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KOMPAS APPOINTS GENERAL SALES AGENT IN SA

CAPE TOWN – Leading global tour operator Kompas International Travel Group has established a presence in Southern Africa with the appointment of Kompas South Africa as General Sales Agent.

Kompas SA, spearheaded by Ms Lanie Grierson, represents the Kompas Group in this region and promotes and sells the group's tourist packages and related services commercial products from Slovenia, Central and Eastern Europe. The company's main focus comprises wholesaling – escorted tours, leisure groups, tailor-made tours, cruises and MICE (meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions).

The Slovenian-based Kompas Group, which has a presence in 21 countries and more than 50 offices, is the largest tour operator in south-east Europe and one of the largest in the European Union. The group, which celebrates its 60th anniversary this year, specialises in both inbound and outbound travel across Europe.

Grierson's appointment follows a move last year to make Slovenia more accessible to South African visitors. The local German Consulates now issue Schengen visas to South African passport holders on behalf of Slovenia. Prior to this, South Africans had to spend two to three days in a foreign country where there was Slovenian representation and apply there for a visa to visit the country.

Says Grierson: "Slovenia is a wonderful new destination for first-time and seasoned South African travellers alike and an excellent choice for tour groups and incentive trips. It is a beautiful, clean, safe country in which the locals can speak English and visitors enjoy great value for money.

"Against a backdrop of European culture, Slovenia offers a wide variety of experiences that will appeal to many South Africans," she says. "These include skiing in the Alps, hiking in natural forests or taking a dip in the Adriatic Sea."

As Kompas SA's first initiative to launch the country as a top tourist destination to South Africans, it has arranged a reader's tour to Slovenia in conjunction with *Rapport* and the Honorary Consulate of Slovenia. The tour will take place in May/June 2011.

Ms Simona Mele, chief executive officer of the Kompas Group, believes Kompas SA will play a key role in promoting and educating South Africans on lesser visited, but increasingly popular European destinations such as Slovenia.

Dr Prieur du Plessis, Honorary Consul of Slovenia in South Africa, welcomed Kompas's entry to the South African market. "This move affirms a strong recognition of and confidence in promoting the attractive and mutually beneficial tourism potential between South Africa and previously untapped European markets," he said. "This is an excellent opportunity for destinations known as Europe's best-kept secrets to be highlighted on the tourist map."

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About Slovenia

Formerly part of Yugoslavia, Slovenia has been a democratic parliamentary republic since 1991. It was the first of the “new entrants” to join the European Union (2004) as well as the European Monetary Union (2007). The so-called “jewel of Central Europe” is a compact country, about half the size of Switzerland, and is bordered by Austria, Italy, Hungary and Croatia. It is 20 273 km² in size and has a population of just over two million.

Slovenia has been dubbed many things, including ‘Europe in miniature’, ‘the sunny side of the Alps’, ‘the green piece of Europe’ and ‘Central Europe’s best-kept secret’. Although it is a small country, it is very diverse, with areas of outstanding natural beauty ranging from rugged Alpine mountains to tranquil lakes, fairytale forests, valleys with lush vineyards and even a stretch of beautiful coastline on the Adriatic.

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