

## Canarian schools

## Teachers toughen wage stance



Empty classrooms on the cards

▲ **More strike action** is on the cards by teachers in Canarian schools between now and February.

Following the breakdown of talks with the Department of Education, unions insist that unless the government takes teachers' demands for pay equality with other civil servants seriously more one-day walk-outs are inevitable. Equality would see most public sector teachers receive several hundred euros more in their monthly pay-packet, but the Department will

only negotiate if the talks include performance-related aspects also, a link the teachers seem unwilling to discuss for the moment. The demands have led to a mini-backlash in other public sector branches, where civil servants say that any increases in salary for teachers should be accompanied by changes to their generous holidays. If progress is not achieved by the end of the year, the unions say they may step up the stakes by calling for indefinite strike action as of February.

## Visitors drop

## Canaries losing foreign visitors



South Tenerife is losing British and German visitors

▲ **According to figures** available from the regional government, while tourism figures appear to be holding their own, in fact the islands have seen a drop of one million in the number of foreign visitors arriving in the last five years.

Analysis of the statistics show that in 2001 10.5 million foreigners chose the Canary Islands as their holiday destination as compared to 9.6 million last year. However the increase

in the number of visitors from the Spanish peninsula has increased, so overall the numbers are stable. However this latter fact is also a source of worry to some tourism chiefs, as it indicates that in general the islands haven't seen any increase in tourism figures in the same five year period, with the annual figures fluctuating between 13.2 and 13.6 million per annum. Worryingly, it would appear that the

British and German markets are weakest, with a noticeable drop in interest in holidaymakers from those two countries, the island's two main sources of tourists. The general situation is being felt all over the islands, however recently Ricardo Fernández, the manager of Ashotel, Tenerife's hotel association, said that this season, while not positive so far, was in a period of change, and "now it is the turn of the

Scandinavian tourist, and expectations are for an increase in numbers", with respect to the first half of the year. He added that instead of talking about a period of crisis "we are dealing with a moment of change". The president of Ashotel, José Fernando Cabrera confirmed that in the south of Tenerife too the market was seeing a drop in visitors from the UK and Germany though the numbers arriving from the peninsula was steady. With regard to the Scandinavian market the commission for the promotion of South Tenerife has already been working to increase awareness of the islands as a desirable destination for holidaymakers from there, with advertising in specialist travel and holiday magazines. The commission has also spent extensively in promoting the south of Tenerife throughout the rest of Spain, with the island council, southern town councils, Ashotel and Spanair all investing in the promotional campaign.

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