

## Food for thought for European Cities in Lyon



This year, ECM's Annual Conference was held in Lyon from 8<sup>th</sup> - 10<sup>th</sup> June. Its theme was food as a tourist attraction and the extent to which it can act as a competitive advantage in the marketing of a city. The event brought together 160 participants.

Peter Kreiner, director of Noma Restaurant, gave the delegates a fascinating insider perspective on the development of the award winning Noma restaurant in Copenhagen. The idea of local Danish food and traditional recipes presented in simple and modern way had initially been greeted with cynicism by many, but it went on to confound the critics. Peter Rømer Hansen, Senior Director of Business Development at Wonderful Copenhagen outlined the significance of Noma to the city as a whole, showing how it formed an integral part of city marketing strategies and initiatives

Speakers went on to give their differing perspectives on how to attract a tourist to a particular city through its culinary heritage. Jean-François Mesplède traced the origins and evolution of the Michelin guide star rating quality assurance scheme. Others exemplified the role TV programmes play in promoting cities as much sought-after gastronomic destinations.

"The visitors search a real immersion in local culture. They want to get off the beaten tracks, meet the local population and live according to their habits. Eating habits are one of the easiest parts of a countries' culture to immerse oneself into. Even without experiencing the best restaurant in a town, we nearly always have a memory of what and where we had a meal. This being a real activity of city visitors, it's our job to create a marketing strategy around cuisine and show off the best of it to attract them," explains François Gaillard, the CEO of Lyon Tourism and Convention.



François Gaillard

The afternoon part of the seminar illustrated best-practice examples of how four ECM member cities were promoting cuisine to good effect - Graz, Brussels, Gijon and Valencia.

On Thursday the very first Chief Executives Forum took place and provided a stimulating and informative platform on which to discuss the latest trends and development in respect of policy, strategy and operations. Very successful, this first session brought together 30 CEOs.

*\*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.*

For more information and pictures, please contact:  
Marie Kuklova, [press@europeancitiesmarketing.com](mailto:press@europeancitiesmarketing.com),  
+33 380 56 59 51