

PRESS RELEASE

17/12/2010



Tourism guru Eddie Friel crosses the pond to Bulgaria to deliver major European address

Keynote speaker at European Cities Marketing's forthcoming seminar in Sofia is distinguished city marketer and renowned presenter, writer, broadcaster and consultant - Professor Eddie Friel OBE.

Friel will headline the ECM seminar whose theme is "Financing Europe's City Tourist Offices and Convention Bureaux – Threats, Opportunities and Solutions". No stranger to controversy, he will confront an audience of Europe's leading city tourism chiefs with his views as to whether or not their organisations are really needed in today's fast-changing world, as city tourist offices and convention bureaux face budget cuts, steepening competition from third party intermediaries, and the challenge of how best to respond to the rise of social media and mobile communications.

Eddie Friel is a native of Londonderry, Northern Ireland, and his illustrious, nearly forty year experience as a city marketer is reflected in numerous accolades, including in 2004 the award of Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) for services to Scottish tourism. In particular, between 1983-2004, Friel masterminded Glasgow's transformation into one of Britain's leading tourism destinations, pioneering the concept of public-private partnership in city tourism, pace-setting arts and events-led tourism strategies, and the development of electronic bidding documents in the conventions sector.

Eddie Friel is currently "Expert in Residence" at the Hospitality and Research Centre at Niagara University, New York, and is President and CEO of his own consultancy business: EFA Tourism & City Marketing. He is an advisor to a number of municipalities and state agencies in New York State and Ontario, Canada.



Eddie Friel

The ECM seminar will take place on Thursday 17th March 2011 at the National Palace of Culture, Sofia. Results of a comprehensive survey into the financing of city tourist offices and convention bureau will be released directly after Eddie Friel's keynote.

Other speakers at the seminar include: Philippe Vignon, Managing Director, Geneva Tourism; Pere Duran, General Manager, Barcelona Turisme; Stefan Diender, Managing Director, Amsterdam Tourism and Convention Board; and Burkhard Kieker, CEO, Berlin Tourism Marketing.

**ECM (European Cities Marketing) is the leading European association of city tourism offices and convention bureaux, representing 120 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:

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