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AGUICAT Wins TO DO Award Human Rights in Tourism

Association of Catalonian Tour Guides (AGUICAT) promotes sustainable and socially responsible development in tourism, working to reconcile the needs of the population, the ecosystem and travellers.

Seefeld, 01/03/2022 – In 2022, the "TO DO Award Human Rights in Tourism" once again goes to a European tourism organisation. This year, AGUICAT – an association of tour guides in Catalonia – will receive the renowned prize which has since 2017 been awarded annually by the Institute for Tourism and Development (Studienkreis für Tourismus und Entwicklung). The award honours initiatives, projects, and individuals who are extraordinarily committed to the protection and respect of human rights principles along the entire touristic value chain.

AGUICAT was founded in 2016 with the initial objectives of pooling the interests of licensed tour guides in Catalonia and of maintaining the quality standards of their services on the long run. This happened against the backdrop of plans by the regional government of Catalonia at that time to enable easier access to this profession. Since then, AGUICAT (currently with about 400 members) has been fighting to improve the working conditions of tour guides. At the same time, the association has been pursuing the objective of offering socially responsible, high-quality tourism.

This particularly includes preventing disturbances of the population as they may happen due to touristic travel. More decent working conditions for tour guides and a good co-existence with local people in the areas visited are demands to the government. At the same time, AGUICAT offers advice and support to local authorities on their way to a more sustainable management of tourism.

Economy, Ecology, Society, and Culture in Harmony

The association also focuses on high-quality, ethically responsible training of young tour guides. That's how the

members ensure an exchange of experiences, knowledge transfer, and a better understanding among themselves. Safe and attractive jobs as tour guides on the one hand and satisfied guests on the other hand are visible results of the various efforts by AGUICAT.

Claudia Mitteneder, Executive Director of the Institute for Tourism and Development: “Exactly one week ago, on the occasion of the annual ‘World Tour Guide Day’, we already got an opportunity to point out the central role of tour guides in ensuring successful holidays. It is not just about their knowledge of tourist attractions, but mainly about facilitating understanding on the side of the tourists and empathy with the people and the region visited. AGUICAT does excellent work, promoting intercultural encounters between equal partners, taking all interests into account and developing feasible solutions for all players involved in tourism. The jury also particularly appreciated the fact that the association takes care of training junior members with outreach to spread its vision. We congratulate AGUICAT and would like to see the association serve as a model to inspire many local and regional initiatives. Thank you very much for your commitment to a kind of tourism that is socially responsible in all respects!”

The virtual award ceremony will take place on Wednesday, 9 March 2022 at 2:30 pm at Livestream „Exhibitor Presentation“ and may, upon registration (free of charge), be viewed on the streaming portal www.itb.com/convention ITB.

A representative of AGUICAT will also participate in a virtual ITB Convention event on ”The Forgotten Majority – Informal Workers in Tourism“ on Thursday, 10 March at 4:05 pm.

The “TO DO Award Human Rights in Tourism“ is awarded annually by the Institute for Tourism and Development in cooperation with the Roundtable Human Rights in Tourism, the Swiss Foundation for Solidarity in Tourism (SST) and the tour operator Studiosus. It is not possible to actively apply for this award which comes with a prize money of CHF 5,000. Potential award winners are identified by an expert jury which then

assesses their efforts. The award ceremony takes place in the context of ITB in Berlin.

The Institute for Tourism and Development (Studienkreis für Tourismus und Entwicklung) focuses on development related information and education in tourism. In this context it brings out publications, organises international contests, offers training and seminars for people employed in the tourism sector, carries out tourism research and consultancy, and is involved in dialogue on issues related to tourism development.

Contact for the press

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