

ITB BERLIN: SUBSTANTIAL INCREASES DESPITE STRIKES AT AIRPORTS AND IN PUBLIC TRANSPORT



More trade visitors from all over the world - ITB Berlin Convention a major attraction with 11,00 participants (+ 25 per cent) - Partner country Dominican Republic very satisfied with results - 177,891 visitors in the exhibition halls. "The ITB Berlin continues to grow. According to its exhibitors sales with a value of just under six million euros were finalized at and around the ITB Berlin", according to Dr. Christian Göke, COO of Messe Berlin. The leading trade show for the global travel industry not only included more exhibitors than ever before this year but also attracted more visitors over the past five days than it did last year, despite strikes and snow. Just under 40 per cent of the trade visitors came to the German capital from abroad in search of information about the latest trends in the industry. "The accompanying convention was an outstanding event with a record number of attendees and it continues to attract growing numbers of international decision makers, including many top executives. Once again the ITB Berlin has provided impressive proof of its position as a world leader in its field", Göke continued.

There is a mood of optimism in the international tourism sector and on the business travel market. Exhibitors revealed a high level of satisfaction with their participation in this event. The world's largest travel trade show attracted more exhibitors than ever before, with 11,147 companies from 186 countries presenting the latest products and services from the travel industry (previous year: 10,923 companies from 184 countries). Crowds of people came to the ITB Berlin each day and, shortly before it closed, attendance figures revealed a positive picture, with a total of 177,891 visitors to the exhibition halls. Between Wednesday and Friday a total of 110,322 trade visitors were registered (2007: 108.735). During the weekend 67,569 members of the public also came in search of information. The surveys conducted at the ITB Berlin revealed that more than 70 per cent of the general public who attended intends to use a travel agency when making their travel arrangements. Once again all available space was taken at the ITB Berlin, which was taking place for the 42nd time. Because all 160,000 square meters of display space in the 26 halls on the Berlin Exhibition Grounds was occupied, increasing numbers of exhibitors are resorting to the construction of multi-storey stands. One particularly spectacular example this year was provided by Emirates Airlines with a world first, a three-storey, rotating globe. The exhibitors from all over the world as well as the programme of the ITB Berlin Convention Market Trends & Innovations provided a clear indication that the travel industry is seriously addressing the consequences of climate change and its impact on tourism. With such outstanding speakers as Bertrand Piccard and Peter Sloterdijk, together with a wide and varied programme dealing with aspects such as aviation, hotels, travel technology and destinations, the Convention attracted a record attendance of 11,000. The Business Travel Days, which were opened this year by the CNN correspondent Richard Quest, also contributed to the twenty five per cent increase in attendance.

Highlight: partner country - the Dominican Republic

As the partner country the Dominican Republic was able to garner the maximum media attention. The Dominican Republic is now firmly established in world tourism as a year-round destination for vacationers and for incentive tour operators. Evidence of this is provided by the increase in arrivals from all over the world, which exceeded four million in 2007. Growth prospects are very promising because of the country's stable political situation and a steadily improving business and investment climate. One of the main features of the presence of the Dominican Republic at the ITB Berlin was the high volume of meetings with buyers.

Magaly Toribio, Vice-Minister of Tourism for the Dominican Republic: "The ITB Berlin exceeded all our expectations. Our exhibitors were able to conduct substantially more business than they did in 2007. An enormous volume of enquiries was received from buyers, and the public came in vast numbers too. We are more than happy ("más que feliz"). Not only did the ITB Berlin create greater interest in our country on the German market, it also made us the focus of increased international attention. This trade show was an effective way of promoting our country. Important business discussions were held with trade visitors, for example from France, the United Kingdom, Spain and Italy. We also believe that markets in Russia and other Eastern European countries offer interesting prospects. Many journalists from television, radio, print and electronic media in the Dominican Republic reported in depth on the display and the trade show in general. This was the fifth time that I had attended the ITB Berlin and without doubt it was my best ever."

The ITB Berlin is acquiring a growing appeal as a marketing instrument for destinations. The demand by applicants wishing to become partner countries at future fairs culminated in the signing of an agreement for 2010 with the Turkish Tourism Minister. Applications are already being submitted for 2011 and 2012.

ITB Berlin as a meeting place for the media and politics

The ITB Berlin is an international media event. In addition to international news agencies some 8,000 journalists from 90 countries attended. Politicians and diplomats were present in even greater numbers at the world's leading travel trade show, 171 from 100 countries (2007: 137 from 85 countries). They included 71 ambassadors, 82 ministers and 18 state secretaries.

The next ITB Berlin will take place from Wednesday to Sunday, 11 to 15 March 2009.

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