
EUROPEAN PROJECT “PRESERVE”

SUMMARY OF TOURISM IN THE PROVINCE OF AVILA

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AVILA COUNTY COUNCIL

1.1 Geographical District

The province of Ávila occupies an area of 8,048 km². and is the one located farthest south of the nine provinces that compose the Autonomous Community of Castilla y León, it is integrated by 248 municipalities with a total population of 171,000 inhabitants.

Its capital Ávila has been World Heritage since 1985, it has 60,000 inhabitants and is situated 1,131 metres above sea level.

Its areas are very different from one another: the northern area, which is the area of La Moraña, forms part of the Castilian plateau; the central area, which begins in the outskirts of the city of Ávila and extends to Gredos, is the mountainous area par excellence, the core of the whole Central System and the southern area, which is the area of the Tiétar Valley, sheltered by the Gredos Mountain Range. Here the climate gets milder, the landscape changes and so do the layout of the villages and the character of the people.

1.2 Competences

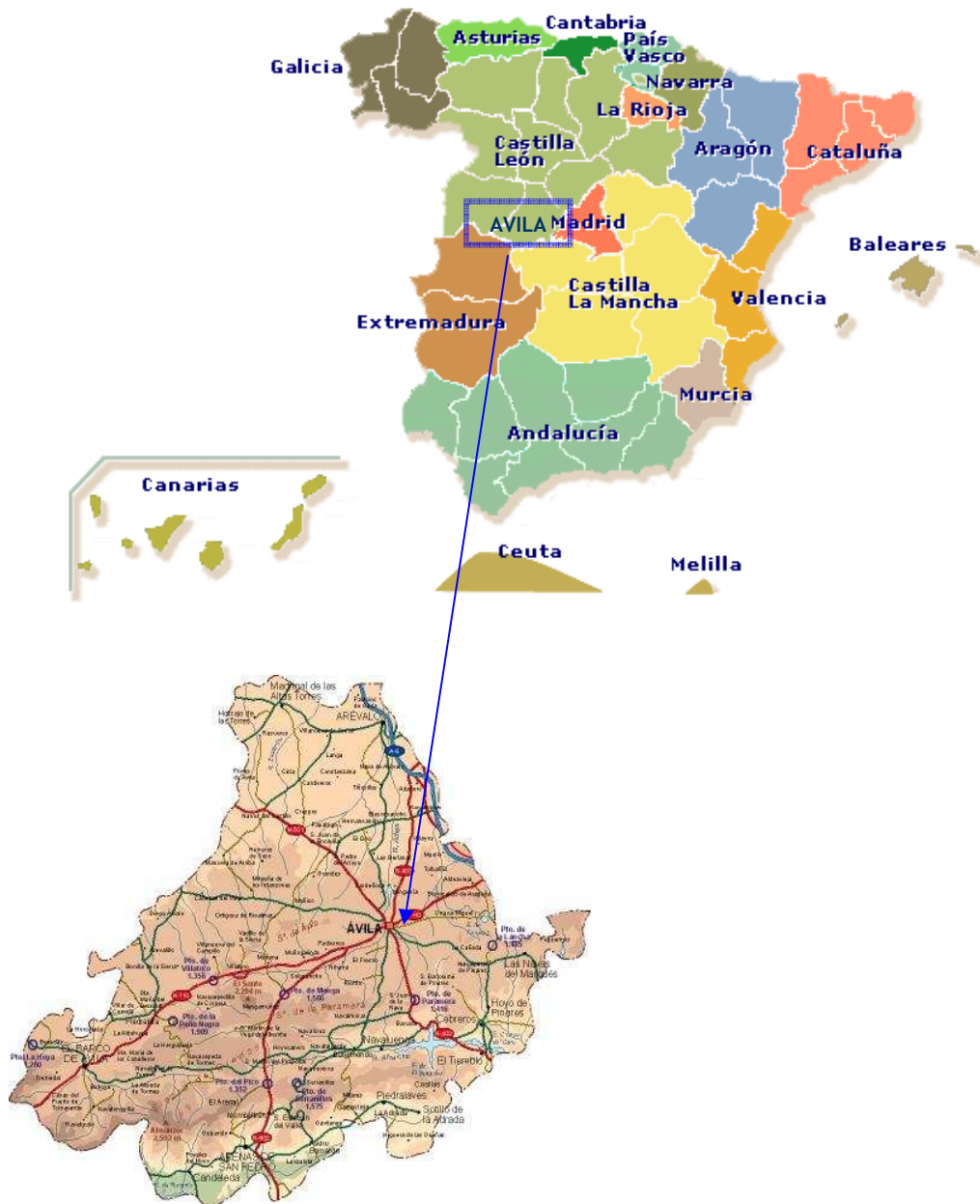
The Avila County Council is the governing body of the Province of Ávila. Like the rest of County Councils, it has delegated as well as decentralized competences on the part of the Autonomous Community and it participates in coordination tasks between the State and Regional Administrations with the Local one.

1.3 Singularity of the Spanish organizational system: region vs province

Spain has a territorial administration system in which three different levels coexist: National, Autonomous or Regional, and Local. This singularity makes competences of different administrations converge in the same geographical space in the province area, as is the case for those of County Councils and Provincial Offices of the Regional Government.

In our particular case, in the geographical district of the province of Ávila on the one hand there exists the figure of the **Ávila County Council**, to which the Area of European Affairs belongs, and therefore is the partner of the PRESERVE project, and on the other hand there are several aspects regarding which the competences correspond to the **Junta de Castilla y León**, which is the regional

authority for the nine provinces through its Provincial Office, so both administrations coexist and have distributed their competences in a coordinated way. This explains the fact that in certain aspects the Avila County Council does not have the competences to perform some actions, or the availability of certain data.



2. TOURISM IN THE PROVINCE OF AVILA

2.1 Tourist resources

History, nature, cultural and artistic heritage, the wide offer of rural as well as sports and adventure tourism, gastronomy, ...etc., are the main tourist resources in our province, which is distributed in 7 Areas/Counties from the point of view of tourism:

1. La Moraña
2. City of Ávila
3. Amblés Valley and Ávila Mountain Range
4. Corneja Valley
5. Tormes-Gredos County
6. Tiétar Valley
7. Alberche Valley-Tierra de Pinares.

1. The plains of **La Moraña**, cradle of Saint John of the Cross in Fontiveros, and cradle of the discovery of America with the birth of Isabella the Catholic in Madrigal de las Altas Torres, are lands full of art, in whose skyline the church towers of the purest **mudejar style** stand out, with the highlight of the monumental town of Arévalo, also famous for its tasty roasted suckling pig.

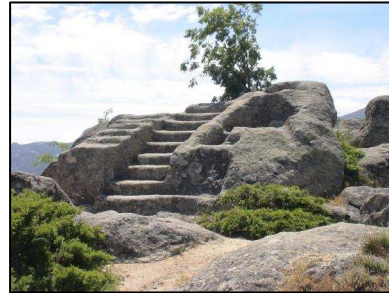


2. In the **city of Ávila**, the walls are the best preserved walled precinct in the world, along with the beautiful samples of Avila Romanesque, which in December 1985 led UNESCO to declare Ávila World Heritage.

World-famous figures as Saint Theresa. Good infrastructures for the celebration of Congresses para la celebración de Congresos. Numerous restaurants to taste the variety and quality of Avila cuisine among which stands out the veal of Ávila “Iberian Avileña Black Breed” and the well-known “Ávila egg yolk cakes”.



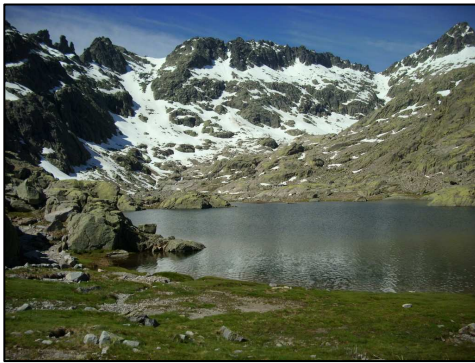
3. Close to the capital city, the **Ambles Valley**, after which the famous veal was named, and the Ávila Mountain Range keep important Celtic remains in the fortified settlements of Ulaca (Solosancho), Las Cogotas (Cardeñosa), La Mesa de Miranda (Chamartín) or Los Castillejos (Sanchorreja). This area is developing an interesting offer of rural tourism very close the city.



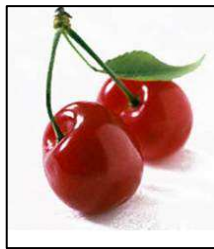
4. If we get near the **Corneja Valley** we find villages full of history as Piedrahita or Bonilla de la Sierra and unbelievable natural scenery. A world-famous area for its special suitability to practise sports as hang gliding and paragliding or equestrian tourism where localities as El Barco de Ávila, famous for its highly prized beans and to taste delicious "patatas revolconas" (potatoes poached with onions and peppers), are a must.



5. The top of **Gredos**, with spectacular natural landscapes as the Five Lakes, The Big Lake, The Almanzor, Gredos Cirque, there, Navarredonda de Gredos is the location of the first National Tourism Parador in Spain, and all over the area we will find a wide and varied offer of rural as well as sports and adventure tourism, Hoyos del Espino is the place of the Nature Interpretation Centre of Gredos Regional Park. Gredos is remarkable for the existence of many protected animal species among which the Hispanic goat stands out.



6. In the **Tiétar Valley**, the most southern area in the province, enjoying a privileged climate, tobacco and paprika grow perfectly well in villages like Candeleda, which also has in El Raso one of the most important archeological sites in the province. Castles like those in La Adrada (Historical Interpretation Centre of Tiétar Valley), Arenas de San Pedro or Mombeltrán and a rich gastronomy headed by roasted kid, goat cheese of Tiétar and all kinds of fruits (cherries, figs, chestnuts, etc.) which will enrich even more the tourist attractive of this county.



7. In the east of the province, **Alberche Valley** and **Tierra de Pinares** make up an area where nature is especially attractive, with magnificent reservoirs like el Burguillo, historical centres like the Bulls of Guisando in El Tiemblo and tourist centres like Navalunga and Las Navas del Marqués. A wide offer of Rural Tourism in such beautiful scenery as Iruelas Valley, aquatic sports, golf, and a rich gastronomy in which vegetables, Alberche peaches and wines deserve a special mention.



2.2 Main feasts

Although there exist many feasts and popular events throughout the whole geography of our province, the main feasts in the province of Ávila that have officially been Tourist Interest Declared are the following:

- Holy Week in Ávila (AVILA), National Tourist Interest Declared April
- Christ of the Light (LANZAHITA), Regional Tourist Interest Declared May-June
- Our Lady of Chilla (CANDELEDA), Regional Tourist Interest Declared September
- El Vitor, (SAN ESTEBAN DEL VALLE), Regional Tourist Interest Declared. February and July
- Saint Peter of Alcántara, (ARENAS DE SAN PEDRO), Regional Tourist Interest Declared. October
- Carnival (CEBREROS), Regional Tourist Interest Declared. February
- Procession of Romances on Maundy Thursday (NAVALUENGA), Regional Tourist Interest Declared. April.



2.3 Infrastructures and facilities

The province of Ávila has a wide network of **rural tourism** establishments, leading the national ranking as concerns the number of this type of establishments, with over 800 of them as of April 2010. There is also a good infrastructure of hotels and catering.

As regards tourist facilities, we have a modern **Congress Centre** in the city, several golf courses in the province, one of them integrated in Naturavila tourist and leisure centre, several nature interpretation centres, archeological study centres, museums, ...etc.



The province of Ávila, located in the central part of Spain, has a good road network linking Ávila with the other provinces in Castilla y León, as well as with Madrid by motorway.

The closest **airport** is Madrid-Barajas, 125 km, there is a good connection by train with the capital although the high speed line has not arrived yet. In the province there are no navigable rivers and therefore tourist fluvial transport is nonexistent.

2.4 Profile of the visitor

The origin is national, mainly from Madrid and Castilla y León. The greatest expenditure corresponds to accommodation 41% and 20,7% to restaurants and the average degree of occupancy is 30% and 1.5 days of overnight stay. There is a considerable difference between the profile of the visitor to the capital city and the visitor of the province:

According to our own surveys, carried out in tourist offices in the province, the profile of the visitor in our province could be established as a young adult or adult, between 30 and 50 years old, who travels with a partner, with family or friends, and who are lodged in rural housing, usually for a weekend, in order to enjoy nature and gastronomy in each area.

In the city, according to surveys conducted at the Visitors Reception Centre, a high percentage of visitors are trippers who do not spend the night in the city. They make a cultural visit in the city, guided in most cases, and they go back to their places of origin or continue their scheduled tour. The average age is older than the visitor of the province.

3. TOURISM BOARD

The Tourism Board is the organism in charge of tourist promotion of the province of Ávila, it is integrated in the structure of the Ávila County Council, and currently has two people, a Manager and an Administrative Assistant, as its staff.

Logo of Tourism and Patrimony - Ávila County Council



Website:

<http://www.diputacionavila.net/patronato>

3.1. Members of the Tourism Board

The Tourism Board is integrated by:

The President will be the person who holds this position in the County Council or the person who receives this delegation.

Members are Province Deputies appointed by the Plenary proportionally to the representation of each political group in the Council.

Besides there is representation in the Full Session of the Tourism Board, of the Junta de Castilla y León, the Ávila City Council, the Provincial Bureau of Public Works, the Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Ávila and Arévalo, CONFAE (Entrepreneurs Association), Hospitality Federation, Travel Agencies, Savings Banks (Caja Ávila and Caja Duero), the Association of Tourist Guides and the School of Tourism.

3.2. Internal operations

The Tourism Board, created in the year 1989, is ruled by its internal statutes, which establish the existence of a Plenary integrated by representatives of all sectors involved in tourism in our province, and this organism will be the one to make proposals in the frame of the general guidelines and it will be the Executive Commission the one to pass and develop such lines of action.

With the purpose to achieve greater functionality and agility, in the current legislature an Informative Commission for Tourism and Patrimony has been constituted inside the structure of the Ávila County Council, where the representatives of the sector also participate after materializing the proportional funds contribution.

3.3. Aim of the Tourism Board

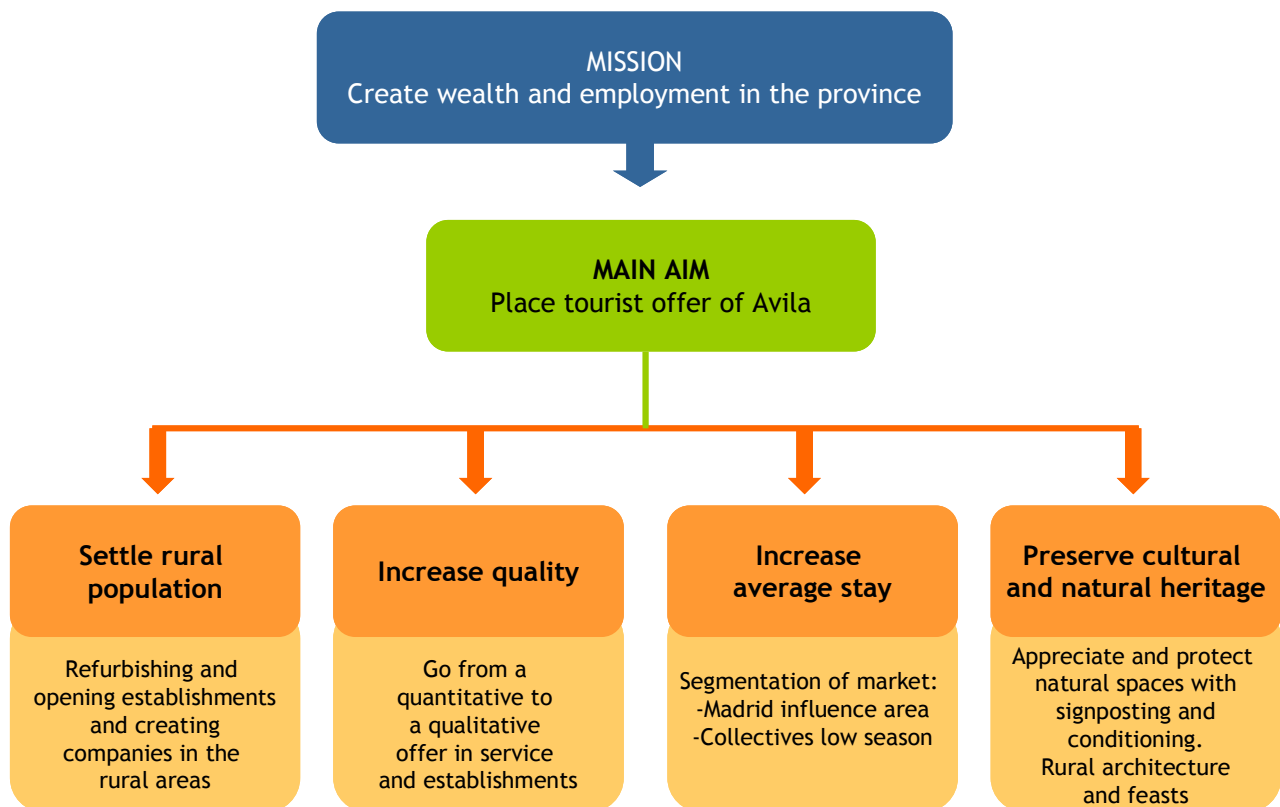
The Tourism Board has as its main aim to place the tourist offer of the province of Ávila in the national market so that it contributes to achieve its mission to create employment and wealth in the province.

Note: The endowment of economic resources assigned for investment is a competence of the regional administration.

This main aim is achieved by means of the following partial objectives:

- Contribute to the settlement of the population in the rural environment, promoting the opening of new establishments in rural areas and contributing to the creation of employment, as well as the promotion of companies related to the tourist sector in rural areas, especially in those affected by depopulation.
- Increase the quality of services offered by hotel establishments, boosting a qualitative development of offer, with the help of the new Law of Tourism of Castilla y León.

- Increase the average stay by means of the segmentation of the market, so as to structure the offer:
 - Promote the strategy or proximity, taking advantage of the great influence of Madrid.
 - Strategies focused on collectives such as senior citizens, housewives or religious tourism, to name but a few.
- Contribute to the appreciation and preservation of the natural, cultural and architectonic heritage: with measures such as the correct signposting of routes and limitation of accesses, appreciation of feasts and promotion of refurbishing in rural tourism houses belonging to the town council, as the former houses of the doctor, secretary...etc. according with local traditions and architectonic elements.



3.4 Main lines of action

The lines of action on which the Tourism Board bases its strategy are:

A) TOURISM PROMOTION

A.1.- PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN ON MASS-MEDIA.

It would address both general mass-media and specialized media in the sector. Specific campaigns could be made occasionally on regional mass-media of the main Autonomous Communities which send tourism to our province, such as Madrid, Castilla y León, País Vasco, Levante and Cataluña.

It also considers the possibility of carrying out any promotional trip for mass-media throughout the provincial geography.

This item will be managed jointly and coordinately with the Communications Direction of the County Council.

A.2.- ATTENDANCE OF TOURISM FAIRS AND PROMOTIONAL ACTIONS.

This chapter includes attendance of tourism fairs and promotional actions, both individually and jointly with the Junta de Castilla y León and Turespaña.

The most important might be:

International:

I.T.B. in Berlín, B.T.L. in Lisbon, BIT in Milan.

National:

Fitur in Madrid, Intur in Valladolid, Naturiva in Madrid, S.I.T.C in Barcelona, Expovacaciones in Bilbao, Sevatur in San Sebastián, Ferantur in Sevilla, T.C.V. in Valencia, Aratur in Zaragoza, Expogaleica in Vigo, Turismur in Murcia, FITC in Málaga, Salón del Senderismo in Barcelona.

Regional and Local:

Fairs in localities of our province which the Tourism Board attends with a stall, as Fair of Antiques in Arévalo, Fecointur in Arenas de San Pedro, etc.

Besides it includes attendance of promotional events and tourism presentations which occasionally may be organised by the Junta de Castilla y León

like Turespaña, or any occasional action that may be seen fit to organise according to the province interests in cooperation with Local Action Groups in

the province and with the preceptive approval of the Informative Commission for Tourism and Patrimony.

This chapter considers space rental as well as stall design and setup, hostess hiring, complimentary attention, etc.

This section also includes making advertising ploys and complimentary presents to be distributed at fairs and events the Tourism Board attends, as well as for congresses, organised groups, schools, ...etc.

B) TOURISTS RECEPTION AND SUBVENTIONS TO TOWN COUNCILS OF THE PROVINCE TO ORGANISE TOURISM ACTIVITIES.

B.1 Continue with the campaign to open tourist offices in the province, in collaboration with the requesting Town Councils, as well as the possible subvention to buy stands or restore premises to be used as tourist offices. Currently there exist 25 offices distributed in the province some permanent and others temporary.

B.2 This section also includes subventions to Town Councils in the province for the organisation of tourism activities (fairs and events).

At the beginning of the fiscal year a line of subventions is launched with the aim to let all Town Councils in the province know the possibility to benefit from this programme and it will be the Informative Commission for Tourism and Patrimony the one to evaluate the applications submitted.

C) EDITION OF TOURIST INFORMATION MATERIAL

There will be a reedition of the tourist information material edited by the Tourism Board (new provincial brochure, province map, service guide, archeotourism, Avila mystics, DVD, bags, etc), as well as its renewal.

Edition of new informative material on the occasion of the participation of the County Council Tourism Board in the CETS (European Charter of Sustainable Tourism) of Iruelas Valley Natural Reserve and of Gredos Mountain Range Regional Park) as well as possible collaborations with the Local Action Groups of the province.

D) PRIZES AND CONTESTS

D.1.- ANNOUNCEMENT JOURNALISM AWARD FOR REPORTS “BENJAMÍN PALENCIA” AND LAUNCH OF THE NATIONAL LANDSCAPE PAINTING AWARD “BENJAMÍN PALENCIA”

Proceedings will be initiated to announce the II Edition of the Journalism Award for Reports “Benjamín Palencia” as well as the announcement of the I Edition of the National Landscape Painting Award “Benjamín Palencia”.

D.2.- CONTEST “DESIGN OF A ROUTE THROUGH THE PROVINCE OF ÁVILA”

Announcement of the contest “Design of a route through the province of Ávila” in collaboration with the School of Education and Tourism of the University of Salamanca and addressed to University students, there is also a proposal to collaborate in this action with the Catholic University of Ávila and the Spanish Open University UNED.

3.5 Budget

STRATEGY OF THE TOURISM BOARD-LINES OF ACTION - ACTION LINES	BUDGET
A. Tourist promotion	
A.1 Publicity campaign on mass-media	60.000
A.2 Attendance of Tourism fairs and promotional actions	120.000
B. Tourists Reception and Subventions to Town Councils in the province	
B.1 Opening of tourist offices	60.000
B.2 Activities of tourism promotion by Town Councils	60.000
C. Edition of promotional material for tourist information	120.000
D. Prizes and contests	
D.1 Journalism award and national painting award “Benjamín Palencia”	15.000
D.2 Prize “Design of a route through the province of Ávila”	2.500
TOTAL	437.500

3.6 Associativism

In the Tourism sector there is associativism both in a vertical sense with the 4 Reservations Head Offices currently existing and focused on rural tourism:

- Gredos Houses (created and started by the Ávila County Council and currently managed by the owners themselves).
- Rural Ávila
- Reservagredos
- Rural breaks

At the same time there is associativism of a transversal type as is the case for the 4 Local Action Groups which operate in different areas in our province:

- Asider (Piedrahita-El Barco de Ávila)
- Adrimo (La Moraña)
- Asocio (Ambles Valley, Ávila Mountain Range and Alberche)
- Ceder-Tiétar (Tiétar Valley)

On the other side there exists an entrepreneurial organisation called Confae, Avila Entrepreneurs Confederation, where the Hospitality Association of the province of Ávila is integrated, representing the interests of Hotels, Restaurants, and other establishments of the sector.

Lastly it is possible to mention the existence of other associations with a provincial scope which bring together different professionals: Tourist Guides, Sports and Adventure Tourism Companies, Camping...etc.

3.7 Applicable regulations

Currently in force Law **10/1997, of 19 October** along with a series of provisions which regulate concrete aspects of tourist services.

Also Order in Council 3/2009, of 23 December, on Impulse Measures for Service Activities in Castilla y León, Law 17/2009, of 23 November, on free access to service activities and their exercise, which has incorporated partially to Spanish law Directive 2006/123/CE of the European Parliament and the Council, of 12 December 2006, relative to services in the internal market.

It is necessary to remark that this Law will be replaced presently by the new Law of Tourism of Castilla y León, which has passed already the period of allegations and is in the parliamentary stage.

On a regional level there exists a Strategic Plan for Tourism in Castilla y León 2009-2013.

We are working on obtaining the **European Charter of Sustainable Tourism** with the following objectives:

- Cooperation between different Administrations and private initiative
- Protection and appreciation of heritage
- Satisfaction of visitors' needs
- Information about the area and awareness-raising of local population

- Creation of tourist products related to the protected space
- Training
- Upkeeping of local quality of life
- Benefits for local economy
- Management of the visitors flows

3.8 Analysis of strong and weak points

Strong points

Varied tourist offer: cultural, nature, gastronomy, making seasonality not so strong.

Presence in fair circuit, mobilizing Madrid's potential.

Good facilities and number of beds offered with over 800 establishments of rural tourism which have about 6.500 beds on offer and 130 hotel establishments that provide over 5,000 beds.

Weak points

Need to structure in a clearer way the segmentation of the market, allowing for focusing and distinguishing the offer by taking into account the objective kind of public it addresses to.

Although belonging to the route of World Heritage Cities is undoubtedly a positive aspect that reinforces the tourist offer of Ávila, especially on an international level, on the other hand it also involves wholesalers offering packages with very little time in each city and therefore overnight stays and spending are shared among Ávila, Salamanca, Segovia and Toledo.

Availability of the Website of the Tourism Board in English language as a tool for attracting potential foreign visitors, as well as data of access to it so as to know which are the most interesting offers for visitors.

Improvement in infrastructures for signposting routes and heritage elements, arraying certain infrastructure items as points for water discharge/charge for caravans in our province.

The existence of professional intrusion in the sector is an aspect that must be eliminated, from the point of view of facilitating the task of professionals in the sector according to established standards of quality, thus avoiding the bad image which this fact may give of the tourist offer in the province.