

PRESS RELEASE

ITB China Travel Trends Report: Chinese sports travel market expected to grow by 25-30 percent over the coming three years

- sports travel is expected to reach RMB 1.5 trillion by 2020
- growing demand – but still difficult to buy events tickets
- travel form centred on unique and irreproducible events
- global sports stars is a main driving factor of sports trips
- 'Local activities' is the most important component for Chinese travelers
- 72% of surveyed travel agents agree that sports travelers primarily go in groups of friends, but families with children is a segment on the rise
- European football leagues are the most popular events to attend

Berlin/Shanghai, 7 May 2019 – Sports travel is a fast-growing sector as recent findings of the ITB China Travel Trends Report revealed. ITB China's survey among Chinese buyers of sports travel products shows that the market is expected to **grow by 25-30 percent over the coming three years**. According to the market survey result from 300 Chinese outbound travel agents, sports travel is expected to reach RMB 1.5 trillion by 2020 according to interviewed industry experts. Despite the growing interest and an increasing purchase power, the **difficulty involved in securing tickets** to events poses significant barriers for travelers – making ticket arrangements a field in which travel agencies and package providers have a critical role. The ITB China Travel Trends Report is a yearly publication commissioned by ITB China and conducted by Kairos Future. The full report will be presented at ITB China, set to take place from the 15 to 17 May 2019 in Shanghai.

Sports trips are typically built around big sports events and therethrough exclusive in power of the **irreproducible nature of every event**. The opportunity to watch global sports stars perform live in important games is one the main factors attracting travelers. It is the **on-site experience** that sports travelers care most about - with the exciting experience being at the very core of a sports trip, no matter if a traveler is there to participate or to watch.

Interviewed buyers testify about a clear trend towards customized 'a la



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carte' packages: travelers pick add-on experiences according to taste. Packages might include activities that bring travelers closer to a sport, to a team, or to sports stars. For some travelers, choosing between a trip for doing or watching sports is not good enough. Despite the demand, however, there are few packages on the market today that in this way combine those two.

Several interviewees point out that **stars are a key factor** attracting travelers to attend sports events. With many sports travelers opting to attend overseas events for seeing the stars or teams they are fans of in action in important championships, there is a significant **market also for side experiences** that bring travelers closer to the teams and the stars.

'**Local activities**' is the most important component for Chinese travelers going on a sports trip, according to the surveyed travel agents. Those activities include experiences that are not sports-related as components in sports travel packages, for increasing the diversity of a tour and appealing to those in a travel group who are not as big sports fans as others. **Families with children** are a traveler segment on the rise, meaning an increasing demand for child-friendly activities as part of sports trips. **72 percent** of the surveyed travel companies, however, agree that most sports travel groups are groups of friends.

NBA basketball and World Cup football are immensely popular championships among Chinese sports fans. Among Chinese sports travelers, however, the **European football leagues** in England, France, Germany, Italy, and Spain are the most popular to attend. Apart from these, the 2019 AFC Asian Cup and the 2020 UEFA European Football Championship are expected to be the top events among Chinese sports travellers over the next couple of years.

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More information at www.itb-china.com.

About ITB China and the ITB China Conference

ITB China 2019 will take place from Wednesday to Friday, 15 to 17 May, at the Shanghai World Expo Exhibition and Convention Centre in Hall 1. ITB China is a three-day business to business travel trade fair that focuses exclusively on the Chinese travel industry. The ITB China Conference will take place parallel with the show and is co-organized by the leading conference organizer TravelDaily (www.traveldaily.cn).

About ITB Berlin, ITB Asia and ITB India

First launched 53 years ago, ITB Berlin is recognized as the most successful trade show for the global travel industry. Some 10,000 exhibitors from more than 180 countries regularly attend this event. Every year in October for the last eleven years Messe Berlin has successfully organized ITB Asia in Singapore. Boasting more than 1,000 exhibitors from 127

countries, ITB Asia in Singapore has established itself as Asia's Leading Travel Trade Show. Messe Berlin will be organising the inaugural ITB India in 2020. The 3-day business-to-business travel trade show and convention will take place at the Bombay Exhibition Centre in Mumbai, India, from 15 to 17 April 2020. The show will bring together industry leaders and buyers from cities across India, and international exhibitors from the MICE, leisure and corporate sectors.

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