

## Qisan in talks with UK Home Office

THE QUALITY INTERNATIONAL Study Abroad Network (Qisan), which was set up in 2003, has revealed that it is aiming to become recognised by the UK Home Office as an accrediting body for private, non-language, teaching institutions in the UK. It is also collaborating with QS, a private company that offers graduate and careers events for students. QS plans to use the agent membership of Qisan to expand its agent workshops – Qisan was first launched as a network primarily for agencies that were unable to join national agent associations because they were not formed already in their countries, such as in India.

Details of the network's quality inspection process for education institutions have not been made available to *Language Travel Magazine*. Whilst it is unclear whether any teaching standards are checked, Qisan issues a Certificate of Accreditation stating that member centres have been "fully evaluated and recognised as a high quality professional and ethical institution".

"Our [educator] accreditation is mainly concerned with the marketing activities of these institutions," said Maurice Dimmock, Founder of Qisan. "We also check that they meet the minimum requirements of the Home Office. They get a lighter touch if they are accredited [by an existing UK accreditation body]."

Dimmock said that if Qisan failed to become recognised by the UK Home Office, it would simply offer a membership scheme for schools and assist with marketing activities. "This will start to come under the QS banner," he said.

There has been some concern in the industry about a possible new accreditation system for UK institutions. At English UK, Chief Executive, Tony Millns, said, "It is not clear what criteria and standards are used by Qisan, whether there is any form of independent inspection, who is in effective control, what its legal status is, and who stands to make a profit from it."

At the British Accreditation Council (BAC), Chief Executive Stephen Vickers said, "It is not our policy to comment on nascent or would-be accrediting institutions, save to state that we consider a non-profit structure to be an appropriate model and that inspection is robust and carried out by skilled and qualified inspectors."



No current information was supplied by Qisan about the inspection process for agencies, or the inspection team. Dimmock – an ex-employee of University of Northumbria – said this was due to the impending acquisition of Qisan by QS.

Dimmock told *Language Travel Magazine* that Qisan "now has over 750 agencies accredited". With an initial membership of around 150 member agencies – this means a growth rate of around 200 agencies per year. However, in a recent newsletter from QS, it was claimed that Qisan had 1,300 member agencies.

Masaru Yamada, President of global agency federation, Felca, commented, "Qisan has no mandate to accredit any institutions, whether agents or schools, in our industry. We have no reason to believe that any of its current agent members have undergone sufficient independent checks and inspections for Qisan to be using the word accreditation." He added that if Qisan agency members happen to be a member of one of Felca's national association members, for example, their quality is verified by Felca member associations, not by Qisan.

QS declined to comment on its activities regarding Qisan. ●

### Currency

1xUS\$ =currency\*

|               |             |         |
|---------------|-------------|---------|
| Argentinean   | Pesos       | 3.067   |
| Australian    | Dollar      | 1.344   |
| Brazilian     | Real        | 2.110   |
| British       | Pound       | 0.560   |
| Bulgarian     | Leva        | 1.584   |
| Canadian      | Dollar      | 1.139   |
| Chilean       | Pesos       | 518.25  |
| Chinese (PR)  | Yuan RMB    | 8.011   |
| Czech         | Koruny      | 23.06   |
| Danish        | Kroner      | 6.042   |
| Egyptian      | Pound       | 5.748   |
| EU            | Euro        | 0.810   |
| Hong Kong     | Dollar      | 7.755   |
| Hungarian     | Forint      | 214.15  |
| Icelandic     | Kronur      | 77.68   |
| Indonesian    | Rupiah      | 8,936.2 |
| Israeli       | New Shekels | 4.541   |
| Japanese      | Yen         | 117.09  |
| Maltese       | Lira        | 0.347   |
| Mexican       | Peso        | 10.924  |
| New Zealand   | Dollar      | 1.577   |
| Norwegian     | Kroner      | 6.321   |
| Polish        | Zloty       | 3.154   |
| Russian       | Rubles      | 27.463  |
| Singaporean   | Dollar      | 1.597   |
| Slovakian     | Koruny      | 32.262  |
| South African | Rand        | 5.955   |
| South Korean  | Won         | 945.76  |
| Swedish       | Kronor      | 7.546   |
| Swiss         | Franc       | 1.270   |
| Taiwanese     | NT Dollar   | 32.402  |
| Thai          | Baht        | 37.768  |
| Turkish       | YTL         | 1.331   |
| Venezuelan    | Bolivar     | 2,144.0 |

\*Rates are subject to change and should be used as indications only. 19/04/06.

## Chinese death in New Zealand

THE DEATH OF a language student in Auckland, New Zealand, earlier this year should be treated as an "isolated case", said Robert Stevens, Chief Executive of New Zealand.

Nineteen-year-old Wan Biao was found in a suitcase floating in the harbour in Auckland. Three other Chinese nationals have been subsequently charged with his murder and kidnap, or with being an accessory to the murder. One of the men, who had been

his classmate at the Oxford Academy, is reported to have phoned his parents demanding a RMB4 million (US\$0.5 million) ransom. By the time this information reached police in New Zealand, the student was already dead.

The kidnapping of well-off Chinese nationals when abroad has occurred previously but this is the first case to come to light in some time. Jenny Wang, Executive Director of the Chinese New Settlers Trust, said that

only-children from China were particularly at risk when dealing with new-found freedom for the first time, if they got mixed up with the wrong crowd or were unclear as to who they could turn to for help.

Stevens noted, "This tragic case does need to be seen in context. New Zealand is one of the safest destinations globally for international students and we have been the global pace-setter in terms of regulatory protections for students." ●

#### Scope on the Globe

Date: October 11-14  
Venue: Utrecht, Netherlands  
Email: s.vdaakster@aromedia.nl  
Web: www.scopeontheglobe.com

#### The Icef Asia Workshop

Date: October 11-16  
Venue: Shanghai, China  
Email: info@icef.com  
Web: www.icef.com

#### Higher Education Exchange and Agent Workshop

Date: October 16-18  
Venue: Istanbul, Turkey  
Contact: IEFT as above

#### The Alphe Russia Workshop

Date: October 27-29  
Venue: St Petersburg, Russia  
Email: jane@hothousemedia.com  
Web: www.hothousemedia.com

#### The Language Show

Date: November 3-5  
Venue: London, UK  
Email: jrs@thelanguageshow.co.uk  
Web: www.thelanguageshow.co.uk

#### The Icef Berlin Workshop

Date: November 5-7  
Venue: Berlin, Germany  
Contact: Icef as above

#### CIEE Annual Conference

Date: November 8-11  
Venue: Seville, Spain  
Email: conference@ciee.org  
Web: www.ciee.org

#### Expolingua Praha

Date: November 10-11  
Venue: Prague, Czech Republic  
Email: prague@expolingua.com  
Web: www.expolingua.cz

#### Expolingua Berlin

Date: November 17-19  
Venue: Berlin, Germany  
Email: info@expolingua.com  
Web: www.icwe.net  
www.expolingua.com

#### The Alphe Asia Workshop

Date: November 19-21  
Venue: Bangkok, Thailand  
Email: jane@hothousemedia.com  
Web: www.hothousemedia.com

# Airline profits pick up worldwide

The International Air Transport Association (Iata) has increased its 2007 forecast for global profit within the airline industry from US\$6.2 billion to US\$7.2 billion. The increase is largely attributed to increased passenger demand as well as airlines exhibiting more efficient operations.

The association, which represents 265 airlines with 94 per cent of international traffic, also cut its forecast of the global industry's losses in 2006 by half to US\$2.2 billion. US carriers in particular are expected to lose just US\$5.4 billion in 2006, half the losses they posted in 2005.

While high fuel prices have been hampering growth in the aviation market in recent years, an increase in passenger traffic due to improved economic conditions in many countries, as well as a general trend towards improving the efficiency of airline services, has had a positive effect on profits.

But Giovanni Bisignani, Chief Executive of Iata, warned against complacency. "There are some wild cards beyond our control – avian flu and security among them," he said. "If we are looking for a common villain, it is fuel."

The association also announced that a recent survey of airline chief financial officers found that more than two-thirds predicted an

increase in profitability over the next year. The global market has been buoyed considerably in recent months by a return to more positive fortunes by many of the major US airlines, due to cost cutting measures.

A different study by the Airports Council International reported that passenger traffic through the world's airports increased by six per cent in 2005, compared with 2004. The top five busiest airports for international travellers were listed as London Heathrow, Paris Charles de Gaulle, Frankfurt, Amsterdam and Hong Kong, while the number of travellers taking international flights increased to 1.6 billion. ●

## Travel Update

- Low-cost airline **Easyjet** has announced negotiations to establish its operational base for southern Europe at Madrid's Barajas Airport. A spokesperson for the carrier said that Madrid offers good growth opportunities because of the opening last month of a new passenger terminal.

- **Austrian Airlines** is to add to its already extensive network of Eastern European routes, adding flights from Vienna to Yekaterinburg in Russia; Donetsk in the Ukraine; Iasi and Sibiu in Romania; Pecs in Hungary; and Ostrava in the Czech Republic this summer. The carrier's Eastern European route network will then service a total of 44 cities in 23 countries.

- A new reciprocal codeshare deal between **Air China** and **Virgin Atlantic Airways** will see Virgin Atlantic customers able to purchase flights between London Heathrow and Beijing from July, complementing existing daily flights to Shanghai. Virgin Atlantic's Commercial Director, Willy Boulter, said, "We look forward to welcoming more passengers on board this year and further expansion in China in the future."

- A **Queensland** ministerial mission is being sent to Japan and South Korea in a bid to encourage more tourists from these countries to visit the state. Queensland Tourism has blamed falling visitor numbers on a cutback in flights between Japan and Queensland and hopes that meetings with Japanese and Korean airlines will help reverse this decline.

- US carrier, **United Airlines**, restored its daily non-stop passenger service between San Francisco and Seoul Incheon International Airport in April this year. The carrier is currently the only airline in the USA to offer this service. Meanwhile, **American Airlines** launched a long-awaited daily non-stop service from Chicago O'Hare International Airport to Shanghai Pu Dong International Airport in China in March.

- German airline, **Lufthansa**, announced that profits for 2005 were up by 51 per cent to €577 million (US\$712 million) on the previous year, despite a 46 per cent increase in fuel costs. "Despite sky high fuel prices and a relatively weak economy, we carried more passengers and freight and improved capacity utilisation," said Chief Executive, Wolfgang Mayrhuber. Germany's air traffic is also set to increase in the future, after the Germany government approved plans for a **new airport in Berlin**, due to open in 2011. The new airport, which will be called Berlin Brandenburg International, will be capable of handling 22 million passengers annually.

- Chile's **LAN Airlines** expects to break even in 2007 after predicting an increase in 2006 revenue of 20 per cent to US\$3 billion. Chief Executive, Enrique Cueto, said that six aircraft would be added to the fleet this year and the airline would also begin flying from Buenos Aires to Miami.

## Europe adds links to Dubai

LINKS BETWEEN Europe and the Middle East were expanded earlier this year with the introduction of two new direct services from Dublin and London to Dubai. The new routes were introduced by Aer Lingus and Virgin Atlantic and are the first Middle Eastern destinations to be offered by either company from London or Dublin.

Virgin Atlantic's service between London Heathrow and Dubai was introduced on a four-times-weekly schedule but is expected to increase to a daily service from June. Richard Branson, Chairperson of the airline, said, "Dubai is the second largest long-haul route out of London and we are confident we can make big inroads into this market, targeting 10 per cent in our first year of operation."

The Aer Lingus flight from Dublin to Dubai is the carrier's first long-haul destination outside of the USA and marks a significant development for the airline. The service is expected to carry in excess of 70,000 passengers in its first year of operation. Noel Dempsey, Ireland's Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, said, "Not only will our passengers be able to fly directly to Dubai but our partnership with Emirates will also allow Irish passengers the option to travel on to a further 21 destinations in the southern hemisphere, making long distance travel easier and more accessible for everyone." ●

## Canada set to welcome Chinese tourists

CANADA COULD soon be welcoming an influx of Chinese tourists after it is made an approved tourist destination later this year.

The Canadian Tourism Commission predicted that Chinese tourist arrivals would increase by 25 per cent annually following the ruling. Currently, China only allows its citizens to visit Canada for business, study or family visits, of which an estimated 100,000 occur per year. It is hoped that the number of Chinese arrivals could rise to 500,000 once approved status is given.

A Chinese-language tourism website has been launched to promote Ontario as a potential destination for Chinese tourists, ahead of the ruling. Ontario Tourism Minister, Jim Bradley, said, "This new website provides valuable information about Ontario's tourism destinations and will help increase awareness of Ontario's attractions for Chinese travellers." ●



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