

March 09, 2014

## **CLOSING REPORT ITB Berlin 2014: Halls fully booked, increase in trade visitors and business volume sets new records**

**Positive forecasts for the global economy boost the tourism sector – ITB Berlin 2014 confirms its role as the world’s leading travel trade show – increase in international buyers, exhibitors and congress delegates**

*Berlin, 9 March 2014* – This year’s ITB Berlin sent out very positive signals for the international travel industry. With the global economy expected to recover in the years to come the world’s travel industry has begun 2014 confident of good tourism business. Following a recent period of relatively sluggish growth, particularly in many recession-hit countries, the global travel industry is once again on course for rapid growth. In Germany consumers have ensured that the mood in the travel industry is positive. Backed by a stable employment market, good wage agreements and positive forecasts for economic growth, German citizens aim to spend more money on their holidays than in previous years.

This year’s ITB Berlin reported a four per cent rise in trade visitors and an increase in business volume, which Messe Berlin estimates reached 6.5 billion euros. The focus of the world’s leading travel trade fair, which came to an end on Sunday, was on travel bookings via smartphones and tablets and on sustainable practices in the travel industry.

**Dr. Christian Göke, CEO of Messe Berlin:** “Never before was there such an emphasis on innovation as at this year’s ITB Berlin. The mood among exhibitors and visitors at this year’s show was one of euphoria, which over the last five days could be felt everywhere on the Berlin Exhibition Grounds. The world’s leading travel trade show had an even more positive impact on trade buyers and holidaymakers than in previous years.”

Among the countries on the Mediterranean Greece and Spain reported particularly high growth. In 2013, numbers visiting Spain reached a new record. Germany and Europe have become increasingly popular with travellers from Asia. At this year’s ITB Berlin numerous hotels and holiday resorts not only exhibited on the stands of the various countries and regions but also hosted their own displays in the halls.

In its role as a think tank, the ITB Berlin Convention has become a firm fixture for trend scouts operating within the international travel industry. More than ever, Berlin is where innovative travel trends are shown. Luxury travel was a key topic that attracted keen visitor interest.

From 5 to 9 March 2014, 10,147 exhibitors from 189 countries – more than two-thirds of whom came from abroad – were represented in 26 halls which were booked to capacity. Overall, some 114,000 trade visitors (2013: 109,616) travelled to Berlin. This year there was a slight increase again in buyers from the USA and the Middle East.

The ITB Berlin Convention registered record levels of attendance. A total of 22,000 took part in around 200 lectures, discussions and workshops, over 5 percent more than in 2013. Social Media and Mobile Travel Services proved to be major visitor attractions. Once again, the matchmaking event for bloggers and exhibitors met with an extremely positive response. Over a period of two days 2,000 events took place attended by 120 exhibitors and bloggers from 25 countries.

Visitors thronged the halls on the Saturday of the show. Despite the warm weather for this time of year more than 60,000 members of the general public came to find out about the wide-ranging information on offer from exhibitors and providers of niche market products. As in 2013, visitors at the weekend were able to book their tours directly at ITB Berlin. A poll among visitors revealed that around 50 per cent intended

to book a trip. On average, each visitor spent around 2,000 euros on a holiday trip. Close to one-third of the companies exhibiting sold travel products to the end consumer. Christian Göke: "It was not only our visitors who responded positively to this new service. For exhibitors as well it makes ITB Berlin even more attractive and offers a 'test market'."

### **Big success for the partner country Mexico**

Mexico, this year's partner country, fascinated its visitors on the eve of ITB Berlin with a dazzling programme of entertainment and a fascinating multimedia show which highlighted its cultural treasures. Inside the display halls Mexico put on a show of traditional music and dance performances, served authentic Mexican dishes, exhibited colourful handicrafts from the various regions and whetted visitors' appetites for holidaying in a country with so many different attractions. Using interactive media visitors were able to go on a virtual trip to Mexico and take their experiences back home.

**Claudia Ruiz Massieu, Minister of Tourism of Mexico:** "Mexico shares its joy and satisfaction at the results of ITB. As the partner country in 2014 it was a great opportunity to showcase our country and destinations. ITB Berlin is the most important platform for tourism and we were able to show a sophisticated, modern and diverse Mexico.

We offered a taste of Mexico's cultural and natural destinations as well as our food and handicrafts. It was also an opportunity to share President Enrique Peña Nieto's vision and commitment to tourism as an engine of economic growth and social development.

We invite you to visit our changing, moving and growing country, because in order to experience Mexico you have to "Live it to believe it".

**Taleb Rifai, General Secretary of UNWTO:** "I must congratulate ITB on another great success. ITB 2014 reflected the vitality of the tourism sector extremely well and I must particularly commend ITB for its Corporate Social Responsibility Programme which, year after year, reminds us all that with the continuous growth of tourism comes a great responsibility."

**Dr. Michael Frenzel, president of the Federal Association of the German Tourism Industry (BTW):** "ITB Berlin has come to a successful conclusion and the overall mood was positive. People have their sights set firmly on their next holiday, as shown in many of the surveys presented here. What is also clear is the importance of such an up-to-the-minute event, as well as of keeping in touch with business partners and customers in a society dominated by the digital revolution.

Numerous politicians expressed their satisfaction with the positive impact that tourism has on industry and society. In that context it is all the more difficult to understand the many policy decisions, those currently imposed as well as those planned for the future, which weigh heavily on our industry. The aviation tax in particular is a source of major concern to many of our enterprises, as was made clear to me again in many conversations at the show. The tax is a burden on Germany's commercial aviation business, which is of major importance to tourism. It undermines growth and should be scrapped once and for all."

**Jürgen Büchy, president of the German Travel Association (DRV):** "The prospects are very good for the tourism industry. German citizens are as keen as ever to travel and business in selling tours for the upcoming holiday season is booming. The number of early bookings gives us good reason to believe that Germans will be travelling even more than in the past. I am confident that traditionally popular destinations on the Mediterranean will benefit. At ITB we noted a growing interest in long-haul destinations. More and more Germans are not only keen to visit sunny places, beaches and the sea, but have become interested in the natural, cultural and historical attractions that other countries have to offer.

Thus, everything points to 2014 being a successful year for the tourism industry. That

will benefit travel agencies, tour operators, national representations and every company in the tourism sector. It is a long time since I experienced such a positive mood at ITB. That bodes well for 2014. As the leading association representing the tourism industry we forecast that overall the market will expand by two to four per cent. Barring unforeseen events, even five per cent is a realistic possibility.”

**Christine Duffy, President & CEO, Cruise Lines International Association**

**(CLIA):** “Seeing this amount of attendees, one thing is clear: ITB Berlin Congress has become a must-attend event for the entire travel industry. Why? Because really all segments of travel meet here to intensify relations and talk about new trends – where we are going, how tourism impacts on the economy and why leaders are so excited to be part of this industry.”

**High level of media attention and political interest**

Around 5,700 accredited journalists from 81 countries and some 300 bloggers from 25 countries reported on events at ITB Berlin. Politicians and diplomats from Germany and abroad were present at the show.

In addition to 125 foreign delegations, Thailand’s Princess Ubolratana Mahidol also attended the show. 97 ambassadors from around the world, 44 ministers from abroad foreign a numerous undersecretaries were also present. Vice Chancellor and Federal Economics and Energy Minister Sigmar Gabriel, Federal Minister of Justice and Consumer Protection Heiko Maas and Governing Mayor of Berlin Klaus Wowereit came to find out what the travel industry had to offer.

You can find more comments from exhibitors on the internet at [www.itb-berlin.com](http://www.itb-berlin.com) under the section heading Press Service / Press Releases.

Next year, ITB Berlin will be taking place from Wednesday, 4 to Sunday 8 March. Mongolia is the official partner country of ITB 2015.

**About ITB Berlin and the ITB Berlin Convention**

ITB Berlin 2014 took place from Wednesday, 5 to Sunday, 9 March, and from Wednesday to Friday was open to trade visitors only. Parallel with the trade show, the ITB Berlin Convention, the largest travel industry event of its kind in the world, was held from Wednesday, 5 to Friday, 7 March 2014. More details are available at [www.itb-berlin.com](http://www.itb-berlin.com). ITB Berlin is the world’s leading travel trade show. In 2014 a total of 10,147 exhibitors from 189 countries displayed their products and services to 170,000 visitors, who included 110,000 trade visitors.

Join the ITB Press Network at [www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com).

Become a fan of ITB Berlin at [www.facebook.de/ITBBerlin](http://www.facebook.de/ITBBerlin).

Follow ITB Berlin on [www.twitter.com/ITB\\_Berlin](http://www.twitter.com/ITB_Berlin).

Get the latest updates from the Social Media Newsroom at <http://newsroom.itb-berlin.de/en>.

You can find press releases on the internet at [www.itb-berlin.com](http://www.itb-berlin.com) under the section heading Media Centre / Press Releases. Make use of our information service and subscribe to our RSS feeds.

If you would no longer like to receive our ITB Berlin press releases then simply send an e-mail to [presse-itb@messe-berlin.de](mailto:presse-itb@messe-berlin.de).