

# Salta in Switzerland comes to life

## Next issue

In our December issue, **Special Report** looks back over 2004 and finds out some of the highs and lows of the past year, while **Market Report** provides an update on business trends in Malta. **Direction** finds out about the services that a guardianship agency can offer, while **Feedback** finds out what students studying in Canada think about their study abroad experience. **City Focus** visits Barcelona and **Status** provides industry information from New Zealand.

**S**ALTA, the Swiss Association of Language Travel Agents, is the latest association of agents to have been formed by a peer group of agencies interested in promoting their quality services. Salta was born last year but came to life this summer when three new members joined the three founding members to double the size of the association.

Mark Winkler of Media Touristik, President of the association, said, "Salta is something that we have tried to do for the last 15 to 18 years. We need a body to represent this niche industry." Two other agencies in the Swiss marketplace plan to join but Winkler explained that until the agencies have travel guarantee insurance in place, they cannot become members.

Current members are: Boalingua, Cosmolingua, Prolinguis, STA Zurich, Dr Steinfels Sprachreisen Zurich and



Salta currently has six members and is expecting two more to join

Media Touristik, which comprises the four separate companies of Global Study, Follow Me, Allez-y and Linguista. "Salta has been formed to enable lobbying with embassies, to provide an interface with the Swiss press and to provide consumer information via a central body," said Winkler.

A code of ethics and quality standards are currently being worked on. To date, membership is based on reputation and experience in the industry and an assurance of a funds guarantee for clients. Other plans for Salta in the future could include working on regulation for the industry. □

## Industry issues - agents speak out

January February March April May June July August September October November December

*Q How flexible are schools when agreeing prices/commission rates with you?*



**Eduardo Heidemann, AF Intercambio, Brazil**

"Some schools are flexible and others not. At the moment, due to economical issues in Latin America, especially in Brazil where the currency has devalued a lot in the last three years, many schools are being very flexible with agents here, giving us special prices and discounts. It really helps considering we have a completely different reality from other countries, especially those in Asia such as Korea and Japan! Generally, schools in Canada, Australia and New Zealand are more flexible in terms of negotiating than those in the USA and Europe. I think it's changing, all schools are becoming more and more flexible in order to survive in this new global market."



**Elena Fedotova, MisterCase, Russia**

"As we are a very new agency, we do not have

a great deal [to do] with schools concerning our commissions yet. But this year is our second year of business and we are feeling more confident about bringing up the issue about raising our commission. I am sure some of the schools will be flexible about it, because they see our potential and the number of clients we sent them. Also, we think that we can discuss the commission on accommodation and on extra orders such as golf or tennis."



**Denis Mello, MA Intercâmbio & Turismo, Brazil**

"It is important to say that Brazil is now in a real time of experiencing economic problems, and we try to negotiate new rates or better commission with our partner schools. [Students'] search for language courses has been declining and something has to be done. If schools cannot understand the problem and cannot be a real partner, we must change to new

schools that can be part of our new situation and spirit."



**Gabriella Perfetti, Auriga Servizi, Italy**

"Schools never offer the chance to negotiate on [my] rates even when, occasionally, we send a group of 10/15 students or individuals during low season; on the contrary, they are ready to offer us more services, I mean excursions, social activities and packed lunch which are included in the price: this is OK for our clients. Another chance to get a better commission is the reaching of a certain number of course weeks each year (generally 30) but, since our students commonly go abroad during the summer, this means they may meet an increasing number of Italians who are attending the same course, even in the same classroom! This is why we persuade them to choose another school or location, so we never reach the minimum required and never get the promised additional commission."



**Elena Solomonova, Insight-Lingua, Russia**

"We may ask for a special deal if we send a group or chain of groups during the summer or if we develop a special promotion plan for a school or a group of schools or we send a reasonable number of students at low season. Sometimes schools may be interested in attracting more students from our country [for] a better nationality mix and then they may agree on special terms with us. Or if we take a risk to support a new school or new programme then more likely we'll get a higher commission not only for the launching period but even later when this school becomes well established. Not all schools are flexible. Usually it depends on the level of competition and on their interest [in] you as an agent. Agents may expect good results in negotiations only if they remember that business should be for mutual benefit."

## English UK's first inward mission

ENGLISH UK hosted its first inward mission earlier this year, taking over from where Baselt, in its former guise, left off. Six educational agents from Vietnam, based in Ho Chi Minh City and Hanoi, visited the country to attend two workshops hosted by Crawley College in Sussex and Ealing, Hammersmith and West London College in London. There, they met with 14 representatives from the higher and further education sectors.

As Julie Hutchinson, English UK Market Development Manager, explained, "Now English UK... offers agents the opportunity to experience the whole range of EFL provision in the UK." While this trip was organised by Baselt prior to English UK's formation, future missions will include opportunities "for all



Six agencies from Vietnam met with a range of UK providers

members in both the private and the public sectors", she said.

Accompanying the agents on the inward mission was Phan Thi Bao Phi from the British Council in Vietnam. She said, "With one main association I am sure this will help to simplify communication channels and provide a united

front in quality provision of English language study in the UK."

Speaking about his experience, Nguyen Do Lang at Cattuong International Consultancy said, "We had a very useful, interesting and enjoyable trip to the UK and I'm sure all of us will benefit [from it]." □

## On the move



Claire Selby has been appointed Principal of Albion International in Oxford, UK. The company offers students English language tuition prior to placement in schools and universities in the UK. Ms Selby is author of the Yellow House English series for children.



Neil Miller has been appointed as Industry Strategic Development Manager at

Education New Zealand. His prime responsibility will be to provide strategic direction and management of the delivery of a range of industry development projects and work-streams. These projects are all funded through the industry levy. Mr Miller has a background in public policy and research, and previously worked at Treasury.



Will Maciver (top) joined Study Group in April this year, after eight years at Regent. Mr



Maciver was appointed to the Europe, Middle East and Africa (Emea) Regional Office at Study

Group, taking over the position following the transfer of Chris Taylor from Brighton to New York. Another new addition to the Emea team is Lucy Cattermole, who worked previously for the Council on International Educational Exchange in both London and Madrid. Claire Gallagher (below) was recently appointed Area Manager, also joining the Emea team.



Carolyn Llewelyn has moved from Albion International Education in Oxford, UK, back

to the Centre for International Education (CIE) Oxford, where she was the founder Principal in 1995. Ms Llewelyn has had a career in international education spanning over 20 years, and was runner up in the national Women in Business awards some years ago. She hopes to widen the range of programmes offered at CIE, especially in the area of foundation programmes.



Tommi Mutonnen is the new Group Sales Manager at Twin Training and Travel in London, UK. Prior to this

position, he was Head of Sales and Marketing at Saint George International in London, UK. □

## Agency of the month



CDS

In a series appearing each month in *Language Travel Magazine*, we ask a different language teaching institution to nominate one of their preferred agencies or agent partners, and to explain why this person/company is worthy of their nomination.

**This month, the English Language Centre at University of Victoria in Canada nominates CDS in Turkey. Chris Gambrell, Marketing Manager at the institution, explains this decision:**

"Consultants of Development Services (CDS) is my choice for preferred agency because this Turkish company implements best practices in the profession while maintaining an excellent relationship with our staff at UVic. Caglayan Ozer and Senem Altansunar, the owners, visit Canada annually, attend the CEC Agent Workshop and visit the University of Victoria. They regularly send staff to attend our programmes so counsellors are knowledgeable about Victoria, our university and the courses. This is particularly important to us as we want students to be well informed about what to expect.

This agency cheerfully organises information seminars for us when we are in Istanbul. Their positive energy, professionalism, and loyalty to the University of Victoria are very beneficial to us when marketing in Turkey. CDS is not the largest provider of students for our programmes but they are a consistent partner during good and bad economic times."

## Dodgy immigration agents exposed in NZ

TWO cases of fraudulent immigration agencies disappearing with clients' money have come to light in New Zealand. The first case was a Chinese agency based in Auckland, Li Feng Immigration, which promised clients entry into Auckland University without English language certification. The second company was dealing with Fijian Indian clients migrating to New Zealand.

The Auckland police department is investigating complaints by 10 clients of Li Feng Immigration who have lost a substantial amount of money and their passports, according to an article in *The New Zealand Herald*. Two students told the newspaper that they had dealt with a consultant who told them his contact at the university would help enrol them. One of the students had paid close to NZ\$30,000 (US\$19,000).

The University of Auckland did not comment on the case, but said all courses required proof of English language ability from international students. □