

BUSINESS TOURISM IN SPAIN CONTINUES THE UPWARD TREND



Business tourism in Spain brought a total of 22,000 meetings to the country in 2015, a figure that represents a 15% increase over the previous year (2014), as well as visits by four million people. This data was reported by the Spain Convention Bureau (SCB) at its annual meeting held in Ibiza.

Currently, Spain is in the fourth place worldwide regarding the total number of countries hosting conference-type events, seminars or workshops, falling behind only the United States, Germany and Great Britain.

Experts have been encouraging cities to invest more in business tourism which is emerging especially in the large population centers, but also those that are small or medium-sized. Undoubtedly, business tourism in Spain may become a real boost for the economy not only of the whole country but individual regions as well. While more jobs will inevitably be created with this development, the companies involved are especially satisfied with the economic performance linked to the sector.

In the numerous related events that are taking place, some companies are using the marketing strategy of making presentations to the public using customized exhibition stands, with designs tailored to fit the company. Customization has come alive. In fact, it is commonplace nowadays to find companies dedicated specifically to designing stands that then are exhibited at the fairs.

The two Spanish cities with the largest population, Madrid and Barcelona, are among the most prominent cities globally with respect to business tourism. In 2015, they hosted up to 61% of all the international congresses held in the country in that period.

In the case of Barcelona, it is placed third in the world ranking (moving up from fifth place in 2014), while the Spanish capital dropped three places and ended up fifth in the top 5 (along with London). A total of 171 congresses were hosted by Madrid. Berlin (195) and Paris (186) were the leaders in this category.

Globally, during the two years between 2013 and 2015, 14% of the absolute number of trips involved business tourism. Overall spending on these trips in 2015 also amounted to 1.2 trillion euros. Forecasts for the near future are more promising as the figure is projected to reach 1.6 million by 2020.

The countries accounting for the highest growth in annual spending for business trips were China and India, with 11.4% and 11% respectively. The high growth in these countries is expected to be consolidated over the next few periods to be reviewed. In theory, these are the two that should grow most in the coming years. On the other side of the coin, those countries with the largest decreases in spending are Brazil (down 4.1%), and especially Russia, which has fallen by 18.2% in business tourism.

Date: 2016-12-12

Article link:

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