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Sonae's athletic brand boosts internationalisation with new store in Ceuta

SPORT ZONE OPENS FIRST FRANCHISE STORE IN CEUTA

Sonae's athletic brand Sport Zone has bolstered its international business with the start of expansion through franchising. The brand's first franchise store is located in the autonomous Spanish city of Ceuta on Africa's northern coast.

This new store is part of Sonae's growth strategy focused on the increased internationalisation of its brands by exploring new competitive advantages and pursuing alternative growth routes based on partnerships, franchising and exporting.

Sonae and Sport Zone Director Paulo Simões says that "Sport Zone won its leadership position on the Portuguese market by focusing on the customer and investing in developing specialty brands and products and an attractive store concept. These improvements have spurred mounting international interest, and have now led to international expansion through franchising, diversifying and opening a potential new growth direction for Sport Zone".

The new Sport Zone store in Ceuta is located in the city centre, on Calle Antioco, with an area of around 300 m² and a wide range of products tailored to the local climate. The vast selection includes specialty brands developed in Portugal by Sport Zone, such as Berg Outdoor (outdoor activities) and Berg Cycles (cycling), Deeply (surfing, other aquatic sports and surf wear), Outpace (walking and running), Doone (gymnastics and casual wear), Ankor (swimming), New Fit (fitness devices and accessories) and K-Open (tennis).

With the opening of this store, Sport Zone is expanding its international business outside of the Iberian Peninsula, with additional stores in the regional markets of the Canary Islands and Ceuta as well. Sonae's athletic division has strengthened its internationalisation through capital-light strategies, and now exports its brands to more than 15 countries worldwide.

Sonae is a retail company with two large partnerships for shopping centres (Sonae Sierra) and Software Information Systems, Media and Telecommunications (Sonaecom).At the end of 2013, Sonae had a turnover of over €4.8 billion. The company's strategic objectives are internationalisation, to diversify its investment style and to leverage and bolster its asset base and skills. See more on www.sonae.pt/en.

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Paulo Simões concludes that "we will continue to seek opportunities for Sport Zone's international growth through franchising, and remain confident in the signing of new agreements that will take our brands to a growing number of families and athletes throughout the world. Interest has been expressed by several potential business partners, meaning that new international Sport Zone stores may arise in the future."