

## PRESS RELEASE

# The *Club de Excelencia en Sostenibilidad* and the Adecco Foundation present the **Accessibility Guide for Companies to the European Parliament**

- The translation into English of this document and its presentation in Brussels represent a great move forward at a European level for the implantation of accessibility in companies.
- In Spain, 9% of the population suffers from some type of disability. However, it is still one of the countries with the lowest rate of work integration in the European Union, and one of the main reasons is accessibility, which is still insufficient.
- If companies wish to be socially responsible and to be ready to comply with the Spanish Law on Social Integration for the Disabled (*LISM*), they will have to adapt their buildings and have areas for all their employees, whether of limited abilities or not.

**Madrid, January, 2010.-** The integration of disabled persons is a problem area still to be resolved in our society. In Spain, social equality has made progress in recent years with regard to the design of integration policies, but its mainstreaming is still a long way off, despite the fact that one of the main groups at which social policies are aimed is that of the disabled.

These are some of the main conclusions to be gathered from the “**Accessibility Guide for Companies**”, the document prepared by the *Club de Excelencia en Sostenibilidad* and the **Adecco Foundation**, the purpose of which is to train companies in the criteria for accessibility in the workplace and to enable the integration of the disabled into a world which, even today, well into the twenty-first century, is not designed for them.

### The role of the company, vital in the pursuit of total integration

In Spain, **9% of the population, that is, 3.5 million people, suffer from some kind of disability**. However, it is still one of the countries with the lowest rate of work integration in the European Union. One of the main reasons for this imbalance lies in the existence of architectural barriers, which make it a great deal more difficult for companies to take persons with difficulties onto their workforce.

In our times, total integration cannot be conceived of if people do not have a stable post of work available. In this context, the **company plays the vital role of being an agent capable of generating real opportunities**. Little more than a decade ago it would have come as a surprise to find companies interested in adapting their buildings, environments and work posts for persons with physical, sensory or psychological disabilities.

Article 49 of the Constitution was the first legislative step towards social integration for the disabled. This constitutional mandate culminated, in the legislative field, with the publication of the Spanish **Law 13/1982, dated 7th April, on social integration for the disabled (LISMI)**, which, among other matters, obliges state owned businesses to give employment to a number of disabled no lower than 5% of its total workforce, and 2% for privately owned businesses, where these businesses have 50 employees or more.

Yet, it is true today that the majority of companies are not architecturally prepared to integrate persons with some type of disability and this means a significant hindrance towards fulfilling this legal regulation. Therefore, **if businesses wish to be socially responsible and to be ready to meet the law, known in Spanish as LISMI, they will have to adapt their buildings and make areas available for all their employees, be they of limited abilities or not.**

To help businesses achieve this task, the Accessibility Guide offers a broad vision of the world of disability, explaining and defining all matters of use and offering, in six sections, the parameters and basic norms for achieving accessibility in any and all settings:

- **Urban accessibility** (urban furniture, parking, pedestrian crossings, rest areas, etc)
- **Accessibility in building** (ramps, staircases, lifts, etc)
- **Accessibility to the company by transport** (by road, air, sea, rail, etc)
- **Accessibility in communications systems** (characters, size, colour, contrast, illumination, tactile signage, sign language, etc)
- **Accessible equipment, products and services**
- **Personnel awareness and training activities**

### To reach full accessibility, the new challenge for the XXIst century

Our country, Spain, has been witness in recent years to an important legal evolution in the social sphere. The Dependence Act, the Equal Opportunities Act or the requirement to meet the regulations with regard to Safety at Work, are just a few examples.

Likewise, new criteria for accessibility and anti-discrimination have gradually been becoming established as part of our culture, and the aging of citizens, due to the high life expectancy registered in our country, is an ever more palpable reality.

Taking into account this ambience which leans more and more to the putting in place of social norms, our **situation could provide a good opportunity to boost architectural accessibility**, which in the long run is the first step towards eliminating the possible mental barriers which may still be in existence, and to reaching total integration.

In our day and age, a new paradigm is becoming the norm: **Universal Design**, which directs its activity at the design of products and environments which are easily accessible to the greatest possible number of persons, regardless of their capacities and abilities, without their being need to adapt them or redesign them in a special way.

This prototype has to be put into practice in the XXIst century, and good accessibility must be achieved, by which is to be understood a level of accessibility such as one which exists, but is unnoticeable for the majority of users.

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#### **Fundación Adecco, the Adecco Foundation**

*Constituted in July 1999, the Fundación Adecco is the fruit of the social responsibility assumed by the Adecco company, as a world leader in human resources management. Its main objective is the insertion in*

*the labour market of those persons who, because of their personal characteristics, find greater difficulty in finding a post of work.*

*The Fundación Adecco carries out labour integration programmes for:*

- *Men and women over the age of 45*
- *The disabled*
- *Women with family responsibilities which are not shared and / or victims of gender-based violence*
- *High performance Sports People or Ex Sports People*

#### **Club de Excelencia en Sostenibilidad**

*The Club de Excelencia en Sostenibilidad is a business association made up of a group of large businesses who are committed to sustainable growth from an economic, social and environmental point of view, with the objective of being:*

- *A forum for dialogue with stakeholders*
- *A benchmarking platform in Sustainable Development.*
- *Transmitters of best practice in Corporate Responsibility for the Spanish business network.*

*The Club for Excellence in Sustainability, as defined by its statutes, has the following general objectives:*

- *To organize corporate responsibility events.*
- *To share experiences in corporate responsibility*
- *To organize training in corporate responsibility.*
- *To establish alliances with foundations and business schools.*
- *To produce publications.*
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- *The creation of prizes and public awards.*
- *The development of projects.*
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- *To collaborate with associations and administration.*
- *The discussion and analysis of recommendations.*

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*For further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact us. With very best wishes.*

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