ICT Accessibility in Malta

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About FITA

The Foundation for Information Technology Accessibility was set up in 2001 to drive policy and initiatives promoting ICT accessibility for persons with disability.

- To promote equal opportunities for all through ICT
- To provide training services in ICT for disabled people
- To gather and disseminate information and to increase awareness on ICT matters;
- To liaise with and facilitate public and private endeavours in respect of the creation of equal opportunities in respect of ICT
- To offer advice and consultancy services to private and public organisations in information technology

Accessibility Services

- support for strategic planning for product accessibility
- design and development support
- expert accessibility testing
- conformance with Accessibility Standards
- creation and verification of VPAT documents
- accessibility monitoring service

Accessibility Certification

Standards applied by FITA

- Web Content Accessibility Guidelines
- EN301549

Certified ICT resources

- FITA approved logo
- Website included in the register of vetted websites for a year

Most common accessibility issues

Image descriptions
- Frequently lacking post launch

Audio alternatives
- No captions or script

Data Tables
- Occasional issue

Forms
- Unlabeled fields or use of icons instead of text labels

Colour contrast
- Common design issue

Headings and navigation
- Occasional CMS theme based issue

Text resizing
- Uncommon

Menus
- Occasional CMD theme based issue

Video
- Frequently lacking captions

Documents/PDF
- Occasional encapsulated images

Graphs & charts
- Rarely encountered but poorly described

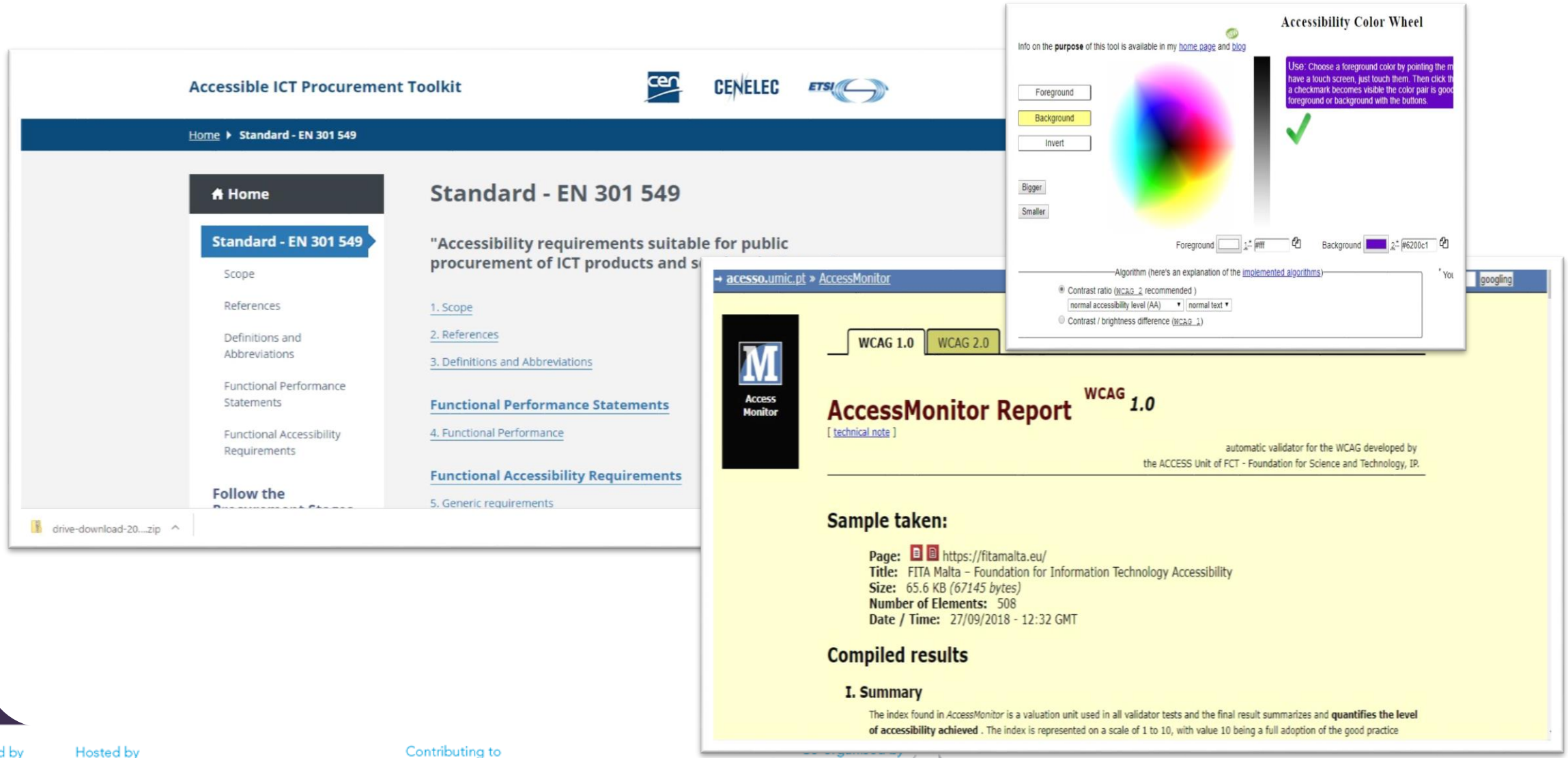
Flash
- Rarely encountered

Plugins
- Dependence on service provider

Compatibility with Assistive ICT

- Screen readers
- Voice Recognition
- Eye tracking
- Magnification software
- Mainstream smartphones and tablets
- Use of dedicated devices

Accessibility Toolkits



The Web Accessibility Directive

1. In Malta ICT accessibility is covered under the Equal Opportunities Act of 2000 which prohibits discrimination against persons with disability under Article 4 – Goods and Services.

2. With the transposition of the Web Accessibility Directive the legal framework is strenghtened through provisions made specifically for the websites and mobile APPs owned by public entities.

The Web Accessibility Directive

1. Work on transposition is being concluded.
2. FITA recommended CIOs to implement self assessment and publish accessibility statements.
3. The Malta Communications Authority was entrusted with the implementation, enforcement and reporting
4. FITA was entrusted with assessments and providing assistance to public entities with addressing accessibility issues
    1. Assessment includes use of automated tools and human testers using assistive technology products.
    2. FITA reporting mechanism and standard report template were revised to include format suggested by the Accessible ICT Procurement Toolkit based on standard EU301549.
    3. FITA‘s previous roles in supporting private sector, education and public health services in the effective implementation of accessible ICT remain unchanged.

Accessibility Initiatives

1. Malta Communications Authority and Parliamentary Secretariat for Persons with Disabilities and Active Ageing

   Short courses for elderly and disabled persons on cost-effective communication tools such as Skype and email communication, Facebook, YouTube, online shopping and government e-Services.

   1. Cavetta Digitali
   2. ENTER

2. Malta Communications Authority and other project partners

   ICT Accessibility Hubs – An extension of the ICT Pool service presently provided by FITA, where anyone including education and health professionals can try out and confirm the validity of assistive technology products based on user needs.

   1. Four centres (MCAST, SAPPORT, Ghajnsielem Centre, Public Library)
   2. ICT training in collaboration with EnableIreland

Accessibility Initiatives

1. There are ongoing discussions to release the Maltese Speech Engine that FITA launched in 2012 as open source. This is being done in collaboration with KPMG Crimsonwing Plc and the University of Malta.

2. Persons with disability can apply to fund their purchase of ICT products that help them address the limitations caused by impairment, through two grant schemes:
   a) The Malta Community Chest Fund
   b) The Empowerment Scheme managed by SAPPORT

Accessibility Initiatives

1. FITA, the Education Directorate and the Presidents Trust are collaborating on the testing, selection and funding of assistive ICT for school children with a vision impairment so as to help ensure their access to education.

2. The Access to Communication and Technology Unit (ACTU) provides an assessment service to children and young adults with a disability, including Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), in the area of Assistive Technology (AT) and Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC).
   ACTU is currently the sole trans-disciplinary team of assistive technology consultants which brings experience from a variety of backgrounds including occupational therapy, speech and language therapy, and education. The team operates both a unit based and home/school based service.

Accessibility Initiatives

Accessibility Initiatives

1. Targeting business accessibility as a whole
2. Certification awarded according to the business size
3. Re-Certification
4. Mystery Shoppers
5. Inclusion of award within SPOT platform

The SPOT project

spot.org.mt
discover accessible venues

Placing quality and accessibility on the map

Vodafone Malta Foundation
Mobilising the community, mobilising social change

Project Partners

spot.org.mt
discover accessible venues

Project Funding

- The Foundation for Information Technology Accessibility
- The Vodafone Malta Foundation
- Office of the Prime Minister

Data providers

- The Malta Tourism Authority
- Heritage Malta
- The Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability
- Local Councils
- Business owners
- The Maltese public in general and tourists

Main features

spot.org.mt
discover accessible venues

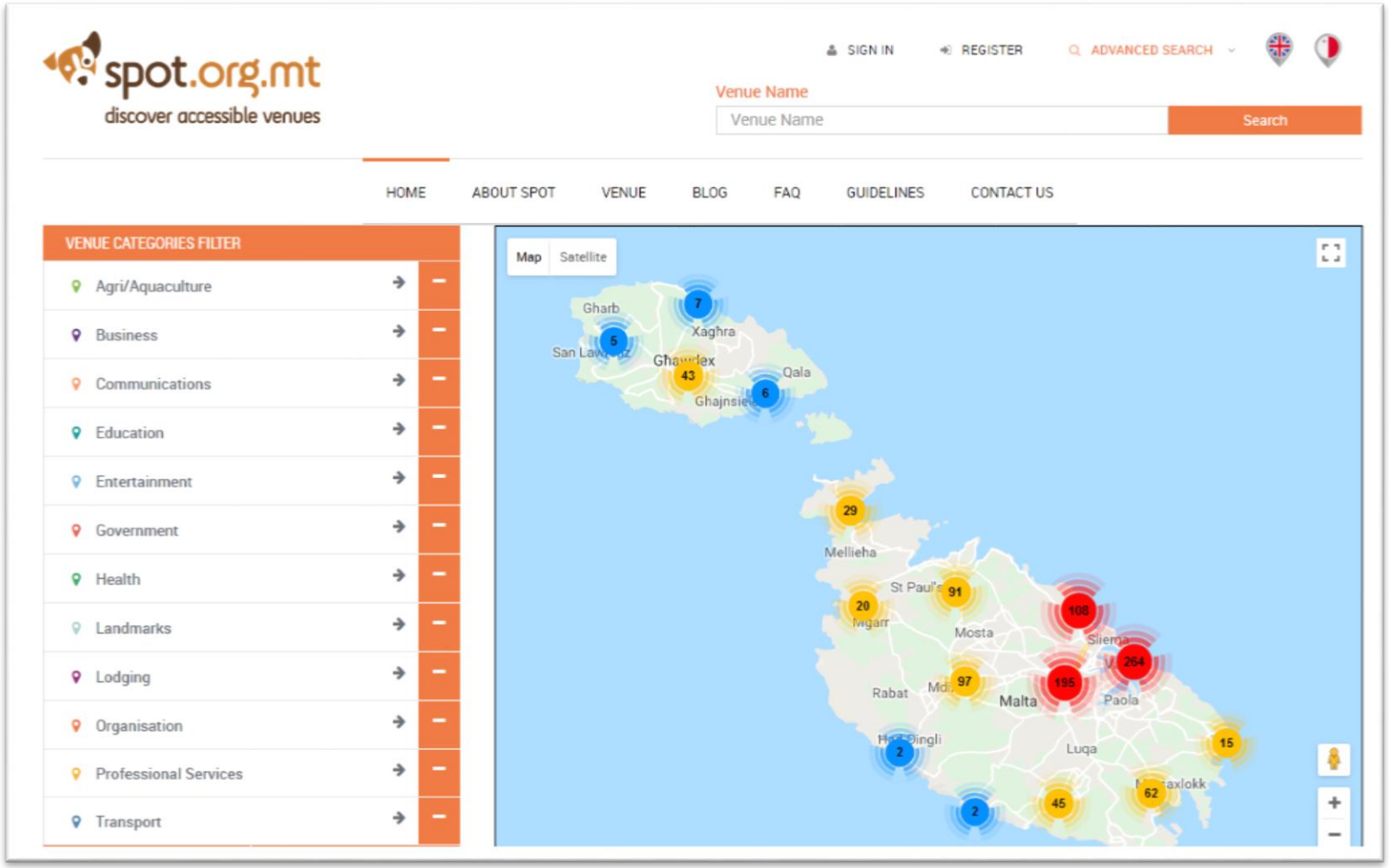
Search mechanisms

- Quick search
- Advanced search
- MAP search

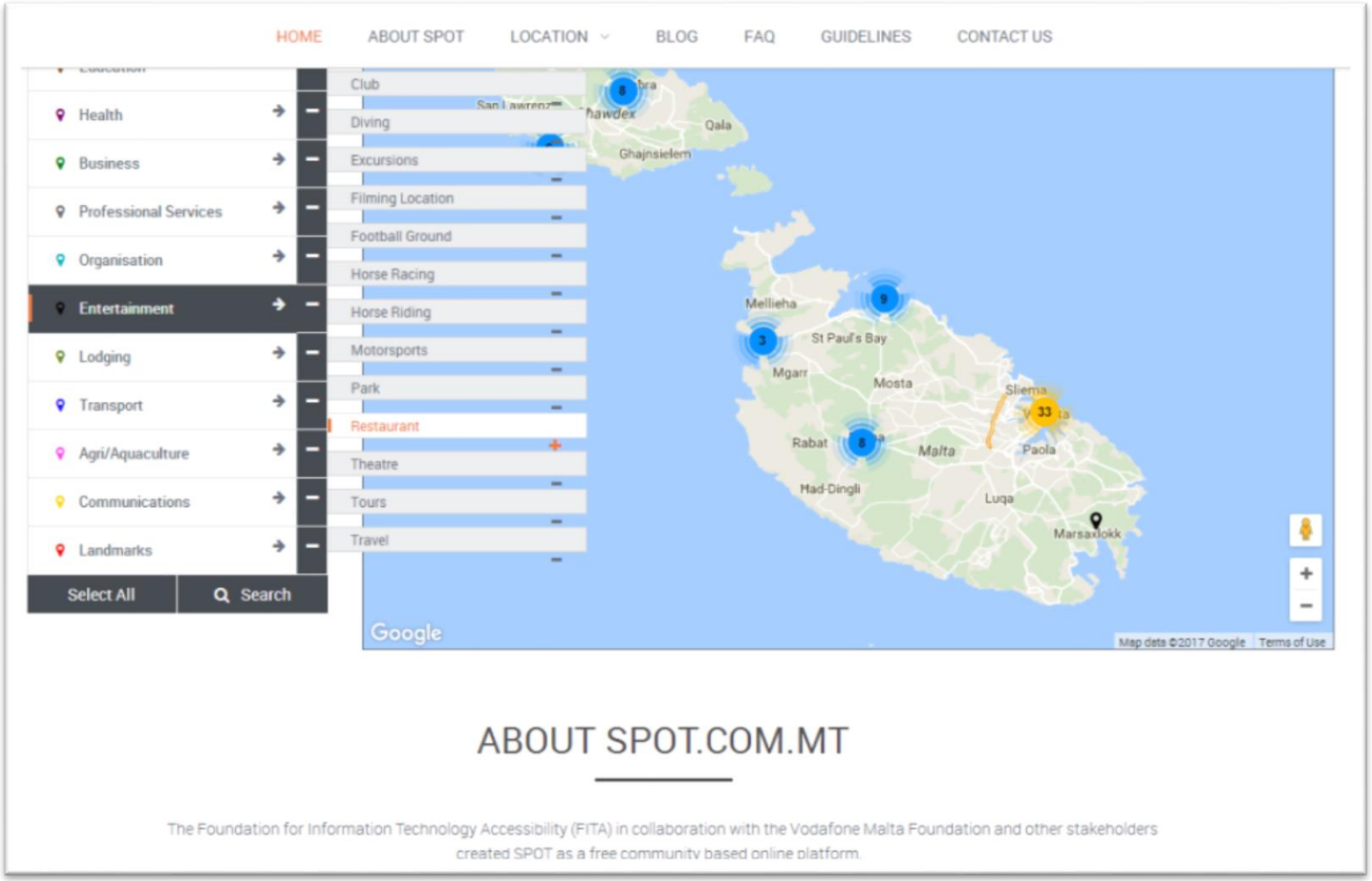
Additional features/functionality

- Compliance with WCAG standard
- User can add reviews of existing venues and can also add their own venue
- Moderated content
- Blog posts / articles
- Links to complimentary services
- Intelligent quality and accessibility rating systems
- Businesses may claim and maintain their own venue listing

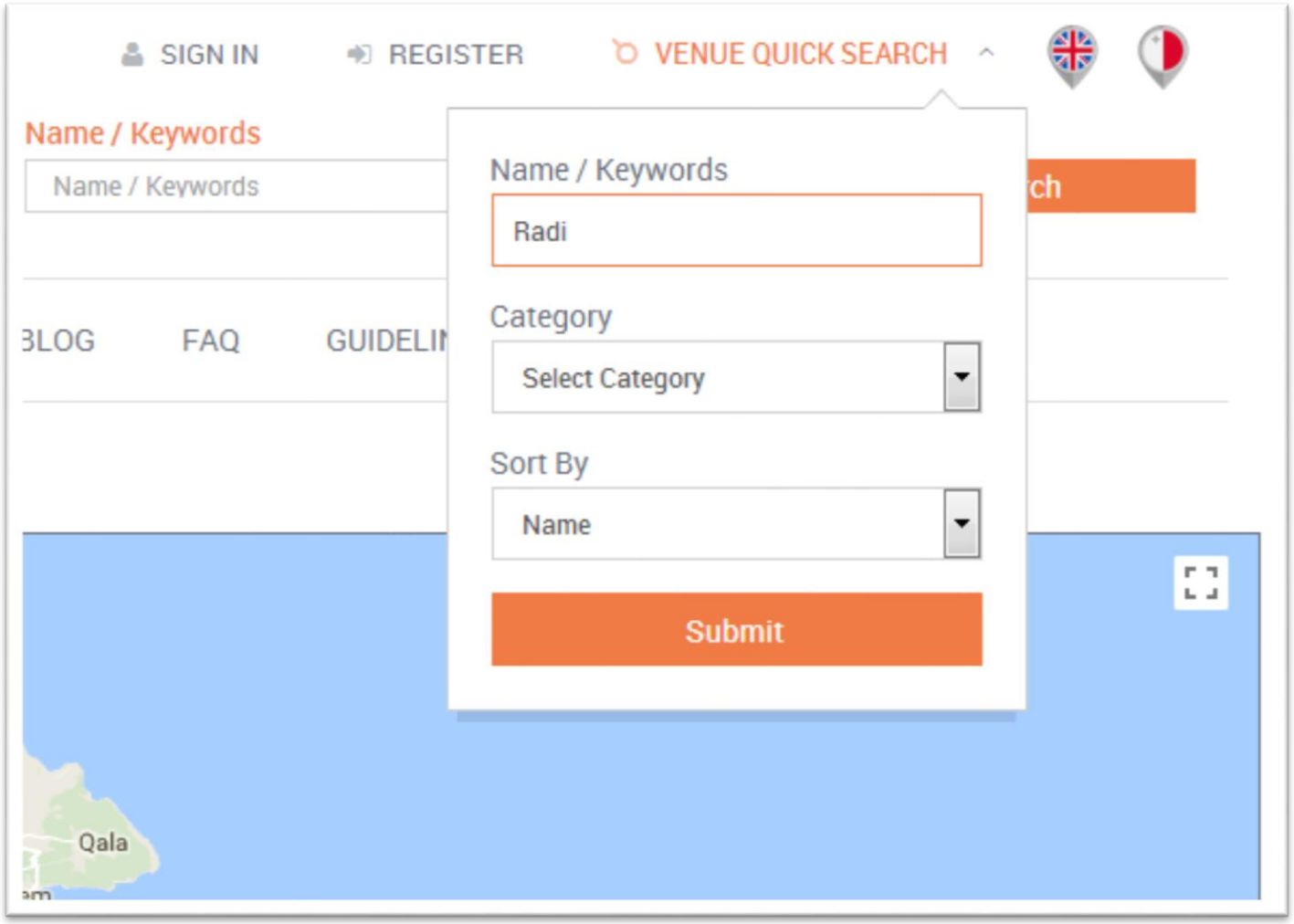
SPOT home screen with interactive map and quick search fields. Zooming in and out groups and ungroups venue pins



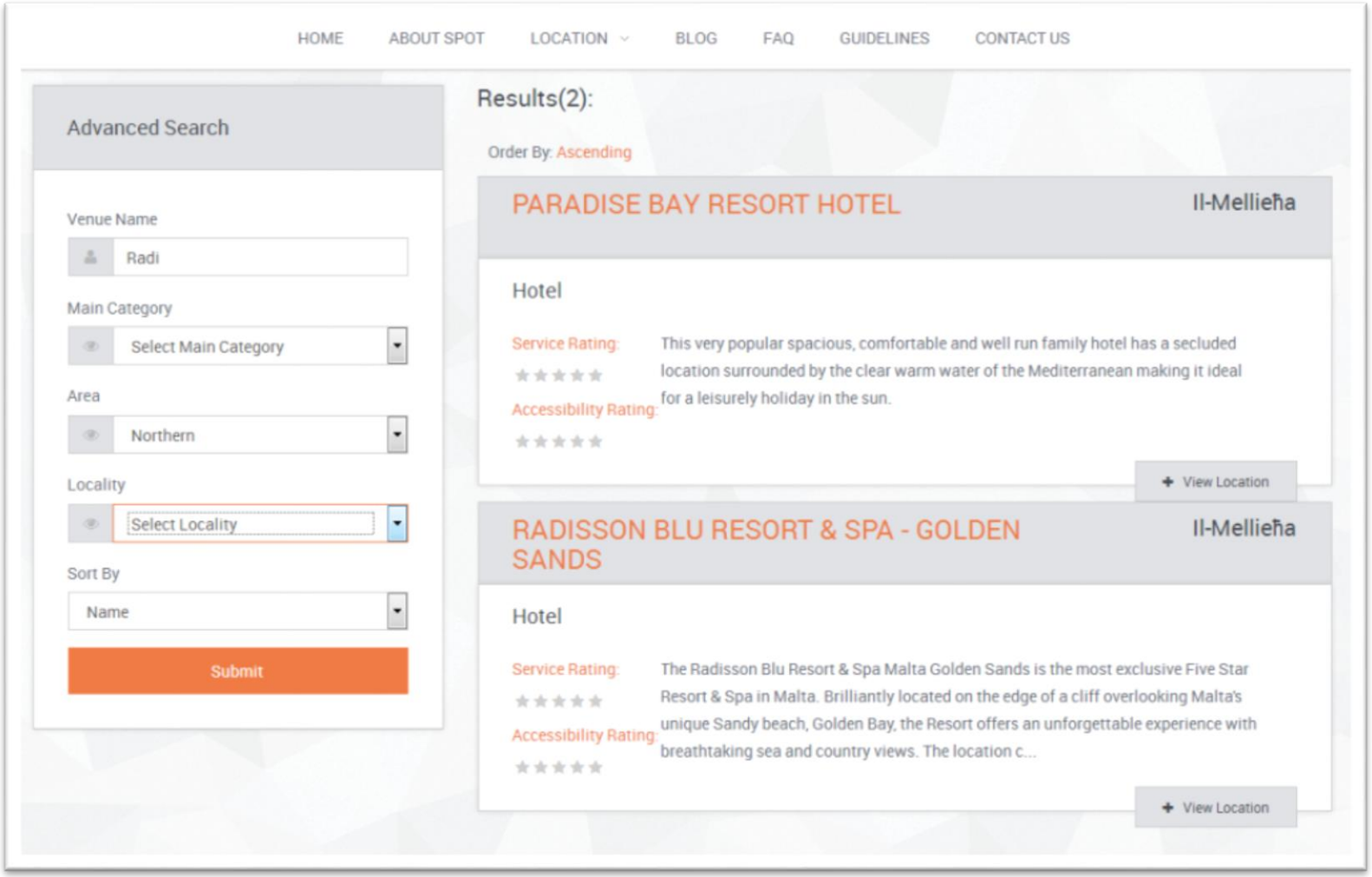
The map search with categories filter.
Users may select any combination of main or subcategories.



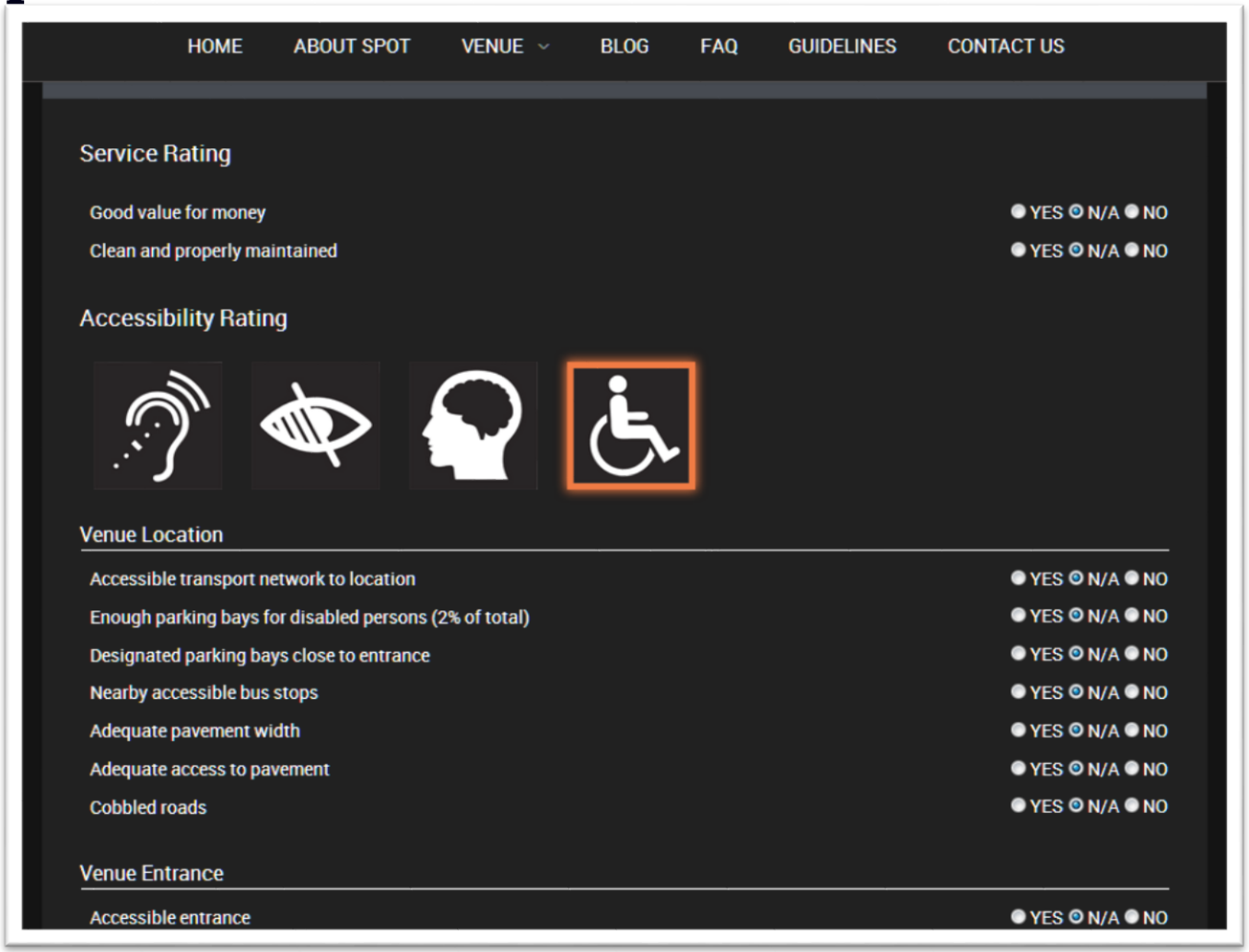
Text based quick search feature.
Plus a more in-depth search is available under the Venues menu



The advanced (text) search results page displaying summaries of matching venues.



Venue review page with dynamic questionnaire based on user selected disability groups. Here, the website's dark theme is active.



Thank you

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Accessible Europe

Coordinated by

Hosted by

The United Nations in Vienna

Contributing to

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

#ICT4SDG

Co-organised by

European Commission