

PRESS RELEASE

02/04/2009



The Mercado: A Resounding Success in the City of Music

The Mercado, a brand new conventions workshop, took place in Montreux, Switzerland, on 26th and 27th March 2009. Eleven ECM member cities each brought one of their best clients in order to enhance new business opportunities within the ECM network.

For the very first time, European Cities Marketing recently organized The Mercado, a workshop for ECM Conventions members. The principle of the event is very simple: the participating destinations each bring one of their best clients. During the workshop, in the form of speed-dating appointments, the clients meet all of the participating destinations. Each appointment lasts 20 minutes, allowing the client and the representative of the destination to discuss the needs of the clients and the possibilities how the destination can meet those needs.

The workshop was embedded in a carefully thought out ensemble of networking possibilities: welcome cocktail and dinner on Thursday, coffee breaks and shared lunch on Friday and on the last evening the participants were able to taste regional wine and enjoy dinner in a restaurant in the nearby vineyards.

The feedback obtained during the debriefing sessions that took place right after the workshop was extremely positive with participants particularly appreciating the networking possibilities and the personal feel of the whole workshop.

“At big events or trade fairs where you meet a lot of people, it is hard to remember who is who at the end of the day, whereas the format of this workshop provides a kind of intimacy for the appointments. The atmosphere here as well as the limited number of participants is absolutely convenient and appropriate for networking”, commented Karin Kohlfuerst, General Manager, Hightent Events, the client invited by the city of Graz.



Participants of The Mercado

Olivier Lépine, ECM Vice-President and General Manager of Biarritz Tourisme is also very satisfied with this first Mercado: “Honestly, we couldn’t wish for a better start. It was a very successful event with great feedback from both ECM members and their clients. We have already started preparing next year’s event... I think that says it all!”

**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*

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

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