**2nd project Technical Meeting of “Pathways of accessible heritage tourism – Access2Heritage” Project**

The 2nd Technical Meeting of the project “Pathways of accessible heritage tourism – Access2Heritage” took place in Thessaloniki, on the 26th of November, on the premises of **Regional Development Fund of Central Macedonia.**

At the meeting, which was organized by the Lead Partner of the Project, the Management Body of Rodopi Mountain-Range National Park, the Project’s Partners had the opportunity to meet and discuss about the progress of the project so far, and about the next steps of implementation.

Among the key topics of the meeting were:

* the works about the **Pilot Rehabilitation and accessibility improvement in selected sites,**
* the actions aboutthe **Capacity building activities** that focus mainly to the Joint Strategy and Action Plan for promoting Accessible Heritage Tourism in the Cross Border area
* the preparations about the **Data Collection** in regard to accessible sites in the CB area, and about the Training sessions that will take place for local stakeholders and people working in the field of tourism
* the specifications about the accessible **Web Portal**
* and last but not least about the Case study **International Visits** in accessible destinations abroad that will result to the exchange of know how in accessible tourism.

In the end of the meeting, the Project’s Partners renewed their appointment for next March for the 3rd Technical Meeting in Razlog.

We remind you that Access2Heritage” is funded by INTERREG V-A “Greece-Bulgaria 2014-2020”, and involves the following nine (9) partners:

Management Body of Rodopi Mountain-Range National Park; Regional Development Fund of Central Macedonia; Municipality of Volvi; Local Economic Development Agency-Razlog (Bulgaria), National Confederation of Disabled People of Greece; Union of Disabled People in Bulgaria; Technological Educational Institute of Central Macedonia – Business Management Department, Ecoworld Rhodopes Association (Bulgaria), Regional Youth Parliament Association (Bulgaria).

The budget for the project amounts to 1,295,840.00 €

The principal objective of this project is to support sustainable tourism relating to natural or cultural heritage in the Cross-Border area and to consolidate the area as an international tourist destination with an increased accessibility via and by means of a series of activities designed to support the tourist project and the spectrum of services that are associated with it.

Among other things, the project aims:

* for the exchange of know-how, expertise and good practices relating to the improvement of accessibility with respect to the infrastructures for natural and cultural heritage between the partners;
* to sensitize local entities on the importance and potential of cultural tourism and of adopting strategies for its viable and all-inclusive planning and development;
* to collect data relating to accessibility and user-friendliness for visitors with disabilities and senior citizen of the key cultural and natural resources in the area, and
* towards the elaboration of a joint survey for the strategic design and planning of the branding of the CB area as an international tourist destination for senior citizens and people with special needs, offering high quality at a low to affordable cost.

In this context, Access2Heritage includes of sensitization campaigns on the local-level, the organization and hosting of a festival and educational – training seminars on increased accessibility tourism.

Access2Heritage also includes works for improving accessibility to selected areas in in the Rodopi Mountain-Range National Park, and in the Municipalities of Volvi, of Razlog and of Kardzhali.

