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## ***Turisme de Catalunya* opens a new Tourist Promotion Centre in Germany**

**The new office will be located in Frankfurt and will be managed by Montserrat Sierra, who has been officially presented in the course of the 9th Sessions on Sending Markets currently being held in Barcelona**

Monday, 28 November 2005.— Ignasi de Delàs, the Head of *Turisme de Catalunya*, announced today the creation of a Tourist Promotion Centre (TPC) in Germany, and presented Montserrat Sierra as the person in charge of the new tourist representation office in this important European sending market.

The new Tourist Promotion Centre (TPC) will be located in the city of Frankfurt. The new Head in Germany holds a degree in German Language and Literature from the University of Barcelona, and has a number of postgraduate degrees from the University of Cologne. Sierra has a wide experience with the German media, where she has worked in the production of a number of TV programmes, and has also been responsible for Press and Public Relations. Sierra has also worked as event organiser for a number of Spanish and German companies.

According to Ignasi de Delàs, the Head of *Turisme de Catalunya*, ***“we at Turisme de Catalunya saw the need to have a stable presence in the German market, the third most important sending market for Catalonia, with 1.4 million tourists a year”***. Delàs added that ***“the creation of this new centre, and the choice of Frankfurt as its location, have been welcome decisions by the sector”***.

By means of this action, *Turisme de Catalunya* widens and consolidates its network of offices abroad, currently made up of the TPCs for France; the United Kingdom and Ireland; Belgium, the Netherlands and Luxembourg (Benelux); the Nordic countries; the eastern European countries; China; and, from now on, Germany too.

### **German Tourism in Catalonia**

The German market represents one of the main foreign tourist sending markets for Catalonia. During the year 2004, Catalonian destinations received 1.4 million German tourists, a figure that means 10.4% of the total foreign market and an increase, with respect to the year 2003, of 3.7%. German tourists carry out long stays in Catalonia, on average longer than 10 days, with 15 million night stays



accumulated during the year 2004. As for this year, 1,021,000 Germans have already visited Catalonia between the months of January and August. The Head of the new Tourist Promotion Centre in Germany pointed out to the low-cost airlines as important galvanisers – especially for the promotion of short stays – in a market that she defined as **“very experimented, forward-planning and prepared”**.

### **First Approaches to Markets**

More than 50 professionals from the tourist sector in the regions of Barcelona (Barcelona city, Costa del Garraf, Costa del Maresme and Central Catalonia) will maintain some 200 interviews with the people responsible for *Turisme de Catalunya's* Promotion Centres abroad.

The meeting started with a round-table made up of those responsible for the Centres. They, together with those attending, debated about the situation of the supply and the demand in the various tourist sending markets.

In the case of the more traditional markets, David Miró, Head of the TPC for France, underlined the marked family character of French tourism and the importance that the French tourist gives to the language issue.

Miquel A. Cusí, the Head of the TPC for the United Kingdom and Ireland, explained that the British market, **“itself made up of experimented tourists, is after a dynamic, varied and, above all, flexible offer”**.

As for the Benelux, Ana Escarpenter, the person responsible for this market, explained that **“the tourists from this area constitute a very loyal public who value highly the climate and the possibility of having a good time with the family, practicing water sports, and going shopping. The tourists from the Benelux have shorter but more specialised holidays and are great lovers of theme holidays – tourism on horseback, wine tourism, wellness tourism, and so on”**.

Eulàlia Cabana, the Head of the TPC for the Nordic countries, explained that this market **“still depends highly on the tour operators”**, although she also remarked the importance of the low-cost connexions that are just starting now.

As for China, Naiwang Chen Li announced that in two or three years, the Catalan tourist sector will begin to notice the arrival of tourists from this emerging giant that, for the present is still very incipient. Both the person responsible for *Turisme de Catalunya's* centre for China and Josep Maria Perramón, the Head of the TPC for the eastern European countries, denounced the bureaucratic obstacles found by all



those seeking to visit Catalonia when applying for a tourist visa, something that constitutes an **“important brake to the development of both markets”**.

To speak of other emerging markets, Claes Akerblom, the person in charge of these destinations in *Turisme de Catalunya*, made manifest the potentialities of countries such as Brazil, India, United States, Canada or Australia, with segments of population with a high purchasing power, and very keen to travel, but he also spoke of the great deficits that make it hard to take advantage of these potentialities, namely the lack of direct flights from these destinations to Catalonia.

### **9th Sessions on Sending Markets**

During these two days, the experts of *Turisme de Catalunya* will hold individual meetings with the tourism professionals who previously applied for it. This initiative is a must for the Catalanian tourist sector, receiving first-hand information about the trends of the demand and the novelties of the main sending markets of Catalonia. The meetings are aimed for business persons, associations, federations, tourist offices, consortia, tourist boards, regional councils, and so on, seeking to have detailed information about aspects such as the evolution of the markets, the appearance of new operators, or the competition by other destinations.

During these sessions, *Turisme de Catalunya* makes known the reality of the markets of France, the United Kingdom and Ireland, the Nordic countries, the eastern European countries, the Benelux, Germany, Italy, and China. After the sessions at the regions of Girona, Lleida and Barcelona, the session for the Tarragona regions will take place on 1st December.