

## **The Government of Catalonia and the World Tourism Organisation are holding the World Sports Tourism Congress which will take place from 25th-26th November 2021, in Lloret de Mar.**

- **The congress will feature renowned prestigious international speakers in their fields and the attendance of 500 sector professionals and experts.**
- **The programme will include conferences, workshops and round table discussions designed to encompass the most current trends**
- **From today onwards, pre registration is open on the official event website: <http://worldsportstourismcongress.org/>**

*5 August 2021.*— As part of the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the Catalan Tourism Agency (CTA) which forms part of the Catalonia Government (Generalitat de Catalunya) and the World Tourism Organization (WTO) are organising the World Congress on Sports Tourism. This event, which had to be postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic, will be held from 25-26th November at the Palau de Congressos Olympic in the Catalan town of Lloret de Mar. The congress, which will be held using a hybrid scheme and can be attended both in person and virtually, seeks to strengthen the relationship between sports tourism and sustainable and inclusive development, diversification, differentiation and deseasonalisation within the sector. The event's organisation and planning also features the collaboration of the Costa Brava Tourism Board and Lloret de Mar Town Council.

During the course of two days, Lloret de Mar will be turned into a centre of debate and reflection around the present and future of this massively booming sector. The event will feature renowned international speakers and the attendance of 500 professionals and experts in a full programme of conferences, workshops and round table events. Pre Registration for the event is now open and can be made at the following official website <http://worldsportstourismcongress.org/>.

The congress will centre on talks related to challenges that Covid-19 has caused to the sector, but will also address issues such as trends in sports and physical activity; innovation in the development of sports tourism; massive attendance at sporting events, as well as environmental frameworks, diversity and inclusion

issues in the world of sport. The programme will also feature topics ranging from the different public-private strategies in governance of industry, the sector's digital transformation, e-sports, digital marketing, marketing and advertising. During the course of the two day congress, there will also be different sports activities offered for participants, there will be academic communications and technical visits, and networking spaces will be enabled so that attendees can take advantage of synergies and build professional relationships.

The basis of the hosting of this event is the legacy left by the two major events held so far in the sports tourism field: the Barcelona Declaration on Sports Tourism of 1992 and the Conclusions of the Da Nang (Vietnam) Conference of 2017.

### **Catalonia, a Sports Tourism destination**

Sports tourism has established itself as a strategic sector in Catalonia in recent years due to the region's state-of-the-art facilities and the excellent offer provided for those seeking sports-based trips and stays, either individually or as a team. In 2003, the Catalan Tourism Agency created its Sports Tourism Mark, a distinction awarded to towns, facilities and specialised companies that meet quality standards in a range of sports disciplines and recognise excellence in resources and services that enable the practising of sports or enjoyment of events and championships for elite athletes, professionals and fans of major sporting events.

This sector is an area of activity with an increasingly relevant presence in the Catalan economy. During the course of 2018, around 260,000 international tourists chose Catalonia for sporting purposes, with a combined spend reaching nearly 140 million euros. Additionally, more than 500,000 residents of Catalonia and 200,000 people from the rest of Spain moved within or travelled to Catalonia for sports purposes, with a global spend of almost 130 million euros. Furthermore, 133 million of indirect impact and 155 million of induced impact must be added to the 270 million euros of direct impact.

During the last year, the Catalan Tourism Agency has been working on a strategic initiative that will strive to generate new business opportunities for the sports tourism sector and that will improve tourism competitiveness with differentiated value proposals. The goal is to secure international positioning as a benchmark and point of reference for sports and sporting events. Promoted by the Catalonia Convention Bureau under the name of *Meetings and Sports*, this strategy brings together the concepts of Sports Tourism, MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions / Events) and the Sports Industry. More details about this new initiative will be given during the congress.

### **The venue for the World Sports Tourism Congress 2021**

Lloret de Mar is a Sports Tourism Destination certified since 2006 by the Catalan Tourism Agency in the disciplines of football, athletics, swimming, team sports, triathlon and cycling. The municipality features an extensive hotel infrastructure in place to accommodate all of the congress attendees and those attending a range of parallel events. Lloret de Mar's community welcomes more than 60,000 athletes and their companions annually and, during the course of 2019, proudly hosted a total of 446 sporting events, games and competitions.

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