



This morning, the Formentera councilwoman of Tourism, Alejandra Ferrer and the head of tourist promotions, Carlos Bernús, received the second group of Russian travel agents in what is known as a familiarising trip, or 'famtrip'.

Last Thursday Formentera was met with the arrival of some 40 people who, together with the group from today, make up approximately 80 travel agents from the tour operator "Natalie Tours" visiting the island to discover the tourist qualities available for travelers here. They are accompanied by a Russian-speaking guide.

The trips are classified as intended to 'familiarise' the representatives, and were scheduled following meetings held during the course of a 2013 Moscow trade show. This past March, Formentera attended the Moscow MITT trade fair and called a number of meetings with local tour operators and small local agencies, facilitating both contact information for establishments that offer accommodation and other information of interest with respect to Formentera.

Natalie Tours is currently the largest Russian tour operator with operations in the Balearic Islands. Although the Russian market is quite familiar with Mallorca and Eivissa, this is the first

time that they have come to Formentera. Initiatives like today's are part of an attempt to bring Russian tourism to the island. Estimates predict a 20% increase in the Russian market's presence in Spain this year. Significant news this summer was the addition of a weekly Moscow connection in Eivissa, which will be a positive factor in the arrival of Russian tourists.

The opening of the Russian market here has for some time figured among the work of the Formentera Office of Tourism, made manifest by the island's first year of participation at MITT Moscow and the publication of the Russian translation of the Formentera Tourist Manual, the central source of Formentera tourist promotional info.

The Russian market's position – as continues to be the case with the German, English and French markets here as well – as one of the important wagers of the Tourist Board of Formentera, is the backdrop to such collaborations as the one established between the Council and the Chamber of Commerce of Eivissa and Formentera for the publication of a review that is delivered to Turepaña. It is currently being distributed by Russian tour operators at their agencies. In addition, pages about Formentera's qualities as a tourist destination will appear in certain Russian tour operator's catalogues, and familiarising trips will allow the same tour operators to discover Formentera first-hand.

Today's encounter included a tour of some of Formentera's beaches, a visit to the Ses Salines Natural Park, and a walk through the commercial zone of the Sant Francesc town centre with its typical products in artisanry and fashion. Finally, the event also included the opportunity for the Russian visitors to get a look at the island's hotel infrastructure and acquire information necessary to adequately selling the island once back in Russia. To this end, the visitors were taken to hotels that the Russian tour operators work with and the Insotel Group gave them an official welcoming at the hotel Formentera Playa.

Thanks to the association agreement between the Formentera Council and the Trasmapi transport company, the Office of Tourism has at its disposition 200 return trips (Eivissa – Formentera) to use for familiarising trips in exchange for the Council's promotion of the Trasmapi logo.

In related news, with an end to continuing financing the German market at the start and end of the normal summer season, today also featured the arrival in Formentera of a group of 18 German travel agents from the German tour operator REWE Touristik.

The object of these promotional trips is to let visiting travel agents experience the island's qualities in person, and in so doing, furnish them with the tools necessary to selling Formentera as a tourist destination.