

## Pharos Datacom: Two steps forward into the German market

*Reading, UK, and Hamburg, Germany, 15 December 2010* – Pharos Datacom, leading reservations service provider in the ferry sector today announced it has achieved two major milestones in its strategic goal of developing significant revenue from the flourishing German travel market, one of the largest travel markets of the world.

The Reading-based company, which delivers fares and inventories of the leading ferry operators using Xchange, their unique B2B-only trading hub, offering a single ferry reservations API to tour operators, online travel agencies, distribution networks and technology solution providers, was recently admitted to the German Association for Ferry Travel and Ferry Tourism (VFF - Verband der Fährschifffahrt und Fährtouristik e.V., Hamburg), whose members include all ferry organizations important to the huge German market.

At the same time and as part of Pharos Datacom's overall business expansion plan the company has opened their German office in Frankfurt, the capital of the German travel trade.

Alan Warburton, Managing Director of Pharos, says:

"According to our market evaluations, the German travel sector has not so far adopted the techniques of online ferry bookings by means of API access. Efficiency, speed and economy in making reservations are only achieved when the agent system is fully integrated with the supplier system, enabling full automation.

As the leading B2B provider of this technology in the UK, we now plan to exploit the same market opportunity overseas. Germany is Europe's vibrant economy with the dominant travel sector; consequently we are targeting the DACH region."

Eye for Travel research [European Online Travel Report: 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition] has monitored ferry reservations since 2002 with projections to 2012. The report shows that the online travel trade is gaining share over online direct consistently in the UK and Germany, with the trend continuing upwards.

This indicates a significant and growing opportunity for German travel organisations in eCommerce to achieve success through full automation by taking advantage of the Pharos technology."

Interested organisations are welcome to meet Pharos at ITB 2011 in Hall 18, Stand No. 125

According to the Eye for Travel research the German sea ferry market is worth 269 million euro/225 million pounds sterling. While the majority of ferry sales is still generated offline, online booking revenues are accelerating – from €45m in 2009/10 to €55m by the end of 2012. By becoming fully automated, German travel organisations can benefit from this acceleration and achieve success in the sector.

About Pharos Datacom:

Pharos, established in 1992, is a reservations service provider specializing in the ferry and rail sectors and operating as a technical intermediary. Based at Reading to the West of London, the company's expertise and versatile Xchange Reservation platform provides a range of B2B online booking solutions enabling efficient, profitable reservations between agents and their partner suppliers.

Xchange processes reservations for more than forty Online Travel Agencies, Tour Operators, membership organizations and travel networks and is linked to over thirty transport operators. Furthermore, Pharos collaborates with ten technology partners, who integrate Xchange services within their own solution.

Pharos' list of clients includes Eurostar, Brittany ferries, Comtec, DFDS Seaways, Multicom, P&O Ferries, Stena Line, Seafrance, Thomas Cook UK, Traveltek and RWA.

Pharos' connected suppliers include Balearia, Corsica and Sardinia Ferries, DFDS (Seaways and Lisco), Eurostar, Eurotunnel, Grimaldi, Grandi Navi Veloci, Irish Ferries, Minoan, P&O Ferries, Scandlines, Seafrance, Stena Line, Superfast, Blue Star Ferries and TT Lines.

About VFF – German Association for Ferry Travel and Ferry Tourism:

The Association of Ferry Travel and Ferry Tourism (VFF) is the organisation that represents German ferry companies, international ferry companies with German representations and related partners from within the tourism industry. Founded by 15 ferry companies in 1995 the association today counts more than 50 members.

VFF's activities focus on:

- Support of distribution channels through comprehensive training of travel agents
- Participation at relevant domestic and international trade fairs to represent their members
- PR work
- Industry analyses

Within the VFF information exchange of all members has the highest priority. Externally the VFF supports the interests of its members and the growth of the ferry sector within the travel trade, through its active membership work in the German travel associations DRV and ASR, as well as in the international bus tourism Organisation RDA.

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