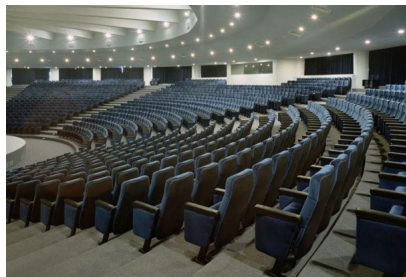


# FINLAND THE NEW CORPORATE EVENT HAVEN



The land of the thousand lakes, as Finland has been known for a long time, is steadily becoming the land of the thousand corporate meetings. Finland used to be most famous for its beautiful lake-filled nature scene and motor racing drivers. Now, the country is a hotspot for business tourism. The reasons behind such a change in stance could be summed up in two words: neutrality and position. Finland is situated right on the border with the business giants of

Russia and not too far for any of the other major European economic powers to travel. Furthermore, Finland has relatively little political past and is viewed by many as the perfect neutral ground to hold meetings on. The principle is much the same in terms of the EU headquarters being situated in neutral Belgium.

The corporate event tourism branch is worth €125 million per year to the Finns. Further light on the subject was shed after a survey was sent out to 77 companies in 2006 about the importance corporate events have to the Finnish economy. The results revealed that 4.950 such events were held in Finland that year, at which there were 143.100 participants, each of which left an average sum of €198 on the Finnish soil. The main participants unsurprisingly came from Spain, France and Germany. The most important result for the future of the Finnish economy was that Helsinki became the 6th most popular city in the world for hosting corporate events. On a similar note, an additional 700 or so hotel rooms were made available in and around Helsinki for the extra businessmen to make use of. Some people maintain that it is a great shame that Finland is now being exploited as a haven for the purpose of cultural tourism and less people are appreciative of the stunning natural beauty the country offers. However, economists would argue that hosting so many corporate events is superb for the country's economic status.

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