

# **ENAT Congress 2009**

## **Workshop „Trends and Innovations in Accessible Tourism“**

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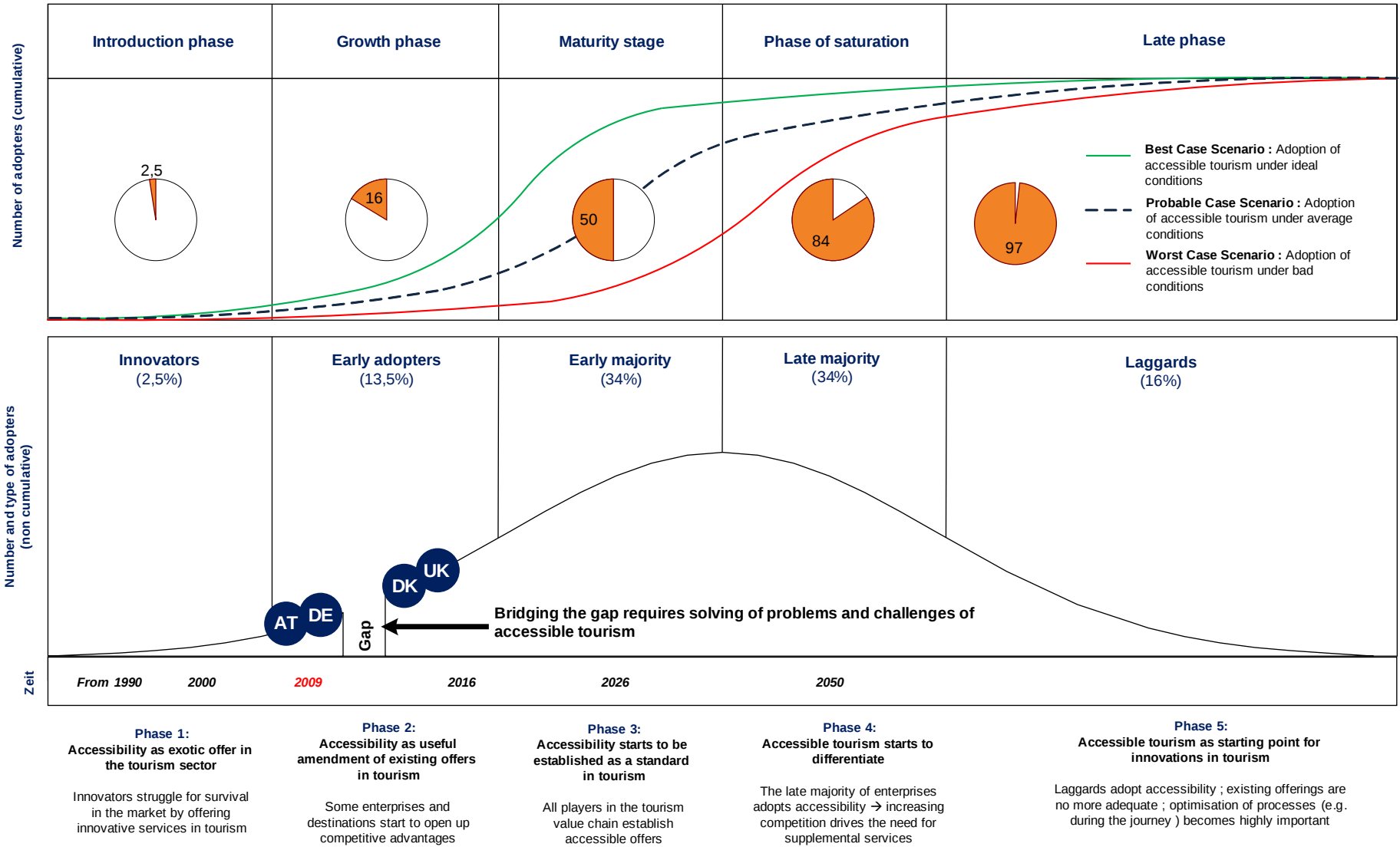
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## | Workshop Report - Starting point...

# Adoption Curve of Accessibility in Tourism – An Assumption

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- | What is the assessment of the adoption of accessible tourism?
  - | Market scenario with full penetration by about 2026 is right!
- | Accessible tourism is not a niche market! Yet, does the long-term trend indicate towards accessibility in ALL tourism enterprises?
  - | At the moment, accessible tourism is a niche market. Especially in economically difficult times, operating in a niche market may be an advantage, as well.
  - | On the other hand, it is not only a niche, but more some kind of a cross issue.
  - | In the long term, the market for accessible tourism is sustainable (see e.g. study by Peter Neumann in Germany)
- | What are the requirements and preconditions for reaching a critical mass of tourism enterprises (about 20% of enterprises)?
  - | Difficulty is that tourism enterprises must adopt accessibility, BUT they must be accompanied by other companies/providers of infrastructure/public bodies etc. The whole value chain must become accessible! It is not enough to have leading-edge single players. (Yet, early adopters in a region may play an important role in convincing followers!)
  - | Transport is a difficult issue (especially if not public transport).
  - | Co-operations among stakeholders (especially for marketing etc.) are highly important.

- | Which kind of active push is required: Society, Politics, Market?
  - | Political push is necessary (and good!), then society and market will follow.
  - | There is a multitude of possible “pushes” (from different stakeholders).
- | What are the main obstacles for the diffusion of accessible tourism?
  - | Decision makers in tourism companies must force this issue actively – in person (this requirement may be good and bad as well).
  - | Yet, not only decision makers (managers etc.) must be committed to this issue, also personnel in tourism companies is very important (it is a service sector!)
  - | Tourism enterprises would appreciate some kind of one-stop-shop where they can gain the necessary know-how.
  - | Sometimes, lobby groups for different types of disabilities do not cooperate well with other lobby groups, and some kind of “competition” among different types of disabilities evolves – which clearly impedes the adoption of accessibility”.

## Clear trends

1. Multitude of regional initiatives (unconnected among each other) in accessible tourism (Upper Austria, Southern Tyrol, Salzburg, Styria, Vienna etc.); first modest attempts (e.g. in Austria) to coordinate these initiatives with each other.
  1. It is no danger for the adoption in general (at the side of companies), but a standardisation of certificates would be comfortable for guests. From this point of view, inhomogeneous certificates are a problem!
  2. Yet, a standard overall certificate for ALL types of disabilities at the same time will never be possible!!
  3. The way how to realise this standardisation of certificates remains somewhat fuzzy – there is no clear solution. In any case, this must be solved at the international level (e.g. EU), national homogenisation is not enough! The comparison with the categorisation of stars for hotels (which remains inhomogeneous up to now) does not suggest a possible standardisation...

## Fuzzy trends

1. Tourism industry starts to be interested in disabled persons as a target group (at least indirectly)
  1. Comfort is the leading mega-trend (which is rather close to accessibility, but not exactly the same)
  2. To a large extent it is a question of communication: It must be communicated much more positively - not “barrier-free”, but “accessible” - not “built for disabled”, but “design for all”.
  3. Tourism enterprises estimate that NOT EVERY company will specialise in accessibility, yet a majority (if not all, in the long term) of tourism enterprises will fulfil at least minimum criteria.
2. Marketing initiatives of individual tourism enterprises are on the rise, are getting more explicit and direct (“outing” as accessible enterprises)
  1. E.g. in the beginning in Germany, some tourism marketers did not dare to mention this issue in marketing. (Yet, now there are trends in marketing to address target groups e.g. like elderly people more directly, which is positive for the issue of accessibility, as well.)

## Final conclusion

1. Do invest in accessibility, but before you should gain the necessary know-how by expert consulting etc.
2. Basic know-how in business management is necessary for an accessible company just like any other company.
3. You must stand for accessibility yourself personally in order to be believable – only then it will work (only commercial arguments are not enough!)

## Thank you for your attention!

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