

## Cancun Centre Conventions & Exhibitions



Surrounded by beautiful white, sandy beaches bathed by the turquoise waters of the Caribbean, Cancun Centre is located strategically in the very heart of the Cancun hotel zone that offers more than 26,000 rooms as well as nearby restaurants, shopping malls, night clubs and marinas. It is only 15 minutes from downtown Cancun and 20 minutes from the international airport where flights arrive from all of the principal cities of Mexico, the United States, South America and Europe.

The recently renovated Centre can host up to 7,000 delegates and is fully equipped with the most modern technology including electrical installations, hydraulics and inter-communications systems. It offers 14,200 square meters of rentable space, consisting of a 7,200 square meter exhibition area, 7,000 square meters of meeting halls made up of 13 major rooms divisible into 37 sections, an auditorium and board room.

Additional facilities include a business center, a deli garden and a snack bar.

The professionalism, warmth and quality of service of the Cancun

Centre have been recognized with its having been given the honour of hosting such prestigious events as the Ministerial Conference of the World Trade Organization, the World Congress of Pediatric Medicine and the World Congress on Infectious Diseases.



## ExCeL Exhibition and Conference Centre



The ExCeL Exhibition and Conference Centre is London's largest and most stylish conference venue. Located in a waterside, campus-style environment, it offers 6 onsite hotels, over 30 bars and restaurants, 4,000 onsite parking spaces and 3 dedicated railway stations. Just minutes from London City Airport and the

financial district of Canary Wharf, ExCeL is situated in London's fastest economically developing area.

The venue's core strength is its tremendous flexibility in providing solutions for a diverse range of event formats, particularly multi-faceted events requiring co-located plenary, syndicate, exhibition, reception and banqueting space. ExCeL's facilities include bespoke auditoriums and banqueting halls for 1,000 to 20,000 delegates, a new, integrated conference suite ideal for 400 to 1,000 delegates and a range of over 40 smaller meeting and syndicate rooms.

Since opening in November 2000, ExCeL has hosted over 700 events, with key corporate clients including Oracle, Toyota, NHS, AstraZeneca, IBM, Barclays, Tesco, M&S and the Royal Bank of Scotland. International association meetings already confirmed include the EADV Congress 2005, ESCRS Congress 2005 and the BAOG Annual Congress 2007, while key exhibition clients include the renowned Schroders London Boat Show, the London International Wine & Spirits Fair, the International Food & Drinks Exhibition and World Travel Market.



Partner News:

## 2004 Global EBMS Conference Scores BIG!

The 2004 EBMS International Conference was held from October 3-6, 2004 at the Hyatt Union Station in St. Louis, USA, and will go down as the largest and best attended conference in USI history. The event was truly global, with representatives from many countries, including Australia, Britain, Canada, China, France, Germany, New Zealand, Singapore, Switzerland, and, of course, the United States.

The program was highly educational and interactive, giving attendees the opportunity to network with their peers as well as spend quality time seeing the latest features, discussing the varied uses of EBMS and suggesting enhancements for future releases. Commenting on the success of the conference, USI President Dieter Ungerboeck said: "I am delighted that so many of our clients took the time from their busy schedules to attend the conference. The continuing increase in attendance at EBMS conferences validates one of our key goals, that of building long-term partnerships with all of our clients. It is particularly pleasing to observe that the broad range of conference topics encourages many organizations to send several representatives, thereby contributing to a spirited and progressive inter-departmental dialog. The feedback from the conference has been excellent, with some great ideas to make next year's conference even more beneficial and enjoyable."

Ungerboeck Systems International (USI), develops and markets

Event Business Management Software (EBMS), recognized worldwide as the leading, enterprise-wide integrated software product for venues, exhibitions, conferences, contractors and destinations. USI currently serves customers in more than 20 countries worldwide from offices in St. Louis, Karlsruhe, Paris, London, Hong Kong, and Sydney. For further details on Ungerboeck Systems please visit [www.ungerboeck.com](http://www.ungerboeck.com)



## AIPC Accepting Proposals for 2007 Annual Conference

*With the program for Québec City well underway and plans developing for Montpellier in 2006, AIPC is now receiving proposals for hosting the 2007 Annual Conference. Details can be found on the AIPC web site, and complete information and copies of the bid manual, which outlines the responsibilities and expectations of the host facility, are available from the Secretariat office.*

### To keep in touch with AIPC, visit [www.aipc.org](http://www.aipc.org)

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# Communiqué

ASSOCIATION INTERNATIONALE DES PALAIS DE CONGRÈS  
 INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONGRESS CENTRES  
 INTERNATIONALER VERBAND DER KONGRESSZENTREN

President's Message:

## Looking Back Makes It Easier to Look Forward!

We're nearing the end of the year, which is the traditional time to reflect back on the events of the past twelve months and think about what the future holds. And in thinking about where we've come from, there are at least three areas we should be pleased about;

The first is that a real economic recovery has taken hold and it appears to be leading into a long awaited period of stable growth. There are still lots of lingering effects from the turmoil of the past three years – everything from tighter security to more wary clients – but the fundamentals are looking better every day and that will inevitably lead to a return to industry development in a form closer to what we left behind at the end of the 1990's.

Secondly, we're seeing travel numbers start to recover, and along with them, increases in delegate numbers attending conventions, congresses and the other kinds of events we depend on. There was such a long period of reduced travel that it looked as though things might never get back to normal, but now indications are that this is happening, and with it will come more capacity and greater competition amongst air carriers. Again, this is one of the fundamentals that we needed to see turning around in order to get any real sense of progress.

Third, and perhaps best of all, we've seen that our industry can deal with an unprecedented combination of

setbacks, and still emerge intact. The dire predictions of the end of global travel, the replacement of face-to-face meetings with electronic alternatives and a permanent "stay at home" mentality all failed to materialize. In fact, the pent-up desire to return to more normal travel and event attendance patterns is now

becoming evident in many areas as attendance is exceeding projections and delegates are again looking on convention participation, particularly in attractive destinations, as a "perk" instead of an inconvenience.

The fact that we could have got through so much, and in relative terms, suffered so little, should give us all a new sense of confidence that we can survive the worst that global conditions can throw at us – and hopefully, that will make us better equipped to deal with other disruptions that the future may bring. Someone said recently that change is the new norm – and that the only real mistake is to assume that things will stay the same. If that's the case, we should be better equipped than ever to deal with it.

So even when we've yet to see full recovery, there's still lots to celebrate – and even more to look forward to as we start into another year in what we all know to be the best business in the world! And on that note, let me take this opportunity to wish you, your staff and your family the very best of the holiday season and all the excitement of looking forward to an even more successful year ahead!



Barbara Maple, AIPC President

## Education Task Force Stages Security Seminar in Gothenburg

The AIPC Education Task Force facilitated a seminar on the topic of **Security Measures for Congress Centres** in Gothenburg on Tuesday 9th November. The session was convened at the request of several Scandinavian members during the annual conference in Edinburgh; in response, the Task Force arranged a day of shared experience and discussion with representatives from a number of different regions.

The session was facilitated by AIPC board member and Education Task Force Chair Steve Piper, using the AIPC Guidebook to Security Planning For Congress Centres, to which he was a major contributor, as the basis of the presentation. The day included:

- A case study presentation by Brighton colleagues Jacquie Rogers and Rebecca Crow on the Labour Party Conference, the largest political event in Europe when the government of Britain moves into Brighton for a week. The presenters illustrated how Brighton copes with the demands this event puts on the City and how the team works with outside agencies to ensure the delivery of a quality service to the clients under the constant scrutiny of world media with the hope that by sharing this experience and knowledge, other venues can learn techniques that can be applied to their own challenges.
- A presentation by David Reilly of the successful AIPC Excellence in Customer service course, who gave an overview of

"Securing Your Facilities" and how planning the building makes security an easier task. David's session was both enlightening and amusing, drawing on his great experience and sharing anecdotes of incidents from his career in security.

- Another presentation by Berit Krantz of Sweden, who heads up and has responsibility for security operations for one of the regions largest operations, Astra Zeneca. Berit offered her insights into meeting security from the perspective of a PCO.
- An overview by Steve Piper on planning for an emergency, including both reactive and pro-active approaches. It addressed such topics as basic good house keeping, planning for the worst case scenario, communicating the plan to the team and covering points that are often overlooked.

The day was concluded with a question and answer session which amply illustrated how being able to interact with colleagues stimulates ideas and creates learning opportunities. Both organizers and participants particularly thanked Ulrica Cranby for her hospitality and support for this event in her wonderful city.

"This event showed there is great potential for more sessions where members who have specialist areas or subject can share these successfully in a forum setting", said Piper. "From the perspective of the Education Task Force, we see an opportunity for more such events, and would welcome suggestions along this line. Anyone who has an idea for such a session should contact myself, and I'd be pleased to look at the potential for staging them".



## AIPC Adds Extra Dimension to EIBTM Attendance

AIPC had a full program of participation at the new edition of EIBTM this year in Barcelona. Along with participation in the trade show and networking with clients and colleagues, AIPC members had a variety of association activities to join in. Among these were:



- AIPC was represented throughout the show at an association stand located in the heart of the action. Members and other visitors were able to get all the latest information about AIPC activities and plans while exchanging information and experiences with both fellow members and clients.
- The Québec 2005 Reception took place on Tuesday November 30, both to promote our upcoming 2005 Annual Conference in Québec City, Canada and to give members a detailed insight into the many activities planned for the conference in this fabulous historic destination.

- Also on Tuesday November 30, AIPC participated in the EIBTM Association Program breakfast session and lunchtime panel debates. These sessions, designed to provide association delegates with educational programming, covered a number of topics; AIPC President Barbara Maple spoke on the topic of "Running an Annual Conference / Congress – Risk Management and Security Issues", which was a hot topic with many attendees.

- The following day, AIPC and IAPCO held a joint panel discussion on the topic of "Quality Standards for Convention Centres: Who Decides?". The panel was comprised of centre, PCO and client panelists and addressed the key issue of what kinds of factors best lend themselves to quality standards from these different perspectives. The results of the panel are being considered as part of AIPC's program to develop a quality standards program for the association, and provided useful input to this process.

"With a new venue and format, EIBTM presented many new aspects to participants this year; however, the constant was another great opportunity to interface with clients and colleagues", said President Barbara Maple. "AIPC's participation creates a good framework for members to expand the benefits they get out of attendance, as well as raise the profile of our association amongst other parts of the industry".

Convention and Visitor Bureaus (CVB's) are a fact of life in the sales and marketing mix of almost all congress centres. But a recent AIPC survey has shown that while many members question the job that CVB's do in marketing their destinations or the role they may play in promoting their centres, in reality they have little in the way of control over their activities or performance in either of these areas.

The centre – bureau relations survey had a very high rate of response amongst members, demonstrating the high level of interest in this topic and giving a good statistical basis for the results. The survey conclusions showed a lot of variability in how centres interact with their bureaus; however, there were enough areas of consistency to establish some general principles, provide some measure of how these relationships work and offer some suggestions of what can be done to improve them.

- Some of the results include:
  - Most destinations have a combined leisure / convention marketing role, with only 12% having a leisure marketing function alone and 18% having a convention promotion alone.
  - 45 % of centres reported that governance of their CVB was by the city. 38% were described as being independent (member based) organizations, while 17% were state or regionally governed.
  - In 78% of cases, there was no administrative connection between the CVB and the congress centre other than a small number (12%) who indicated that there was some form of overlapping governance such as reciprocal board connections between the two organizations. Only 18% reported shared governance (i.e., both reporting to the same authority or government) while only 4% had any shared funding source.
  - There were no reported cases where the CVB was entirely responsible for the sales and marketing of the centre. 30% of respondents described this as a joint effort, with a similar number indicating that the centre was entirely responsible for this function. The balance of response divided equally between those who reported that the CVB took the lead in marketing and those who indicated that the centre took the lead.
  - However, although many centres relied on CVB's to carry out at least a part of their marketing function, in almost 80% of such cases there was no formal accountability measure in place for the results. 11% indicated that they had a measure of control via the centre providing funding to the CVB, and 8% indicated that there was accountability via reporting to a common authority; however, only a single respondent indicated they had a formal performance-based contract in place for this purpose.
  - More respondents (47%) rated their CVB's performance as "good" or "excellent" in terms of destination marketing than did for marketing their centres (27%). However, the number reporting

- that performance "needs improvement" or was "poor" was exactly equal in both cases. Amongst the subjective results contained in the survey were a number of suggestions as to how the effectiveness of the relationship and / or the sales and marketing performance of the CVB could be improved. These included;
  - A need for more education of CVB's as to the nature of the meetings and convention industry and how it works, with potentially more CVB staff with meetings industry expertise;
  - A greater focus on convention business and placing this at a higher level of priority than is currently the case;
  - Better communications and coordination between the efforts of CVB's and centres, particularly in the areas of joint planning, sharing of information and research, and
  - Having a concrete plan in place for the meetings area and some form of measurable accountability in place for the results as they affect convention business.

Other points made in this regard included a need for greater stability in CVB management and less staff turnover; more funding for overall destination and centre promotion; a clearer delineation of roles to eliminate duplication and/or overlap; congress centre representation on CVB boards and more of a "business" orientation as opposed to other priorities (i.e., member programming and enhancement) that many CVB's have.

In response to the question of what other kind of model for CVB / centre relations might work better, most respondents indicated that they felt the current model was one that fit their circumstances and/or the realities of their situation, and needed to be worked on for improved performance. Specific areas that were noted as offering better potential included the idea of developing a joint venture model with shared benefits and rewards; separating CVB and convention marketing functions into two separate organizations; creating a model that focused more on business than membership and developing a model that responded better to the realities and expectations of how clients want to do business and how this may change in the future.

While 30% of centres state that they have complete responsibility for selling their facilities, most reported that this function was handled jointly, with about equal divisions as to who took the lead. However, in many cases there were significant concerns about how effectively this was being done. Most respondents felt that as their current relationship was unlikely to change for a variety of structural and political reasons, there is a need to work within the existing structure to improve performance rather than to invent a new form of administration. More meetings industry-specific knowledge, expertise and resources combined with better communications and a greater sense of priority attached to the convention area were seen as the best routes to improving CVB performance.

## Three Good Reasons to Plan Now for Your Attendance at the AIPC 2005 Annual Conference in Québec City!



From July 20 to 23, 2005, the Québec City Convention Centre promises you an unforgettable journey and a state-of-the heart welcome! Along with a comprehensive educational program and the opportunity to network and exchange views with your industry colleagues, there are some very special reasons why this is a year not to miss;

- You'll get to discover Québec City, one of the first European settlements in North America and a one-of-a-kind 400 year old destination recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage Treasure.
- You'll have a very unique chance to explore the great outdoors, to experience the ebb and flow of the mighty St. Lawrence River, to taste fine cuisine featuring local flavors, and to discover how the heritage of Québec's founding people are in step with today.
- You'll be able to experience North America from the perspective of a completely safe city, vibrant by day and dazzling by night, and to visit a capital steeped in parliamentary tradition, a center of knowledge at the cutting edge of research, and a world of culture with a wealth of performance venues and museums. Québec City 2005 will be the perfect opportunity to network with your peers on topics rich with discussion possibilities under the overall theme *From Operational Excellence to Strategic Excellence*, all in a comfortable and stimulating environment! At the same time, this very unique destination will offer a festive and exciting social program appropriate to a city with a very enviable reputation for a creative and exciting ambience.

In early February, the Conference website will reveal the details of the first AIPC Conference to be held in Eastern Canada, and the Spring issue of *Communiqué* will supply full conference information. In the meantime, make your plans now to take full

advantage of this exciting opportunity!

*Please note: The meeting days for Quebec City 2005 are different from previous years, with a welcome reception on Wednesday July 20, the Annual Conference program on Thursday July 21, Friday July 22 and Saturday July 23 and the General Assembly on July 23 as well. Make sure you take this new pattern into account as you organize your travel!*



### Member News:

## Bregenz: A Great History Shapes Their Current Role



Since the days of the ancient Romans Bregenz has been known as an excellent meeting place. The capital of Austria's westernmost state, with 27,000 inhabitants, is not only situated at the point where Germany, Austria, Switzerland and the Principality of Liechtenstein meet, but is also the place where the Alps meet Europe's third largest lake, Lake Constance. In spite of changing political borders, some of which have become obsolete in the recent past, Lake Constance has always united the peoples living around it.

Centuries of cross-border traffic in the region encouraged the development of the first Bregenz Festival on the eastern shore of Lake Constance. The ability not only to hold celebrations and congresses but to do so in a beautiful location between lake and mountains helps maintain local citizens' understanding for the efforts needed to position such a large convention centre in the market on a long-term basis.

A further very important aspect of the region is architecture. Centuries ago, young architects set out from here for distant places throughout Europe, where they very successfully made a name for themselves when building castles and above all churches. This art has continued to develop until today, and both Vorarlberg's architects and those from nearby regions of Switzerland are now known worldwide and have set architectural milestones with daring buildings in Bregenz. It was thus appropriate that local architects Dietrich I Untertrifaller be given the challenge to combine art, culture and congress facilities in the *Festspiel- und Kongresshaus*.

A design was produced in 1971 which featured two key new ideas. Firstly, the festival centre needed to be multi-functional, to which end a congress hall was to be built. The second new requirement was that the new Festspielhaus should be connected to the outdoor auditorium in such a way that a performance could be moved from the Floating Stage into the building within half an hour in the event of bad weather.

A preliminary design fulfilling these criteria was approved by Bregenz municipal council in 1972 and by the republic, the province and the city in 1974 with the condition that the sum of 100 million schillings (equivalent to 7.2 million euros in 1970) not be exceeded in the planning and designing of the festival centre. The architects could meet this requirement only if they eschewed all cost-intensive decorative elements. A more ambitious exterior architecture, for instance, could only be a secondary consideration after functionality of the building and design of the audience areas. The new idea of connecting the building with the outdoor auditorium changed the original concept substantially; because of the relocated auditorium, there was no longer an open view of the lake from the entrance hall and ground-floor lakeside foyers and the foyers and staircases were located under the auditorium in order to make maximum use of space while the deliberately asymmetrical alignment of the auditorium axis and the building axis allowed easy vehicular access to the main entrance.

The Festspielhaus was officially opened in 1980, with the new section opening in 1998 and a third addition scheduled for construction for 2005/2006 for opening in 2006. The total investment for this latter project will be 40 Million Euros. The ongoing success of the Bregenz Festival also prompted the decision when the opera house was inaugurated in 1980 to employ on a year-round basis the employees who were indispensable for the great work done during the festival. One result of this decision was that ever since the Festspielhaus was opened, it has been able to deliver competence in organising events and coming up with technical solutions.

It is this combination of design, location and long years of competence that has today given Bregenz its position as an event venue. "We see ourselves as the City of Lake Constance and act accordingly, crossing not only virtual borders in organising events, but also geographic borders in offering our guests a multitude of social programme possibilities, with almost every larger event that is held at the *Festspielhaus*.", says Gerhard Stübe, Managing Director of the *Festspielhaus Bregenz*.



## EICC Completes Another Successful ECS Course

Twelve participants from nine countries comprised the very diverse set of graduates from the most recent edition of AIPC's ongoing success story, the ECS (Excellence in Customer Service) courses offered in cooperation with the Edinburgh International Conference Centre. As always, the course covered a wide range of key topics from sales and marketing to managing client relationships, and had sterling reviews by participants.

Sometimes, however, the clearest impressions come from the participants themselves. With this in mind, here's a review by one of the graduates, Laura Milne, who is a Business & Media Centre Assistant;

*I am currently working as a Business and Media Centre Assistant for the Edinburgh International Conference Centre and I was fortunate enough to gain a place on the recent AIPC Course, held in September 2004.*



*I was thoroughly looking forward to attending the course as I had heard such good reports about it from my colleagues. I wasn't disappointed; the course was excellent from start to finish.*

*I met with fellow participants from a variety of countries who all came from different backgrounds within the conference industry. It gave me a great chance to network and discuss and exchange ideas with industry professionals.*

*The course was largely geared towards improving our customer service skills which I think is vital to running a successful conference centre. The course also enabled me to build upon my communications and teamwork skills and provided me with an increased knowledge of different cultures.*

*The sessions were extremely well delivered and informative and covered topics such as leadership, understanding customer needs and business excellence. We also covered the impact of global culture and disability awareness, which I found extremely interesting.*

*Throughout the course there was constant discussion and constructive debate between attendees providing us all with some thought provoking ideas.*

*The social programme which ran alongside the course gave us all some valuable time to get to know each other, to complete the group exercises and discuss the topics which had been raised earlier in the day. I've made many new friends and still keep in touch with them via regular e-mails.*

*All in all a truly invaluable experience, I would definitely recommend this course.*

Information regarding future ECS course offerings is available from the AIPC Secretariat.

### And in Other Educational News....

AIPC's special arrangements with IAPCO (the International Association of Professional Congress Organizers) makes access to the 31st IAPCO Seminar on Professional Congress Organisation available to AIPC members at the IAPCO member rate. This course, which takes place Jan 16-22, 2005, is a highly regarded and comprehensive program focussing on the role of PCO's and their interface with suppliers, venues and clients. Further information and registration details are available at <http://www.iapco.org/>