple course, absolutely level, without steps and uneven weights, free of obstacles along its entire length and free at the height of obstacles.
- the presence of a driver for the blind, marking at the end of the crossings and the provision of good lighting.
- The floor on an accessible route must be stable, made of hard continuous material, without flairs, retreats and gaps.
- The ascent and descent to/from the pavements must be accompanied by ramps, which in any case should not be less than 1.50m wide, without forming a "steppingstone" during their union with the roadway.

#### *c. Accessible entrance*

The entrance must be easily located and for this reason its strong contrast with the wall must be provided for, or it must bear visible elements, allowing it to be located by the visually impaired. In order for an entrance to be characterized as accessible, it must be opened or sliding, it must have a useful width of at least 0,90m with a maximum frame thickness tangent to the floor 2cm, it must have good lighting, it must not require the payment of special force for the handling of the door leaf during its opening or closing and the bells must be at a height of 0,90m - 1.20m from the floor. (Please note that revolving doors are not considered accessible even if they have large dimensions and low speeds of movement).

If it is not possible to access it at a level from the pavement, a ramp must be provided. It should be noted that only inclinations up to 5% ensure autonomous and safe movement of a person in a wheelchair. For ramp lengths up to 8,00m. can be accepted and ramp slope of 6%.

In case the accessible entrance cannot coincide with the main entrance of the building, in which case it is a secondary entrance, there should be a directional signage from the main entrance to it. The directional signage must be clearly visible and displayed in conspicuous places, including the International Access Symbol and arrows clearly indicating the direction to the accessible entrance.



Ensuring autonomous and safe movement within the building includes both horizontal and vertical traffic. Guidelines on how to configure an accessible interior are given, in addition to the legislation, in presidential decree-law 16/1996 on the minimum safety and health requirements in the workplace, where the requirements of Directive 89/654/EEC have been incorporated.

In order to determine the assurance of horizontal movement, the area where the accessible entrance leads is initially examined. Acceptable solutions in this case are considered both the version of driving directly in a reception area for citizens, and of driving on a route to an elevator.

#### *d. Accessible reception area*

An accessible reception area for citizens means a space located on the ground floor of the building, the existence of which is mandatory in cases where in no way can accessibility be ensured in all areas of the service or institution. In order for such a space to be considered accessible, it must have a suitable standard door, good lighting, non-slip, without reflections flooring and color contrasts between the structural elements and equipment elements. Provision is made for the obligation to have appropriate markings (indication of the use of the space accompanied by the International Access Symbol (SAB), both in conventional form and in Braille in writing at a height accessible to the visually impaired, a simplified diagram of the services housed in the building as well as a table for announcements concerning the public, as well as free space for the movement and manoeuvring of wheelchairs between furniture and equipment.

The reception benches and the counters for dealing with the public must have a section at least 1,00m long, at a height of 0,80m from the floor, sufficient space for the approach of a wheelchair as well as a recess in their lower part for the footrests. In areas where there are telephone booths and other machines that are expected to be used by the public, the device and their controls should be located at a height of 0.90m - 1.20m from the floor. It is considered necessary to have a driver for the blind from the entrance to the reception counter, the counter, or the trading machines, while the reception area must be permanently staffed with at least one person, who will have received training on dealing issues with people with disabilities.

#### *e. Accessible route within a building*

The accessibility of the route from the entrance to the elevator, as well as any other route within the building, is ensured in case the following conditions are met: The width throughout its duration should not be less than 1,30m. In any case, a minimum useful width of 0.90m is required, completely free from each obstacle. The route follows a simple course and is absolutely level, without steps and unevenness, with a maximum acceptable slope of parts of 5%. It is important that it is completely free of obstacles along its entire length, as well as free of obstacles in height, but also that it has good lighting, proper marking and a stable floor made of hard continuous material. This route is necessary to have spaces of dimensions of 1,50mx1,50m for maneuvering the wheelchair.



To be able to meet the needs of a person with some form of disability moving along them, the corridors of each floor must meet the conditions set for accessible routes within the building.

In addition, in the case of buildings with increased traffic of obstructed persons, they should have double handrails at two heights on both sides.

Internal doors of appropriate specifications shall meet the following conditions:

- Their useful width should not be less than 0.90m.
- Their case must be of a different color from the wall or door leaf for it to be easily located by visually impaired people.
- If they are glass, their edges are marked with a bright color. These doors are opened or sliding with a lever-type handle (not spherical), without an automatic closing mechanism. It is important to make a relevant provision so that they do not require a high handling force and that there are signs in an accessible place with the indication of the space.

#### *F. Accessible workspaces*

Accessibility to the workplaces located on each floor should ensure:

- The movement of a person in a wheelchair between furniture and equipment, but also the safe movement of a visually impaired person, which requires the absence of equipment not projected on the ground, such as shelves or fire extinguishers.
- The appropriate lighting.
- The provision of space for a person to stand in a wheelchair in front of trading counters or offices to which it is planned to address the public for the processing of his affairs.

#### *g. Accessible public areas*

In addition to all the requirements laid down for workplaces, special hard-seated seating positions must be provided for people with traffic problems. If there is public service equipment in the area, a guide for the blind from the entrance to this equipment is provided on the floor. To ensure that hearing impaired persons are given timely notice in the event of an emergency, these areas must also be provided with a visual warning sign.

#### *h. Accessible areas for special uses*

Similar conditions to those provided for public areas must be met by special use areas. The movement of persons with physical disabilities, in particular wheelchair-disabled persons, must be ensured, at least in part of the space, if the space is structured in levels. It is required to have free space between the seats where it is possible to stand a person in a wheelchair, while in cases of amphitheatrical

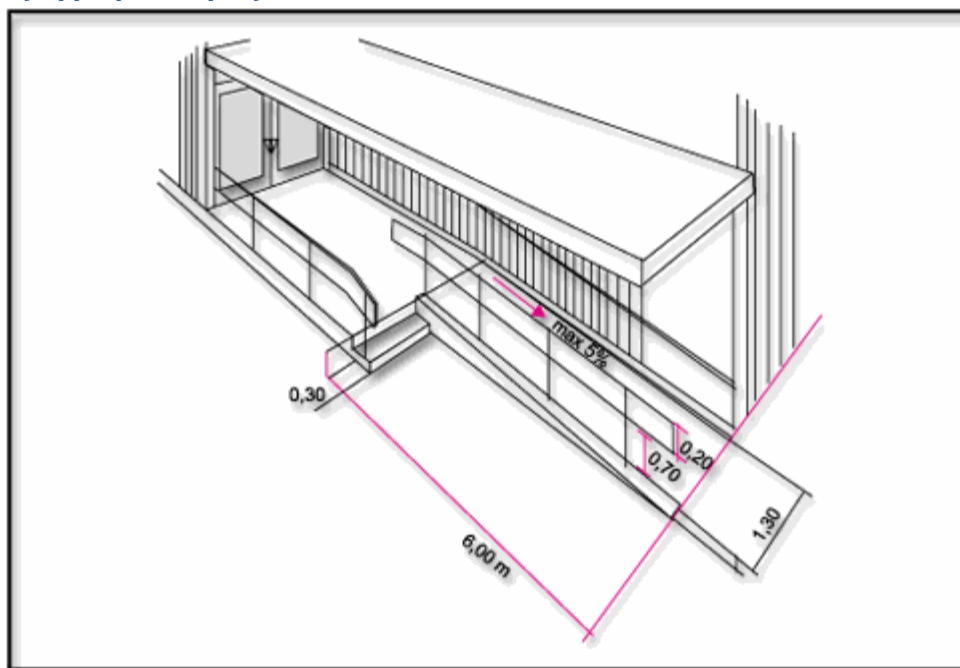


this space is required to be provided in the first row of flat sections or in the last row of dividing corridors of the diazomata leading to exit doors.

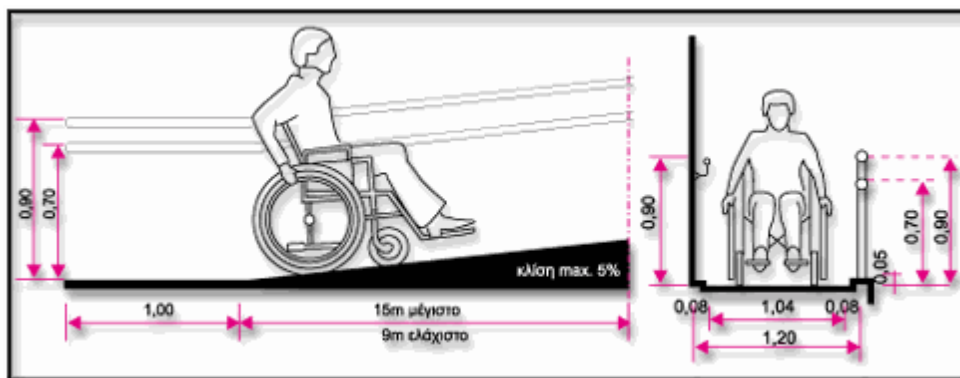
In the case of a speaker pedestal, provision should be made for the existence of a ramp or lift allowing a wheelchair to rise to it, while in case of a service bench, it must meet the requirements required for the construction of the reception or service benches for the public.

Vertical traffic within the building is ensured using properly designed ramps, stairwells, elevators and lifts.

*i. Ramps of appropriate specifications*



Entrance ramps (Office of Studies for people with disabilities – Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Public Works, 1996)



Ramps dimensions (Office of Studies for people with disabilities – Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Public Works, 1996)



In cases where the construction of a ramp is foreseen (Ministry of Health and Welfare, 2001), in order for it to be safe during its use by people with disabilities, it must be properly designed (GOK, Law 2831/2000, No.28, par.8, ramps) so that it has an inclination of up to 5%, is limited by a wall, parapet, a perimeter of 10cm height, or a horizontal bar at a corresponding distance from the floor, have a stable floor, with a non-slip coating and good water runoff (Fig. 2, 3).

The length of the ramp must be 10,00m continuously for a maximum, otherwise it is foreseen to be interrupted by a landing of at least 1,50m length. At the beginning, the end, as well as in any change of direction of the ramp, widths of 1.80m length must be provided.

As for the width of the ramp, this should be 1.30m and between the handrails 1.20m. According to the Gok (L.1577/85, No.16, handrails, handrails), the handrails should be placed at a height of 0.90m on both sides, and at a height of 0.70m for children, as appropriate, while they should extend 0.30m before and after the ramp. Proper lighting, proper marking of their beginning and end as well as points of change of direction are necessary.

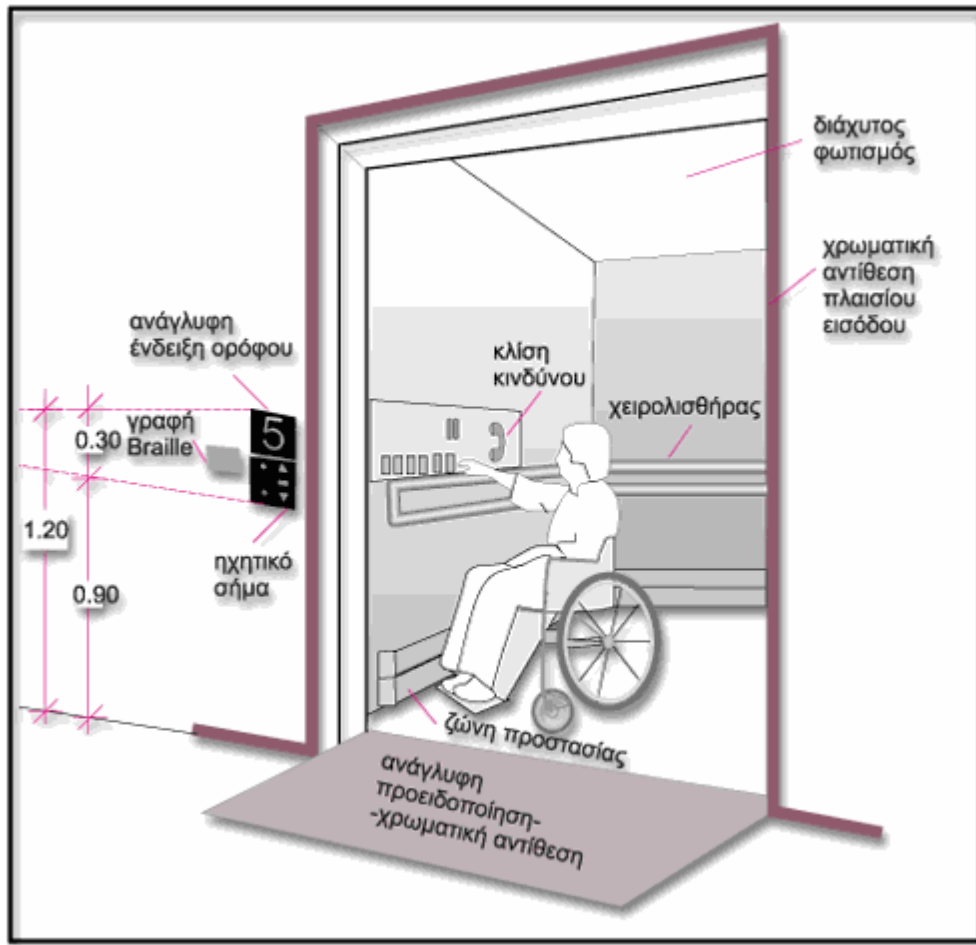
#### *i. Stairwell of appropriate specifications*

For a staircase to be considered to have appropriate specifications, it must meet the characteristics laid down for ramps as regards anti-slip coating, handrails and start, end and change of direction marking.

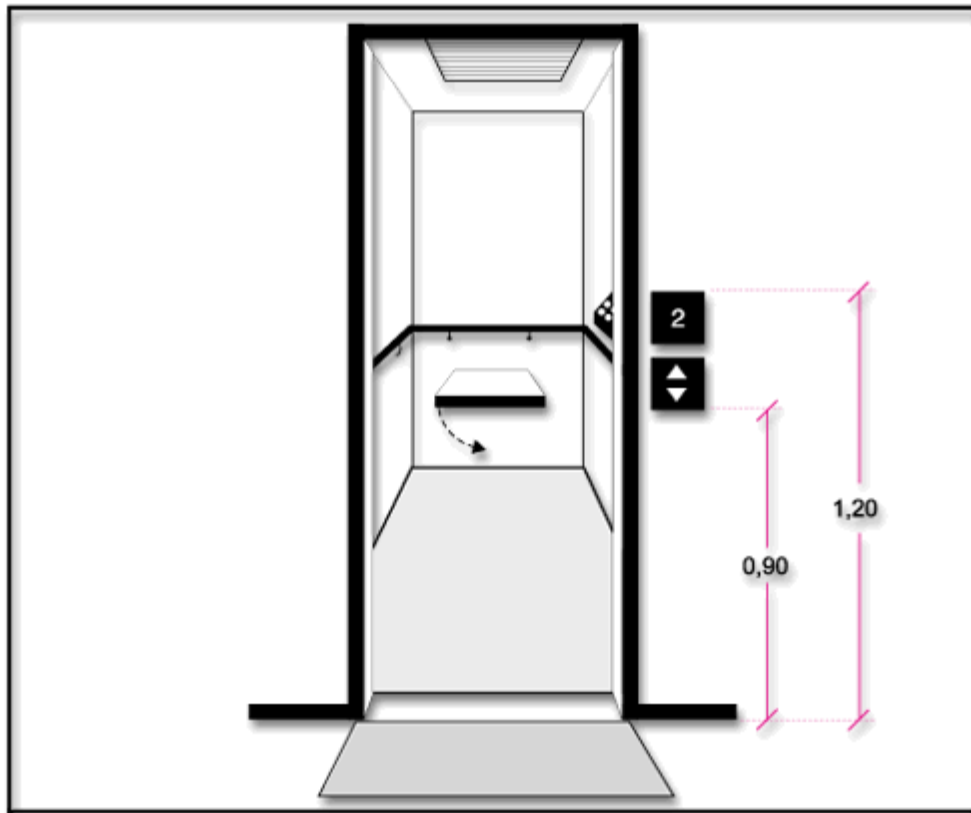
The steps of the staircase must have full heights without overhanging the footprint and have a skirting board or a horizontal bar at a distance of 0,10m. from the floor, while their edges are marked with material in sharp contrast to the coating of the steps.



*Ia. Elevator of appropriate specifications*



**Elevator - Car Equipment** (Office of Studies for people with disabilities – Ministry of Environment, Energy and Business, 1996)



**Elevator controls (Office of Studies for people with disabilities – Ministry of Environment, Public Health and Public Health, 1996)**



**Elevator Signage for People with Disabilities (Office of Studies for people with disabilities – Ministry of Environment, Energy and Business, 1996)**

The most important feature is the dimensions of the car and the position of the door (the door must be automatically opened or sliding) on the smaller side of it. The dimensions of 1,10mx1,40mx1,40m are minimum acceptable internal interiors, while the usable door opening cannot be less than 0.80m (Fig. 4).

It is important to have a free distance of 1.50m between the elevator door and the opposite wall, staircase, or other obstacle. The controls must also be accessible to these persons and the announcement of floors must be given by both visual and acoustic means (Fig. 5). On the floor in front of the entrance of the elevator there must be a relief and brightly colored warning for blind or visually



impaired people (Fig. 6). It should also be ensured that there is no gap and a difference in level between the floor of the floors and the floor of the chamber.

*Ib. Accessible trading counters*

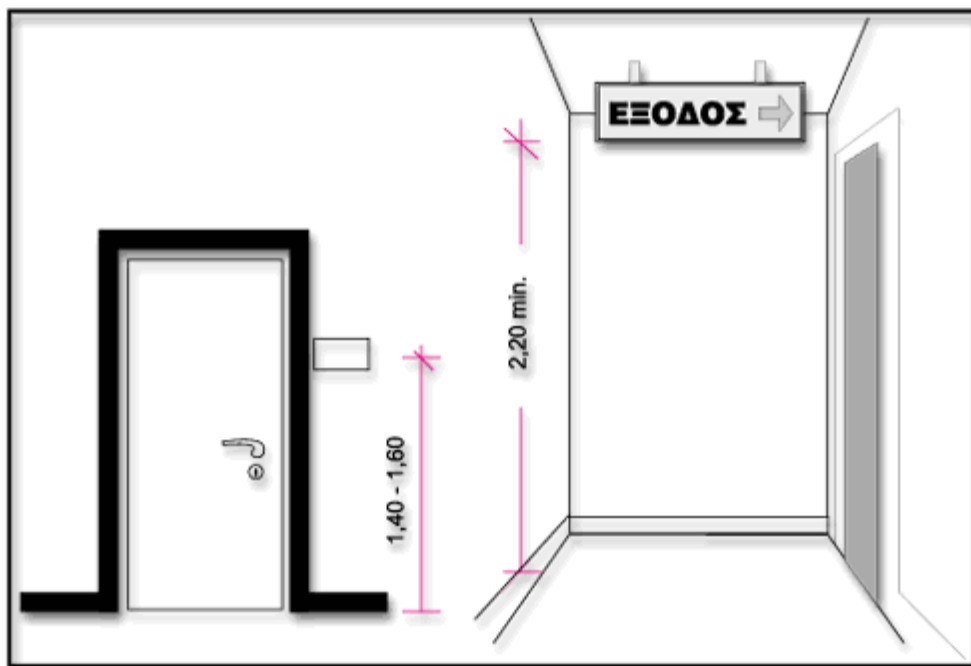
In the case of trading benches, they must have a section at least 1,00m long at a height of 0,80m from the final surface of the floor with a suitable recess at the bottom of the façade to the trader for the installation of the footrests of the wheelchairs.

*M. Accessible signage*

To facilitate the movement of persons with disabilities within buildings, provision should be made at a strategic point in the area for the existence of a simplified plan for floor plans and/or a model indicating the parking spaces, entrances, information office, vertical traffic areas, sanitary areas, areas and points of interest, etc. both in conventional form and in relief or Braille writing.

As far as signs are concerned, they must be placed in such a way that they do not obstruct traffic or cause accidents and that they are repeated where there is a change of direction or where there may be doubt as to the choice of the desired route or escape route.

In case they are wall mounted, they should be placed embossed and in Braille at a height of 1.40m-1.60m from the floor. For those suspended from the ceiling or for those that are fixed perpendicular to the walls, their lower edge is predicted to be at a height of 2.20m from the floor (Fig. 7). If they mean entrance to a service area they must be placed next to and not on the door, on the side of the handle.







Guidelines for accessibility and safety in the organization of agrotouristic and sporting activities in rural areas  
**Appropriately accessible signage** (Office of Studies for people with disabilities – Ministry of Environment, Energy and Business, 1996)

The same goes for the numbering of spaces. In addition, in addition to visual signs, sound signs must be provided. The signs, regardless of their content, must have matte surfaces without reflections and be well illuminated, while, in any case, as far as the shape, color, character of letters and symbols are concerned, they must comply with Directive 6 of the Office of Studies for People with Disabilities of the Ministry of Environment, Public Works and Public Works (Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Public Works, 1996).

#### Escape in case of emergency

The provision of a procedure to support people with disabilities to escape from the building in case of emergency is a very important factor in avoiding accidents in a similar case. The references to issues of escape of people with disabilities are found in the P.D. 16/1996 on the needs of employees with disabilities and in the Planning Instructions of the Office of Studies for People with Disabilities of the Ministry of Environment, Energy and Climate Transport. which have been established through the above Decree and the Decisions 52487 and 52488/2002 of the same Ministry.

## 7.2 Current institutional framework for access for people with disabilities to cultural sites

To be accessible to all, cultural buildings must have the following services:

### *a. Specifications for entrance and reception areas*

1. There must be parking spaces for people with disabilities that will constitute 5% of the total allocated and in any case at least one in cases of a few spaces. The positions must have the appropriate dimensions (3,30m x 5,00m), be close to the entrance of the building that is accessible to people with disabilities and the movement from the location to the entrance should be without obstacles.
2. There must be a free space for stopping a small car in front of the entrance, for the immediate embarkation - disembarkation of people with disabilities. This space is preferred to be roofed.
3. In the surrounding area, there shall be a free pedestrian zone, with the blind driver incorporated.
4. At least one entrance, preferably the main one, must be accessible to wheelchair users. The rest must be accessible to walking disabled people, by installing handrails, highlighting the edges of the stairs, using non-slip floors, etc.
5. After entering, in a place close to it, wheelchairs must be provided to those who wish to do so.
6. The stalls of the ticket office, the refreshment bar and the shop must be low to serve wheelchair users.
7. Telephone devices and any other equipment must be usable by all visitors.



*b. Specifications for common areas*

In all public areas, a suitable route of a minimum width of 1,5m, free of obstacles and with a guide for the blind, must be provided.

Small level changes should be covered, apart from steps, by inclined levels of maximum inclination of 5%, minimum width of 1.5m that will have the necessary handrails, landings and non-slip floor. Alternatively, lifts can be used.

When there is a floor, elevators are necessary. At least one of them must measure at least 1,10m x 1,40m. Adequate lighting must be provided to facilitate deaf and visually impaired persons, as well as an audio description of the floor for blind people. Also, in the level changes, in the frames, in the obstacles and in the furnishings, there must be strong color differences.

*c. Specifications for the surrounding area*

The surrounding area ought to be approachable by all. Signs must be affixed to appropriate points so that the spaces are easily identifiable and that the routes to be followed are easily selected. The marking must be accompanied by texts in Braille and embossed drawings of the space to be placed at its strategic points.

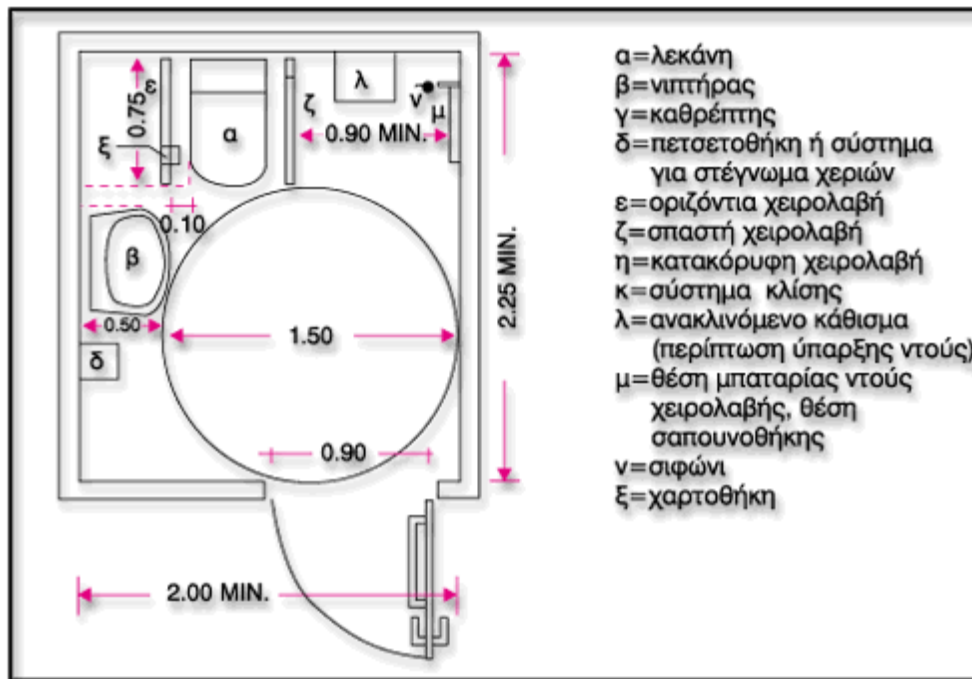
At the same time, it is advisable to paint the spaces in such a way as to create color contrasts that will complement the marking and will be particularly useful to people with impaired vision. Also, there should be guidance and signage for the services offered for people with disabilities. The international symbol of access to the I.S.P. (Fig. 8) should be used in the signage for people with disabilities. If there is a special service for people who are blind or deaf, there must be the corresponding signage.



The International Access Symbol (White on black or blue background) (Office of Studies for people with disabilities – Ministry of Environment, Spatial Planning and Public Works., 1996)



Finally, sanitary facilities with dimensions and equipment suitable for people with disabilities are necessary.



Design of a sanitary area (Office of Studies for people with disabilities – Ministry of Environment, Public Health and Public Health Organization, 1996)