

ECM 2010: Striding Forward

The European Meeting of Chief Executives of Capital Cities

The CEOs of 13 European capital cities met in Berlin on 14th December 2009 to attend 'The European Meeting of Chief Executives of Capital Cities'. Previously held in Dublin in 2007 and last year in Paris, this one-day meeting gathered together the brains behind the European capital city tourism and meetings industry. This time, Burkhard Kieker, CEO, Berlin Tourismus Marketing GmbH, welcomed colleagues to his city 20 years after the fall of the Berlin wall.

The participants were able to learn more about the strategy of Air Berlin with Matthias von Randow, the Director of Air Berlin and also to compare the statistics of several European cities thanks to the presentation 'European City Tourism: Trends and Prospects' by Olivier Ponti (a representative of ECM Research & Statistics Working Group). Olivier Ponti also explained that, according to the interpretation of the findings of the ongoing crisis monitoring of ECM cities, we could expect a rise of 2% for 2010 after a more-than-difficult 2009.

The ensuing discussion during which CEOs related the economic situations of their respective cities and gave approximations of the increase and decrease of activities in 2009 was, of course, the crucial part of the meeting and even continued throughout the dinner at Bode-Museum. The necessity of exchange between the CEOs and of sharing experience was evident and proved that there was a very real need for this meeting. At the request of participants, the discussion will be extended and developed even further at the CEO meeting in 2010.

Dieter Hardt-Stremayr comments: "The year 2009 has been a roller coaster ride and we have all been trying to manage the situation despite the loops. Even now the ride has not finished - we are still sitting in the train and nobody knows when it will stop, where we will arrive and in what condition. The only thing we can do is our best. For ECM, this means constantly changing, developing and restructuring our activities so that they follow the rhythm of our members' needs."



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What will ECM offer to the CEOs and their cities in 2010 in terms of strategy and activities?

2009 was a challenging year for most of the destinations in Europe. In order to meet this challenge, European Cities Marketing adopted a policy of not only keeping in line with developments in the tourism and meetings industry, but also of pursuing its goals more steadfastly and providing relevant support for ECM member cities: reinforcing the possibilities of sharing knowledge and expertise, stressing the educational aspect of the association and focusing on the development of new activities.

As a result, in 2009, ECM was able to innovate in a number of ways. A new format of seminars was introduced comprising break-out sessions with specific case studies and discussions in smaller groups of participants. The 'Meet Europe' event took place in Washington D.C. for the first time in its history and a brand new business workshop called 'The Mercado' was put in place for ECM members and their clients. In addition, a 'Special Impact Crisis Review' of the 'ECM European Cities' Visitors Report' was published and the traditional ECM Summer School was organised in an environmentally-friendly

way, with the topic of organising green events incorporated into its educational content. In June 2009 a new ECM Intranet was introduced to members as a platform for sharing their best practice remotely.

Given the successes of 2009, in 2010 ECM will continue to pursue its strategy and to run its newly introduced activities. During the first six months of 2010, member cities will have the opportunity to meet in Turku for the ECM Spring Meeting (24th - 27th February) and in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria for the ECM Annual Conference and General Assembly (9th - 12th June). 'Meet Europe' will again take place in Washington D.C. - on 27th January 2010 - and 'The Mercado' workshop will be hosted by the city of Biarritz on 25th and 26th March 2010. A little later in the year, the 24th ECM Summer School will retain this year's green approach, this time in Tampere, Finland, from 28th August to 1st September 2010.

****ECM (European Cities Marketing)** is the leading European association of City Tourism Offices and Convention Bureaus. Its network comprises more than 125 members from more than 100 major cities in 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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