

**Interreg**  
CENTRAL EUROPE



**COME-IN!**

European Union  
European Regional  
Development Fund

**ACCESSIBILITY IN CULTURAL POLICIES:  
OUTCOMES AND PERSPECTIVES FROM THE COME-IN!  
PROJECT**

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## 1. COME-IN! in a nutshell

The project COME-IN! (Cooperating for Open access to Museums- towards a widEr Inclusion), funded under the Interreg CENTRAL EUROPE Programme aims at valorising cultural heritage, by enhancing the capacities of small and medium-sized museums to increase the number of visitors, by making museums accessible to people with disabilities.

The project partnership led by Central European Initiative – Executive Secretariat, is composed with a multi-faceted network of museums, disability associations, academic representatives, training institutions and policy makers, who worked jointly to define transnational standards and to transfer the acquired know-how, to increase the accessibility of museums involved in the project.

Since its kick-off in July 2016, the project has delivered very important outcomes/results: the COME-IN! Guidelines for organising accessible collections and exhibitions, and the training handbook for museum operators were developed as an innovative and strategic approach to promote museums' accessibility and which are available for the public. Both outputs have been applied during 2017 and 2018 to the museums involved in the project which performed investments in the field of accessibility. The newly accessible museums were presented at the launching events in Udine, Steyr, Pula, Piran, Weimar and Krakow.

Finally, the COME-IN! label will be developed as a promotional tool: museums which commit to apply the accessibility standards defined within the project will be awarded with the label. The label will be promoted on a transnational, national and local level to ensure the visibility of participating museums and the transferability of project results.

The project started on July, 1th 2016 and will last till September, 30th 2019.



## 2. The COME-IN! principles

The COME-IN! approach is based on two fundamental concepts: inclusion and accessibility for all.

Inclusion implies to respect everyone just the way he or she is. It means that all people have the opportunity to take part fully in the life of society.

The other fundamental concept is accessibility as stated by Article 9 of UN Disability Rights Convention: “Accessibility or freedom from barriers is an essential condition for the equality of people with disabilities and their participation in society”.

Accessibility has to take into account:

- Physical access

Physical access means access to public buildings, roads, transportation and other indoor and outdoor facilities, including museums. Especially persons with mobility impairments are dependent on physical accessibility.

Regarding museums the concept of universal design is important: “Starting out from the concept of ‘design for all’ or ‘universal design’, the physical environment and products and services should be designed in such a way that it can be used as simply, without problems and efficiently by as large as possible a group of persons with different conditions, abilities, preferences or needs”.

- Access to information and communication

Access to information and communications includes i.a. electronic services and emergency services. Especially people with sensory or intellectual impairments are often confronted with information and communication barriers. This includes, for example, measures to provide in public buildings and other public facilities signage in



Braille and signage in easy to read and understand forms. Furthermore, guides and sign language interpreters should be available in public buildings.

- Social access

Among physical barriers, such as steps in a building, negative attitude towards people with disabilities can also be a barrier to access for all persons with disabilities. Since people with disabilities have the same rights to be included in society as anybody else, they should have equal opportunities to participate to all aspects of social life: education, work, leisure, sport, etc. Regarding museums, “The challenge in this field is not only ensuring the accessibility of buildings, but to enable people with sensory impairments and those with learning disabilities to experience and understand the arts and culture, e.g. by means of tactile, visual and audio presentations. In addition, the active participation of people with disabilities in cultural events should be promoted and the wariness of society with regard to such artistic events reduced”.

- Economic access

People with disabilities are often confronted with economic disadvantages. Museums should promote initiatives that offer free admission, reductions, and priority access for people with disabilities and/or the accompanying persons. Alternatively, they should provide equal service for all and therefore have equal fees (and no fee for an accompanying person).

### 3. The COME-IN! tools

The COME-IN! project has developed an innovative and strategic approach to promote museums’ accessibility, based on two main pillars: assessment and planning, and training.

**The COME-IN! Guidelines** represent a guide for museums and galleries to:

- Evaluate their accessibility level along the defined service chain;
- Develop all possible conditions to ensure accessibility for all;



- Adjust their services to the adequate accessibility standard;
- Organise accessible and multi-senses exhibitions for all.

The service chain is the basic tool to evaluate museum's accessibility, as it considers the most important moments when visiting a museum: Input (information and communication before the visit), arrival, entry, cash desk, wardrobe, exhibition area, services, shop and output (information and communication after the visit).



The COME-IN! Guidelines allow us to cross-check the service chain with the relevant accessibility criteria: physical access, information and communication access, social access, economic access and to identify possible lacks in services in terms of accessibility and therefore to plan the interventions. The Guidelines include examples and best practices identified on the international level as an input to solve problems and eliminate barriers.

Accessibility / Service chain	Physical access	Information and communication access	Social access	Economical access
<b>Input</b>				
<b>Arrival</b>				
<b>Entrance</b>				



Cash desk				
Wardrobe				
Exhibition area				
Toilet				
Shop				
Output				

Besides physical interventions and adjustments in communication, it is crucial to provide **training** for museum operators to ensure the same service for all and to make operators aware of the meaning of inclusion and accessibility and thus, to be ready to:

- Apply the procedures and use the foreseen accessibility tools in their work;
- Use the accessibility matrix of the service chain;
- Accompany and offer proper services to single visitors or groups of visitors.

Staff training is essential to guarantee the provision of good service to persons with disabilities.

Staff training has the following aims:

- To raise awareness of the meaning of inclusion and accessibility;
- To apply the procedures and use the tools available in their own framework for the purpose of accessibility;
- To use the Matrix of the service chain;
- To accompany and offer proper services to single visitors or groups of visitors;
- To design accessible exhibitions.

All museums employees must attend the training.



The training curriculum developed for the COME-IN! project consists of three modules:

- M1 Accessible museums and the service chain approach (4/6 h)
- M2 Awareness raising (6/8 h)
- M3 Designing accessible exhibitions (4 h)

Each museum can choose the number of training hours (between 14 and 18) on the basis of its needs and constraints.

The COME-IN! consortium has developed a training path and handbook for operators, which is available together with the guidelines at: <http://www.interreg-central.eu/Content.Node/COME-IN.html>

#### **4. The COME-IN! Label: transferability of results**

The consortium is currently working on the elaboration of a label to be awarded to the museums applying the COME-IN! standards, as defined in the Guidelines. The label will be promoted on the transnational level to ensure the application in other museums.

During the Conference, the main features of the Label awarding procedures and the opportunity for museums to enter a network of cultural institutions promoting accessibility to culture will be presented for the first time.

#### **5. The political endorsement and the CEI Capitalization Conference Outline**

The conference will provide the opportunity to present the COME-IN! results to the Ministries of Culture representatives from CEI Members States and from the COME-IN! partnership countries, with a focus on:

- Enhancing the ministerial cooperation in the cultural field;



- Extending the concept of accessibility to culture to other countries in Central Europe and beyond, in line with European principles;
- Presenting of COME-IN! label and discussing its strategic positioning;
- Encouraging the adoption of political measures towards accessibility for all;
- Having the COME-IN! approach and results endorsed.

The Conference will gather representatives of Culture Ministries from the Central European Initiative's Member States, museums, other relevant external stakeholders, associations and representatives with a specific expertise/interest in accessibility.

The working language of the conference will be English. Translation in Italian will be provided.