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50 Years of ITB Berlin: Fully booked exhibition halls, more trade visitors than ever before, and record sales

Global travel industry withstands geopolitical crises and remains on course for vigorous expansion – Record attendance by some 120,000 trade visitors over five days – ITB an international success story: in addition to ITB Asia in Singapore, ITB China will take place in Shanghai from 2017

A reliable indicator of the state of the industry, an indispensable networking platform and invaluable for providing an impetus for one of the world's more important industries: as it marked its 50th anniversary ITB Berlin again underlined its importance as the leading trade show for the global travel industry. Summing up the five day trade show on the Berlin Exhibition Grounds: the international travel industry has shown its resilience in the face of the refugee crisis and geopolitical risks, demonstrating that it remains in a robust state as a vigorously expanding industry despite difficult global conditions. In Germany, one of the most important source markets for international tourism, the uncertainty of the first weeks of the year is clearly being replaced by a growing confidence. After a somewhat restrained start to the 2016 travel season, the desire among the German public for vacation trips is currently being accompanied by an ongoing positive mood among consumers and a stable job market. Moreover, a reduction in the cost of living and above all the sharp fall in energy prices have given consumers in the Eurozone additional financial scope for the most enjoyable weeks of the year.

As it takes place for the 50th time ITB Berlin is stronger than ever: from 9 to 13 March some 10,000 exhibiting companies from 187 countries and regions met with 120,000 trade visitors in the 26 exhibition halls, which had been booked up months in advance. These were the estimated figures given by Messe Berlin on Sunday, at the close of ITB Berlin 2016. They reveal that the world's leading trade show for the international travel industry attracted the largest number of trade visitors since it was launched in 1966. On the purchasing side there was also a further increase in the number of decision-makers: two thirds of the trade visitors stated that they held direct authority for all purchasing decisions. Business conducted during the trade show rose from last year's figure of 6.7 billion euros to around seven billion this year.

Dr. Christian Göke, Chief Executive Officer of Messe Berlin: "Never before in its 50 years has ITB Berlin welcomed so many trade visitors to the exhibition halls. After this five day event trade visitors and exhibitors are leaving Berlin with a clear message: even in times dominated by a "sense of uncertainty" people are not willing to do without their holiday trips. Conversely, over the past few days the travel industry has made it clear that it can provide suitable answers to the major challenges that it currently faces." ITB Berlin has again provided evidence that this trade show, a global market place and a platform for personal encounters, provides a "firm foundation for the industry during turbulent times", and in the digital age too it has lost none of its importance for the travel industry all over the world.

Dr. Christian Göke: "Currently ITB Berlin is not only one of the most important trade shows taking place in Berlin but, over the past five decades it has been a significant economic factor for our city. This international show for the global travel industry has also been a remarkable success story for the trade fair sector in Germany, and this is something of which our company and the Berliners too can be very proud. In terms of its exhibitors and its trade visitors, no other show anywhere in the world has an international structure that can compare in any way with it. ITB Berlin is "more than just a trade show" – today, all over the world, it represents Germany, symbolizing hospitality and serving as a practical example of international understanding." The



Official Partner Country
ITB Berlin 2016



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travel trade show that was held for the first time in Berlin 50 years ago has now evolved into a real international success: ITB Asia has been held annually in Singapore since 2008. Furthermore, as Messe Berlin has recently announced, from May 2017, ITB China will be taking place annually in the populous city of Shanghai in cooperation with that country's major tour operators and travel agents.

The world's largest convention for the global travel industry attracted a record attendance. The 200 events at the ITB Convention were attended by over 26,000 visitors. It was taking place for the 13th time and occupied eight halls on the Exhibition Grounds. The main themes at the ITB Convention, which is regarded as the "think tank" for the international industry, were "Travel 4.0" and the complete digitalization of all the various business processes of travel companies. Due to the evident willingness of many travelers to spend, the subject of luxury travel also attracted a great deal of interest. Discussions also took place about the opportunities and risks facing tourism as a consequence of the influx of refugees to Europe. With the first appearance in Europe by a humanoid robot from Japan – clad as an elegant trade show hostess – visitors to ITB Berlin were able to see for themselves how engineers and scientists view the future of a service-based industry. The importance of ITB Berlin as an economic and social platform was underlined by the presence of many prominent speakers. Among those providing information and inspiration for the participants in the Convention were Günther H. Oettinger, EU Commissioner for the Digital Economy and Society, Dr. Gerd Müller, Federal Minister for Economic Cooperation and Development, and Professor Dr. Hans-Werner Sinn, President of the ifo Institute – Leibniz-Institute for Economic Research.

On the Saturday and Sunday the halls were thronged with visitors. According to a provisional estimate by the organizers, some 60,000 members of the public took advantage of the wide range of information available from tour operators, including those representing niche markets. As in previous years, during the weekend visitors were able to make travel bookings at ITB Berlin. Between 9 and 13 March ITB Berlin attracted some 180,000 visitors.

Taleb Rifai, Secretary General, World Tourism Organization (UNWTO):

"On the occasion of its 50th anniversary ITB continues to reflect the vision and leadership of the tourism sector. We at UNWTO are very proud to have ITB as a strong partner and thank the whole team at ITB for their contribution to making the tourism sector more competitive but also more responsible and sustainable."

Dr. Michael Frenzel, President of the Federal Association of the German Tourism Industry (BTW):

"On this significant anniversary ITB again showed how important face-to-face meetings remain in an increasingly digitalized world. The general mood and the many discussions that took place at this trade show confirmed our basically optimistic outlook for 2016. The tourism industry, both in Germany and around the world, is in an ideal situation, there is a wider choice than ever before, the mood among consumers is positive, and Germans prefer to spend their money on travel, as was confirmed this week by the consumer research organization GfK. Provided that we as an industry stick together, and politics does its part to get a grip on the very real challenges presented by the influx of refugees, 2016 will be another good year for travel."

Norbert Fiebig, President of the German Travel Association (DRV):

"This year the world's largest travel trade show was the focus of general interest to a greater degree than ever, because security and travel were among the dominant topics at this leading international trade show. ITB is not only a market place for destinations, but also a vital yardstick for assessing the level of bookings for the coming travel season. Where are Germans travelling to, what are their summer holiday destinations? During ITB answers to these questions can always be accurately deduced on the basis of reports about the latest trends. I am pleased to say that most destinations continue to expand their business. Whereas at the start of the year people were uncertain, leading to hesitancy in making bookings for certain

countries, many of the participants in this trade show expressed their confidence that, over the next few months, many customers would make decisions at short notice in favour of those destinations where there has so far been some hesitancy. Despite all the challenges that it faces, I am convinced that this travel year offers a great deal of potential and will achieve very positive overall results. “

Haris Mohammed, Acting Managing Director, Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation:

“On behalf of the Maldives and our entire tourism industry, I would like to thank you and congratulate you for a wonderful ITB Berlin 2016. We are very pleased that we were the partner country of ITB Berlin 2016 that marked the 50th anniversary of ITB Berlin as well as the Visit Maldives Year 2016, in which we celebrate the tourism industry in our beautiful country.

We look back at a very successful trade show through which we were able to present the Maldives as the world’s leading island destination. We invite the world to experience our wonderful tropical beaches, our culture and the warmth of our people as well as our unique hospitality in some of the best resorts around the globe.

We very much look forward to building our continued success story in Germany as well as in our other important source markets to showcase everything that make our country one of the leading travel destinations in the world.”

Keen interest shown by the media and politics

More than 5,000 accredited journalists from 80 countries, as well as around 380 bloggers from 30 countries, reported from ITB Berlin. This trade show was a meeting place for politicians from Germany and many other countries, as well as for many diplomats. In addition to 124 delegations, it was attended by the members of four royal houses, 48 ministers and 87 ambassadors from all over the world.

The next ITB Berlin will take place from Wednesday to Sunday, 8 to 12 March 2017. The Official Partner Country will be Botswana.

About ITB Berlin and the ITB Berlin Convention

ITB Berlin 2016 will take place from Wednesday to Sunday, 9 to 13 March. From Wednesday to Friday ITB Berlin is open to trade visitors only. Parallel with the show the ITB Berlin Convention, the largest event of its kind, will be held from Wednesday, 9 to Saturday, 12 March 2016. More details are available at www.itb-convention.com. ITB Berlin is the global travel industry’s leading trade show. In 2015 a total of 10,096 companies and organisations from 186 countries exhibited their products and services to 175,000 visitors, who included 115,000 trade visitors.

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