

## ITB Adapts to Social Change

IF THERE is no war in the Middle East, ITB Berlin 2003 – the world's biggest travel trade show – will break new ground from March 7 to 11, 2003. The fair expects to attract more than 9,000 exhibitors from 180 countries and territories. This year there will be more exhibitors from Arab and Asian countries, as well as from Turkey, Russia and the Ukraine. After withdrawing in 2002, companies such as Thomas Cook, Club Med, Lufthansa, Start Amadeus and Sabre are making a comeback. As of January 2003 no countries have withdrawn their participation in the event.

The show has adapted to many of the complex economic, cultural, social and demographic changes that continue to affect the travel and tourism industry. Every year there are new reasons for visitors to attend. Luxury of space allows ITB to extend its target beyond buyers and sellers of tourism products, to include suppliers of products to the tourism industry.

According to ITB organisers Messe Berlin, experts predict that demand for travel will remain high in 2003. Destinations considered "safe" should enjoy vigorous growth. Both demographically and economically the Pacific Asia region is experiencing rapid growth, which in turn is driving the global tourism industry.

*Issues & Trends* explores some of the highlights of ITB Berlin 2003.

### Market Segments

"Tomorrow's Consumers: How the Tourism Sector Can Take Advantage of Social Changes" is the subject of an international conference organised by Messe Berlin and N.I.T., a research institute based in Kiel, Germany. The focus will be on the demographic trends influencing industrialised countries. These trends could have dramatic consequences for the travel industry. The conference will seek to identify market segments and strategies for destinations and companies to take advantage of these changes.

### Youth Travel

For the fifth year ITB Berlin will feature a special room for young people called the "Young Travel Centre". An increase in demand by young travel exhibitors is becoming evident.

"Nowadays, one in four travellers is a young person," Director General of the Federation of International Youth Travel Organisations, Mr. Peter Kruyt, said. FIYTO, with 470 members, is the world's leading organisation for youth travel. In 2002 the youth travel industry bucked the overall downward trend and in some areas registered growth.

RUF Jugendreisen, a German company specialising in youth travel enjoyed 22.5 per cent higher turnover last financial year. "We noted that parents...were particularly concerned that the quality of travel should be high and that accompanying travel group leaders should be properly qualified," company spokesperson, Mr. Thomas Gehlen, said.

FIYTO and RUF Jugendreisen are organising discussions, events and activities on the subject of youth travel. There will also be a special section on "Youth Travel Berlin" with the Berlin tourist office focussing on young visitors for the first time. Berlin's hotels, guesthouses, tour operators and clubs will display products and packages targeted at young people.

### Sports Travel

Expanding on youth travel, ITB Berlin 2003 will also focus on sports-related travel. According to research conducted in Germany, 55 percent of sports travellers make their own travel arrangements. However, in recent years, 30 percent of sports travellers have been influenced by tour packages. When making bookings 15 percent organise their sporting trips with the help of travel agencies.

This new section is designed to provide exhibitors an opportunity to present products and services aimed at the growing popularity of sports-based holidays. It features "Fit for Fun" and "Sport as Adventure" themes.

### **Nature Travel**

Experiencing the natural world is becoming more important for holidaymakers. People are recognising that wilderness is often more impressive than civilisation. And they understand that it's much more difficult to regain once lost.

The "Experience Nature Hall" has been created for ITB 2003 so ecotourism and rural tourism operators can draw interested visitors. Leading national and international organisations such as the German Agency for Technical Cooperation (GTZ), Eschborn, and the World Tourism Organization (WTO) will present their concepts in this sector.

"The concept of sustainability is now an accepted feature of the international tourism industry," WTO Head of Sustainable Tourism Development, Mr. Eugenio Yunis, said. He believes the industry needs to try harder to follow the directives that have been developed over the years. "It is now time for action. Interesting examples worth imitating can be found everywhere," he said.

### **Travelling with Children**

Travelling with children requires special preparation. Children are more at risk from the effects of extreme temperature, sunlight and dehydration. Parents or guardians of youth travel groups can quickly encounter mishaps if they give insufficient consideration to medical requirements when they plan their travels.

Hence "Travelling with Children – Health Care Advice" is the theme of the fourth "Travel and Health Forum" at ITB 2003. Topics will include taking care of children when travelling with them, inoculations, environmental risks and general advice on what to do in specific circumstances.

The forum is to be jointly hosted by the Centre for Health Care Aspects Abroad (CRM), Düsseldorf, and the health service of the German Foreign Office in Berlin. More than 350 specialists, doctors, pharmacists and representatives from the tourism industry are expected to attend.

### **Cultural Tourism**

Cultural tourism is now a well-established feature at the ITB. This year it will feature an even larger display of 170 exhibitors from 14 countries. Highlights include a unique presentation organised by the city of Genoa, the design of the opera house by the Bregenzer Festspiele and spectacular displays from Spain. Exhibitors from Birmingham and Glasgow will be represented for the first time

### **Travel Technology**

In 2002 the shake-up in the travel technology sector led to a number of cancellations, causing problems for Messe Berlin when allocating hall space. The situation has improved this year. By January 2003 more than 60 technology companies from eight countries had announced their participation, with companies from Lithuania and Russia attending for the first time.

"Only a short time ago everyone was talking about the Internet business," said Mr. Ian Wheeler, Managing Director of e-Travel, the e-commerce business unit of Amadeus. "Now that the Internet bubble has burst, online businesses in the travel market have become much more interesting. Today it is one of the fastest-growing business sectors."

Although people may be keen to travel, they are finding it more difficult to plan holidays in advance and to set aside the necessary funds. This accentuates the trend towards impulse buying, making reservations at short notice and heightened price sensitivity. Online businesses cater to those needs.

While the industry in general has been contracting, online travel providers and travel technology companies are recording growth rates of up to 100 percent in the consumer sector, considerably higher than in the business travel field. They are benefiting from their customers' greater confidence in using the Internet and of online shopping, as well as from ongoing technological improvements.

### **ITB Travel Technology Congress**

Previously known as the "Electronics Congress," the "Technology Congress" programme has been overhauled and modified. It now offers unique insights into the latest trends in online reservation systems, legal and safety issues, the hotel trade, improved productivity through technological advances, and multi-channel marketing.

"Railways Versus Cheap Flights and Road Transport" is one of the topics to be discussed, with representatives of Deutsche Bahn (German Railways) and Siemens pointing to new opportunities for the tourism industry as a result of developments in IT.

"Which Online Reservation System Will Prevail in the Future?" is the subject of a discussion among representatives of leading reservation systems Orbitz, Sabre, Opodo, Start Amadeus and Expedia.

#### **PATA AT ITB 2003**

As usual, the PATA stand will be in a prominent position in the Pacific Asia hall during ITB. In addition, PATA President & CEO Mr. Peter de Jong will address a gathering of media on Sunday March 9 at 1400 hours for ITB Aktuell (news). His speech, entitled "Pacific Asia: Open for Business," will touch upon the following themes:

1. The continued, strong performance, with examples, of the Pacific Asia region as a whole, despite the impacts of September 11, 2001 and October 12, 2002.
2. The predominant role which China (PRC) and India will play in the global travel and tourism industry in the years ahead.
3. Recent security and crisis management initiatives PATA has taken to make the PATA region a more secure destination
4. An update on Bali as a destination
5. Travel advisories

#### **Toura d'Or 2002 – International Film Competition**

The Toura d'Or is awarded to a film and television production that fosters socially responsible and environmentally acceptable forms of tourism. Only films that encourage travellers to look behind the scenes, acquire a better understanding of everyday reality in the host countries and make contact with the local population are eligible for the award. Films should take a constructive but critical look at some of the negative aspects and effects of tourism and also offer positive examples of sustainable tourism development.

This year's theme is "Tourism with a Viable Future". A total of 34 films have been considered, including information and documentary films, films for service purposes, advertising films and miscellaneous entries. Prizes will be awarded at ITB 2003.

#### **Golfing Holidays**

European tour operators are searching for markets that offer greater immunity to crises, and golfing is considered to be one of them. For many years there has been a steady expansion in the number of golfing holidays. Increasing numbers of suppliers are producing their own catalogues aimed specifically at golfers. Messe Berlin has noticed that countries are investing heavily in this sport, which is no longer seen as a pleasure reserved for the elite. Golfing holiday programmes are set to be one of the major areas of growth at ITB 2003.

#### **Fourth Caribbean Forum**

The Caribbean region is facing the future with confidence. The region is a major competitor for Pacific Asia because it caters to the German demand for beach holidays, is value for money, and has the added advantage of facing no perceived security and safety problems. Representatives of the Caribbean Tourism

Organisation will provide information about the tourism situation, including the latest visitor figures and marketing activities in Germany.

#### **Fifth German-Arab Tourism Forum**

The German-Arab Association for Trade and Industry in collaboration with Messe Berlin, the DIHK (German Council of Industry and Commerce) and the Iktissad wal-Aamal Group will hold the 5th German-Arab Tourism Forum. It will feature contributions on the subject of "Theme Marketing for Arab Destinations," and provide opportunities for collaboration in the development of tourism infrastructure and new destinations.

Special attention will be focused on "wellness". Experts from Germany and the Arab world will discuss wellness tourism as a factor in the success of tourism destinations. The focus will be on "Thalassotherapy" and on "Wellness Treatment at Red Sea Resorts". The programme will be rounded off by a presentation of special tourism destinations in Oman, Yemen and the United Arab Emirates.

#### **New Concept at the ITB Book World**

ITB Berlin is also a meeting ground for publishers of travel books and representatives of the tourism industry. Publishers from Germany, the United Kingdom, Austria and Switzerland have used it to market their travel guides and similar publications, as well as to better understand changing travel patterns. The overall objective is to encourage people to read and to travel.

This year for the first time, Messe Berlin will launch its "ITB Book World Award" to generate media awareness about travel books, guides and maps. Prizes will be awarded for the best new publications of 2002, chosen by a panel of qualified travel book and map experts from the German book trade. For the first time,

in association with the trade publication BuchJournal, ITB 2003 will also feature an "ITB Travel Book".

"We are convinced of the growing importance of understanding the fascinating, every-day reality of the countries we visit, and of their people and religions," said Mr. Armin Vielhaber, Chairman of the Board of the Study Group for Tourism and Development, Ammerland. "There is a need for people to develop a critical but sympathetic awareness of the places they visit, to expand their knowledge and perception, to avoid clichés, prejudice and fears of the unknown, and to display greater respect and tolerance when faced with the different and the unfamiliar. Every holiday paradise has its every-day side, too. It is helpful to be able to appreciate this through books and guides, especially during times of uncertainty," he said.

#### **Tourism Studies Centre**

Now in its fourth year, the "ITB Tourism Studies Centre" has become a major forum for industry research, practice and training. Despite difficult economic conditions, organisers have succeeded in consolidating its role as a focal point for students of travel and tourism, especially newcomers.

Forty-six German and foreign universities, vocational schools, private institutes and employment offices are expected to attend. This year there will be exhibitors from Italy, the Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Switzerland and Finland.

Among the items to be exhibited are the first European-wide distance learning courses for the leisure and tourism industry. They will come on stream in the winter semester 2003/2004 at the RheinAhrCampus in Remagen.

Specific discussions moderated by well-known German professors are to take place following a series of lectures on the following topics:

Module 1: "From Cold Beds to Hot Beds – New Approaches to the Management of Second Homes Against the Background of the Latest Demand Trends" will deal with the issues involved with the use of second homes.

Module 2: "International Cooperation in Tourism – Problems and Perspectives in Destination Management" will examine the risks and opportunities for national, cross-border and international joint ventures.

Module 3: "Public Private Partnership – A Way Out of the Debt Trap for Tourism Municipalities?" discusses a critical issue given the growing debate about empty public coffers.

#### **Tourism Studies Prize**

Introduced in 1995, this award recognises the best research by graduates of universities, technical colleges and vocational schools offering tourism studies. There will also be a prize for the best end-of-course work at a foreign university or similar educational establishment. Attractive prizes are on offer in three categories: best practice-based work, best theory-based work, and the best international work. A special prize is to be given for the best work on the subject "Shipboard Tourism". Tourism companies have donated cash and gift prizes.

#### **Tourism Forum**

This forum provides a venue for academics to talk with industry practitioners. Featured this year are a total of 47 delegates and speakers from the United Kingdom, Italy, Croatia, Austria, Switzerland, Slovenia, Greece and Germany.

One topic concerns the current and past implications on the future of tourism of the events of September 11, 2001, especially in the context of terrorism. One paper entitled "The World After 11 September" will explore the impact on intercultural management.

Documentation for "Tourism Forum 2003," together with the many individual contributions to the "ITB Tourism Studies Centre," will be accessible over the Internet at [www.fvw.de/Marktplatz](http://www.fvw.de/Marktplatz). Most of the papers will be available in an abridged form.

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