



A WARM WELCOME FOR MEDICAL CONFERENCES

A big issue for medical congress organizers today is the need to comply with local rules in every country. In Amsterdam, we have set up a partnership to provide independent tailor-made advice to organisers in advance, so they can begin their conference assured that they are in compliance with all regulations.

Legislation combined

Although embedded in national legislation, the regulations regarding medications for human use are the same throughout Europe. In addition, the European umbrella organisation for self-regulation EFPIA has drawn up an international code of conduct.

In the Netherlands, these components are combined in the Dutch Code of Conduct for Pharmaceutical Advertising (CGR). One section of the CGR is particularly important: prescription medications may only be advertised to professionals, that is, people who prescribe or deliver drugs, such as physicians and pharmacists. Fortunately, it is actually quite easy to keep track of this, with a bit of help.

Independent advice

In Amsterdam, the municipality, NBCT Holland Marketing, RAI Amsterdam, the Ministry of Health and the Keuringsraad work closely together to ensure that the organisation of each medical conference proceeds smoothly.

The Keuringsraad plays a key role in this regard, as it oversees compliance with the CGR and advises conference organisers about this topic. We will bring the organiser in contact with the right person and can also invite the Keuringsraad to send representatives if the organiser visits RAI Amsterdam in advance. Organisers can then explain their plans and are given advice on what is and is not permitted, and what the possible alternatives are.

Alternative layouts

In many cases, it is necessary to register the profession of the visitors and ensure that it is clearly visible on their badges. This opens up several alternatives in terms of layout. A part of the show floor could only be accessible to professionals, for instance. Another option is that exhibitors only be allowed to recommend drugs in one-on-one contact with professionals. With major events that are focused primarily on professionals from abroad (and not patients), the conclusion can even be that organisers need take no extra action.

Other components to keep in mind are the content of the presentations, the hospitality offered and gifts. The general guideline is that pharmaceutical companies cannot be allowed to improperly influence professionals.

Simple practice

While the rules may seem complex, the practice is simple. You do not need to have studied law: simply explain the concept of your conference and you will receive a tailor made advice based on that.

MAURITS VAN DER SLUIS - COO RAI AMSTERDAM

RAI Amsterdam is a long-standing member of the International Association of Convention Centres (AIPO). AIPO represents a global network of over 185 leading centres in 60 countries with the active involvement of more than 900 management-level professionals worldwide. It is committed to encouraging and recognizing excellence in convention centre management, based on the diverse experience and expertise of its international representation, and maintains a variety of educational, research, networking and standards programs to achieve this.