

# ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT

## General

The **PARANGALITSA ECO TRAIL** is straight, therefore once the visitors reach it end, they then need to return to the starting point, over a total distance of 400 m. The TRAIL starts 30 m. away from the refuge/guest house **Фургон картала** and extends southeast through the adjacent forest. Now, after the interventions and the smoothing of the TRAIL that took place in the context of the **BIO2CARE Project**, the path is relatively gentle, without irregularities, with almost zero transverse slopes and slight slopes locally along the direction of path as it is uphill.

The **TRAIL** includes:

- pathway of a clear width that is in general over 1.5m and no less than 1.3m (locally), and of a clear height 2.3m and above
- accessible rest points (benches)
- fences-handrail on the left side of the TRAIL, at 90-95cm from the ground, which may serve as a guide for blind visitors and as an auxiliary handle for the visually impaired and/or visitors with limited mobility
- information and signage for the disabled, available also in Braille

It is allowed to visit the TRAIL with guide dogs and/or help dogs.

The TRAIL is open all year round, however the access conditions can change dramatically in cases of strong winds, rain, snow, frost, etc., so it is recommended not to visit the TRAIL under such conditions.

Guests can be informed about the accessibility and the condition of the TRAIL prior their visit by at the **Visitor Information Centre in Blagoevgrad** run by the [Rila National Park Directorate](#).

The Rila National Park Directorate is committed to making the PARANGALITSA ECO TRAIL accessible, according to the guidelines for visitors with disabilities included in the "[Guidebook for Accessible Nature Trails: Design Guidelines and Evaluation System](#)".

## Compliance status

The **PARANGALITSA ECO TRAIL** is **partly in compliance** with the *General Guidelines* provided in the aforementioned Guidebook for visitors with reduced mobility, due to the following *cases of non-compliance*:

- Near the start/end of the TRAIL there are no suitable special parking spaces for disabled vehicles.
- The welcome/bird watching area (with picnic tables, chemical WC, etc.) that the visitors will encounter when approaching the area is not, at this stage, accessible to visitors with disabilities. Note: Especially blind visitors and wheelchair users may have significant difficulties in accessing and making use of the facilities in place.
- The route from the welcome/bird watching area to the start/end point of the TRAIL is not, at this stage, accessible to visitors with disabilities. Notes: Therefore, one should park temporarily (for disembarkation) by the starting point of the TRAIL.
- The staff of the Information Center has not received specialized training for the service/tour/information of people with disabilities.
- The information material available to the visitors of the Information Center is not available in multiple accessible formats, but only in conventional printed versions and in Braille-print versions.
- There are no provisions/plans for emergencies cases that take into account the needs of visitors with disabilities.

In addition, the **TRAIL** is partly **in compliance** with the *Special Guidelines* provided for visitors using **wheelchairs**, visitors with **walking difficulties**, visitors with **vision impairments and visitors with hearing impairment**, due to the following *cases of non-compliance*:

- The surface of the TRAIL is not paved. Note: In most parts of the TRAIL the surface is natural, which may make it difficult, at least locally, to move with some types of wheelchairs.
- The fences-handrails next to the pathway surface of the TRAIL do not have a low protection guard (e.g., at 10cm from the ground) for the safety and convenience of wheelchair users or visually impaired.
- The rest points (benches) that the visitor will encounter inside the TRAIL, every 35 to 40m are not designed for persons with reduced mobility.
- Some features (e.g., tops of the signage boards) are not high enough (in some cases around 2m) for high persons.
- In some parts of the TRAIL the surface has relatively rough irregularities (protruding rocks/stones) and/or transverse (up to 7 degrees) or longitudinal (up to 10 degrees) slopes.
- The staff of the Information Center does not know sign language.
- The Information Center in Blagoevgrad is not fully accessible for visitors with disability. Note: There are no suitable special parking spaces for disabled vehicles and there is no accessible WC.

## About this accessibility statement

This statement was drafted on **14.12.2020**, following an evaluation performed by [DOMI ANAPTYXIS IKE](#) and [EUROPRACTIS M.IKE](#), on behalf of the [National Confederation of Disabled People in Greece \(E.S.A.meA.\)](#), based on a regular inspection to verify compliance with the guidelines provided in the aforementioned Guidebook.

## Submitting feedback and contact details

For the submission of requests for information and/or remarks about accessibility issues, as well as for the information of the Directorate for cases of non-compliance, please contact our **Headquarters** (Tel.: 073/880537. E-mail: [office@rilanationalpark.bg](mailto:office@rilanationalpark.bg). Address: Varosha, Bistrica str. 12 V, Blagoevgrad).

To submit requests for information regarding the renovation project of the TRAIL and/or regarding the BIO2CARE Project, please contact the **Director**, Mr. Krasimir Andonov.

For the organization of guided tours, organized/group visits, etc. and for information/instructions for your visit to the TRAIL, please send an email to [delovodstvo@rilanationalpark.bg](mailto:delovodstvo@rilanationalpark.bg).