



***Turisme de Catalunya* takes part in Warsaw's Tour & Travel fair for the first time**

The Brand Catalonia positions itself in an emerging market where the irruption of the low-cost airlines will facilitate the travel of Polish tourists outside of their country

Wednesday, 21 September 2005.— *Turisme de Catalunya*, the body attached to the Catalanian Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Consumer Affairs, presents the tourist attractions of Catalonia in Poland by taking part for the first time in the Tour & Travel fair to be held from the 22nd to the 24th of September in Warsaw's Palac Kultury i Nauki.

The presence of *Turisme de Catalunya* in this Polish fair shows the hopes it places on the eastern European market, especially that of the countries that have recently joined the European Union. *Turisme de Catalunya*, through its Centre for the Tourist Promotion in the Eastern Countries, will take part in the fair with a 45 m² stand, where the following entities will also be present: the Patronat de Turisme Costa Brava Girona, Lloret Turisme, Turisme de Barcelona, Montserrat, and Sol Vip Travel agents.

The first day of the international fair is devoted exclusively to professionals, while the other two days is open to the public. According to the organisers of the event, during last year's edition of the fair a total number of visitors was 39,780, of whom nearly 9,000 were professionals from the tourist sector.

The Polish market

Poland joined the European Union in May 2004, and it has nearly 39 million inhabitants making up an emerging market full of new tourist possibilities. A 5.5% growth of Poland's GDP during the period 2004-2005 is leading to the consolidation of a middle class that joins the population segment that can afford to go on holiday outside Poland.

According to figures from Poland's Institute of Tourism (ITP), during the year 2003 the Poles went on a total of 17 million tourist trips. 65% of all travel carried out



abroad had holidaying as its leading motivation (essentially taking the form of circuits, sun-and-beaches, and city breaks), and 50% was done with previous reservation.

Catalonia is the destination in the Spanish state receiving the greatest number of tourists from Poland. The attraction of Barcelona and the good road communications are two of the key factors that have contributed to the positioning of the Catalonian tourist destination among the Poles' favourites in their travels around Europe.

In addition, the incorporation to the European Union has facilitated the arrival of the low-cost airlines as a response to the growth of trade relations between the new and the old EC countries. Thus, the arrival of Central Wings, Wizz Air, Skyeurope, Germanwings, EasyJet or Ryanair, all of them operating with Barcelona, Girona and Reus airports, has placed the Brand Catalonia as a second Schengen destination after Greece, and could favour the increase in the demand for the Catalonian city breaks product.