

European Cities Marketing

Spring Meeting

16th to 18th March 2011

Sofia, BULGARIA



“Financing Europe’s city tourist offices
and Convention Bureaux
- threats, opportunities and solutions”





Dear Colleague,

We take great pleasure in inviting you to the European Cities Marketing Spring Meeting which will take place in Sofia, Bulgaria, from 16th to 18th March 2011.

Sofia is jam-packed with things to see and do. It generates a sense of excitement for first time and repeat visitors because of its energy and hospitality.

The city offers an incredible array of restaurants and thousands of boutiques and stores where you can shop to your heart's content, pick up the latest designer fashion or a unique handcrafted memento.

Against a background of continuing economic uncertainty, reductions in public sector funding, and stiff competition from third party booking agencies, the financial outlook for city tourism offices and convention bureaux is, to say the least, a highly challenging one. While the money has not exactly run out, it is certainly drying up!

The aim of the seminar is twofold. First, to provide an authoritative overview of how Europe's leading city tourist offices and convention bureaux are currently financed and of how they perceive their financial futures. This part of the seminar will be based on the findings of a survey of ECM members conducted in the Autumn of 2010.

Secondly, the seminar will highlight appropriate political, organisational, financial and operational strategies and address key issues, so as to ensure city tourist offices and convention bureaux remain viable over the next decade while continuing to deliver good results for the visitor and for public and private sector stakeholders.

Keynote speaker will be Eddie Friel, credited with Glasgow's late twentieth century development as an urban tourist destination and with many achievements – from the introduction of electronic conference bidding documents to the use of the arts as a focus for tourism-led urban regeneration. Eddie currently lives in North America where he is a visiting professor at Niagara University and President/CEO of EFA Tourism and Marketing Consultancy.

Take advantage of a great opportunity to stay until Saturday March 19th and to visit magnificent sites such as the National Museum of History and the Alexandar Nevski Cathedral and its crypt. Do not miss it!

Sofia Convention bureau is looking forward to welcoming you and to guiding you through a fantastic Bulgarian experience!



Christo Drumev
Christo Drumev
Chairman
Sofia Convention Bureau



Dieter Hardt-Stremayr
Dieter Hardt-Stremayr
Managing Director, Graz Tourismus
President, European Cities Marketing



Why Sofia?

Founded seven thousand years ago, Sofia is the second oldest city in Europe. It has been given several names in the course of history and the remnants of the old city can still be seen today. Serdika was the name of the central dwelling of the ancient Thracian tribe known as "Serdî". It bore that name when it became part of the Bulgarian state at the beginning of the 9th century and was soon recognised as one of the most important feudal towns, acquiring the Slavic name Sredets. Until the end of the 14th century, the city grew inside its fortress wall. Its name changed once again at the end of the century. The new name was Sofia after one of the city's symbols, the church St. Sofia.

Near Sofia lies the Boyana church, which is one of the most valuable memorials of Bulgarian and European culture. The most famous frescoes were painted in 1259, seven years before the appearance of the first works of the Italian Renaissance. The decline of Sofia during the Ottoman Empire was followed by the rejuvenation after the liberation in 1879, when the city was chosen as the capital of Bulgaria at the First National Constituent Assembly. The plans of 1881-1882 were followed by a brisk and straight-forward period of construction. In 1900 the City Council approved the coat of arms of Sofia and its motto *Ever Growing, Never Aging*. Today Sofia is a modern and busy capital and a centre of Bulgaria's political, economic and cultural life.

The venue

Congress Centre-Sofia, National Palace of Culture is the largest multifunctional complex on the Balkan Peninsula, incorporating congress, cultural and an exhibition centre. Finalist and Second Best Congress Centre at the 2010 AIPC Apex Award competition, winner of the 2008 EBA *European Quality Award* and the 2005 AIPC Apex Award for the *World's Best Congress Centre*, Member of ICCA and AIPC, the venue was the host of the Second Extraordinary Session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO in 2008, the 2007 CEI Summit of the Heads of Government, the 2007 PES Council, the 2006 Meeting of NATO Foreign Ministers, the 2004 OSCE Annual Ministerial Council Meeting, the 2002 Parliamentary Assembly of NATO, the 35th AIPC General Assembly and many more.

Over the years it has become the hub of an active intellectual and cultural life, whose stages have been honored by Herbert von Karajan, Claudio Abbado, Riccardo Muti, Jose Carreras, Andrea Bocelli, The Bolshoy Theatre, La Scala, The London Symphony Orchestra, The Vienna State Opera and The Royal Swedish Ballet. Vladimir Putin, Pope John Paul II and Bill Clinton are just a few of the dignitaries who have visited the Centre.

Remarkable for its architectural, artistic and functional merits, the venue offers the highest level of services sophistication, facilities and state-of-the-art equipment. With no subsidies from the government the complex is entirely self-supported. As part of its social responsibility program, Congress Centre-Sofia has become the largest public establishment in Bulgaria, which is fully accessible for wheelchairs and handicapped visitors.

The venue has also implemented discounted rates for pupils, students and pensioners. Located in the city centre, it has a great collection of supporting 4 & 5 star hotels just minutes away.

Only 15 minute drive from Sofia International Airport, Congress Centre-Sofia is easily accessible via the public transport system.

WEDNESDAY 16TH MARCH
1ST FLOOR OF THE NATIONAL PALACE OF CULTURE

09.30 - 12.30 **Knowledge Group Research & Statistics**
*Group members only** Room 1.7

10.30 - 11.00 Coffee Break

12.30 - 14.00 Lunch (at own expense) *price : 25€ / person*

14.00 - 15.00 **Knowledge Group Editorial Board**
*Group members only** Room 1.7

14.00 - 15.30 **Client Oriented Activities Committee**
*Committee members only** Room 1.6

14.00 - 15.30 **Knowledge Group City Cards**
*Group members only** Room 1.8

15.30 - 16.00 Coffee Break

16.00 - 17.00 **Communications Committee**
*Committee members only** Room 1.8

16.00 - 17.30 **Knowledge Group Online Marketing & Sales**
Group members (Observers welcome) Room 1.6

16.00 - 17.30 **Meetings Committee**
*Committee members only** Room 1.5

17.00 - 18.00 **Lead Exchange** Room 1.8
Open to members of Conventions Forum - please register in advance

19.00 Welcome Reception at the National Palace of Culture - Hall 6
Dress code: Smart casual

**Group/ Committee members only - Please find all Committee and Knowledge Group members on www.europeancitiesmarketing.com*

Open sessions for all delegates (in black)



THURSDAY 17TH MARCH

08.00 - 08.45 Breakfast with the President at Hilton hotel
This breakfast is open to all future members and new members attending an ECM meeting for the first time.

FINANCING EUROPE'S CITY TOURIST OFFICES AND CONVENTION BUREAUX - THREATS, OPPORTUNITIES AND SOLUTIONS

HALL 8 (5TH FLOOR) - THE NATIONAL PALACE OF CULTURE

09.00 - 09.10 **Welcome address**
Dieter Hardt-Stremayr,
President, European Cities Marketing & Christo Drumev, Chairman
Sofia Convention Bureau

09.10 - 10.00 **ECM update**
Dieter Hardt-Stremayr,
President, European Cities Marketing

10.00 - 10.10 **Seminar overview** by the seminar chairman
Philippe Vignon, Managing Director,
Geneva Tourism

10.10 - 10.45 **City tourist offices and convention bureaux – who really needs them?**
Professor Eddie Friel OBE,
Visiting Professor and Expert in Residence,
Niagara University,
and President and CEO of EFA Tourism and Marketing Consultancy

THE SURVEY

10.45 - 11.00 **The financing of city tourism organisations : results of the ECM members survey**
Dr John Heeley,
Interim CEO, European Cities Marketing

11.00 - 11.30 Coffee Break

STRATEGIES - THREE CITY CASE STUDIES

11.30 - 12.00 **Accommodating cuts and still delivering!**
Stefan Diender, Managing Director,
Amsterdam Tourism and Convention Board

12.00 - 12.30 **From conservative to efficient marketing - a practical approach**
Philippe Vignon, Managing Director,
Geneva Tourism

12.30 - 14.00 Lunch

14.00 - 14.25 **Maximising private sector and earned income streams**
Pere Duran, General Manager,
Barcelona Turisme

THREE BURNING ISSUES

- 14.25 - 14.50 **Online booking systems - to have or not to have!**
Burkhard Kieker, CEO, Berlin Tourism Marketing
- 14.50 - 15.15 **Online booking systems - to have or not to have!**
Markus Penz, Strategic Destination Development,
Vienna Tourist Board
- 15.15 - 15.45 **Online booking - why we do it and our business model**
Katrine Mosfeld, Director of Digital Development,
visit Oslo
- 15.45 - 16.15 Coffee Break

- 16.15 - 16.40 **Deploying a mobile channel - how to invest in smart phone applications**
Paul Hennessy,
co-founder and Director of Sales and Marketing
GeoGuides

REFLECTIONS, OBSERVATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

- 16.40 - 17.00 **Summing up** by Seminar chairperson

ECM SUMMER CONGRESS

- 17.00 - 17.15 Invitation to attend ECM Annual Conference in Lyon
- 17.15 - 18.45 **Coordination Group** [Room 1.5](#)
*Group members only**
- 19.30 Gathering in the lobby of the Hilton hotel
- 19.45 Dinner at Sofia Live Club
Dress code: Casual
Address : National Palace of Culture

FRIDAY 18TH MARCH

- 08.30 - 12.30 **Board meeting** [Room 1.5](#)
Board members only
- 09.30 - 11.00 **Knowledge Group Tourist Information Centres** - Open session for all delegates
«TIC formula - the different commercial models»
[Hall 8](#)
- 10.00 - 11.00 **Knowledge Group Online Marketing & Sales** - Open session for all delegates
«Brussels new developments» [Hall 9](#)
Olivier Van de Kerchove, Web Project Manager
Brussels International Tourism & Congress
- 10.00 - 11.00 **Benchmarking CTO Websites from a Consumer's Perspective** [Hall 7](#)
Clemens Költringer, Researcher and lecturer
MODUL University Vienna
- 11.00 - 11.30 Coffee break
- 11.30 - 12.30 **Open square workshops** [Hall 8](#)

ECM invites you to meet with the ECM Head Office and fellow members in order to answer all questions you may have on several topics related to the projects and the tools ECM put at your disposal.

ECM Intranet by Aurore Prost (Head Office)
City Fair by Blanca Lopez (ETOA)
ECM Benchmarking report 2011 by Katrin Heintschel (chair of the Editorial Board)
Summer School by Pier Paolo Mariotti (Course Leader)
Hosting an ECM meeting by Katy Schmitt (Head Office)
TourMIS and shopping barometer by Clemens Költringer (MODUL University Vienna)
Knowledge Groups by Mathilde Brunet de Courssou (Head Office)

- 11.30 - 12.30 **Knowledge Group Research and Statistics** - Open session for all delegates
«Sustainable tourism in European cities: what do the figures say?» [Hall 7](#)
- 12.30 - 14.00 Lunch

- 12.30 - 14.00 Meetings Committee Lunch**
*Committee members only**

Free time in the city (Buses will leave the hotel at 19.30 and will pick up delegates in the city centre at 22.00). Sofia Convention Bureau will provide a list with recommendations for dinner venues





Sofia Live Club

Dinner venues

Tuesday 15th March
(at own expense)

19.00 - Dinner at own expense (**30€ per person**) at Hilton Seasons Restaurant.

Wednesday 16th March

19.00 - Welcome Reception at National Palace of Culture - Hall 6

Thursday 17th March

19.00 - Dinner at **Sofia Live Club**
Sofia Live Club is a historical place for night life in Sofia, which has been renovated and decorated in a typical cabaret and jazz club style. The club is a revolutionary place for the Bulgarian live music performers and is located in the subway with the fountain of the National Palace of Culture.

www.sofialiveclub.com

Friday 18th March

Free evening

Shuttle buses will leave the hotel to the city centre at 19.30 and will pick up delegates in the city centre at 22.00 to go back to the hotel.

Sofia Convention Bureau will give recommendations for restaurant venues.



Hilton Seasons

Suggested location for late drinks

Culture Beat Club (National Palace of Culture)

Culture Beat is considered the most unique and innovative boutique café, bar, restaurant and club in Sofia. The venue is led by a strong team of creative people who are managing astonishing results for its diverse seven days and nights a week program



Culture Beat

Social programme - TECHNICAL VISITS

Saturday 19th March

The City Tour includes: The Alexandar Nevski Cathedral with the Crypt and the National Museum of History.

Programme :

09.30 Pick up from Hilton Sofia

09.50 Visiting the National Museum of History

11.20 Visiting the Alexandar Nevski Cathedral and the Crypt where the Joan Kukuzel Orthodox Ensemble will perform a few chants

12.30 Back to Hilton Sofia for lunch (at own expense)

The National Museum of History

The National Museum of History (NMH) was established on the 5th of May 1973 by Decree No. 90 of the Council of Ministers. On the 2nd of March 1984, the new representative exhibition was opened in the building of the Court of Justice on the occasion of the 1300th anniversary of the Bulgarian state. In 2000, the NMH shifted to a new location – Home 1 of the former Boyana residence, where on the 10th of November 1989 the last communist leader was removed from power. The museum boasts more than 650,000 exhibits and is one of the largest history museums on the Balkans. Its aim is to provide visitors with a comprehensive view of the Bulgarian history from prehistoric times to the present.



The Alexandar Nevski Cathedral and the Crypt

The Alexandar Nevski Cathedral Memorial-Church is located in the centre of Sofia. It is one of the finest examples of 20th century architecture in Sofia and one of the symbols of the city. The magnificent Cathedral was built between 1882 and 1912 to honor the Russian soldiers who died fighting to liberate Bulgaria from Turkish rule in the 1878 war under Tsar Alexandar II. The Memorial Church represents the material expression of gratitude of the Bulgarian people for the remarkable self-sacrifice of the 200,000 Russian heroes who by their unprecedented heroism, resolution and boundless fraternal love, at the price of their blood and life, in the Russian-Turkish Liberation War (1877-1878) broke the chains of the five century Ottoman bondage and gave the people their priceless freedom.

The famous Alexander Nevski cathedral is situated on the tree-lined square of the same name, which also contains the monument of the *Unknown Soldier* with its eternal flame. The impressive five-nave basilica houses an interior just as splendid, with mosaics, stained glass windows, marble and woodcarvings as well as frescoes that cover the walls and domes. The underground crypt houses the Icon Museum featuring icon paintings from across the country that represent masterpieces from the 9th to the 18th century.



The Yoan Kukuzel Orthodox Ensemble

World-famous Yoan Kukuzel Chamber Ensemble, which aims to popularize old Bulgarian music around the planet was founded in 1967. The ensemble was named after the remarkable Bulgarian composer, singer and reformist of the Eastern Orthodox music, Yoan Kukuzel (14th century).

USEFUL INFORMATION

Currency

Bulgarian Leva (BGN) (1 BGN ~ 0.5 EUR)

Time Zone

GMT + 1 in winter

International dialing code

+359

Electricity

220 volts, European 2 round pin plug

Tipping

Tips of 10% of the bill are appropriate for waiters and taxi drivers

Banks opening hours

Monday-Friday from 8:00 am to 6:00 pm

Weather in March

Average temperatures : +5°C / 41° F



HOW TO GET TO THE HILTON HOTEL

The easiest way to get to the hotel is to take a taxi at the designated taxi stands in front of the western exits from Arrivals at Terminal 1 and Terminal 2.

Alternatively, you could request a taxi at the desks of the taxi companies, which are located in the Arrival halls of the both terminals.

It will cost approximately 15 BGN (~8 €) and take 30 minutes depending on the traffic.



HOTEL ACCOMMODATION

Hilton Sofia *****

1 Bulgaria blvd., Sofia, BG 1421

Tel: +359-2-9335000

Fax: +359-2-9335111

Email: events.sofia@hilton.com

www.sofia.hilton.com



Hilton Sofia has the perfect location in the heart of the city, opposite Congress Centre-Sofia (National Palace of Culture), surrounded by the South Park and overlooking the Vitosha Mountain. Hotel guests are near the commercial district and government offices. Boutiques, restaurants and nightclubs are within walking distance, while Sofia International Airport lies 13 km to the east, an approximate 20 minute transfer. With 245 rooms on 8 floors, equipped with the most modern in-room facilities, 2 newly renovated Executive Floors, the Executive Lounge, Business Centre, Health Club with in-door pool, Hilton Sofia is the perfect choice of the modern traveler. Spacious, stylish and modern venues, resplendent with natural light, provide you with an unparalleled environment in which to work and relax.

From the daily airport shuttle to the multifunctional meeting facilities, creative food service and elegant dining: enjoy the Hilton Sofia experience.

Room rates include breakfast and VAT and are subject to City Tax of EUR 0.62 per person per night.

Standard Guest room:

Single :	92€
Double :	102€

Guest room plus:

this room rate includes complimentary two-way airport transportation, complimentary internet access, one complimentary pressing per stay.

Single :	107€
Double :	117€

Executive room:

this room rate includes complimentary two-way airport transportation, Concierge Service, Private Check in & Check out, Complimentary Clubroom (Executive Lounge) access with breakfast in the morning, snacks, drinks, cocktails and hors d'oeuvres throughout the day, Complimentary internet access, Daily complimentary newspaper delivered to your room, In-Room Fax for Junior Suites and private fax service from Executive Floor Reception, Complimentary fruit basket in your room and complimentary premium mineral water, one complimentary pressing per stay, CD player.

Single :	125€
Double :	135€



CONFERENCE FEES

	Registration by February 1	After February 1
ECM Members (1 st & 2 nd delegate)	400 €	450 €
ECM Members (3 rd delegate & more)	300 €	350 €
ECM Members 1 day fee*	200 €	200 €
Non-members	500 €	550 €
Accompanying persons**		200 €

*The conference fee includes attendance to the conference, and either the Welcome Reception on Wednesday 16th March or dinner on Thursday 17th March.

** Take advantage of a great opportunity to bring along your partner, children and friends. The Accompanying Persons programme includes a City Tour on Saturday 19th March, Welcome Reception on Wednesday 16th March and dinner on Thursday 17th March.

REGISTRATION

Please visit www.europeancitiesmarketing.com and complete the online booking form **before 1st February 2011**. If you have any questions, please contact Katy Schmitt at katy@europeancitiesmarketing.com.

The deadline for confirmed accommodation bookings is **1st February 2011**. After this date the Hilton hotel will do its best to assist all participants with hotel bookings, however all requests will be confirmed upon availability. Rooms category will be allocated on a FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED BASIS.

PAYMENT & CANCELLATION POLICIES

Conference

The conference fee is payable by bank transfer* or credit card to ECM.

*For payment by bank transfer, please follow the instructions:

- . Reference to include on banking order: ECM Sofia meeting + name of your city
- . Please instruct on the bank transfer: net by payment order
- . Bank transfers within the EU without correct BIC and IBAN cause additional bank charges on our side and will be added on to an additional invoice.

Bank Details: SOCIETE GENERALE AV Victor Hugo - 21000 Dijon FRANCE BIC CODE : SOGEFRPP Account number : 00050410261 IBAN number : FR76 3000 3007 5700 0504 1026 117	Beneficiary: EUROPEAN CITIES MARKETING 29D RUE DE TALANT 21000 DIJON FRANCE
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Any cancellation must be sent in writing to katy@europeancitiesmarketing.com. In case of cancellation by 1st March 2011 we will refund your registration fee. After this date a cancellation fee of 100 € will be charged.

Accommodation

*for cancellations between 21 to 14 days prior to arrival, the hotel will charge 50% of the total amount.
for cancellations 14 days or less prior to arrival, no refunds will be made.*

For further information please contact:
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Bulgaria Air
National Carrier www.air.bg



DIRECT CONNECTIONS FROM MANY EUROPEAN CITIES :



Special agreement with Bulgaria Air:

Bulgaria Air is offering all ECM delegates a 15% discount on all their flights to Sofia from March 14 until March 19.

In order to benefit from this discount, please take the following steps:

1. Choose your tickets on www.air.bg/en/
2. Call the Bulgaria Air call centre : +359 2 402 0 400 **or** +359 2 400 11 89 and give the operator the event code "ECM SOFIA"

OR send an email to Bulgaria Air at callFB@air.bg and specify in your email the event code "ECM SOFIA" as well as your preferred flights, the airport you will be flying from, as well as your contact details and phone number. An operator will call you back.

For any further information, please contact Katy at katy@europeancitiesmarketing.com

WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS



IN COOPERATION WITH



Sofia Municipality



National Museum of History



Sofia Live Club



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