



THE CATALONIAN MINISTER OF TRADE, TOURISM AND CONSUMER AFFAIRS ANNOUNCES THE LAUNCH OF THE *OBSERVATORI DE TURISME DE CATALUNYA*, THE FIRST INSTRUMENT FOR THE ANALYSIS, MONITORING AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT OF THE TOURIST SECTOR

***The Observatori de Turisme de Catalunya, open to the participation
of the sector, will elaborate among its first studies the ‘Satellite
Account of Catalanian Tourism’***

Saturday, 12 March 2005.— Josep Huguet, the Catalanian Minister of Trade, Tourism and Consumer Affairs, in the company of Isabel Galobardes, the Director-General of Tourism, and Marién André, the Co-ordinator of the *Observatori de Turisme de Catalunya*, presented today the first activities of the new monitoring instrument of the tourist activity and of its competing and sending environment. The creation of this instrument of management of tourist knowledge that depends from the Directorate-General of Tourism, responds to the objective of placing within the reach of the public and private sectors a tool for the analysis, geared to promoting competition of tourism, and to collaborating in the placement of the brand Catalonia.

The *Observatori de Turisme* will elaborate periodical reports, and will have a monthly and quarterly newsletter containing information about the tourist evolution in the 10 Catalanian regions. Similarly, among its first reports, the *Observatori* will elaborate the “Satellite Account of Catalanian Tourism”.

The *Observatori de Turisme de Catalunya*, together with the Strategic Plan of Tourism, are the two tourist policy activities contemplated in the *Strategic Agreement for the Internationalisation, the Quality of the Occupation and the Competition of Catalanian Economy*, signed on 16th January last. ***“This way — the Minister said — the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Consumer Affairs has already honoured the three commitments made with the economic and social agents of Catalonia, as detailed in the strategic Agreement, namely, the start of work on the Strategic Plan of Tourism, the creation of the Observatori de Turisme, and the Plan for the Internationalisation of Catalanian Enterprise 2005-2008, by the COPCA consortium”.***



The *Observatori de Turisme* is the first integrated system of information, study and monitoring of tourism created in Catalonia. The objective of the new body is to promote the knowledge of tourism to support the making of decisions and the design of strategies geared to increasing efficiency. In this sense, the *Observatori* is open to the participation of the various economic and social agents and to public administrations, and will set up communication channels with other bodies involved in knowledge management within this sphere.

The *Observatori de Turisme* will have a Plenary Committee made up of agents from the public and private tourist sector from the whole territory (business collectives, chambers of commerce, economic and social agents, centres of knowledge management and research, and representatives from the local administrations).

The workings of the *Observatori de Turisme de Catalunya* structure themselves around 5 basic points of action based on the information and knowledge management:

- 1. Ordered and analytical compilation of statistics, studies and information**, by means of the criteria laid down by the main official bodies (Idescat, INE, Eurostat, WTO and the United Nations). In collaboration with the Institute of Statistics of Catalonia, the *Observatori* will contribute information beyond that of supply and demand, through new statistical indicators.

During a first phase, concerning the information that is currently being worked on (*travels of Catalans, travels of Spaniards, travels of foreigners, and questionnaires of tourist accommodation occupation*), new periodical studies will be added, until the 10 basic lines of continuing evaluation of the sector are reached and are incorporated into the coming Statistical Plan of Catalonia.

The new reports will review tourist activity from the economic sphere in order to analyse the impact of tourism at the various activities. On the other hand, an interdepartmental working committee will be launched to evaluate the influence of tourism in other sectors (employment, commerce, territory, environment, culture, among others).

The leading novelties are:

- Report on expenses, by sectors (*accommodation, restaurants, commerce, leisure, culture, among others*) and by segments (*expenses at origin; expenses at destination; business travel; leisure travel; package travel; individual travel*).
- Report on the competition within the tourist sector.
- Structural analysis of the tourist companies.



- d. **Satellite Account of Catalanian Tourism**: The *Satellite Account of Catalanian Tourism* will measure, among other issues, the contribution of tourism to the GDP; the position of tourism when compared to that from other sectors; the number of jobs created by tourism; the amount of tourist investment; the collection of taxes generated by the tourist industries; the tourist consumption; the incidence of tourism on the balance of payments of the country; and the characteristics of human resources in tourism.

According to the Minister, ***“this Satellite Account is necessary, given the nature of the tourist sector, which is complex, diversified and affecting the competencies of other Ministries; because it is the natural platform of reference given the various agents of the sector; and because it is a useful instrument for the design of tourist policies”***.

2. **Detection of information shortcomings and emerging themes.** Conduction of surveys at origin and monitoring of the promotion activities, as well as the detection of new market segments and business opportunities. The *Observatori* also conducts an exhaustive analysis of the demand, not only at the conjunctural level but also at the level of detection of trends. As for the analysis of the environment, the *Observatori* will carry out a permanent monitoring of sending markets and of the competing and emerging destinations.
3. **Analysis, presentation and distribution of periodical reports.** The *Observatori* will work on the publication of a monthly report on tourist evolution in the 10 Catalanian regions (Pirineus-Prepirineus, Costa Daurada, Costa Brava, Costa del Garraf, Costa del Maresme, Barcelona, Val d’Aran, Terres de Lleida, Central Catalonia and Terres de l’Ebre). On the other hand, the *Observatori* will inform every quarter of the evolution of the activity and the situation of tourism, and will elaborate an annual balance.
4. **Unification of methodological criteria with the various bodies of knowledge management.** The *Observatori*, from an efficient and transparent methodology at the service of the sector, will co-ordinate and lay down communication channels with the various bodies of knowledge management of tourism – both local and territorial – in Catalonia.
5. **Permanent forum with the tourist sector.** The *Observatori de Turisme de Catalunya* will become a permanent space of communication with the agents of the sector and public and private bodies.



The *Observatori de Turisme de Catalunya* is being co-ordinated by Marién André, a Doctor in Economics and Business Sciences by the University of Barcelona. André is also Titular Lecturer in Applied Economics at the University of Barcelona; she is also a researcher at the Grup de Recerca 'Anàlisi Quantitativa Regional-AQR', and at the Institut de Recerca en Economia Aplicada-IREA (Parc Científic de Barcelona). Since 1993, she develops her research within the sphere of the Economy of Tourism, with special interest in statistical analysis and econometrics.

Marién André is member of various academic and scientific forums in the sphere of regional and tourist science, and has taken part in various projects and research networks financed by bodies from various spheres. She has also been a member of the Scientific Committee of the Dialogue *Tourism, Cultural Diversity and Sustainable Development* of the Forum Barcelona 2004, and Co-ordinator of the subject *The organisational and promotional model of tourism in Catalonia* at the latest Congress held in the city of Girona. Marién André has taken part as a speaker in congresses such as the *Congress of the European Regional Science Association*, the *Biennial Conference of the Association for Cultural Economics International*, among others, as well as in the *think tank* on the *Management of tourist destinations*, organised by the WTO. Marién André has written various articles and publications.