

World Tourism Day, 27 September 2016

Turisme de Barcelona promotes inclusive tourism and expands its accessible guided tours

- **The consortium Turisme de Barcelona takes part in the World Tourism Day activities, dedicated this year to accessible tourism.**

- ***Easy Walking Tours* for people with reduced mobility are expanded to accommodate any kind of special need**

Barcelona, 23 September 2016 – **Turisme de Barcelona** has joined in the activities to celebrate World Tourism Day, dedicated this year by the World Tourism Organization (WTO) to universal accessibility, with a new initiative to expand the current guided *Easy Walking Tours* for people with reduced mobility to accommodate all those with accessibility requirements.

In this regard, an *Easy Walking Tours* event will take place on 27 September, leaving the Plaça de Sant Jaume at 10 a.m., for groups with motor, visual, hearing or cognitive functional diversity. The objective of this event, organised in association with the Catalan federation ECOM and the Representative State Platform for Physically Disabled People (PREDIF), is to give social disability organisations an opportunity to find out about an accessible tourism activity designed to reinforce one of the strategic lines in the field of responsible tourism and public care.

Turisme de Barcelona is thus participating in the activities of World Tourism Day, which, with its slogan *Tourism for all: promoting universal accessibility*, seeks to raise

awareness among the international community about the importance of tourism and its social, cultural, political and economic value.

Promoting inclusive tourism

The consortium promotes inclusive tourism, fully integrating people with physical and cognitive difficulties. In this regard, **Antonio Guillén**, ECOM President, asserts that “tourism is a universal right, and all people should be given equal opportunities to enjoy it”, and underscores the importance of thinking about social diversity so that all people “can benefit, whatever their characteristics”..

Turisme de Barcelona created the Easy Walking Tour Gòtic last year. This was the first guided tour for people with reduced mobility, and was promoted by *Barcelona Sustainable Tourism*, whose priority is to ensure that all people can enjoy leisure activities on equal terms. The Easy Walking Tour is a one-hour guided tour of the Gothic quarter, with no architectural barriers, so that people with reduced mobility who require wheelchairs to get around, have problems walking or are easily tired can visit the old quarter of Barcelona. Although prior booking is required for this new tour, the consortium is working to develop more regular tours accessible to blind people, people with impaired visibility or people who use sign language.

This year, Barcelona was internationally recognised as one of the most accessible cities to visit. The prestigious *Lonely Planet* publication evaluated accessibility to the city’s public transport system and priority access for people with disabilities to avoid them having to queue for the main attractions in Barcelona, as well as beach ramps. Furthermore, it placed particular emphasis on the friendliness of the city’s inhabitants, who are always ready to help people with reduced mobility.

Tour information

Date: Tuesday, 27 September 2016

Time: 10 a.m.

Place: Plaça de Sant Jaume. Tourist Office

Tours: Group 1: Visual and cognitive disabilities

Group 2: Motor and hearing disabilities