



FTI

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## Franchise hotels and French tour operator

**German tour operator FTI is taking two more steps in its international expansion with the launch of a hotel franchise partnership and expansion of its French tour operator business.**



The newly-branded Aquis Rocca Nettuno Tropea in Italy

Foto: FTI

The Munich-based group, with annual revenues of €1.8 billion, has grown in the last few years into the fourth-largest German tour operator with a small travel agency chain, a travel TV station and diverse other businesses. It has expanded internationally with the establishment of Dubai-based destination management company Meeting Point International (MPI) and the acquisition of UK-based You Travel.

From November, MPI Hotels, which operates nine properties, will cooperate with Greek hotel chain Aquis on a franchise basis. Its nine hotels will be added to the 10 properties of Aquis on Corfu, Kos and Crete and will gain the Aquis brand name. The deal will enable the Greek hotel group to expand into new international markets and offer properties in

Turkey, Italy, Malta and the Canary Islands.

However, FTI chief Dietmar Gunz told fvw: "In contrast to the hotel brands of other German tour operators we are not planning a concept with common standards. The MPI hotels are different. Many hoteliers do not want to bind themselves but act freely in the market."

Aquis was founded by Ioannis John Kent, former founder of Med Hotels (now owned by Thomas Cook) and You Travel. "The merger of MPI Hotels and Aquis is the first step in international growth," said Kent. This will be the responsibility of the hotel group's new CEO, Maria Douvrou, who was formerly TUI Travel's head of business development for hotels and resorts.

Meanwhile, FTI is also venturing across the Rhine into France with the creation of FTI Voyages, a new tour operator that will offer Mediterranean and long-haul holidays from airports across the country this winter. The new brand will be developed by Starter, the Alsace-based regional tour operator bought by FTI last year which has some 150,000 customers in the border region. The expansion move contrasts with the current downscaling of TUI and Thomas Cook activities in the difficult French market.

Gunz also stressed to fvw that FTI is financially solid and has always been profitable in recent years. He said he was "very satisfied" with an EBITA margin of well over 1%. "We don't promise any margins of 4% or 5% because we don't want to take any excessive risks. We are probably the tourism group with the lowest risks as we don't have our own airline and can act very flexibly in procuring flight and hotel capacity," he stressed. "We are not growing excessively but organically at above 10% a year."

**Quelle:** <http://www.fvw.com/fti-franchise-hotels-and-french-tour-operator/393/122412/11245>

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