



Press Release - Appearance in the Parliament of Catalonia

ACAVE president calls for more coordination between police forces to fight crime in Catalan tourist destinations

- **In his appearance in the Commission for the Study of the Police Model, Jordi Martí valued the police work positively but demanded, among other things, better attention to tourists who have been victims of crime.**
- **He also called for more effective combating the illegal sale of fraudulent trips and services sold to tourists by unlicensed companies or even on the street by individuals.**

June 3, 2022.- The President of ACAVE, **Jordi Martí**, has participated this morning as a representative of the travel agency sector in the Commission for the Study of the Police Model of the Parliament of Catalonia, where he has presented the point of view of the sector on key issues related to the safety of tourists and the image projected from the city abroad. In fact, he commented that receptive travel agencies *"know first hand the security and public order problems that tourists encounter during their stay in Catalonia and that directly affect the international tourist image of Catalonia and of its various destinations, as well as all the companies that we dedicate to the tourist activity. In addition, as companies that carry out our activity in Catalonia, we see how we are also the direct object of crimes, whether they are robberies in our facilities or cybercrimes, which have been growing in recent years"*.

Police coordination

The important point that Jordi Martí has demanded is to ensure that the local police and regional police work in a more coordinated way in all Catalan tourist destinations and especially in the city of Barcelona to ensure a greater police presence on the street in order to prevent and avoid thefts and robberies suffered by tourists. In this sense, he also commented that *"the recent agreement on the amendment to toughen the Penal Code regarding the multi-recidivism in case of theft or robbery worth less than 400 euros, going from a fine to a fine prison sentence is very good news for the tourism sector and we are convinced that it will help to fight against these crimes that most commonly occur against tourists who visit us and that can truncate a whole holiday"*.



CON MI AGENCIA, VIAJO SEGURO

This issue is especially necessary, said Martí, because in recent months, with the reactivation of tourism, there has also been an increase in thefts and robberies, especially of watches by organized criminal gangs. The scope of these bands is usually limited being in the main tourist areas and the victims the tourists. Travel agencies call for strong police action, both in the prevention and prosecution of these crimes, as these criminal acts cause great damage to our international tourism image.

Attention to the tourist victim of crimes

The president of ACAVE also stressed the need to **improve care for tourists who have been victims of crime**. When a theft or robbery occurs, the tourist must go to a police station and file the corresponding complaint, often getting lost in the various administrative and bureaucratic procedures that all this entails. To begin with, you need to know if you have to file a complaint with the local police or the Mossos d'Esquadra, where the police station is located translation service ... all this means that in addition to the anxiety of being the victim of a crime, the tourist will have to invest a large part of his holiday, if we take into account that the average stay is places between 3 and 4 days, to be able to comply with the procedures for submitting the complaint. For this reason, it is necessary to establish agile and proximity mechanisms in the main tourist destinations for the submission of such complaints and to provide translation services for the submission of such complaints.



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Illegal sale of excursions and other tourist services

However, coordination between the different security forces and the police with the tax and labor inspection administrations is also necessary to put end to the illegal street vending carried out in the main Catalan tourist destinations. In addition to deteriorating the tourist image of our destinations and the quality of the goods and services offered to tourists, this is an illegal competition for all tourism companies and businesses that carry out activities within the legal framework. There are many other illegal sales that affect the tourism industry, such as the sale of tours by companies and individuals that are not legalized and that directly affect the activity of travel agencies and tour guides.

Jordi Martí insisted: *"For us as tourism entrepreneurs, this is another priority to which all efforts must be made by the different police forces, both local, regional and state, working together with other administrations involved (inspection of work, tax administration, migration, ...) in order to achieve the desired effects. On many occasions we have had the feeling that there has been a certain permissiveness regarding these activities to the detriment of legalized companies, as well as a lack of forcefulness in the actions that have been taken, which at other times have been paralyzed by the difficulties encountered in the coordination between the different police forces or the different administrations that have to participate in it"*.

Altercation and vandalism

"Equally with companies that are dedicated to organizing and coordinating the different tourist services that cater to tourists, we will put the focus on the damages that produce our own activity the different manifestations that are produced to the tourist destinations and especially to the city of Barcelona, which on many occasions have ended up in altercations and destruction of the businesses, elements and public goods of our city. We are very aware that freedom of expression must be guaranteed and that Barcelona, as the capital that it is, is where the vast majority of demonstrations are concentrated, but it is totally incomprehensible that these demonstrations, as has happened in many times, they end up in public altercations, harming the tourist image of our city and impeding that on many occasions it is can to provide the services contracted", explained the president of ACAVE.



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He explained that some of these altercations are motivated by the infiltration of organized groups, that they dedicate themselves to participating in the different demonstrations, who followed the reason for the claim, and that in a almost professional way they dedicate themselves to destroying businesses and public benefits. For this reason, the maximum forcefulness of the police forces is required with respect to these organized groups: tolerance must be zero.

Cyberattacks

Lastly, the president has highlighted the problem of cybercrimes that in recent years they have been on the rise, along with other frauds of which travel agencies are and have been victims. Historically, travel agencies have suffered from fraud in the sale of tickets, which have been produced mainly by the falsification of credit cards. Martí has commented *"Since the ACAVE doing pedagogy among our associates, remembering the requirements that must be followed in order to avoid this type of fraud, but it does not prevent that it is a continuation of the product, how it is can be imagined the criminal techniques, aids for the technologies, each time it is perfected more. Likewise, in the darrers all the cyberattacks has been on the rise, paralyzing on many occasions the activity of the companies due to the action of hackers or deviating payments and charges due to the impersonation and falsification of contracts and other documents. Companies are very aware of the need to adopt measures in order to prevent these cybercrimes, but it is not always possible to avoid them. For this reason we request a police specialized in the prevention and prosecution of cybercrimes that each time produce some damages majors to the companies"*.

About ACAVE

The Corporate Association of Specialized Travel Agencies (ACAVE) is the employers' association of travel agencies in Catalonia. ACAVE is the most representative association in Spain with approximately **450 associates and 1.000 sales points throughout Spain**. Agencies of different types are part of the association: vocational issuers, corporations, tour operators, coastal and city receptives, online and creuers agencies.

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