

PRESS RELEASE
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ECM Keeps In Line With the Latest Tourism Developments

Every year, ECM* publishes the "European Cities' Visitors Report" – a unique report in tourism research with complex statistics, graphs and analyses. Since the economical crisis is having a major impact on the recent tourism development, a "Special Impact Crisis Review" of the "ECM European Cities' Visitors Report" has been published to answer the questions about the latest trends in city tourism development. This tool enables the professionals to react on the current developments and to define counter-strategies.

"Special Impact Crisis Review"

The "Special Impact Crisis Review" is presenting the earliest market trends of the first quarter 2009 and the results of business year 2008 across 6 source market segments. In the following some of the most important findings:

The total market for European Cities' Tourism contracted by -7,1% and the international market by disastrous 12% during the first quarter 2009. More than 60% of the cities included in this review were facing dramatically decreasing bednight volumes during the first quarter 2009 with declines of their total bednight volumes between -10% and -32 %.

In summer 2008 the *global financial crisis* showed its first noticeable effects on the European Cities' Tourism business. For the first time, the total market for European Cities' Tourism began to decrease in June 2008 by -1,7%, followed in August 2008 by a decrease of -3,8% and deteriorated until February 2009 progressively with a negative monthly growth record of almost -10%.

Further aggravating the down-turn is that the volume strong UK and Overseas source markets were the most affected by the crisis. The bednight volumes of these source markets initially began their decline during 2007, and nose-dived during the second half of 2008. During the business year 2008 only the UK source market for city tourism declined by -4,4% , the Japanese source market by -8,7% and the US source market even by -13,9%.

The expectation of a negative all year growth seems to be a very likely possibility for European Cities' Tourism during 2009. This forecast is seen in the light that the total and international bednight growth rates decreased from 7% in 2006 down to merely 1% in 2008, the dramatic slow-down in tourism demand during the second half of 2008, plus the fact of the disastrous negative growth figures during the first quarter 2009.

The positive aspect is that, even in times of economic downturns, meetings and conventions still do take place in large numbers all across Europe and that some major events (Sport Championships, European Capital of Culture etc.) have proven to be an engine for bednight volume growth for the host city destinations.

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***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.