

The Meetings Industry Is on the Rise and Achieved a Record Result with 323 Million Participants



Frankfurt am Main, 24th May 2011. The results of the Meeting & EventBarometer 2011, the definitive annual survey of the events market in Germany, show: The optimism of the industry has returned. More events, more participants and larger budgets underline the fact that the worst of the economic crisis has long passed. The future outlook is very optimistic.

Overall, approximately 2.69 million events took place in 2010 (up 9.4 percent compared to 2009), which were visited by 323 million participants (plus 6.9 percent) - a record result (the previous record was 318 million participants in 2008). The share of foreign participants remained stable at 5.8 percent (up 0.3 points).

The Initiators of the survey are the European Association of Event Centers (EVVC), the GCB German Convention Bureau e.V. and the German National Tourist Board (GNTB). The survey was provided by the European Institute for the Meetings Industry (EITW). The Meeting & EventBarometer is the only survey that covers the entire event market - both the congress and the event area - in Germany and creates a significant overview of this industry.

9.4 percent more events / participation record

Around 40 percent of the providers surveyed in the study report that they organized more events in 2010 than in 2008, eleven percent recorded the same result as in 2008.

“This is a strong result, because in 2008 - before the crisis-induced decline of events in Germany in 2009 - the market segment was at a very high level”, said Matthias Schultze, Managing Director of the GCB. “The rapid recovery of the demand in Germany proves the high quality of the services offered”, said Joachim König, president of the EVVC.

The supply side remained relatively stable: Germany offers a total of 6,420 meeting and event venues (plus/minus zero percent). The full facts: According to the results of the Meeting & EventBarometer event organizers can now choose between 1,557 convention and event centres (plus 0.2 percent), 3,173 conference hotels (minus 0.5 percent) and 1,690 event locations (plus 1.3 percent).

The survey also provides insight into how vendors and operators assess the importance of different types of events. Accordingly, “Meetings” have the highest priority in the future. Followed in second place are “Conventions”, while further behind “Incentives” and “Events” rank third and fourth.

67 percent report higher budgets than in 2009

In 2010, 67 percent of the surveyed event organizers had bigger budgets than during the previous year, another sign that the trough has been overcome. Only 33 percent said they have fewer financial resources.

In particular, the proportion of the medium budgets has increased: 26 percent of operators were able to plan with budgets of 100,000 to 500,000 Euros per year, which corresponds with an increase of five percent compared to the previous year. In contrast, the proportion of budgets ranging from half a million to one million decreased slightly (minus three points).

Confidence in the industry: An optimistic look to the future

“Germany's image as a conference and events destination is getting better and better” - 91 percent of the surveyed providers and organizers are convinced of this statement. “The optimism of the industry is back. Operators and service providers alike are aware of the many benefits that Germany as a conference destination has to offer and that its importance in part still continues to rise due to the economic crisis. Above all, Germany offers an excellent value for money”, said Matthias Schultze, Managing Director of the GCB. In addition, the German regions offer about 40 airports, one of the densest railway networks and one of the most highly developed motorway networks, making the journey affordable, convenient and flexible.

Driven by this self-confidence and the economic upturn of recent months, a great majority agreed with the survey's statement that the economic situation will further improve (78 percent of surveyed providers and organizers). Last year only about half of the respondents shared this opinion.

56 percent of respondents expect that the realized prices on the market will rise again. In 2009, only about one third of the providers and organizers shared this opinion.

More investments planned again

The overall positive mood and the expectation of being able to implement price increases resulted in a significant increase in willingness to invest: 75.2 percent of providers plan to invest in their product, which is an 8.4 percent increase compared to last year. However, this is also due to a catch-up effect resulting from the budgetary constraints of the previous year's crisis. In addition, the VAT tax reduction that was introduced in 2010 also plays an important role for the hotel industry: it is regarded as a positive impulse by some 40 percent of the providers and a third of the organizers.

“If the mood is right, there will also be willingness to invest”, says Joachim König, president of the EVVC. “Even if business management is seemingly made up of rational decisions based on numbers, we all know that - as with many topics - psychology is often more than half the battle. The good thing is that, with this outlook, the competitiveness of Germany as a conference and event country will remain intact and thus the overall position is strengthened”.

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