

European Cities Marketing: Focus on Sustainability

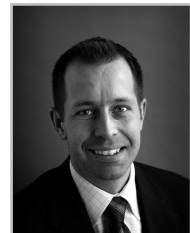
From 24th to 27th February 2010, European Cities Marketing had the honour of being hosted by the city of Turku (Finland) on the occasion of the ECM Spring Meeting. Delegates had the opportunity to attend a one-day seminar, learn from numerous case studies and participate in various workshops on sustainability.

“Promoting Sustainable Tourism in Cities – Does it really matter?” was the provocative title of the seminar chaired by Steen Jakobsen, Copenhagen’s Convention Director. Mr Jakobsen also contributed to the content of the seminar by presenting a contemporary and highly relevant case study of the “Copenhagen Sustainable Meetings Protocol”. Together with Guy Bigwood (Group Sustainability Director, MCI and Incoming President, Green



Meetings Industry Council) they shared their experience of organising the UN Climate Change Conference, COP 15 sustainably. Three inspiring keynote speakers also came from Finland: Professor Alf Rehn, who was described recently by The Times of London as a “star” future thinker, presented his vision of a tourism that focuses on environmentally-friendly quality rather than unsustainable quantity; Professor Esko Antola (Jean Monnet chair, Centrum Balticum, Turku) presented the idea of sustainable tourism from the EU policy-making perspective and Jaakko Lehtonen, Director General of the Finnish Tourist Board explained how his agency brands and markets a quintessentially green country.

“The timing was excellent for an ECM meeting with this topic. Sustainability and caring about the environment has been on the global agenda for a long time and it is becoming more and more important. Tourism plays a major role in our cities economically but it also contributes to emissions and pollution and we simply have to act responsibly. People all around the world are becoming more and more aware of the need for sustainable behavior and these same individuals are also city visitors. Therefore we simply must act in order to respond to our clients,” explains Steen Jakobsen.



Immediately after the seminar, breakout sessions were proposed to allow meeting participants to share their experience by discussing the role of sustainability in three areas: meetings, city tourism and events from the host community perspective.

On Friday 26th February, several workshops were held in addition to the usual Knowledge Group presentations. Helena Egan (Destination Marketing Sales Manager, Trip Advisor) explained how the user generated platform of Trip Advisor works and the ways in which cities could benefit from the content of Trip Advisor to complete the marketing image of a tourism destination. In co-operation with Modul University Vienna, two workshops were organised to help ECM members to master online tools: the TourMIS database and Facebook.

The next ECM meeting - the ECM Annual Conference & General Assembly - will take place in Las Palmas de Gran Canaria from 9th to 12th June 2010 and the main seminar will deal with a timely and extremely relevant topic for destinations’ marketing: social media.

**ECM (European Cities Marketing) is the leading European association of City Tourism Offices and Convention Bureaux. Its network comprises 126 members from more than 100 major cities in 33 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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