

UNWTO AND FUNDACIÓN ONCE DELIVER INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION OF 'ACCESSIBLE TOURIST DESTINATIONS' AT FITUR

- In its first edition, the first recipient of the “Accessible Tourist Destination” award was Portugal, while Barcelona and the Indian city of Thrissur received special mentions
- The ATD (Accessible Tourism Destination) are distinctions granted by the UNWTO and the ONCE Foundation to recognize and promote tourist sites accessible to all

(Madrid, January 24, 2020). - The World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and Fundación ONCE celebrated the best ‘Accessible Tourist Destinations’, at FITUR, the tourism trade fair in Madrid. These are distinctions granted by the two entities to recognize and promote tourist destinations that are accessible to all people. In this first edition of the initiative, **this special recognition was given to Portugal, Barcelona and the Indian city of Thrissur.**

The recognition ceremony took place within the framework of the International Tourism Fair (FITUR) 2020, which is now in its 40th edition and is held at the IFEMA Fairgrounds in Madrid. **Zurab Pololikashvili**, UNWTO Secretary-General participated in the event alongside **José Luis Martínez Donoso**, General Director of Fundación ONCE. Also taking part were **Marina Diotallevi**, Director of Ethics, Culture and Social Responsibility at UNWTO; **Ana Larrañaga**, Director of IFEMA, and **Jesús Hernández**, Director of Universal Accessibility and Innovation of Fundación ONCE.

The ATDs 2019 edition conferred **special recognition to Portugal** for the importance the country has attached to accessibility and **for their involvement in the development and implementation of tourism** products and services that have access for all in every part of the design. **Rita Marques**, Secretary of State for Tourism of Portugal, received the recognition.

In addition, special mentions were given to **Barcelona and the Indian city of Thrissur**. In the case of the Spanish city, the jury considered that it is **“really advanced in terms of accessibility”**, presenting good conditions in its tourist resources, including accommodation and catering establishments, in addition to transport. **Thrissur**, meanwhile, received a special mention as an **‘Emerging Destination’** for being **“in full development of accessibility, with strong involvement of public entities in this**

regard". The distinctions were collected by **Eduard Torres**, President of the Executive Committee of Tourism of Barcelona, and **P Bala Kiran**, Director of Kerala at Tourism India.

Cristóbal Gabarrón, the Spanish artist in charge of designing the ATD2019 trophy, created the sculpture "The Door to Adventure", reflecting the values of the ATD initiative and tourism itself. Gabarrón created a character through a door, which is the door to the adventure of travel, nature, culture and friendship.

As indicated by the UNWTO Secretary General at its General Assembly in St. Petersburg, when the distinguished destinations were first announced, with the ATDs "the organizers want to value the destinations that make an important effort so that they can be enjoyed by any tourist, regardless of their physical, sensory or cognitive abilities".

They also clarify that, although it is a recognition of the effort to maintain and increase the level of accessibility achieved in tourist destinations, the **'Accessible Tourism Destination' awards are not formal certifications of accessible destinations** that guarantee that accessibility.

Marina Diotallevi was in charge of closing the event with the announcement of the ATD2020 edition.