

ITB Berlin 2011: Increased Numbers of International Buyers



Approx. 170,000 visitors at the world's leading trade show for the international travel industry – Orders with a volume in excess of six billion euros and a good mood among exhibitors – Over 40 per cent of buyers from abroad – Record attendance at ITB Berlin Convention – Some 7,000 journalists from 94 countries accredited

The 45th ITB Berlin came to a close after attracting a significantly larger number of buyers from abroad and the best exhibitor figures ever. Despite the rail strike the leading international trade show for the travel industry reported that trade visitor numbers remained stable at last year's level. The good volume of business at the trade show provided an additional boost to the current upturn in the tourism sector.

Dr. Christian Göke, Chief Operating Officer of Messe Berlin, was able to look back on a successful event: "Each year ITB Berlin attracts growing numbers of international decision-makers. Nowadays over 40 per cent of buyers come from abroad. As a result ITB Berlin can not only claim the most balanced and international range of exhibitors but it is also the industry's most international event in terms of its trade visitors. These are the ideal prerequisites for business success, and we believe that exhibitors achieved a significantly larger volume of business than they did last year, with a value of over six billion euros."

The two high level meetings of ministers ensured that international politics and diplomacy were strongly represented at this year's ITB Berlin. The "UNWTO Silk Road Ministers' Summit" played a decisive part in efforts to promote the long term tourism development of the Silk Road region. This year's ITB Berlin also hosted the first "Ministers' Summit on Climate Change in Asia-Pacific".

The countries of North Africa used this industry meeting place to re-stimulate the vital tourism sector. Egypt introduced a new advertising campaign that focuses on the peaceful democratisation process taking place in the country. The Japanese earthquake and tsunami cast a shadow over the otherwise extremely positive mood in the 26 exhibition halls. From midday Saturday onwards the Japan stand was closed.

11,163 exhibiting companies and organisations from 188 countries (2010: 11,127 from 187 countries) again presented the entire spectrum of the international travel industry from 9 to 13 March. The presentations and seminars at the "eTravel World", a new feature this year, attracted several thousand interested participants and proved to be a complete success.

At 110,791 the number of trade visitors remained stable, while new records were set at the ITB Berlin Convention, with a 15 per cent increase to a total of 14,000 participants. The ITB Future Day and ITB Hospitality Day were major attractions for the general public. As the Convention & Culture Partner of the Convention and with three additional stands at various locations around the exhibition, Mongolia was able to provide many visitors with details about all the facets of a fascinating country. This land-locked country between Russia and China achieved considerable success with its efforts to establish a higher profile in the fields of cultural travel and sustainable tourism. Discussions by prominent experts of the subjects of climate-friendly mobility and, in

particular, the “Solar Mobility Innovator Panel” again demonstrated the innovative strengths of the world’s largest travel trade convention.

Despite the fact that the weekend provided a first taste of spring, with bright sunshine, large numbers of people from Berlin and Brandenburg flocked to the exhibition halls. Initial projections revealed that some 60,000 members of the general public (2010: 68,398) took this opportunity to learn first hand about destinations in 188 countries.

Major success for partner country Poland

Poland proved to be a highly attractive partner country at ITB Berlin 2011 and, in the run-up to the EURO 2012 football championships, it was able to demonstrate its outstanding tourism capabilities to the world. With spectacular opening ceremonies involving 3-D films and an avant garde dance show that skilfully combined virtual and real dancers, Germany’s eastern neighbour gave its traditional image a complete make-over. All of Poland’s regions were represented on the 1,600 square metre display area. Jan Wawrzyniak, Director of the Polish Tourism Office in Germany, summarised his impressions as follows: “It is a wonderful feeling to be the partner country. We should have signed a partnership agreement for two years. There is now even greater interest in Poland. We held successful discussions, and ITB Berlin has given us an additional boost.”

Taleb Rifai, Secretary General of the UNWTO: “ITB Berlin had a special relevance this year, coming on the tail of the recent developments in Egypt and Tunisia, two important tourism destinations. As we welcomed the new Egypt and Tunisia at ITB 2011 I was struck by the remarkable demonstrations of solidarity shown by the international tourism community to these two destinations. ITB Berlin has also confirmed the rising confidence among the tourism sector, with 2011 set to consolidate the impressive tourism growth of 2010. Against this background ITB has again proven the ideal stage for UNWTO to launch new initiatives, including the first ever Silk Road Ministers’ Summit.

Klaus Laepple, President of the Federal Association of the German Tourism Industry (BTW)

“All the signs point to a continued upturn, in the tourism industry as a whole and specifically at ITB Berlin. This is borne out by the outstanding number of exhibitors and visitor attendance figures at the world’s largest travel trade show. Positive news and forecasts were a prominent feature this year of the travel industry’s pre-eminent meeting place, although of course attention also focused on the political developments in North Africa, which were also the subject of many discussions. There was a very emotional reaction, great consternation and sympathy in reaction to the news of the terrible consequences of the earthquake and tsunami in Japan.

This trade show in Berlin again provided a unique platform for communication, for renewing contacts and establishing new links, as well as finalising many business deals. Exhibitors and visitors alike were very satisfied. The commercial contracts signed at ITB Berlin 2011 are likely to far exceed the figure of six billion euros that was achieved last year. For the general public too this year’s ITB Berlin provided a wealth of colourful experiences, and was an inviting opportunity to gather information and make a decision about the next vacation trip. The good results and positive atmosphere that were such a feature of ITB Berlin this year give us every confidence that our forecasts will be proved correct and that the German tourism industry can look forward to a highly successful year in 2011.”

Jürgen Büchy, President of the German Travel Association (DRV): “Once again ITB Berlin has shown that it is the meeting place for the international tourism sector. Not only can trends be investigated here, innovations displayed, and visions of the future discussed, but ITB Berlin is also the central market place where trade visitors can prepare for business, sign agreements and enter

into joint ventures. Moreover it is also the most important forum for everyone involved in tourism, where they can make contacts and hold discussions. It illustrates the importance of business travel in our industry. Despite the major role that new media play in day-to-day business, personal contacts and direct, confidential discussions are still indispensable. This is also evident from the many discussions about the current upheavals in North Africa, and especially in the two popular destinations, of Egypt and Tunisia, that have taken place at the trade show. The talks that were held in Berlin have helped to provide a clearer picture of the impact. The tourism industry's trade association is convinced that neither of these countries has lost its appeal and that demand for them will soon return to previous levels.

ITB Berlin 2011 provides a positive signal for the travel year 2011: everything indicates growth, especially since Germans are displaying an even greater willingness to travel. The travel industry is gearing up for action. Germans have packed their bags and are keen to travel, as was clearly demonstrated by the reaction of the public at ITB Berlin. Everyone who is interested has been able to obtain a clear picture of the wide diversity of the travel market, along with details about the vacation attractions and offers from countries and tour operators. Keen anticipation of the coming summer vacation has been aroused."

Some 7,000 accredited journalists from 94 countries reported from ITB Berlin. Once again this trade show provided a meeting place for international politicians and diplomats. In addition to the national delegations from 97 countries this event was also attended by Princess Ubolratana Mahidol of Thailand and the former President of the Republic of Poland, Lech Walesa. Meetings took place involving 70 ambassadors from all over the world, as well as 49 government ministers and numerous state secretaries from many countries. Rainer Brüderle, Germany's Federal Minister of Economics and Technology, and Dirk Niebel, Federal Minister of Economic Cooperation and Development, as well as the Governing Mayor of Berlin, Klaus Wowereit, also came to learn more about the strengths and capabilities of the travel sector.

The next ITB Berlin will take place from Wednesday to Sunday, 7 to 11 March 2012. The partner country will be Egypt.

Exhibitors' views about ITB Berlin 2011

Sengee Oyundelger, Director of the Mongolian presentation at ITB Berlin: "The cultural partnership with the ITB Berlin Convention enabled us to stage the largest display every by Mongolia at ITB Berlin. The entire package was excellent, with an outstanding combination of online presentation and promotion. Occupying three separate halls enabled us to present three different products. In addition to our main stand we also had stands devoted to environmental and cultural tourism."

Mehdi Houas, Tunisian Minister of Tourism: "This is my first ITB Berlin. I am touched and overwhelmed by so much sympathy and so many discussions. My country has found many new friends. It was a significant moment for me to attend ITB 2011, an ITB at which Tunisia was quite rightly honoured. The contacts, the press conferences and the meetings with ministers from other countries enabled me to obtain a clearer picture of the international tourism market. Despite the many difficulties confronting us, nevertheless some very real opportunities exist for those who are prepared to take them. The information obtained through the UNWTO is of a very high quality and will be extremely useful for us. We are very grateful for such a professional and pleasant standard of organisation."

Alberto Aldaba Lima, Tourism Minister of the Philippines: "For some months now tourism has enjoyed a new and higher standing. And ITB Berlin is a very good forum for new contacts and

business. I have a very confident feeling.”

Petra Hedorfer, CEO of the German National Tourist Board (DZT): “For Germany as a travel destination ITB Berlin 2011 was a thoroughgoing success and strengthens our efforts to continue to develop our position as one of the most popular destinations in Europe. However, the delight at the great popularity and the appeal of our country that was particularly evident this year at the world’s largest travel trade show was overshadowed by the news currently reaching us from Japan and which has come as a great shock to us. Our thoughts are now with our DZT staff in Japan, with their families and with our Japanese friends, colleagues and business associates.

Manuel Butler, Director, Spanish Tourism Board: “We are satisfied. We are expecting German tour operators to achieve good increases in 2011. The slightly negative trend in the number of visitors to Spain has been halted. Our mood is terrific.”

Özgür Özaslan, Deputy State Secretary at the Turkish Ministry of Tourism: “ITB Berlin is a good trade show among friends. We still have very good memories of ITB Berlin 2010, when we were the partner country. That brought us additional recognition.”

Tim Clark, President, Emirates Airline: “Once again ITB Berlin has proved its importance for the worldwide travel industry. Our presence at the trade show in Berlin was again highly successful and it is ITB Berlin in particular where we meet with industry experts, business partners and customers from our key markets. For many years the largest trade show participation by Emirates outside its home market has been in Germany. The new Airbus A380 display area with the on-board lounge and spa shower on our stand has met with a very positive response among our customers, visitors to the show and the media.”

Joachim Hunold, CEO, airberlin: “I am more than satisfied with the airberlin presentation at this year’s ITB. Apart from the many good discussions, the airberlin stand in Hall 9 was again a magnet for media representatives from all over the world, and for decision-makers from the tourism sector. Improved standards of comfort throughout the airberlin fleet and the expansion of our network through our partnerships with airlines such as Finnair, American Airlines and S7 all met with a good response and are evidence of our efforts to continue to expand this business sector. We have also announced our intention of making our flights even more eco-friendly in 2011 and to reduce fuel consumption to a record low of 3.5 litres/100 passenger kilometres.”

Gisela Thomas, Tourism Department of the Argentine Embassy in Berlin: “This was a wonderful trade show! We at the embassy staged three outstanding events with the Argentine delegation and all of them were very well attended. The mood in the Latin America pavilion is always fantastic.”

Valentin Kavakure, Chief Promotion Officer, Burundi Tourism Office: “For the first time in decades Burundi was once again represented with its own stand at ITB Berlin. I am delighted with the degree of professionalism with which this trade show is organised. I am very satisfied with our progress at this event and would be even more satisfied if we can succeed in retaining our new contacts with our partners in Germany. Our plan is to return each year to ITB Berlin in the future.

Ronald Sanabria, Vice President Sustainable Tourism, Costa Rica: “In December 2010 we had the idea of using ITB Berlin in order to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the founding of our organisation and at the same time to seek new partnerships. In fact we have been able to sign agreements for three large joint ventures: with the German working group ARGE Latin America, with OPTUR from Ecuador and with INGUAT from Guatemala. They will ensure close ties between economic aspects and sustainability in accordance with our slogan – ‘follow the green path’. This is

something for which a very strong awareness exists in Germany. For anyone with an interest in this field we can definitely recommend ITB Berlin as a way of meeting their requirements."

Luz Elena Coloma, CEO, Quito Turismo, Ecuador: "I was attending this trade fair for the first time, because this is also the first time that Quito, the capital of Ecuador, has been promoted here independently. This is a massive trade show and a unique opportunity to make contact with the industry and the trade, with interested parties in Europe, and also with people from our own country who one does not meet as often as one would like."

Dr. Alexander Trommen, CEO, APPSfactory: The trade show has been a very good one for us and provided a good opportunity to improve our profile in the fields of e-travel and mobile applications for the travel industry. Our initial contacts were very good and of a high standard, and I am confident that we have been able to acquire a number of projects.

Tobias Hallermann, CEO, komoot GmbH

"We have been very pleasantly surprised by the attention we have attracted and with the discussions. We received a great deal of media attention and had already made many appointments in advance, as well as spontaneous visits to the stand."

Stefan Möhler, Proprietor, Netzvitamine

"We were very satisfied with this trade show. We met with the response that we had hoped for, the discussions were good as were the contacts. I was particularly pleased with the atmosphere at the eTravel World, where there was a sense of a new beginning and a culture of innovation. The participants showed a great deal of interest and held many discussions with one another."

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