



MIM Europe Magazine, the meetings and incentives magazine for European corporate planners, in exclusive partnership with EUMA, the European Association of Management Assistants, supported by ECM, European Cities Marketing and Site.



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SPECIAL FEATURE

A major boost of CSR
in the boardroom

Interview

ANJA STAS

The world is in Antwerp



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European City Marketing



Site Europe

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Marcel A.M. VISSERS
Editor in Chief

Two hot tips

It has become quite clear that today corporate incentive travel organisers are no longer sitting back and waiting for meetings industry trade fairs to just happen so they can do business. Though big trade shows still have some pull it is no secret that smaller regional fairs have lost their appeal. This is largely due to the organisers who are more interested in making a quick buck than in showing some feeling for the real needs of the market.

I must admit though that in telling this story I have to make an exception for two regional fairs that are doing remarkably well: Convene in Vilnius (Lithuania)

and Meetings Africa in Johannesburg. They are successful because rather than being organised by (singularly) commercially focused businesses they are managed by convention bureaus. The overriding objective of these bureaus is to provide information about the regional market and to emphasize quality. Convene does this job for the Baltic Sea area, showcasing Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. These new countries - and one should definitely not confuse them with Scandinavia - offer visitors exciting incentive programmes with a strong focus on nature, action and experiences. Also, the reasonable fees that are charged definitely don't go unnoticed. This trade show can be highly recommended. The fourth edition is scheduled to take place in February next year.

Meetings Africa is an exceptional story in its own right because, over the past ten years, this trade show emancipated from promoting South African products to becoming a blockbuster event for the whole African continent. A majority of East and Central African regions decided this was to become their new hangout, the place to market their rather attractive selection of incentive programmes.

Of course I don't want to leave South Africa entirely out of the picture. There are two cities (or areas) that caught my attention: Durban and Tshwane (previously Pretoria). Especially Durban seems to be popular with European organisers now that Cape Town is losing some of its attraction. And then what can we say about all the other African nations? Keep an eye out for the October edition of MIM and get ready for an Africa Report with a gold dusted incentive focus.

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Frankfurt
19-21 May 2015

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MEETING EXECUTIVES
18TH MAY 2015 FRANKFURT

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- You need to create truly engaging meetings and events that add value away from the office
- You want to learn, network and feel inspired but you can't afford too long

If this is you, then join us at IMEX – the largest exhibition for meetings, incentive travel and events business – for **Exclusively Corporate @IMEX**.

It's an educational programme designed by corporate meeting planners for corporate meeting planners. There's also generous downtime, so you can stay on top of work, whilst you learn and expand your professional network.

Come along and feel energised!

FOR FULL PROGRAMME DETAILS, VISIT:
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International experts lead packed programme at Exclusively Corporate@IMEX

Corporate executives from across the world can expand their knowledge of organising business meetings and events, as well as meet industry experts and learn from and with their peers in an exclusive and private setting at Exclusively Corporate@IMEX. Taking place on Monday 18 May before IMEX in Frankfurt begins (19-21 May), Exclusively Corporate is the dedicated education and networking event specifically for corporate meeting and event planners.

Kevin Kelly, internationally acclaimed motivational speaker and authority on the success principles underpinning entrepreneurship, leadership, sales and motivation, is set to deliver the keynote address. In 'How Xceptional execution redefines innovation and enhances engagement', he will explain how the driving force behind many organisations' successes is often the exceptional execution of an ordinary idea.

The programme then is split into tracks focusing on 'Engagement' and 'Technology & Negotiation'. Alongside these education strands, senior corporate executives with more than 10 years' experience who manage meetings and event programmes or departments have the opportunity to attend the private Executive Meeting Forum.

What The Business Gurus Are Saying About Innovation and Engagement is the first session in the Engagement track delivered by Alan Jordan and Ron Immick from BookBuzz followed by *Innovation And Engagement In Destination Selection* by Gerard Brown, Head of Future Events at UBM Routes.

The Technology & Negotiation track, sponsored by London & Partners, begins with Mike Dominguez, Senior Vice President for Sales at MGM Resorts International, talking about *Understanding Your Negotiating Leverage In 2015 And Beyond*. LinkedIn expert and trainer Bert Verdonck then explains how to *Innovate By Using LinkedIn To Engage!*

Taking place in the inspiring setting of the newly renovated Kempinski Gravenbruch, Exclusively Corporate begins in style with a 'meet and greet' dinner on the Sunday evening (17 May) hosted by Starwood Hotels & Resorts, followed by a short networking breakfast the following day sponsored by Dubai Tourism. Following time to catch up on work or relax, the group programme kicks back into action with Kevin Kelly's keynote, followed by a networking lunch and the tailored education programme. The programme finishes with a networking dinner hosted by London & Partners.

Carina Bauer, CEO of the IMEX Group, explains: 'As an opportunity to exchange ideas, share expertise and best practice in a truly private and dedicated setting, Exclusively Corporate is unique for this



audience. We're set to welcome some of the industry's leading experts to share their insight and experience in harnessing creativity and innovation to create meetings and events with impact.'

Only corporate meetings and events buyers, planners and co-ordinators can attend Exclusively Corporate to ensure that dialogue remains confidential. However, the chance to meet and do business with suppliers soon follows when the IMEX show itself opens on Tuesday 19 May.

One of the world's foremost business leaders is set to deliver the keynote speech at the opening ceremony at IMEX. Bill McDermott, CEO of SAP, the world's largest business software company, believes passionately in the value and effectiveness of meetings as a means to drive business growth and profit, commenting: '*Your industry is at the forefront of driving growth in the global economy.*'

For more details about Exclusively Corporate:
www.imex-frankfurt.com/events/education/exclusively-corporate-imex/



Developing
Excellence for
Management
Assistants



Contributing and dealing with change

European Management Assistants (EUMA) is the network for management support professionals, which offers training and development for the profession to meet the business requirements of today and especially tomorrow. In our fast changing business environment it is more and more important that companies know how to handle change management. Change management is our main topic for 2015: how we, as management support professionals, can contribute in a proactive way to our company and management, and how we can learn to deal with change when it comes to ourselves.

We are expected to focus on results, think and act like managers so as to contribute successfully to change management process. The change process in an organisation needs to expand the communication channels. An open, early and full communication is an important factor to a successful change management.

Crucial process

A one-way communication process, from top to down, won't be successful. Our contribution in communication processes is crucial. We need to become more available, asking questions, giving an opportunity to our colleagues to give us input, asking for their

opinion and how they feel. It is very important to make clear that our boss is accessible and a good listener.

will help engage people at all levels of the organisation and maintain their focus on the business.

"I always wondered why somebody didn't do something about that. Then I realized I was somebody"
Lilly Tomlin, Comedienne, Actress and Author

With our manager and team, we can work on an initial plan for when employees can expect to learn more and about potential challenges that may be experiences in the end.

Keeping our colleagues updated with specific information, stating the challenges and concerns, clearing up rumors or any misinformation

Our attitude is key. Remaining positive, committed, flexible, enthusiastic and always in control in stressful and confusing situations will motivate others. Our professional approach, empathy and humor, our willingness to change, our attitude to learn and apply new skills is a strength we have to showcase!

What we can do is encourage people, talk to them about how great they are at what they do, listening to their suggestions or comments, empower them to find their own solutions, emphasize how these strengths will help all adjust to new responsibilities. Let's show the example of change, let's show how open we are to new experiences.

Learn to deal with change when it comes to ourselves

Each and every one of us have to face the Realities of a constantly changing business environment. Our role as Management Support Professionals is evolving and developing to a new and more challenging direction.

Key skills to deal with business change include:

Strong Technical Skills

Gaining and sharing knowledge 24/7 is easier and faster. Using technology into our daily work to enhance our productivity is a key factor to our career development.

Cloud computing, web conferencing, mobility, new advancements in software and devices require new technical skills. We can work in different locations or on the road and still collaborate with our managers/supervisors/team.

Digital Communication applications, task management, travel management, event management and online collaboration are our "tools" to embrace change and adapt our working style.

Business Skills

These skills are similar with those displayed by our senior leaders.

- **Resilience.** Providing support to our managers and colleagues and keeping them effective.
- **Trust building.** When change is going to affect people, we are more likely to trust a line manager or a colleague than the big leadership team.
- **Positive attitude and Flexibility:** Lead by being an example.
- **Coaching** individuals who are stressed because of change. They need someone to show and explain to them that everyone reacts differently to change.
- **Organisation** of new procedures, explanation of how things will work in the office or in a department, will help our manager to focus on business.

EUMA's mission is to encourage and empower its members to cope with the New Realities and equip them with the grit and resilience to transform their career.

www.euma.org



Amathus Beach Hotel

How can we be more adaptive?

Let's find out on the EUMA events 2015!

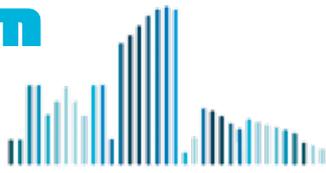
The Annual Conference on September 25, 2015 in Limassol, Cyprus, will focus on "New Realities, Transform & Thrive". The venue will be the fantastic Amathus Beach Hotel*****
(www.amathuslimassol.com)

We must react proactively and face challenges. And what best way is there than face each challenge and transform it into an opportunity, for ourselves and our organizations? So be it!! Let's TRANSFORM our way of thinking, listening and reacting. Let's THRIVE and flourish through our actions, our failures and our accomplishments.

The programme we have developed for our 2015 Conference will assist those who are facing changing conditions of employment and is carefully designed to help us meet our goal to Transform and Thrive. Let's not forget that this is an employers' market and people who work with genuine passion offering value through their strengths are much more attractive than those who simply work to earn a living.

At EUMA international events, we are happy to have a new cooperation with the Lufthansa Group Airlines, which provide a comprehensive global route network linking major cities around the world. We offer special prices and conditions to participants, visitors, exhibitors, invited guests of EUMA and their travel companions.





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ECM's Credo for the Meetings Industry

ECM Vice-President for the Meetings Industry, Heike Mahmoud, explains the virtuous circle that European Cities Marketing members and the Meetings Industry create together.

MIM Europe: You have been ECM Vice-President for the Meetings Industry for 4 years now, can you give us a picture of how ECM keeps on contributing to the recognition of the value of the Meetings Industry worldwide?

Being active on the global level is mainly done via strong cooperation with key partners and through ECM membership of the Joint Meetings Industry Council (JMIC). Meeting with other counterparts globally is second to none. As a JMIC member, we have the opportunity to take part in a Conference on the Value of Meetings that will be held in May in Paris prior to IMEX this year. We will bring our know-how thanks to several case studies and to our annual ECM Meetings Statistics Report.

Our yearly review mainly focuses on the association and corporate but we have additionally considered other segments of the Meetings Industry such as non-corporate meetings which are usually not included in the definitions applied by the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) and the Union of International Associations (UIA). The outcome of this conference will be extremely precious when reporting to a panel of government officials from all around the world at the IMEX Politicians Forum in Frankfurt.

MIM Europe: The Politicians Forum, can you develop on the importance of this event for ECM and the Industry?

The IMEX Politicians Forum [May 19] is co-organised by IMEX and ECM under the patronage of the JMIC and the International Association of Congress Centres (AIPC). The Forum provides an annual platform for international Meetings Industry leaders to meet with national or regional politicians and government officials from around the world; the Politicians Forum aims to demonstrate the economic and social importance of congresses and meetings to politicians, to initiate more dialogs and to emphasize the importance of their role. This finally ensures that public policies remain supportive of the conventions sector. This year, we will focus on how to attract more meetings and events to destinations which is key to the economic development.

MIM Europe: ECM is the only place where CVBs can meet with their counterparts and exchange knowledge on a European level. What are the next opportunities to network?

Our next ECM Annual Conference will be held in Turin in June [June 3-6] and it will address how events and infrastructure projects can change the image of a



Heike Mahmoud

About ECM

European Cities Marketing is a non-profit organisation improving the competitiveness and performance of leading cities of Europe by providing a platform for convention, leisure and city marketing professionals to exchange knowledge, best practice and widen their network to build new business. European Cities Marketing is promoting and linking the interests of 110 members from more than 100 major cities in 36 countries.

For more information, please contact:
Flavie Baudot,
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city. We have the example of Dublin's new Convention Centre which was developed to provide a world-class conference venue in the heart of Ireland's capital city.

On the first day of the meeting the ECM Meetings Industry Steering Group will host a half day Best Practice session offering a platform for our members to share interesting stories about successful or failed 'Meetings Industry' experiences. This session will be organised as a series of 10-minute presentations, leading to in-depth discussion with the speakers.

On the seminar day, after the keynote speakers and the sharing of best practices, attendees will have the possibility to participate to three different workshops: Meetings Industry, City Marketing and Tourism. Then, each group will share their feedback. Exchanges between members are at the heart of European Cities Marketing and with this new formula I am pretty sure that it is going to be even more fulfilling!

MIM Europe: In term of business opportunity what does ECM have to offer to their members?

We provide each year our members with two business events Meet Europe and the India Meetings Industry Workshop.

The first one usually takes place in December in a city with a wide international associations' base: Paris or Brussels. The Meet Europe event is dedicated to organisers of European and international conventions, event managers, meeting planners looking for new destinations in Europe. It is a half-day event where pre-selected top quality associations meet face to face with ECM members cities (circa 25 destinations) both attractive and ready to make association events a real success.

In cooperation with tmf dialogue marketing GmbH, European Cities Marketing also offers the unique opportunity to make the connection between Indian planners and European destinations! India is an undoubtedly important source market for European Cities. The last edition was held on April 27-30, 2015 in Delhi, Mumbai and Bangalore.

MIM Europe: How important is education for ECM?

Education is a big part of the ECM strategy. Every year the ECM Summer School (traditionally taking place last week of August) allows people just starting out in the sector to get insights into the Meetings Industry. This winning formula

has been successful since 1987. We are currently developing the ECM Academy to emerging destinations outside Europe who expressed the need to have their own training (more on this in MIM127 page 9).

MIM Europe: Your mandate as ECM Vice-President will soon come to an end; what is your best memory? What is, according to you, making ECM so unique?

The best memory? This is a hard question... I have so many good memories! If I have to choose one, I would say the successful establishment of the partnership with IMEX Group that really marked a big step for the association! Although my mandate as ECM Vice-President comes to an end, I will still be involved with the association and hopefully be able to trigger more support for the Meetings Industry!

Whether we talk about Meetings Industry, City Marketing or Leisure, there are so many things to learn, so many experiences to share, and so many reasons to grow. This is what makes ECM unique!

29th ECM SUMMER SCHOOL

An unmissable learning opportunity for all professionals working in convention bureaux, tourist offices, congress centres, airlines, hotels, DMCs, PCOs & meeting planners!

22nd > 26th AUGUST 2015
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Logos: EUROPEAN CITIES MARKETING, imex, ebem, THE GLOBAL MEETINGS ASSOCIATION, VIENNA CONVENTIONS AUSTRIA

ECM Summer School: make the most of the Meetings Industry!

Attending ECM Summer School provides with incisive insight into the structure and functioning of the Meetings Industry, bringing all delegates face to face with leading industry professionals. The programme sets out the background and context of the industry, with a focus on European and international best practices. It is perfect for those just starting out in the sector and who quickly want to get up to speed.

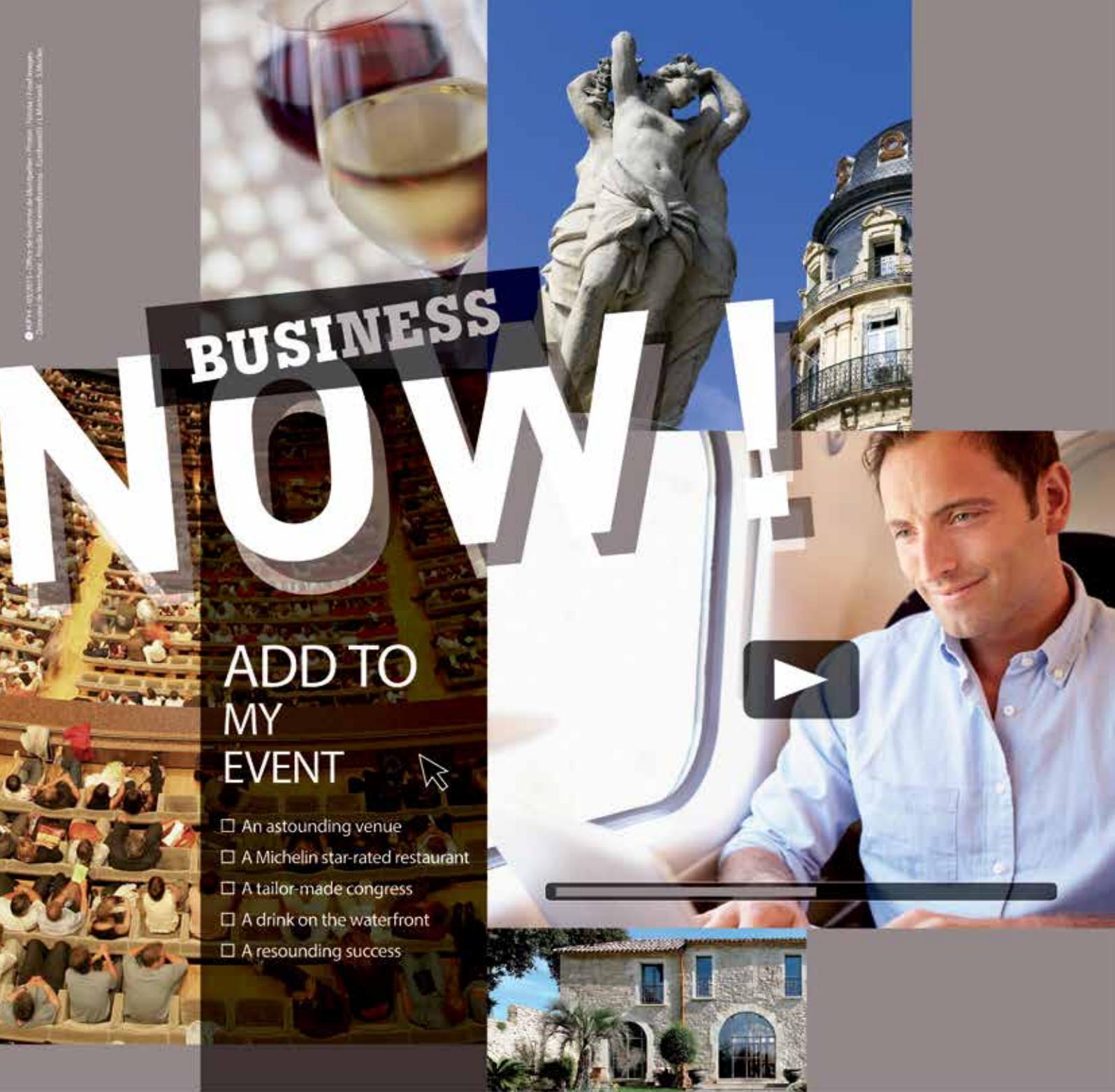
The ECM Summer School has consistently been the bridge to a successful career in the Meetings Industry. More than 1,500 students graduated from the School - many of whom have gone on to become leaders! The Summer School is qualified for CMP certification and every qualified student earns a total 21.25 clock hours for their overall CMP certification.

The next edition will be held in Vienna, August 22-26, 2015.

Registrations are open: <http://www.cvent.com/d/Orq76q/4w>

www.europeancitiesmarketing.com

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YES, WE CAN BE THE CHANGE



Annamaria Ruffini

Leisure and business travel is the largest industry in the world. According to WTTC – World Travel & Tourism Council, in 2013 the industry's contribution to the global economy rose to 9.5% of global domestic product estimated at US \$7 trillion. The industry is growing faster than any other significant sectors and employs nearly 266 million people. Sustained demand for travel and tourism, together with its capability to generate high levels of employment, continues to prove the importance and value of the sector to global economic development and job creation.

TEXT ANNAMARIA RUFFINI, SITE BOARD MEMBER AND PRESIDENT & CEO, EVENTS IN & OUT, S.R.L., ROME, ITALY

Along with its impressive growth are the affect and high costs of the industry on the environment, natural resources and societal impact. Responsible and sustainable tourism is an important strategy to not only put emphasis on the economic, social and environmental impacts, but to also optimise benefits for the stakeholders. All over the world there is a growing interest for an ever sustainable and respectful tourism industry.

“We cannot allow tourism without responsibility”

Most large companies have a detailed and exhaustive Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) code of conduct and apply these principles to the organisation of meetings, events and incentive travel. Today, CSR best practices have reached a high performance standard. Planners can organise low environmental impact travel, can report on them, and our awareness and sensitivity has taught us to respect a destination's people, culture and sites.

However, there are still many societal impacts of the tourism industry that need to be addressed. Sexual exploitation of children is a growing problem affecting every corner of the world. The issue is especially prevalent during



major sporting events such as the Olympics, World Cup, Super Bowl and large meetings and conventions. Human trafficking often takes place in airports and hotels and uses other travel infrastructure.

SITE has identified this issue as a strategic priority and has proposed supporting ECPAT and becoming a member of The Code, an industry-driven responsible tourism initiative with a mission to provide awareness, tools and support to the tourism industry in order to prevent the sexual exploitation of children. This will not be a campaign restricted to 2015, but a long-term priority to raise awareness and stimulate action. Although many

chapters already have, and will continue to support, their own local CSR causes and initiatives we are asking all SITE members around the world to come together to help stop human trafficking.

As meeting and incentive travel professionals we can be the change. There are simple things we can do to help stop human trafficking by being aware of the issue, being vigilant when traveling and reporting any suspicious activity. Fighting child sex exploitation goes hand in hand with running an ethical and responsible travel company and is an important pillar of CSR and responsible tourism.

To learn more about SITE visit www.SITEglobal.com

Annamaria Ruffini is an expert on responsible and sustainable tourism practices and the author of the book “Ecoeventi” published in 2009. The book on the green approach to incentive travel and events received the prestigious Italian award, Premio Turismo Responsabile Italiano 2010. She is currently working on a new book, published in English, which will be available this fall.

site Society for
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8th Latin American & Caribbean Meetings and Incentive Exhibition



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Grote Markt, Antwerp

Anja Stas

The world is in Antwerp

Chief Commercial Officer of Flanders Meeting & Convention Center Antwerp, Anja Stas has been around and entered the meetings industry with a bang. She shares here her views on a sector that is ever-changing and explains all about the latest developments in Antwerp, and the plans of the upcoming, brand-new Congress Center.

INTERVIEW RÉMI DÉVÉ

Can you explain a little bit on your personal background?

I was born and raised in a typical Belgian village and went through your classical Latin Greek education, complete with Law School and an MBA in Marketing. I spent 14 years abroad, both in Eastern Europe and the United States: in Warsaw, I worked in the pharmaceutical industry for J&J, for the Coca-Cola Company in Holland and Atlanta, and in the financial IT sector for CAPco in New York.

When I returned to Belgium in 2006, I started working for the Royal Zoological Society of Antwerp, an NGO founded in 1843. The society currently manages Antwerp ZOO, Planckendael Animal Park, the Elisabeth Concert Hall (which seats up to 2,000 people and hosts meetings

and congresses) and the Serpentarium Blankenberge. The RZSA plays a prominent role as a leading conservation organisation by managing the first Flemish nature reserve “De Zegge” and its own scientific institute the Centre for Research and Conservation.

My official title today is Chief Commercial Officer of Flanders Meeting & Convention Center Antwerp - part of Elisabeth Center Antwerp - and Chief Marketing Officer for the Antwerp ZOO and Planckendael. I like to say that I've always been driven by creativity, imagination and the passion for the possible. I strongly believe in the power of storytelling, intentional creativity and value-centered decision-making: the future lies in those companies whose

© Koninklijke Maatschappij Dierkunde Antwerpen - Jonas Verhulst



Anja Stas

focus is on value creation and authentic collaboration. Add to this a personal passion for digital marketing and technology, and you've got a winning combination, which I'm sure can be applied to the meetings industry, even though the latter is still rather conventional.

As an award-winning marketer, I've also penned a book entitled *Elephant Marketing*.



Antwerp ZOO

© Jonas Verhulst



Antwerp ZOO

© Sarah Demol

You have worked in the US and Europe. Are cultural differences important when it comes to business?

I can only base myself on a limited experience, but I would say the American way of doing business is very result oriented, with a 'it's just business, it's nothing personal' attitude. 'Yes we can', 'How can we make this work?' is definitely the approach. Europeans tend to focus on the people and the human side of business more, their approach is softer. The Americans are very resilient under stress and problem-solving. An American will easily share his title position, salary and religion right after you meet him; this will never happen with Europeans who require a more indirect approach. Also, the Americans are better at celebrating successes, they don't just learn from failure like we sometimes do. We could adopt a more celebratory culture in Europe and Belgium for sure.

Is Antwerp an easily "sellable" destination?

Antwerp is a hidden gem which deserves to be known inside out. I might even say it's the meetings industry's best kept secret, a city that feels like a village but that offers the world,

extremely easy to get to and around. It's got historical class. It's fun and tasty, with loads of great restaurants from the world over, it's a truly cosmopolitan city rich in over 150 different nationalities.

Antwerp is a hidden gem which deserves to be known inside out. I might even say it's the meetings industry's best kept secret, a city that feels like a village but that offers the world

The choice of things you can do or visit in Antwerp is dizzying, and you can do all of it walking: from the world's most beautiful railway cathedral, adjacent to the world's best kept 19th century ZOO, to the historic city centre with beautiful 16th, 17th and 18th century buildings. It's a place that people love, whether for its chocolate and beer, like Barack Obama once said, or for its drive for creativity and innovation ranging from fashion to technology. It's a place of knowledge and history, with a wide choice of hotel facilities.

You obviously work on many projects at the same time. And there are some great infrastructure developments at the moment. Can you expand on that?
In November 2016 the Flanders

Meeting and Convention Center as part of the Elisabeth Center Antwerp will open its doors. It will feature a newly built 25,000m² temple for meetings, seminars and congresses with

an auditorium of 2,000 pax and 20 to 30 breakout rooms. It will combine classic features and modern amenities, with fascinating rooms in the historic wing for meetings and parties alike and the latest technology. There will be a lot of natural light flooding the different areas - the light-infused atrium will be a masterpiece, the Manchester architect Ian Simpson and Chicago-based acoustics specialist Kierkegaard did wonders! - while retaining the glory of the original building. On top of it, we'll be infusing several sustainable solutions to be a socially responsible player in the industry.

The Flanders Meeting and Convention Center will be the 'meeting' part of the larger Elisabeth Center



Auditorium, Flanders Meeting & Convention Center Antwerp

© Ian Simpson Architects



Marble Hall, Flanders Meeting & Convention Center Antwerp

© Ian Simpson Architects

Antwerp, with the Royal Flemish Philharmonic in residence, hosting pop and rock concerts and musical and theatre productions as well.

For the last 40 years we have hosted about 100 to 150 events a year here, from corporate meetings to association congresses. The new building will be a truly multicultural and multifunctional meeting place allowing delegates to convene and meet during the day and go to a concert at night, thanks to an ingenious technique for super fast rotations and top acoustic ratings, ultra comfortable seats and superior audiovisual quality. Spaces like the Marble Hall, maybe one of the most beautiful halls in Antwerp, or the adjacent Verlat room, will serve as reminders of how greatly historical Antwerp is. These are the perfect places for mixers, dinners or other events, making networking very easy.

Then of course there is our world-renowned ZOO, a listed monument with 4,000 animals which makes for great cultural and educational entertainment hosting over a million visitors a year. It's a cultural icon complete with Art Deco and Belle Epoque features

and outstanding animal statues, most of them created by Bugatti, the brother of the famous car builder. The ZOO is managed by the Royal Zoological Society of Antwerp, a leading science centre famous for its conservation and research programmes.

The ZOO is definitely our best asset when it comes to meetings: where else can you find such a world-class facility as part of your meeting place, as delegates get to jog through the ZOO in the morning before visiting hours? And I'm not even talking about the dinner@ZOO which combines a sumptuous meal with a dreamy walk in a sleeping ZOO at night, or the self-explanatory Aquarium Dinners...

Before getting into the meetings industry, you have worked for large corporations. How is the meetings industry like in comparison?

It's a people's business above all, an industry that find its *raison d'être* not necessarily in making money but in knowledge sharing. It's an industry about inspiration and innovation, where you meet people that have something to say and where you learn from them, possibly leading to a positive change

in your business, your life and even the world. This is really fascinating to me, and I like to think that I'm a facilitator in these exchanges...

It's also challenging, as the meeting industry is still a very much offline industry and finding the new balance in the digital world with the rise of hybrid events means that the role of live face-to-face meetings will be redefined in the future. As a classic marketer groomed in storytelling and experience marketing, to be part of that is fantastic.

What are your personal favourites about Antwerp?

Antwerp truly offers the world and you can discover it in just one day. There's so much to see and do all at walking distance. As to my personal favourites, the top of my list includes shopping (I must admit I'm a shopaholic), the Antwerp ZOO of course, but also an area called het Eilandje with Het Mas, a whole neighbourhood where water and yachting have pride of place. I would also mention the Conscience Square, the Modemuseum, Rubens House, a wonderful multicultural food market on Saturdays, the station and of course my yoga studio!

NEWS FROM THE CSR FRONT



A major boost of CSR in the boardroom

Corporate Social Responsibility is nothing new when it comes to the MICE market, but the way it's looked at in the meetings realm is changing. What planners are finding is that your clients may not be knocking down the door asking for a CSR component, but delegates are seeking a taste of this element when attending a conference.

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ALL TEXTS WRITTEN BY LANE NIESET



The industry is taking note and pushing the trend in the right direction. Big name hotel brands and convention centres are jumping on board offering planners everything they need to seamlessly weave CSR activities and sustainable options into the planning and executing process. Welcome to a world where delegates and destinations are driving these efforts just as much as the companies behind the conference.

Destination-driven incentives

"I think consumer expectations have changed," says Wonderful Copenhagen Convention Director Jonas Wilstrup. *"Where socially and environmentally conscious meetings used to be a 'special requirement,' I think it is now an expectation. But we experience that clients more or less expect that CSR is already 'taken care' of by either the hotel, the venue*

or suppliers in general. Therefore clients don't necessary ask for it."

Guy Bigwood, MCI Group Sustainability Director, says they often ask attendees what they expect and are looking for out of an event, and about 80 percent

Sustainable efforts are becoming part of the package for corporate meetings at hotels looking at increasing CSR efforts from the food to the incentive activities

expect the organiser to take a proactive stance in terms of sustainability at the event: *"Consumers are starting to expect a lot more and our event organisers aren't keeping up with that. If we ask the same questions (in regard to sustainability) to the organisers, probably around 30 percent would say 'our clients don't care about it.' There's a massive disconnect with most of*

the organisers not opening their eyes about what's going on out there."

As Bigwood explains, there's a handful of CVBs like Wonderful Copenhagen and Thailand Convention & Exhibition Bureau in Bangkok that realise it's

their role to lead the industry to a better place and drive sustainable development, while also cutting costs.

As the deemed Capital of Sustainable Meetings, Copenhagen continues to make major strides forward in terms of showcasing possibilities for sustainable solutions on the supply side, as well as ways for delegates to



engage with the city and community. With their #BeeSustain initiative, Wonderful Copenhagen shares green solutions and best practices, creating a resource for planners looking to reduce a company's environmental footprint, as well as costs. *"The environmental footprint generated from the activities in the meetings industry is substantial and we all have a responsibility to find solutions, but the clients have the power to make our industry more sustainable and they should ask for sustainable solutions,"* Wilstrup explains.

CSR takes centre stage at hotel meetings

Back in the early 2000s, carbon-less meetings were taking steam in the industry, with small movements to reduce waste like cutting back on plastic bottles, paper and recycling bins.

Hotel Programs to Look Out For

Hotels have been upping their game over the past few years, incorporating more social responsibility initiatives into programmes for planners, all designed with CSR in mind. Here are a few examples:

- **Experienceit at Shangri-La:** Launched just over a year ago, the programme promotes eco-friendly amenities like glass water bottles replacing plastic, onsite herb gardens, and energy-saving solar decks. Attendees also take part in CSR-driven activities with children and local nature projects, and are encouraged to spend break time walking outside enjoying the local area's nature (as opposed to coffee served in a break room).
- **Green Meetings at Four Seasons:** The brand has appointed a dedicated green team at each property to help guide planners in the right direction to create a sustainable event with CSR elements. From the boardroom to F&B, the programme's green services cover all bases.
- **Meet with Purpose at Hilton:** Set to roll out in Europe later this year, the programme has two goals: *Mindful Meetings* and *Mindful Eating*, aiming to not only eliminate material waste through reusable containers at central water stations, but also eliminate food waste typical of buffet style dining. To achieve this, the programme incorporates portion control methods, while meeting rooms also help reduce energy consumption.

Now these efforts are becoming part of the package for corporate meetings at hotels looking at increasing CSR efforts from the food to the incentive activities.

“Corporate meetings and events are definitely seeing greater take up for local, seasonal and sustainably sourced food, as well as innovative meeting packages,” says Pat Gallardo Dwyer, director of CSR and Sustainability for Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts. *“There is interest in particular things like access to sense of place, whether it’s cultural, nature and conservation activities or meeting local children, visiting schools and orphanages.”*

The main components behind this push? Both delegates and corporations wanting to be resource-conscious, eco-friendly, innovative and cost-efficient.

“RFPs from corporate accounts have started to ask about green meeting packages but those who take their events seriously, whether because they are Fortune 500 companies who are

What’s On the Menu at Meetings

In terms of going local, many hotels are turning to the food factor, working with local suppliers to offer healthy and fresh meals. Four Seasons, for example, offers more gourmet menus that feature local and seasonal ingredients, as well as vegan and vegetarian options. This assists with lowering greenhouse gases associated with animal farming and makes vegetarians very happy at buffet-style meals.

Some of Hilton’s U.S. properties who have incorporated the *Meet with Purpose* sustainability program are taking things a step further by donating leftovers to charity; partnering with local farms; and growing their own vegetables on rooftop gardens. *“Many of our hotels were already on board with sustainability initiatives but now that consumers are more invested, the topic itself is front and centre, not just in the meetings space but in everyday life,”* says Andrew Flack, Vice President of B2B Marketing and Customer Insights for Hilton.

measuring their CO₂ footprint or are managing the environmental impacts of their events, find themselves working with our hotel events and F&B teams to create innovative and environmentally-conscious events,” Gallardo explains.

With the development of these new CSR-driven programs, hotel brands are becoming a one-stop-shop for sustainability, offering energy-efficient venues, sustainable cuisine and products, and partnering with local organisations for activities.

One of the main trends is getting delegates out of the boardroom and taking team building into the community, as simple onsite donations are not enough (although even this gesture can make

a huge impact for a charity). Attendees want to get to know the area they’re visiting and see how they can physically change a community, and they don’t mind getting their hands dirty.

One example is a corporate team-building activity at Shangri-La’s Mactan Resort & Spa in Cebu, Philippines where attendees worked with the Barangay Tingo school across the island, created artificial coral reef houses, and participated in beach clean ups - all in one visit.

Another major trend across the board is a growing focus on improving the food factor at events, incorporating organic elements or locally sourced ingredients, supporting the community as well as supporting the health and satisfaction of the attendees. *“There’s a trend coming through that event food can’t be worse than what you’d eat in a restaurant,”* Bigwood says. *“Some brands are thinking that the food at their event is a real way to change the event experience. People get that when it’s 30 or 40 people, but when you’re talking thousands of people, they think let’s just do what’s cheap and good enough- but it’s not good enough anymore.”*





Clifton Suspension Bridge, Bristol

Going Green in 2015 in Bristol

These days, recycling water bottles and reducing paper at meetings isn't enough for attendees. They not only want meetings and conferences to be more energy efficient, they also want to take part first-hand in making a change socially and environmentally. Choosing a destination known for its sustainable initiatives is a great first step toward achieving these goals for both the corporation and its employees.

This year the spotlight is on Bristol, deemed the greenest city in the UK and awarded the status of 2015 European Green Capital. With sustainable innovations stemming throughout the city and its venues, and more projects in the works throughout its green capital year, Bristol has made it easier

than ever for the MICE market when it comes to hosting a green meeting. A beautiful countryside setting doesn't hurt, either.

"Bristol's European Green Capital status in 2015 has undoubtedly increased interest in the destination and we

have always highlighted the city's green credentials when presenting to organisers or at trade events," says Kathryn Davis, head of tourism for Destination Bristol. *"We also promote access to the city by public transport very heavily, including promoting special rates for those traveling by train."*

Judged on 12 environmental areas - ranging from local transport to waste and water management - Bristol's proposal hit the mark when it came to investment plans for transport and energy, as the city aspires to become a European hub for low-carbon industry and has spent the last 40 years championing these environmental efforts. Already, almost one-fifth of the city walks to work and the number of cyclists has doubled over the past few years. The city's innovative outlook also caught the judges' eyes, as one declared the award goes to "the city with the sense of fun".

With sustainable innovations stemming throughout the city and its venues, Bristol has made it easier than ever for the MICE market when it comes to hosting a green meeting

As the first UK cycling city, and the first UK city to be awarded the title of European Green Capital, Bristol plans on using this role to become a leader for other European cities, as a "Laboratory for Change", showcasing its efforts via social media and live lab conferences, all the while reducing its carbon footprint.

This year also marks 10 years of Bristol being a Fair Trade City, and it will be the host of the International Fair Trade Towns Conference in July.

What's Trendy in Bristol Right Now

Green Meetings

Speaking to Davis about how Bristol got to this green point, she mentions that the way consumers are looking at destinations in terms of sustainability is on the rise.

"We saw a great deal of interest pre-recession in specifically requesting venues with tangible green credentials, and while this remained important during times of economic difficulty, this wasn't a 'first' option for many, preferring to look at budget ahead of any other factor in many cases," she says. "I think that

a venue or destination's commitment to the environment is now one of the considerations in choosing the right location, with access and budget remaining the most important deciding factors."

Consumers love the "feel-good factor" that goes along with a socially and environmentally conscious venue, and this makes the organisation seem more caring and inviting, pleasing everyone from the clients to the delegates.

"We are fortunate to have some fantastic venues that not only invest in green

accreditation, but also take these matters seriously themselves and have very clear environmental and social policies to help meeting planners make decisions. Many venues are also charities, and we see that meeting planners can also look at venues where their event will support the charity," Davis explains.

Since the convention bureau works closely with its venues (think eco-farms and manor houses) and arranging specific green requests, meeting planners know they're in good hands making sure their requests get across to the venue, for example ensuring a locally sourced menu. Davis also points out that the city will undergo major changes in the next two years as new venues pop up increasing the range of options for meeting planners.

Green Team Building

Going back to what makes this city so fun is its location. Set in South West England, Bristol has an 800-year history but isn't resting on its laurels. The city is constantly looking at new and innovative ways to make sustainable changes, and this extends to the MICE market in terms of team building.



"We look for experiences or activities that are unique to the city and can offer something very special", Davis says. *"We work with a number of charities locally who may be interested in offering a corporate group an opportunity to participate in what is essentially a team-building activity that genuinely benefits them...this can be clearing sites or building paths."*

From learning "Bushcraft" wilderness survival skills or sheep shepherding at Folly Farm Centre's nature reserve to exploring the local wildlife on a safari through Gloucestershire, planners have plenty of options for green experiences that are unique to the area. *"We are focused on finding 'green' team building experiences, and as we are surrounded by beautiful countryside, there are a number of very special activities that can be offered,"* Davis says.

Green Events

Expect a year-long celebration of sustainability as the community gets involved in hosting festivities surrounding the city's 2015 European Green Capital status. This means nature summits, tree planting and discussions on climate change. The city is also hoping to get others on board hosting their own green events, and has even created guides to going green with tips on ways to make events more sustainable from the inside out.

www.destinationbristol.co.uk



5 Ways to Fuel CSR with Technology

Social media can be a key tool when it comes to driving CSR agendas and activities. Not only can corporations engage their employees and customers, they can also promote their work championing community events and sustainability. So what are some of the top trends in meetings at the moment? MIM Europe spoke with experts across the industry to learn how corporations are driving their causes thanks to a few tech savvy methods and strong social media tactics.

1 - Eliminate Waste

One of the most obvious ways to significantly reduce the amount of paper products is with technology. "Offerings like audio visual technology and event apps have given planners the freedom to eliminate huge amounts of paper waste," says Andrew Flack, Vice President, B2B Marketing and Customer Insights at Hilton. "When people do not have the opportunity to meet face to face, technology is there to help with hybrid and virtual meetings, allowing attendees to connect from offices across the globe." Many venues have already

incorporated these practices, and more corporations are getting on board developing brand-specific apps.

2 - Spread the Word

Most corporations agree that social media is at the forefront when it comes to driving attention toward causes the company and its employees support. In addition to spreading the word in real time, such as live tweeting during a community-based CSR event, social media allows you to share resources and boost more interest in sustainable meetings, inspiring other corporations and planners.

"Social media has made meetings and events highly shareable activities, which in turn helped create interest in 'green' meetings and make it easier for meeting professionals to learn by example," Flack says. This engagement and the result from "likes," "shares", and Retweets not only puts a positive light on the company's efforts, but reflects on everyone involved in creating that meeting or event. Clients can even use this "real time sharing" to test interest levels on certain initiatives and get feedback in an instant regarding a certain product, explains Pat Gallardo Dwyer, director of CSR and Sustainability for Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts.

The use of social media and sharing also shows how the road to more sustainable meetings is a community effort, and by playing your role, it will lead to long-term gains affecting everyone in the industry. *“It allows us to come together and be connected more, so there’s that trend of events wanting to have a social impact, of supporting a cause, and social media allows you to tell that story and engage people in a better way,”* explains Guy Bigwood, MCI Group Sustainability Director.

3 - Create Smarter Meeting Spaces

As technology continues to improve and become more innovative, meeting planners can expect a more streamlined approach to sustainability, without attendees even realising it. *“I think there’s a lot of technology that’s coming around and will come around in terms of how hotels and venues manage themselves. For example, the concept of a smart building telling you when waste*

bins need to be emptied and (automatically) adjusting energy usage based on sensing if there’s people in the room - things attendees won’t see,” Bigwood says. For now, many of the new hotel programs and venues are taking care of these details by adding green certifications to convention centres and placing recycling bins in meeting rooms, all the while making it easier and more cost efficient to host a sustainable meeting than most planners (and clients) think.

4 - Share Knowledge

Get attendees up to speed with social media seminars, where they can not only learn a useful skill, but also be aware of the company’s social media practices and policies. Set up a simple seminar that gives delegates an idea of the client’s social media strategy, easy ways to use Twitter, and pointers on how to optimise their LinkedIn profiles and share news through this. If your client is trying to promote a specific

event or cause, throw a “Tweet Up,” where delegates can get together and Tweet to see who can get a hashtag (created just for this event) trending the quickest. Not only is this a fun activity for the so-called social media nerds, but this promotes your client’s corporate culture in the Twitter-sphere.

5 - Creating Long-Term Impact

A common issue with CSR is the way it trickles down from corporate to employees. *“Often sustainability issues are very present at the top corporate level, but as you move along the chain of command in companies, there is often a disconnect. Sustainability is just not that present at that level,”* says Wonderful Copenhagen Convention Director Jonas Wilstrup. *“Social media and technology can help us communicate the benefits, that having a sustainable meeting is not only efficient and modern, it is an absolute necessity, especially looking ten to fifteen years in the future.”*

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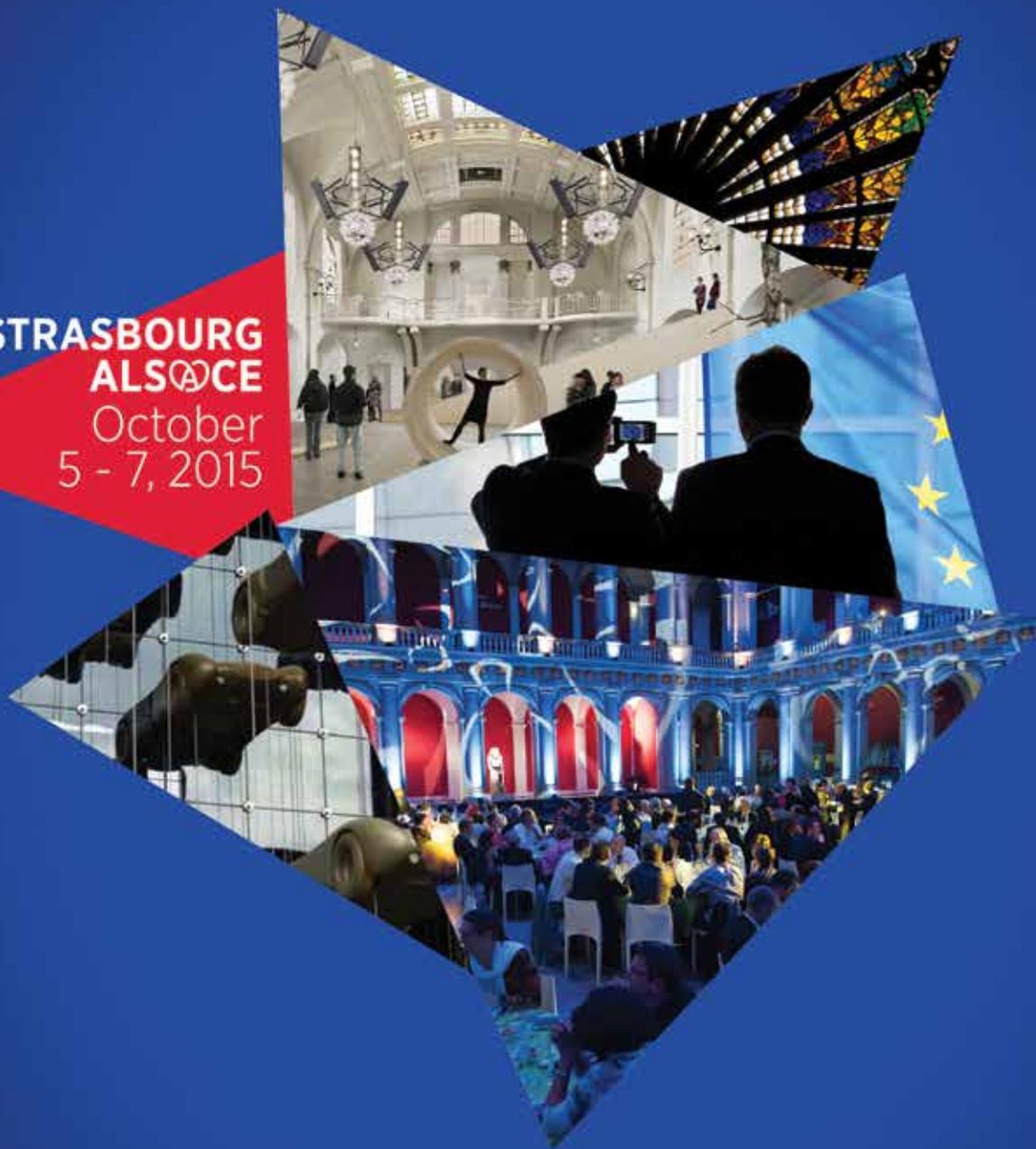
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This iconic establishment of Anancy (also called the Little Venice of the Alps) features a **4-star hotel with 99 rooms & suites, a casino** as well as a **Congress Centre**. **PVG GROUP** has launched a large refurbishment programme: **new design for the rooms and suites** in a cosy contemporary style, new welcome area and soon to come is the **opening of a spa with a swimming pool**.

A Michelin-starred Consultant Chef for an exquisite plate

Born in Savoie, **the Michelin-starred Chef Jean-Christophe Ansanay-Alex** has been given the task to elaborate the menus of the **3 restaurants**, which offer a real wealth of culinary flavors.

"**La Voile**", with its sophisticated setting or its exceptional terrace overlooking the park and the lake has recently become a gastronomic restaurant with a refined and creative cuisine. For "**La Brasserie**", the Chef has imagined a generous and innovative menu combining traditional local

products and emblematic brasserie dishes. On the park level, the terrace offers an astonishing view on the lake and the gardens. "**La Rotonde du Casino**" located in the Imperial Casino welcomes you until late in the evening and serves classical food, daily suggestions or snacks. Being in the casino, entry is for adults only and an ID card is compulsory. Packages with casino chips can also be provided.

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THE CONVENTION CENTRE DUBLIN

Special Interest Incentives Gardens and Flowers

Not much has ever been written about Special Interest Incentives because it is difficult to get these people together in a group, even though there is a lot of interest. Every year, there is a Tulip Festival in Istanbul, with roots in the Ottoman Empire – a high point for Garden and Flower incentives.

REPORT MARCEL A.M. VISSERS

People like to visit gardens

According to Dr. Richard Benfield from the Central Connecticut State University in the USA more people visit gardens in the States than go to Disneyland and Disneyworld combined. Although garden tourism is one of the fastest growing tourism activities it is often not understood and poorly promoted. Research indicates that a garden tourist is also a tourist interested in food, heritage and the culture of an area. Take a look at what these research results might do for the annual Tulip Festival in Istanbul!

Tulips from Istanbul

Since their very beginning, gardens have been the setting for celebrations and special gatherings - and since then flowers have played an important role in all kinds of events, from romantic occasions, such as weddings and birthdays, sad ones, such as funerals, and also religious rituals. Gardens and

flowers are therefore important for us – but it sometimes happens that a flower seizes an entire culture or the hearts and minds of an entire country and gives rise to a real cult there, with extraordinarily passionate manifestations, and no flower has succeeded in doing this more than the tulip.

The tulip has journeyed long and far to reach us here in Western Europe: the first description of a tulip is Chinese. The Persian name for the tulip – *Lale* – has given rise to a special turn of phrase in its history. In Ottoman script, *Lale* is in fact closely related to the words Allah and Elif. The three words have a similar charge, as it were. This is the reason why the sultans in Istanbul – of the enormous Ottoman Empire – ordered the traders plying the silk routes (coincidentally in the same zone of 40° latitude...) to collect as many tulips as possible for the palace gardens which were laid out to represent the heavenly paradise on earth.

How would that be possible without tulips? Poems and music were composed for the most beautiful tulip varieties when the tulips bloomed in the palace gardens, where the sultans organised incredible celebrations to defy the imagination. What incentive could come anywhere near to the feelings that the visitors must have had during those tulip festivals?



Forgotten but discovered anew

In 2004 a prestigious exhibition was held in the Bozar in Brussels under the title '**Goddesses, Mothers and Sultanas**'. The opening was attended by the Mayor of Istanbul, Kadir Topbaş and landscape architect and designer, Ronald Van der Hilst (also known as the Tulip Master). For that occasion, Van der Hilst had brought along a small bag of bulbs of the very rare *Tulipa acuminata* to give to the Mayor, accompanied by a letter describing the relationship between *Tulipa acuminata* and the vanished tulips of Istanbul, and the inspiration of the tulip in art. That message made its mark: a year later, the City of Istanbul placed a large order for *Tulipa acuminata* with growers in The Netherlands and since then more and many different varieties of tulips have been ordered year after year, to the point where Istanbul has now become the capital city of the tulip!

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Kadir Topbaş and Ronald Van der Hilst



CONVENE 2015

I repeat it all the time: regional meetings trade fairs are the gauge of an industry. Convene in Lithuania for example is a very good gauge for the Baltic Sea Region, especially for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. This year was already the third edition, organised by Vilnius Convention Bureau.

BY MARCEL A.M. VISSERS

Convene is a successful fair because it combines a new-style exhibition space with a lot of local exhibitors from the Baltic Sea Region (the Baltic countries, but also Finland, Russia, Sweden, Denmark and Poland). Some 160 international hosted buyers attended the fair, undertaking over 3,200 pre-scheduled appointments.

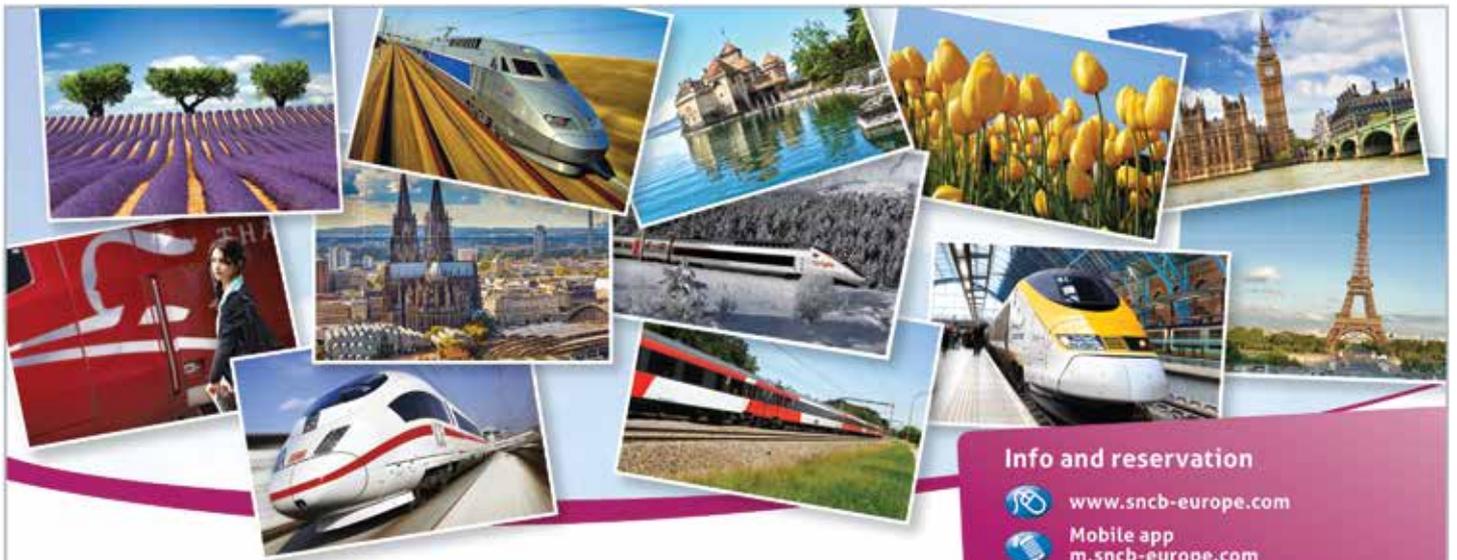
A very positive thing about Convene is that it has a very professional education programme. All sessions are delivered by high-profile speakers from across Europe. Headquarters even did a presentation called 'Associations in a European perspective'. In a recent research study it was mentioned

that there are indeed 95 headquarters of international and regional organisations in the Baltics. Other topics included 'Incentive Ideas and Opportunities in the Baltic Market' and 'Using presentation techniques for sales and marketing', by Luc Chenier, managing director of Titanium. Participants learned key techniques on how to enhance and clearly communicate what they are trying to say and sell without confusing their audience.

A highlight of the fair was the Convene Networking Evening that took place in the Palace of the Grand Dukes of Lithuania, which lies in the heart of Unesco World Heritage Old Town of Vilnius.



Next edition: 10-13 February 2016 - www.convene.lt



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Interlaken

An extraordinary blend of Swiss nature, adventure and culture

A small group of delegates from incentives agencies in Belgium were treated to a wonderful action-packed three-day programme (Feb 27-Mar 1) in Interlaken and its surrounding areas organised by Switzerland Convention & Incentive Bureau (SCIB).

REPORT KELVIN LU & KATIE LAU

Long reputed as Europe's premier resort destination, Interlaken with its surrounding areas including the Jungfrau region is more than just about sightseeing and skiing. As the journey unfolds, participants found that there's a lot more to Interlaken than the famous Swiss Alps and the pristine lakes – all of which serves as a great backdrop to some of the best meeting venues Switzerland has to offer and a vast array of incentives ideas and activities.

Relaxing & carving

After arrival in Zurich from Brussels, the group of nine were quickly transferred by train to Lake Brienz, one of the two lakes of the Bernese Oberland known for its turquoise blue waters and mountain peaks capped with eternal snows. After a relaxing lunch at Restaurant Steinbock, the group were taken to Jobin, famously known as “the village of carving”, where the group carved, decorated and painted their wooden cows with traditional woodcarving tools at the Swiss Woodcarving Museum.

The next stop was the neighbouring Lake Thun, situated west of Interlaken.

For their first night, the group checked into the airy and stylish Congress Hotel Seepark Thun, with picturesque views of the lake and mountain.

The second day kicked off with a transfer to the village of Grindelwald where the group built their igloos or snow sculptures against the beautiful scenery of imposing, snow-capped mountains. To further take in the sights and fresh mountain air, adventurous participants snowshoed their way one step after another to Restaurant Ischbodenhütte. While snowshoeing might look intimidating to laymen, the activity is available in different levels of difficulty so everyone can enjoy nature and being active.

Skating & bonding

The group then headed back to Interlaken where they checked into the elegant Victoria-Jungfrau Grand Hotel & Spa, suitable for events for up to 500 people. It was followed by a visit to the newest attraction in Interlaken, Ice Magic, a new ice-skating ring in front of a unique mountain backdrop.

Afterwards, the group walked to the nearby Congress Centre Kursaal Interlaken for a culinary site inspection. The venue features a new auditorium with its innovative architecture and stylish, historic ambiance in the halls of the Kursaal with a total event area of 5,000 m² and a capacity for over 1,500 people.

On the last day, participants got a good taste of James Bond awesomeness on their visit to the magnificent Mount Schilthorn. First they visited the Schilthorn, a panoramic restaurant at the altitude of 2,970m where the James Bond movie “On Her Majesty's Secret Service” was filmed. The all-in-one venue is perfect for a summit meeting and ideally suitable for a variety of events with great views of the Bernese Alps. Bond fans shall not miss the summit's new attraction “Bond World”, an interactive exhibition showing scenes from the movie, artifacts and an in-house cinema.

www.interlaken-congress.ch

www.jungfrauregion.ch

www.schilthorn.ch

www.myswitzerland.com/meetings

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Switzerland Convention & Incentive Bureau presents

Welcome to Flims Laax Falera

Plenty of room for individual demand

The three tourist destinations of Flims, Laax and Falera are located at a height of 1,100 metres above sea level, embedded between mountains and on a wonderful sun terrace above the wild and romantic Rhine Gorge.

A unique landscape with wonderful forests, idyllic mountain lakes, crystal-clear streams and cultural heritage sights await you in Flims, Laax and Falera. Short connection routes from the airport Zurich and a large number of leisure facilities make the destination an ideal venue for meetings, incentives, congresses and events.

With the «Waldhaus Arena» event hall for up to 1,800 persons, Flims is one of the most important event locations in the Swiss Alps. The region's spirit of innovation facilitates an eventful and dynamic setting for every event, from the classical conference hotel to the small facility on the Alp or the modern event hall. Furthermore, the Waldhaus Flims offers you 16 breakout rooms and the gorgeous historic Belle Epoque ballroom for congresses up to 450 people and 150 bedrooms. "Rent a resort" possibility is given. In the summer and winter, the destination Flims Laax Falera pampers congress guests with a diverse offering of activities and varied supporting programmes.

In the summer, the destination equals adventure: in the heart of fabulous

mountain scenery you will find an imposing Swiss Grand Canyon to enjoy river rafting adventures, refreshing bathing lakes and a top-notch golf course. Outdoor enthusiasts will also love the diverse leisure offering, such as 250 km of hiking experience in the world natural heritage site.

In the winter, the destination offers 250 kilometres of slopes, 55 km of cross-country skiing trails, two tobogganing routes and the world's largest half-pipe, as well as many incentives such as the 'Glacier Team Fun Olympics'

Hotel capacities

- 13 hotels with overnight opportunities
- 6 hotels with meeting rooms and overnight opportunities
- 855 guest rooms with 2,118 beds in 19 hotels

Meeting rooms of the destination Flims Laax Falera

- 50 meeting rooms
- Event hall "Waldhaus Arena" - for events up to 1,800 persons
- Event hall "La fermata" - for events up to 495 persons

at 3000 metres high, snow-shoe hiking in idyllic winter landscape or 'Curling Fun' in the modern Curling Hall. This and much more await you in one of the most snow-sure and largest continuous skiing areas in Switzerland.

Get to know the congress and incentive destination of Flims Laax Falera and let yourself be inspired for your event!

Contact

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DUBAI

Expect the unexpected

Despite being interrupted by a rare sandstorm on the first day, the participants of the “Discover Dubai” familiarisation trip recovered quickly to experience what Dubai has to offer in an action-packed three-day programme in February that reinforces Dubai’s reputation as a diverse and dynamic corporate destination that delivers great value for money.

REPORT KATIE LAU

Sikka Art Fair in Al Fahidi

Organised by Dubai Business Events – the Official Convention Bureau (DBE), a division of Dubai Tourism, the trip showcased Dubai’s appeal and strengths to incentive travel planners as the city is busy upgrading its infrastructure as the host of the upcoming World Expo in 2020 (October 2020-April 2021), including the construction of mid-range hotels and the first phase of the ‘Dubai Trolley’, running on a 7km stretch in the Downtown area set to open in early 2015.

Dubai is busy upgrading its infrastructure as the host of the upcoming World Expo in 2020

About 100 influential meeting planners and MICE journalists from countries across Europe experienced some of the Dubai’s vast array of incentive activities, leisure options and culinary delights throughout their stay, from having breakfast at the top of the world’s tallest tower, Burj Khalifa, to getting up close and personal with horses, animals and dolphins to going behind-the-scenes to discover the ultramodern and efficient kitchen at the Dubai World Trade Centre.

When it comes to accommodations, Dubai can truly say it caters to every

guest imaginable with a portfolio of some 89,000+ rooms – and there are far more in the pipeline. Location-wise, there’s the choice of a city stay, a beachside resort or an eco-retreat in the desert. I was arranged to stay at The Meydan Hotel, the world’s first 5-star trackside hotel where all spacious rooms overlook the stunning Meydan Racecourse. Though located outside the city centre, it’s a perfect location to visit the nearby racecourse for the stable tour.

Though the desert safari was cancelled due the sandstorm, we were arranged to have dinner at JW Marriot Hotel in the thriving business district of Deira, accompanied by entertainment that showcased traditional Arabic traditions and culture.

The Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC), the largest venue in the UAE and also arguably the most imaginative and versatile, was one of the highlights of the trip. More than one million square feet of multi-purpose space, DWTC has hosted more than 500 events across international trade fairs, mega consumer

shows and prestigious conventions, and welcomed more than 2.2 million visitors from 160 global markets every year. Chef Harald Oberender took us on a behind-the-scenes kitchen tour - he explained how to manage a working area of more than 3,600m² with more than 140 of different nationalities.

Dubai also prides itself on its Arabian roots. To understand how the Emirati people think, we visited the Sheikh Mohammed Centre for Cultural Understanding (SMCCU) in the historic Al Fahidi neighbourhood, where Dubai’s first traders settled and built their grand coral-clad houses. Not only a typical Emirati meal is served, you can also ask the local Emirati guide questions, no matter how sensitive!

And of course, Dubai’s year-round sunshine is perfect for a wide range of outdoor activities such as camel polo at the stylishly elegant Dubai Polo & Equestrian Club and swimming with dolphins in Atlantis The Palm’s Dolphin Bay.

Contact

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www.dubaibusinesssevents.ae

Steen Jakobsen

“Dubai has so much to offer in terms of quality and experiences!”

Steen Jakobsen, as Director of Convention and Business Tourism, Dubai Business Events, is responsible for the promotion and development of Dubai into one of the world’s leading destinations for business events. Beforehand, Steen had a similar role as director of the Copenhagen Convention Bureau for eight years.

Dubai government is planning to increase the number of mid-range hotels. Do you think it is done in response to the competitive market in the region?

I think it reflects a global trend that people are looking for high-quality good experiences at reasonable prices. Dubai has so much to offer in terms of quality and experiences. More than 50 applications from developers of three- and four-star hotels have been submitted to the government and we’re looking forward to seeing them in the next 2-4 years. With the addition of cost-friendly incentive activities, public transportation like Dubai Metro and Dubai Tram, and low-cost carriers like flydubai, which started in 2009, Dubai is rapidly growing as a more affordable business destination for conferences and exhibitions that deliver great value for money.

Dubai and Abu Dhabi worked together to host the hugely successful corporate event attended by more than 14,500 incentive delegates from Nu Skin China last April. How would you describe the working relationship between both cities?

Our working relationship with the Abu Dhabi Convention Bureau has been a very good one. On one side, we’re competitors, but we also collaborate, and it is very healthy for the UAE to have two very strong cities that both focus on the international business event market

because it provides the country better chances of being visible on the world map. The fact that we’re friendly competitors also means we have to improve and develop ourselves all the time, which keeps us on our toes.

What qualities does Dubai have when it comes to planning incentive travel?

We can make anything you’re looking for possible here. The shopping, leisure activities here are unique, for one thing. I also found out from Nu Skin and other incentive groups as to why they chose Dubai. It’s very important for them to have some sort of alignment between the vision of the company and the destination they go for. Nu Skin was trying to communicate to its delegates that if you work hard and dream, incredible things can happen, and that is what created Dubai, which came from nowhere to the metropolis it is today with a lot of hard work and strong leadership.

How would you summarise Dubai’s appeal to European incentive travel planners?

Firstly, easy connectivity from all European hubs. Secondly, there is a great number of high-quality three- to five-star accommodations, restaurants, as well as leisure and cultural activities available with year-round sunshine. Last but not least, Dubai is very safe, and efforts are made to ensure delegates are well looked after.



Steen Jakobsen,
DBE Director



Madinat Jumeirah



Couple on abra



Downtown Dubai



Air France



KLM



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Air France began the introduction on B777s in June 2014 and will continue through summer 2016.

Air France and KLM upgraded significantly their Business Class product with offering full – flat seat beds and more privacy to each customer

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KLM completely redesigned the World Business class cabin:

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- **More space:** Added leg room, decrease from 45 to 35 seats on B747
- **Extra storage space:** Seat pocket, storage under TV screens

- **More privacy:** All seats window or aisle, privacy screens
- New modern ‘feel-at-home’ ambience by top Dutch designer Hella Jongerius

Dining on board

Until 26 October 2015, KLM Royal Dutch Airlines will be serving meals created by the leading three-star Dutch chef Jonnie Boer in World Business Class on flights departing from Amsterdam.

The new KLM World Business class is now available on all B747-operated flights, including from Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, Mexico City, New York-JFK, and Toronto and is being installed on the B777-200 fleet through the end of 2015.

More information
www.airfranceklm.com

Denmark – pioneering **MIND**blowing meetings!

Denmark continues to set the pace within the meetings industry. Meetings and conferences are up by 26% in Copenhagen and Denmark recently received MPI's stamp of approval with the announcement that EMEC 2016 will be held in Copenhagen, Denmark. But what's really all the fuzz about Denmark and their **MIND**blowing meeting concepts?

MINDblowing meetings – it's a Danish thing

Denmark has gained a reputation for its forward-thinking and radical meeting design concepts and is currently leading the way as a progressive events destination. In Denmark, sustainable and innovative meetings, conferences and congresses have become a way of life. The secret is not only providing easy access and great meeting accommodation. Rather it's the Danish way of thinking creatively and innovatively. This is part of the Danish DNA – and the basis of the Danish meeting design concept, Meetovation.

What does this mean for your meeting?

Meetovation focuses on innovation, sustainability and efficiency in meetings

Meet the Danes and learn more about **MIND**blowing meetings

- Meet Denmark at IMEX Frankfurt
- Join the Copenhagen MINDfam trips this June, August and December
- Experience world class meetings-creativity at MPI's annual EMEC in Copenhagen in 2016
- Sign up for the local MINDmarket events and activities in USA, UK, NO, SE and DE.

See more at visitdenmark.com/meetus

and conference planning with great results for improving learning and for generating new and amazing ideas. But creativity and innovation is never just for the sake of it. Meetovation is created with the specific aim to achieve a better learning outcome and an increased return on investment (ROI) by using creative, state-of-the-art elements and techniques. Meetovation ensures that you benefit from the time and money invested in your meeting.

What's next in **MIND**blowing meetings?

Developing the Meetovation concept and pushing boundaries in order to make meetings in Denmark even more **MIND**blowing is an ongoing process. That's why Danish companies and organisations over the next two years will invest in enhancing the Meetovation concept – with Meetovation 3.0. This includes developing new Meetovation tools and products and training more Meetovators and facilitators, among other things. From the hugely positive feedback received from international meeting planners and Denmark's strong position as frontrunner within this field, the Meetovation concept has proven to generate more profitable meetings, which in essence is what it is all about.

Today there are over 120 Meetovation venues and suppliers ready to assist with tailor-made meetings in Denmark. So when you are next in Denmark, be sure to contact the Danish Meetovators and heighten the ROI on your meeting!

In Denmark, it's on our **MIND**...

...how you get from A to B. That's why Copenhagen airport is Scandinavia's largest air hub with direct flights to 140 destinations worldwide.

...how you stay. That's why room availability is plentiful and Wi-Fi access often is free of charge. With more than 21,000 hotel rooms in Copenhagen alone, we are sure to accommodate your needs!

...what makes you go WOW! That's why Denmark offers a rich history, great Danish design and architecture, sustainable thinking and exciting incentives.

And of course it's on our **MIND** how you meet! That's why we created **MIND**blowing meetings. Learn more at www.visitdenmark.com/meetings

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JW Marriott Hotel Hangzhou

Meeting and playing along Hangzhou's Grand Canal

In ancient times, prosperity of a city originated from its river, and Hangzhou's Grand Canal is no exception. Nowadays it is in full vigor, with local people carrying on its history, as well as exploring new possibilities. Various venues and facilities have been built along both banks of the Canal, such as tea houses, coffee shops, art galleries, book stores and bars, and incentives can even be organised along it.

The longest, largest and most ancient canal in world - with total length of 1794 kms! - the Grand Canal, whose history dates back a full 2400 years, is the pride of Hangzhou. Running across four provinces and two municipal cities, it is the living witness to a rich and beautiful past.

Understanding culture

Since forever, the Grand Canal has been a classic tourism destination for understanding water-town culture in the south of China. Today it has even been listed as a UNESCO Heritage Site. The Grand Canal passes through the refined Qiantang Land, witnesses the vicissitude of the prosperous ancient capital Hangzhou and the folk customs of the locals living in white-walled black-tiled residences. Hangzhou's Grand Canal can be discovered through many means: hiking, boating, cycling or just sitting on its banks.

If you want to stay around the Grand Canal, **Crowne Plaza Hangzhou Grand Canal** is definitely an option. An upscale international business

hotel with 331 spacious guest rooms and meeting space catering up to 2300 people, it is less than 15 minutes drive from the famous West Lake and 45 minutes from Hangzhou Xiaoshan International Airport. The only international five-star hotel embracing the Grand Canal

materials and precious exhibits. With the help of a Canal tourist map and a list of treasures to find, your team will travel through various facilities, ancient-style buildings, old bridges and distinctive themed blocks, in order to experience Hangzhou's way of life and understand its cultural foundations.

Since forever, the Grand Canal has been a classic tourism destination for understanding water-town culture in the south of China

JW Marriott Hotel Hangzhou is also a possibility, with 305 luxurious rooms and over 2,314 square metres of function space.

Incentive ideas

But Grand Canal is also synonymous with fun and plenty of incentives can be organised along its banks. Among them, let's mention the **Treasure Hunts** or the **Boat Tours**.

Treasure hunts take place all through a cluster of museums that are located adjacent to the Grand Canal, and which showcase detailed historical

Emperor Qianlong in the Qing Dynasty made six grand cruises to South China on the Grand Canal, and today you can also enjoy cruises at a leisurely pace. Options include taking a sightseeing tour on a Caofang boat, where you will appreciate the amazing scenery on both banks especially at night when the lights are on all around you!

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