

Brussels Strengthens Its Ranking as the No.1 Destination for Association Congresses in Europe



The Union of International Associations (UIA) has just published its international rankings of congress cities for the year 2010. For the second consecutive year Brussels maintains its top place in Europe and second worldwide, just after Singapore.

According to the UIA, Brussels hosted 474 meetings in 2010, placing itself behind Singapore with 596 meetings but ahead of Paris (320 meetings) and Vienna (224 meetings).

An important finding from this 2010 edition is that our capital shows the largest increase of all destinations in the number of meetings. The gap is narrowing between Brussels and Singapore in first place!

The UIA criteria include meetings with a minimum of 300 participants from five different nationalities, lasting for at least five days. These criteria also stipulate that at least 40% of participants must be foreign. The statistics are based on 12,015 international congresses held throughout the world in 2010, compared with 11,929 in 2009.

With 474 meetings, Brussels hosted 4.9% of the world's international congresses! This compares with 423 in 2009 and only 271 in 2006.

Belgium is now ranked in 4th place, whereas in 2006 it was not even in the top 10. Brussels accounted for 82.9% of the total number of congresses organised in Belgium in 2010.

The Belgian Presidency of the European Union certainly played an important role in these strong results.

For the Minister responsible for the Economy and Employment, Benoît CEREXHE, "this result supports the efforts undertaken by public institutions in the last few years to develop business and congress tourism in Brussels. This result should also encourage us to continue on the path we have chosen, further strengthening the innovative image of Brussels abroad and providing our Region with the necessary new hosting infrastructure capable of meeting the growth in demand. The bottom line is that the whole Brussels economy benefits, especially the employment of Brussels' residents in a sector which is a talent pool that we are working, and will continue working, to develop to the utmost."

The President of VISTBRUSSELS, Philippe CLOSE, was also delighted with the news: "these results show the advantages of Brussels which stand out on the international scene in the meetings sector. Our status as capital of Europe enables us to be ambitious, and the internationalisation of Brussels is one of the major goals of the Region's economic development. Our infrastructure projects at Heysel will allow us to exploit this potential even more."

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