

PRESS RELEASE

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ECM Annual Conference in Gothenburg: Dieter Hardt-Stremayr, new ECM president

The ECM Annual Conference took place in Gothenburg, Sweden, from 17th to 20th June 2009 and was attended by 175 delegates. In addition to the educational content, on Saturday 20th June, the ECM members gathered at the General Assembly in order to vote for a new ECM president, a vice president for the Tourism Forum and six board members. Dieter Hardt-Stremayr (Managing Director of Graz Tourist Office) was elected the ECM president, Stefan Diender (Director of Amsterdam Tourism & Convention Board) has become vice president for the Tourism Forum and Olivier Lépine (General Manager of Biarritz Tourisme) continues his mandate as vice president for the Convention Forum of the association. The newly elected board members are as follows: Heike Mahmoud (Berlin), André Vrydagh (Brussels), Joaquin Miranda (Gijon), Rémy Cregut (Montreux), Denis Zanon (Nice) and Charlotte Ullberg (Uppsala). Airy Garrigosa (Barcelona), Cesare Torre (Genova) and Anne Wallin-Rodven (Oslo) continue their mandates as ECM board members.

"This role is a great honour and a privilege but it will also be a challenge because of the current economic crisis. But more than ever before we have to join forces, we have to look for solutions in order to emerge from the crisis even stronger in the fields of tourism and conventions. We will soon find the counter-strategies to continue the path of growth," says Dieter Hardt-Stremayr, Managing Director of Graz Tourist Office and ECM president.

The year 2009 is an extremely challenging one and ECM has decided to face it with new inspiration and a fresh approach to its activities and projects. The ECM Annual Conference in Gothenburg was no exception to this. On Wednesday 17th June, a Research Symposium was organised at the University of Gothenburg to offer an enriched program for the participants of the ECM Annual Conference.

The restructured, interactive format of the ECM seminar on the topic "Events and meetings in the city" was also refreshingly innovative. The day-and-a-half-long programme gave delegates the opportunity first to listen to the presentations and afterwards to discuss the most interesting issues during breakout sessions. The use of an electronic voting system throughout the seminar added value as it enabled the participants to share answers and opinions on suggested topics. The seminar topic was relevant for both the Conventions and Tourism Forums and brought together real experts such as Hansjörg Wirz (President of European Athletic Association), Anna Frick (President of International Pharmaceutical Congress Advisory Association and Marketing Services Director of AstraZeneca) and Rob Davidson (Senior Lecturer in Business Travel & Tourism, University of Westminster) who gave a very successful presentation on "Meetings for Generation Y".



Frank Magee (former ECM president) with
tel new ECM president Dieter Hart-Stremayr

The ECM Annual Conference traditionally goes hand in hand with the City Break exhibition. On this occasion the City Break exhibition was organised just before the ECM Annual Conference, from 15th to 16th June 2009, in the very same city - Gothenburg.

This year, the City Break exhibition benefited from a new cooperation with European Tour Operators Association (ETOA). 129 exhibitors came to meet over 100 internationally located buyers looking to contract European City Tourism products.

**ECM (European Cities Marketing) is the leading European association of City Tourism Offices and Convention Bureaus. Its network comprises 134 members spread over 32 countries. Its aim is to strengthen city tourism by*

- *providing sales and marketing possibilities*
- *communicating information*
- *sharing knowledge*
- *educating*
- *and working together on an operational level.*

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