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**MARTINIQUE TOURISM UPDATE #3: OFFICIAL STATEMENT FROM MADELEINE DE GRANDMAISON, CHAIRWOMAN, MARTINIQUE TOURISM AUTHORITY**

*Island's top tourism official states Martinique is '100% open for tourist business' despite general strike*

**NEW YORK, NY – February 20, 2009** – Madeleine de Grandmaison, chairwoman of the Martinique Tourism Authority, issued the following statement today regarding the current state of the tourism industry in Martinique relative to the ongoing general strike on the island:

“Several recent media reports have mischaracterized statements attributed to me concerning the current state of the tourism industry in Martinique and our ability to adequately host visitors at this time.

“Let me be clear in stating that Martinique is 100% open for tourist business despite the strike.

“The reasons behind the strikes in Martinique and Guadeloupe are similar, but the situation in Martinique stands in stark contrast to that in our sister island. We have had no violence, very few arrests and absolutely no threats toward visitors.

“The strike has had a significant impact on the lives of my fellow Martinican residents. This is particularly so for those living in and around our capital city of Fort-de-France where the demonstrations have been concentrated.

“However, for stayover visitors vacationing in the outlying resort areas away from the city, there has been little or no impact.

“Our airport, all of our hotels and many attractions have remained open during the entire strike period, and we are accommodating our guests in the best manner possible.

“Our cruise port lies in the heart of Fort-de-France where the impact of the strike has been strongest, so our ability to host cruise passengers has been compromised. The Martinique Tourism Authority has been proactive in working with our cruise line partners to divert itineraries to other destinations, or to bring passengers ashore at other ports in Martinique to minimize any possible trip disruptions.

“Ongoing negotiations between the government and union leaders continue to yield progress, and we are hopeful of a speedy resolution.

“In conclusion, let me stress that there is no reason why visitors to Martinique cannot enjoy a safe, quality vacation experience at this time.”

The Martinique Promotion Bureau/CMT USA will continue to monitor the situation and issue updates as warranted.

**About Martinique ([www.martinique.org](http://www.martinique.org))**

*The Caribbean island with French flair, The Isle of Flowers, The Rum Capital of the World, The Isle of the Famed Poet (Aimé Césaire) – by any one of its many names Martinique remains one of the most alluring and enchanting destinations in the world; as unforgettable as a summer romance or a first kiss. Named “Best Gourmet Island of the Year 2008” by *Caribbean World Magazine*, Martinique is an overseas region of France that stirs the passions with distinctive culinary delights, awe-inspiring natural beauty, a rich cultural history, warm smiles and so much more. Napoleon’s bride, Empress Josephine, was born and raised here. The Pompeii of the Caribbean, St. Pierre, is found here. The finest French products, from Chanel fashions to Limoges porcelain, are readily available here. *La Route des Rhums*, a tour of the world’s finest rum distilleries based on France’s famed *Route des Vins*, is offered here. A special place, to be sure, with so much to offer – Martinique c’est magnifique!*



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