

The Thyssen now an accessible museum

The first museum in Madrid to obtain the Universal Accessibility Certificate awarded by AENOR



From left to right, Evelio Acevedo, Fernando Benzo, Jesús Gómez-Salomé y Guillermo Solana

The Museo Nacional Thyssen-Bornemisza has obtained the Universal Accessibility Certificate awarded by AENOR (the Spanish Association for Standardization and Certification) and becomes the first museum in Madrid and the third in Spain to achieve this status, following the Guggenheim in Bilbao and the Museo del Hombre y la Naturaleza of the Island Council of Tenerife.

Evelio Acevedo, managing director of the Thyssen, and Guillermo Solana, its artistic director, were presented with the certificate by Fernando Benzo, the Secretary of State for Culture, and by Jesús Gómez-Salomé, AENOR's director of institutional relations and communication.

This category, based on Regulation UNE 170001-2, certifies that the museum offers equality of opportunities to all people in relation to the access and enjoyment of its services regardless of their age or abilities. This refers not only to potential architectural barriers but also to auditory, visual and sensory ones.

Fernando Benzo singled out “the effort” made by the museum in obtaining this certificate and emphasised that: “the Ministry considers it very important that this falls within the strategic plan to encourage the quality of cultural services in this country, Plan Cultura 2020, given that it is essential to ensure that everyone can take advantage of these services.”

For Evelio Acevedo: “we are extremely proud to be the first museum in Madrid to achieve this distinction, thus becoming a reference point for other Spanish museums. [...] The measures that we have taken perfectly reflect the spirit of social responsibility that characterises this museum, given that our mission goes beyond conserving our collections.”

According to Jesús Gómez-Salomé: “it is particularly significant that a museum which is so important for the image of Spain is so clearly committed to the concept of inclusion, furthermore employing a management system that encourages a dynamic of continual improvement.”

In the present day AENOR has issued more than 50 Universal Accessibility Certificate to organisations in all sectors and sizes, covering more than 200 different types of venues and services.

Since 2015 the Museo Thyssen has been working to ensure accessibility through an integral project that locates it as one of its strategic aims in order to ensure that both its installations and the services it offers to the public are universally accessible.

Since then the necessary steps have been taken to adapt all the museum's spaces for visitors' use and enjoyment. These range from external entrances to the exhibition galleries and include staircases, lifts and toilets, ensuring that they can be used by all sectors of the public. The most urgent and necessary changes were those relating to the installation of accessible counters, an updating of the evacuation plan which took into account visitors with reduced mobility, and adapting the toilet facilities. In addition, the museum has installed automatic doors, a staircase platform lift and acquired magnetic loop induction devices, among other initiatives.



The modifications made in order to obtain the AENOR certificate include:

- All **visitor attention desks** are now accessible (ticket desks, information, cloakroom, etc.,) and include magnetic loop technology to improve communication with visitors with hearing aids or implants.



- Various **doors** are now automatic so that visitors with reduced mobility or little strength as well as elderly people can enter without assistance. All frequently used doors have wide openings that allow for entering and turning.

- The step to the **main entrance** has been lowered.

- The **lifts** are now totally accessible with relief and braille buttons at an appropriate height, voice announcements, mirrors and hand rails around the inside walls.

- **Visual contrast strips** have been installed at two heights on windows, glass doors and the panoramic lift.

- The auditorium now has a **platform lift** with **spaces reserved** for visitors with reduced mobility and those accompanying them, and a **magnetic induction loop** to assist people with hearing aids or implants.

- The **adapted toilets** have been improved and are now equipped to be more accessible, including emergency devices.



- The **mother and baby room** is now accessible.

- New **mats** have been installed at the entrance to the museum and in the cafeteria, as well as **double handrails** on the stairs to the auditorium, on the cafeteria ramp and at the entrance to the reserved section of the cafeteria, as well as flexible **nylon support bands at two heights**.

- **Tables and chairs** have been acquired for the cafeteria and the terrace suitable for use by visitors with reduced mobility, as well as adjustable height stools.

- Visitors can **hire wheelchairs**, sticks with portable seats and pushchairs for babies.

- The **Emergency and Evacuation Plan** has been improved, specifically taking into account how to evacuate visitors with reduced mobility. Security staff members have been trained and vertical evacuation zones specified with evacuation chairs installed on the staircases.



- **New internal directives** have been devised to improve attention to visitors with disabilities, assistance in case of emergencies in the adapted toilets, free entry for those accompanying visitors with reduced mobility to the auditorium and galleries, and the preparation of accessible texts and documents.

- All members of the museum's staff receiving **training** in attention to visitors with special requirements. The museum also has 3 staff members trained in Spanish Sign Language and the aim is now to ensure that all visitor attention staff have a basic knowledge of it.

- Now available is a **Spanish Sign Language sign-guide** and text in various languages, auto-description for visitors with severe visual limitations and easy-to-read guides for those with learning difficulties.



- The Education Department is offering **workshops and guided tours** of the museum for special needs groups, adapting the visit and backup material to suit the requirements of the group.

- The museum's new **website** is accessible.

About AENOR

Through its activities of certification and standards compliance AENOR contributes to improving the quality and competitiveness of companies and their products and services. AENOR is the leading certification body in Spain with the most highly regarded certificates. As a result it is considered among the top 10 principal certifiers in the world.

In the present day more than 77,000 workplaces have one of AENOR's certificates, which validate organisations in areas such as Quality, Environmental Control, Innovation, Work Safety and Social Responsibility.

AENOR is a global entity active in 90 countries in certifying, training, information services, inspection, analysis, validation and verification of projects to reduce emissions, accompanying companies as they grow. In Spain it has an extensive network of 20 offices.

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