

PRESS RELEASE

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City Marketing: Finessing Art and Science

The city of Uppsala, Sweden, was last week host to ECM's (European Cities Marketing) Autumn meeting. Eighty representatives of Europe's leading city tourist offices and convention bureaux attended the three day event which addressed the hot topic of city marketing. This included a one day seminar entitled "City Marketing - refreshing the parts that City Tourist Offices & Convention Bureaux cannot reach".

The seminar - chaired by the former City Marketing Director of Brussels International, André Vrydagh - tapped a variety of expert perspectives – that of the academic and consultant, that of the city marketing agencies themselves, and last but not least that of ECM members as important end-users and beneficiaries of city marketing campaigns and brands.



After a pan-European introduction to the topic by Dr. John Heeley (Director, Best Destination Marketing, CEO European Cities Marketing), Elin Berglund, (PhD student, Royal Institute of Technology in Stockholm) provided a countrywide case study of how Swedish cities are marketing themselves as places in which to live, work and invest and as business and leisure tourism destinations. A dazzling array of speakers then presented case studies of city marketing in practice: from the 'be Berlin', 'Only Lyon', and 'cOPENhagen' campaigns through to 'Stockholm: capital of Scandanavia' and the celebrated success story from the Dutch capital - 'I Amsterdam'

André Vrydagh, City Branding and Marketing Consultant, former City Marketing Director of Brussels International and the chairman of the seminar in Uppsala, says: *"This time, almost the entire seminar programme was composed of case studies. We have chosen this approach simply because in the field of city marketing and branding, there is no single best way of doing it well. It is often a matter of feelings and emotions and these differ from one city to another. It is futile to take the branding experience of one destination and apply it rigidly and unsympathetically to another place. You must combine ideas with very clever marketing know-how, finessing theory and practice.*

Elsewhere at the meeting, potentially ground breaking best practice was also evident in an open forum for ECM members which highlighted how in Dublin tourists were able to use their smart phones as guides – a state of the art application utilising GPS and compass functionality. A project is also being developed to improve inter-city benchmarking in respect of MICE statistics while TravelSat presented on how city tourist offices could benchmark themselves in terms of tourist satisfaction.

Delegates left the meeting buzzing with ideas and takeaways to help them perfect their city marketing activities!

The next ECM Meeting will take place in Sofia, Bulgaria, from 16th to 18th March 2011. The one-day seminar will focus on financial strategies and funding.

**ECM (European Cities Marketing) is the leading European association of city tourism offices and convention bureaux, representing 125 members across 100 major cities in 32 countries. Its aim is to improve the performance and maintain the competitiveness of its members through the exchange of best practice and information.*

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