



NEW REGULATIONS ON VISITOR TAX

ASSOCIATION DES COMMUNES

CRANS MONTANA 

Absolutely



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WHY THE NEW REGULATIONS?

Why the new regulations? The new law on tourism in Valais allows communes to modify the way in which visitor tax is collected. The three communes of Crans-Montana, Icogne and Lens have set up a working group which is proposing a change to a flat fee collection system for second homes.

As for professional hosts, the current system remains the same. The only thing that will change is the amount of visitor tax to be collected, which increases from CHF 2.50 to CHF 3.- per night.

However the change is an important one for owners of second homes in one of the three communes. The new system is intended to be fairer, more egalitarian and above all require less policing, as all second home owners will be subject to the tax. An advantage card will be given to owners with new privileges for resort guests.

The new regulations were accepted by the communal councils of the three communes of Crans-Montana, Icogne and Lens on Tuesday 17 October 2017. The new project has also been accepted by the members of Crans-Montana Tourism and Congress (CMTC) at an advisory vote during the general meeting on 19 October 2017.

This information leaflet has been created for you, and aims to help you fully understand what is going to change. How is it going to happen? And above all, what is Crans-Montana as a destination going to do with this additional money?

Happy reading !

Joseph Bonvin, president of the ACCM Economy & Tourism commission

THE CURRENT SITUATION

Distribution of overnight stays in different types of accommodation				
	2015	2016	Evolution	Distribution
Alternative accommodation (including packages)	1,000,470	952,706	-4.77%	60.99%
Hotels (including guesthouses)	215,853	215,959	+0.05%	13.83%
International schools	260,271	245,556	-5.65%	15.72%
Treatment centres	101,431	98,465	-2.92%	6.30%
Group accommodation and huts	51,607	47,552	-7.86%	3.04%
Campsites	3,499	1,746	-50.10%	0.11%
Total	1,633,131	1,561,984	-4.36%	100%

Crans-Montana as a destination is characterised by its very high number of second homes. According to the latest data held by the three communes, there are over 11,000 units, making it one of the major destinations in the Alps. This figure is much higher than Verbier or Nendaz for example, not to men-

tion Zermatt, which has over 100 hotels and far fewer second homes.

The current visitor tax yielded CHF 3.26 million in 2016. 53% of declared stays are paid by flat fee, and 47% are paid per night.

THE NEED FOR A FAIRER SYSTEM

The new regulations on the collection of visitor tax aim to be fairer, more egalitarian, simpler and above all require less policing, as all second home owners will pay the tax. In this way, we can con rm that it will also be fairer, which is not the case today, as there are definitely losses with the current system.

CONSULTATION PHASE

As required by law, the new regulation was made available for consultation between 22 September and 13 October 2017. Some thirty questions, remarks and suggestions have been submitted. They have all been analysed and some have been taken into account in the new regulations, before the decision made by the councils of the three communes of Crans-Montana (Crans-Montana, Icogne and Lens).

WHAT'S NEW

For professional hosts, the current system remains the same. The only thing that will change is the amount of visitor tax to be collected, which will increase from CHF 2.50 to CHF 3.- per night. However, the change is an important one for owners of second homes in one of the three communes. All second home owners will be subject to the tax. And not just those who had been paying for their overnight stays, or paying an annual flat fee. A new advantage card will be introduced. It will offer free cable car transport in summer, and also free public transport. The card also gives a big discount on a series of sports and cultural activities, a list is currently being drawn up.

SIMPLIFIED OPERATIONS

HOW WILL THE FLAT FEE WORK?

All holiday accommodation will be subject to the flat fee and will benefit from the advantage card. A calculation table has been drawn up, modelled on those used elsewhere in Valais. The flat fee tax will be based on an average of 50 overnight stays per year at CHF 3.- (150 francs) multiplied by the units per household (UPH).

For example, for a 3 room property, equivalent to 2 UPH, the flat fee tax will be 300 francs per year. For a property with 6 rooms or more, (10 UPH) it will be a maximum of CHF 1,500.

This tax replaces the tourist tax that owners previously had to pay without any real checks, and which therefore led to very high losses. For those who have paid previously, the change should be bearable, considering the advantages on offer. In fact, the flat fee price is changing from CHF 112.50 today, to CHF 150.- per UPH tomorrow. For others, it will certainly be more of a change, but a huge number of privileges will be created, including the launch of an advantage card (see details on Page 8).

The final point is that owners who rent out their accommodation can charge the visitor tax and keep it for themselves. All details can be found in the new regulations, which you can consult on Page 10 and 11.

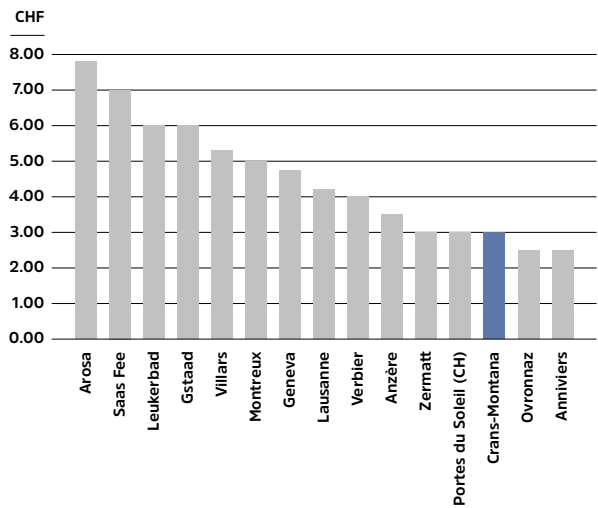
ANNUAL FLAT FEE IN CRANS-MONTANA

Up to 3 rooms	2 UPH	CHF 300.-
3 rooms	4 UPH	CHF 600.-
4 rooms	6 UPH	CHF 900.-
5 rooms	8 UPH	CHF 1200.-
6 rooms or more	10 UPH	CHF 1500.-

Mr. X, who does not live in one of the three communes, owns a 4 room apartment in Crans-Montana. The apartment is used by himself and his family. The flat-fee tax is CHF 900.- and he will receive 6 advantage cards.

COMPARISON OF VISITOR TAXES BY REGION

(PRICE PER NIGHT)



The proposed visitor tax in Crans-Montana will be one of the least expensive in Valais and Switzerland, as illustrated in the table above. The visitor tax will be CHF 3.- per adult instead of CHF 2.50 today. Children from 6 to 16 years old will pay 50% of the tax. A series of exemptions is planned. (see Regulations on pages 10 and 11).

THE OFFICIAL DATABASE FOR ACCOMMODATION

The communes rely on the Federal Register of Buildings and Dwellings (RegBL). The Federal Office of Statistics manages the RegBL in collaboration with construction services and other federal, cantonal and communal services. The RegBL includes baseline data relating to buildings and dwellings. It is used for statistical, research and planning purposes, and helps the cantons and communes to execute certain legal tasks. The RegBL is updated on a quarterly basis.

HOW IS THE NEW FLAT FEE TAX CALCULATED?	Size of property	X	Occupation rate	X	Visitor tax
	Number of UPH Units per household		Number of nights per year		Price per night
	Up to 3 rooms: 2 UPH 3 rooms: 4 UPH 4 rooms: 6 UPH 5 rooms: 8 UPH 6 rooms or more: 10 UPH		The average occupation rate is fixed at 50 nights per year in Crans-Montana.		CHF 3.-



WHO PAYS ?

Visitor tax is paid by guests who spend a night in the communes of Crans-Montana, Icogne or Lens but are not domiciled there. The person hosting is responsible for collecting visitor tax.

In hotels and all other structured forms of accommodation, the visitor tax is calculated per overnight stay (CHF 3.- per night for an adult).

Second home owners pay the tax as an annual flat fee. All overnight stays are included in the annual flat fee for the residence, including occasional lettings. The flat fee is calculated on the basis of an average occupation rate of 50 nights.

WHO DOESN'T PAY ?

The following are exempt from paying the visitor tax:

- Those domiciled in the communes of Crans-Montana, Icogne and Lens.
- Those visiting a family member.
- Children under 6 years old.
- Students attending a teaching establishment recognised and subsidised by the State of Valais.
- Patients and residents in care homes or centres for the disabled.
- Army personnel or those working in civil protection, or firefighters.
- Those carrying out an activity recognised and subsidised by the Jeunesse et Sports (Youth and Sport) programme.

WHO PAYS A REDUCED RATE ?

A reduced rate applies for:

- Children aged between 6 and 16 pay half of the amount
- Accommodation outside of the building zone and located more than 100 metres from a road that is open to traffic all year
- Huts and mountain refuges
- International schools

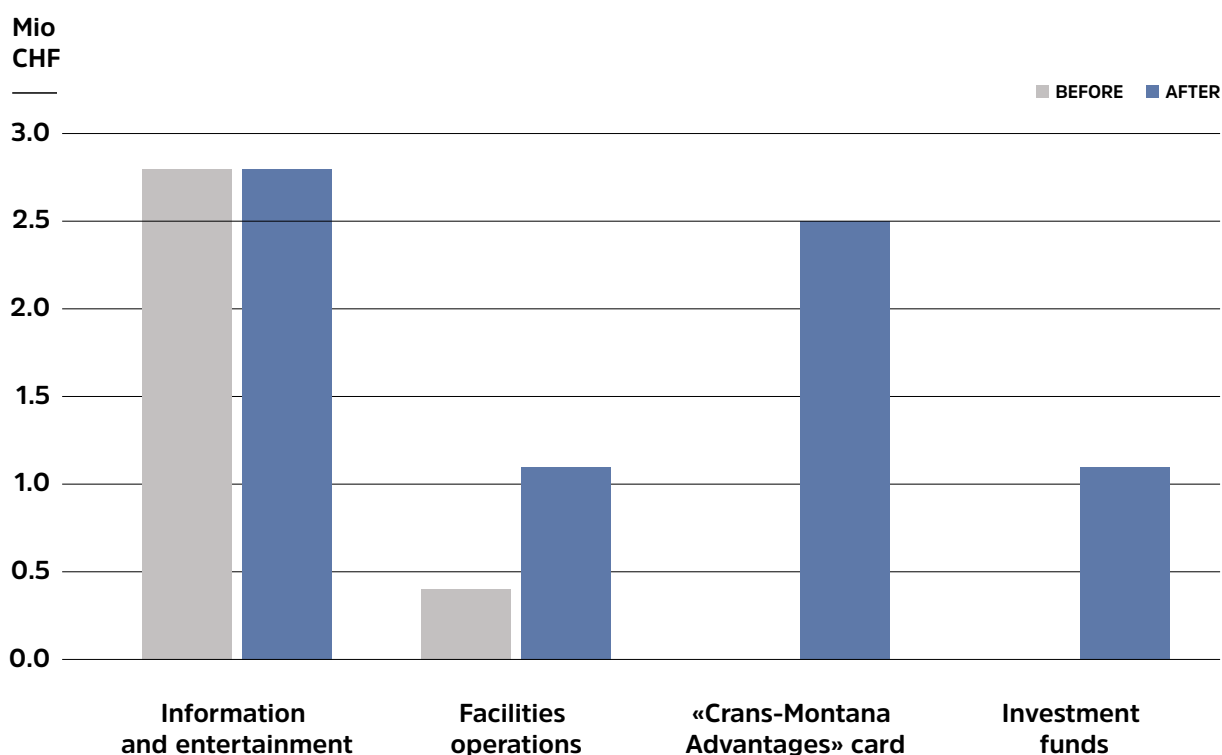
OCCASIONAL RENTALS

Letting, either by the owner or by an agency, is unlimited. Owners can charge the visitor tax per night and keep it for themselves. Long term letting is included in occasional rentals. The accommodation provider can therefore validate advantage cards in the long term tenant's name. Once the long term tenant is registered as domiciled, visitor tax is no longer charged.

COLLECTION SYSTEM

Annual visitor tax is collected by each of the three communes, Crans-Montana, Icogne and Lens. Correspondance will be sent by the respective communal administrative office, who have all the necessary information to perform this task. Visitor tax per night will still be collected by CMTC. An appeal procedure will be available in the event of contestation.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR CRANS-MONTANA AS A DESTINATION



According to estimations by the working group, and examined by boards from the communes of Crans-Montana, Icogne and Lens, the new regulations could yield around CHF 4.3 million in additional income, that is CHF 7.5 million compared to CHF 3.2 million currently.

By law, the proceeds of visitor tax must be used in the interest of those who pay it, and for tourist development. It helps finance expenses related to tourism, in particular information and reservation services, local activities, and the creation and running of tourist, cultural and sporting facilities.

Above, you'll see the new distribution of visitor taxes, with, as key changes, CHF 2.5 million dedicated to the advantage card, and CHF 1.1 million per year for a commune investment fund. These figures are given as an estimate, and subject to modification depending on the actual amount of visitor tax collected by each commune in 2018 and the years to follow.

A NEW INVESTMENT FUND

Part of the proceeds from the tax, around CHF 1.1 million (according to estimations) will be allocated to a commune investment fund. This fund will not be an intercommunal fund, it will be directly managed by each commune. Each commune will be independent in deciding its use, but can only use it in strict accordance to the law that states that this money must be invested in tourist development.



A TAX FOR WHAT ?

INFRASTRUCTURE REQUIRING MAINTENANCE AND DEVELOPMENT

300 km	of signposted walking paths with 3,000 information and direction signs
170 km	of mountain bike trails (9 routes)
60 km	of winter walks
20 km	of cross country ski trails
27 km	of measured courses
20 km	snowshoe routes
7 km	downhill mountain bike trails (2 routes)
5 km	fitness circuit
7	picnic places (capacity 800 people)
9	lakes
4	playgrounds



TO ORGANISE EVENTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

Events organised by CMTC :

- › Food & Ice Guest Tables
- › Crans-Montana Winter Opening
- › Bibi's House (summer and winter)
- › Aminona Grandeur Nature (summer and winter)
- › Funny Land
- › Big Christmas celebrations
- › New Year
- › Carnival
- › Ice Discos
- › Choc'Altitude
- › Ski Food Safari Guest Tables
- › Easter Egg hunt
- › Music Kiosk
- › Food & Fashion Guest Tables
- › 1st August celebrations
- › Water and fireworks shows
- › Food & Wine Guest Tables

Collaborative or external events

(with support from ACCM and CMTC) :

- › Omega European Masters
- › Machine de Cirque show
- › Crans-Montana Classics Concerts
- › International Hot Air Balloon Meet
- › Nocturne du Loup event
- › Winter Golf Cup

- › Wine and local produce fair
- › FIS Ladies European World Cup
- › FIS Ladies World Cup
- › Mont Lachaux Trophy
- › Swiss Freeski Open
- › Junior Half Pipe World Cup
- › Caprices Festival
- › Festival OFF
- › Spring Session
- › Annual brass band concerts for all three communes
- › Wolrd VR Forum
- › La Badadgia
- › Open Cellars
- › Beach Club
- › Sport Talents Charity Day
- › Cycling for Children
- › Ambassadors of Music concerts
- › Beach Volleyball tournaments
- › Icoigne Jazz
- › Montana markets
- › Cable Wake Contest
- › Jumping Longines
- › Midsummer Festival
- › Blues @LakeMoubra
- › Gruyère Festival
- › Vision Art Festival
- › Fiat 500 meet
- › Le Temps du Cornalin
- › The Désalpe
- › Jeep-Heep-Heep
- › Trail des Patrouilleurs
- › Ascension Christ-Roi race



MAINTENANCE OF PLACES

- › **Lakes**
(Ycoor, Grenon, Moubra, Etang-Long, Etang des Briesses, Etang Blanc, Mirioug Lake, Icoigne Lake, Chermignon Lake).
- › **Football pitches when teams are visiting**
(Montana, Les Palettes, Lens)
- › **Ycoor Ice Rink**
- › **Colombire Hamlet**
- › **Snow Island**



ACTIVITY OPERATIONS

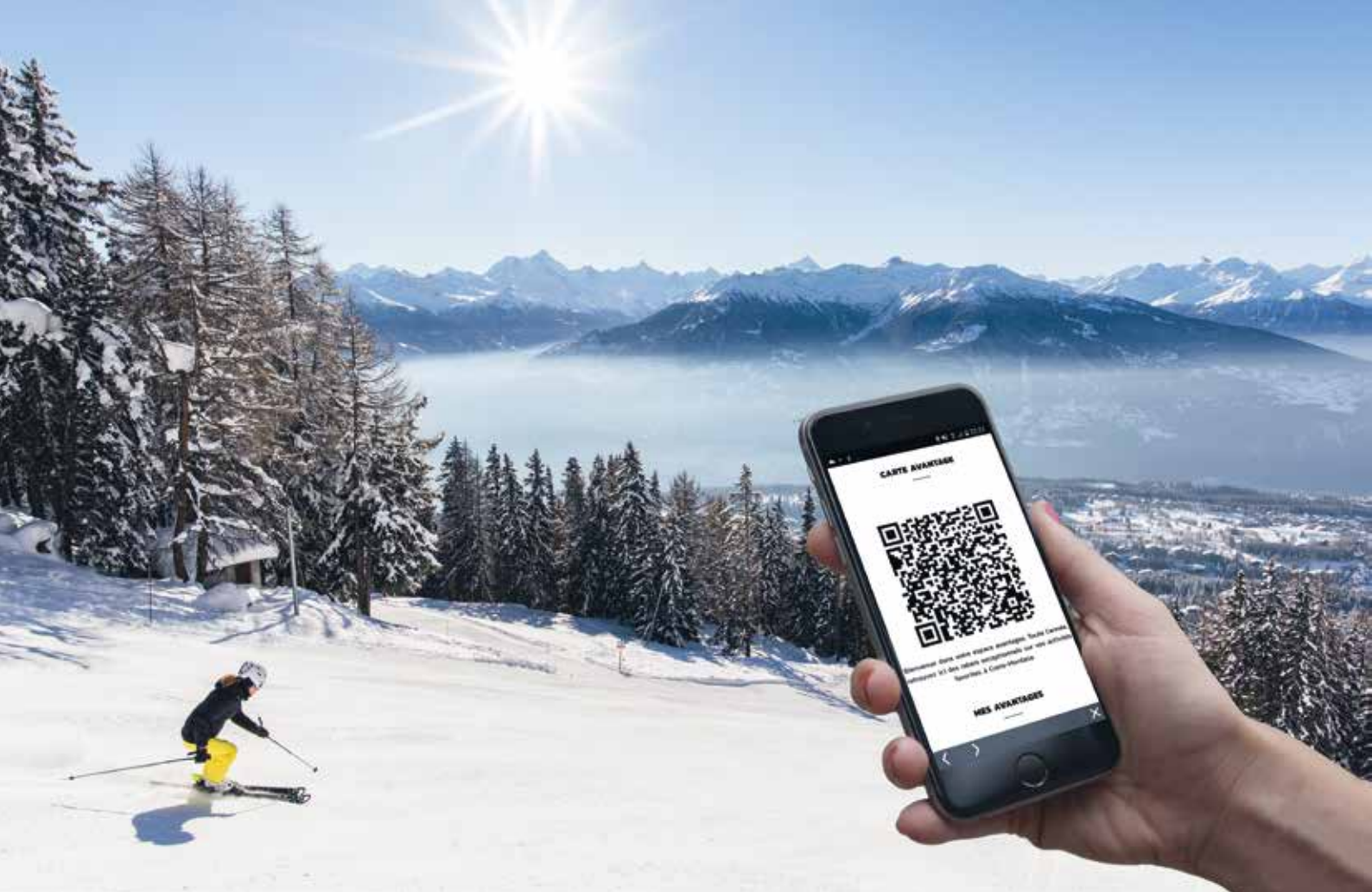
- › Ice rink
- › Curling
- › Sledging run
- › Snowtubing
- › Swimming pool
- › Beaches
- › Pedalos
- › Mini-golf
- › Mini electric car circuit
- › Beach volley
- › Mobile fitness
- › Downhill mountain biking
- › Bike park
- › Football
- › Fun park
- › Climbing wall
- › Carousel



INFORMATION SERVICE FOR GUESTS

- › **Three welcome and information points in Crans, Montana and Aminona.**
- › Publication of brochures and flyers in 4 languages
(French – German – English – Italian)
- › Website
- › Mobile applications
- › Social media





NEW ADVANTAGES FOR GUESTS

THE NEW « CRANS-MONTANA ADVANTAGES » CARD

The new regulations on visitor tax mean it is possible to introduce a new advantage card. Each UPH is entitled to a card, which is valid throughout the three communes, and which offers the following advantages:

Free access to cable cars (CMA)

- from mid-June to mid-October

Public transport

- Public transport in the Crans-Montana region
- Shuttle buses in Crans-Montana from mid-June to mid-October

Reduced price activities

- 40% off a wide range of sporting and cultural activities in Crans-Montana, Icoigne and Lens.

LONGER SEASONS



1 December
→ 15 April



15 June
→ 15 October

The new advantage card means that seasons, in particular the summer season, can be extended by offering considerable advantages, such as free cable cars and public transport during certain periods.

WHAT DO THEY THINK ?



«I support the new regulations because they're fairer, and this is not the case at the moment, as almost 50% of second home owners don't pay for a single overnight stay! In return, the new advantage card will guarantee each cardholder certain benefits, of a much higher value than their expenditure. Our main aim is to make owners want to come and spend more time enjoying our attractions and infrastructure, and more often».

Nicolas Féraud

President of the commune of Crans-Montana



«Increasing the visitor tax from the current CHF 2.50 to CHF 3 tomorrow is more than reasonable. Compared to other destinations in Valais and Switzerland, Crans-Montana as a destination is one of the best value, so it's wrong to say that hoteliers are being attacked. We're perfectly aware of how important hotels are for a resort like ours, and what's more, we're going to do everything we can to look after the guests who place their confidence in us through this new advantage card».

Martial Kamerzin

President of the commune of Icogne



«With the additional money that should come from the tax, we're first and foremost going to respect the law by using it solely to benefit those who pay the tax, and for nothing else. A large part of it will be used for the new advantage card and for an investment fund. We're therefore going to be able to boost the area's tourist and cultural attractions by financing projects in the three communes in Crans-Montana. I'm convinced that the new regulations are going to enable us to be even better at meeting our guests' expectations».

David Bagnoud

President of the commune of Lens



«I've had to lower my prices and they increase the visitor tax! Tax the client who stays in the resort, whilst those who only visit for the day, and there are more and more of them, pay nothing! We want our residents to be ambassadors, yet we hit them with taxes! An optional guest card which is purchased, and adapted to different types of clients, would be fairer, and would avoid chasing them away».

Alain Duc

Hotelier in Crans-Montana



«The large majority of our members are opposed to this project. After putting up with disturbances, notably due to the construction of the ice rink, and a variety of building sites in Montana, they find it difficult to understand why they should be made to pay again. Even more so when the size of second residences is already taxed indirectly by the communal and cantonal tax systems. It is not fair that around 10,000 families with second homes should be forced by 13,000 voters in a communal assembly to provide finances, without being able to state their point of view. It would make more sense to encourage people to come and visit the Haut-Plateau region, rather than dissuading them with a tax like this».

Cédric Berger

President of the APACH Association of apartment and chalet owners in Crans-Montana



«As a hotelier, I don't think there will be any negative effects from increasing the visitor tax from CHF 2.50 to CHF 3, on the contrary, because our rates are still more than competitive. Compared to other ski resorts in Switzerland, we're offering our clients some very good benefits with the new advantage card, such as free cable cars in summer, and the opportunity to use infrastructure such as the minigolf, ice rink etc...The increase in tax can also be used to improve the quality of the entertainment organised by Crans-Montana Tourism and Congress (CMTC)».

Géraldine Patterson-Bestenheider

Hotelier in Crans-Montana

REGULATION ON VISITOR TAX IN THE CRANS-MONTANA COMMUNE

(EXAMPLE FOR THE COMMUNE OF CRANS-MONTANA)

The Communal Assembly for the Crans-Montana commune

- in view of Articles 75, 78 para. 3 and 79, subsections 2 and 9 of the Cantonal Constitution;
- in view of Articles 2, 17, 146 and 147 of the Law relating to Communes dated 5 February 2004;
- in view of the Law on Tourism dated 9 February 1996 ;
- in view of the order relating to the Law on Tourism dated 10 December 2014 ;
- in view of the guidelines issued by the local tourism board in the commune of Crans-Montana, drafted in collaboration with local companies in the tourism sector and adopted by the Municipal Councils on 25 July 2013

Upon the recommendation of the Municipal Council, has decided as follows:

Article 1

Principle and use

1. The Crans-Montana commune collects a visitor tax.
2. The proceeds of this visitor tax must be applied in the interests of those who pay it. It helps finance expenses related to tourism, in particular information and reservation services, local activities, and also the creation and running of tourist, cultural and sporting facilities.
3. It may not be used for promoting tourism or financing the ordinary functions of the commune.

Article 2

Persons liable to pay

1. Guests who spend a night in the commune of Crans-Montana but are not domiciled there are liable to pay this tax.

2. Those who provide accommodation to persons liable to such tax are responsible for collecting the visitor tax from them and paying it to the relevant collection body. If they do not, they are liable to pay it personally.

Article 3

Exemptions

The following are exempt from paying the visitor tax

- a. those domiciled in the commune of Crans-Montana where the tax is collected.
- b. those visiting a family member. 'Family member' means any person related through grandparents, as well as their spouse.
- c. children under 6 years old.
- d. pupils, apprentices, and also students attending a teaching establishment recognised and subsidised by the State of Valais during term time.
- e. patients and residents in care homes for the elderly, centres for the disabled or centres fulfilling a social function and authorised by the State of Valais.
- f. army personnel or those working in civil protection, firefighters and other similar service providers, when there in the course of their duties.
- g. those carrying out an activity that is recognised and subsidised by the Jeunesse et Sports (Youth and Sport) programme.
- h. persons with their domicile in the communes of Lens and Icogne
- i. accommodation outside of the building zone and located more than 100 metres from a road that is open to traffic all year, is exempt from 50% of the flat fee visitor tax.

Article 4

Method of calculating tax

1. The visitor tax is payable per night
2. Owners who are subject to tax (in accordance with article 2, paragraph 2) as well as those using holiday accommodation and who occupy the property themselves, and also long-term tenants pay the tax by way of an annual flat fee.
3. The annual flat fee covers any overnight stay in the property, this includes occasional lettings.

Article 5

Amount

1. The amount of visitor tax per night is fixed :
 - a) for hotels and any other form of organised lodging, unless specifically listed below, CHF 3.00 per night.
 - b) for holiday homes or other similar forms of accommodation, CHF 3.00, used to calculate the flat fee.
 - c) for huts and mountain refuges, CHF 1.20 per night.

-
- d) for international schools, CHF 2.10 per night.
 2. Children aged between 6 and 16 pay half of the amount.

Article 6

Annual flat fee

1. All holiday homes, whether not rented out or occasionally rented out, are subject to a flat rate visitor tax which replaces the daily visitor tax and the old flat fee tax.
2. The flat fee is based on an average occupation rate (number of nights) fixed at 50 nights, and the rate of visitor tax at CHF 3.00 (Article 5b), thus $50 \times 3.00 = \text{CHF } 150.00$. It is payable for each property depending on the number of units per household (UPH), specifically :
 - **Accommodation up to 3 rooms**
equivalent to 2 UPH at CHF 150.00/UPH, or CHF 300.-
 - **Accommodation with 3 rooms**
equivalent to 4 UPH at CHF 150.00/UPH, or CHF 600.-
 - **Accommodation with 4 rooms**
equivalent to 6 UPH at CHF 150.00/UPH, or CHF 900.-
 - **Accommodation with 5 rooms**
equivalent to 8 UPH at CHF 150.00/UPH, or CHF 1200.-
 - **Accommodation 6 rooms or more**
equivalent to 10 UPH at CHF 150.00/UPH, or CHF 1500.-

The average occupation rate is reduced to 20 nights for holiday rentals rented out only occasionally by an owner with their domicile in the commune.

For other forms of accommodation when only a part is offered as holiday accommodation, only the number of rooms offered as holiday accommodation is taken into consideration.

Article 7

Payment

- 1 Visitor taxes due from eligible accommodation businesses must be paid at the same time as the statement of the number of nights is sent.
- 2 The declaration of the number of nights must be made when tenants arrive.
- 3 The annual flat fee is payable within 30 days of annual invoice.

Article 8

Automatic taxation

- 1 If, after written notice, the details necessary for taxation purposes are not declared, or the tax due is not paid by the set time, the Municipal Council will proceed with automatic taxation. This tax is classed as an enforceable judgement under Article 80 of the Federal Debt Enforcement and Bankruptcy Law.
- 2 Automatic taxation should as much as possible reflect the

actual situation of the person subject to such automatic taxation.

Article 9

Collection system

The collection of visitor tax is performed by the Crans-Montana commune, who may delegate this task. The provisions of Article 14 LTour concerning surveillance apply.

Article 10

Statistics for overnight stays

Owners of holiday accommodation who occasionally rent out their holiday accommodation must declare the actual number of overnight stays to the fee collection body, on the special form provided, before 10 May and 10 November.

Article 11

Renvoi

Provisions in the Cantonal Law on Tourism and the General Order on the Law on Tourism additionally apply under this regulation.

Article 12

Commencement

Thus accepted by the Communal Assembly of Crans-Montana,

The Municipal Council

THE NEW VISITOR TAX IN 6 POINTS

A FAIRER SYSTEM

The new regulations on visitor taxes will be fairer, because all owners of second homes will be required to pay the tax, thus avoiding the losses which occur with the current system.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

With an estimated CHF 7.5 million income from the tax, CHF 4.3 million more than the current CHF 3.2 million, Crans-Montana as a destination will have additional means available in order to be even better at welcoming and looking after guests.

A REASONABLE PRICE

With a visitor tax of CHF 3.- instead of CHF 2.50 today, the resort of Crans-Montana is positioned in a very reasonable place on a cantonal and national scale.

ADVANTAGES FOR GUESTS

Every UPH will entitle the owner to an advantage card valid throughout the three communes. Amongst the two most important measures, the cable cars and public transport will be free in summer. The card will also offer considerable discounts on a series of sporting and cultural activities, a list is currently being compiled.

FUNDS FOR THE FUTURE

Part of the proceeds of the tax, around CHF 1.1 million (according to estimations) will be allocated to a new commune investment fund. Each of the three communes will manage their own fund and its use independently, but it is only for the purpose of tourism.

EASIER COLLECTION PROCESS

Annual visitor tax is collected by each of the three communes, Crans-Montana, Icogne and Lens. Correspondance will be sent by the respective communal administrative office, who have all the necessary information to perform this task. An appeal procedure will be available in the event of contestation.

TO FIND OUT MORE

You'll find all the information about the new regulations on visitor tax on the website www.cransmontana.ch

CALENDAR

If the new regulations on visitor tax are accepted by the communal assemblies of the three communes in December 2017, the first taxation period will begin on 1 January 2018, and will end on 31 December 2018. Invoices will be sent out after approval of the regulations by the State Council.

INVITATION TO THE COMMUNAL ASSEMBLIES

Citizens of the three communes are invited to make their decision at a communal assembly about the new regulations on visitor tax on:

MONDAY 18 DECEMBER 2017

For Crans-Montana Commune →

Salle polyvalente Mollens, 19.30

For Icogne Commune → Salle bourgeoisiale, 20.00

For Lens Commune → Salle bourgeoisiale, 19.30

IMPRESSUM

Edition: Communes of Crans-Montana, Icogne and Lens

Graphic design/layout: Boomerang Marketing SA

Texts: Vuistiner Pascal

English translation: Sarah Dunn

Photos: Crans-Montana Tourism and Congress

Printing: Bachmann Impression Groupe SA

