

PRESS RELEASE

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A far-reaching tourism concept: Focus on ecological and social responsibility at ITB Berlin

Key topics: Overtourism, integrating refugees and the financial viability of social tourism projects – Opening event will leave a zero carbon footprint for the first time

Overtourism, integrating refugees and the financial viability of social tourism projects: these are just some of the key topics that this year's ITB Berlin will examine under the 'sustainability' heading. From 7 to 9 March 2018, on the days open to trade visitors, experts from around the world will discuss key issues and possible solutions at the ITB Berlin Convention, on the stages in Hall. 4.1 and at numerous other forums. "Our aim is to make use of the unique international platform that ITB offers to give sustainability and responsibility in tourism a voice", said Rika Jean-Francois, CSR officer at ITB Berlin. "Against a backdrop of climate change, growing ocean pollution, alarming human rights abuses, overtourism and global warming the need for this has never been more urgent."

Sustainability a big topic at the ITB Berlin Convention

Large visitor flows are increasingly posing major challenges, particularly for big cities. Accordingly, **overtourism** is a topic that numerous speakers will address at the ITB Convention. On Wednesday, 7 March at the ITB Future Day, together with Margaux Constantin, Associate Principal of McKinsey, Gloria Guevara Manzo, President and CEO of WTTC, will present the latest McKinsey report. On Destination Day 1, based on a survey conducted by the German Society for Tourism Research (DGT) and the Association of Scientific Experts in Tourism (AIEST), representatives of a number of cities concerned, including Barcelona, Amsterdam and Dubrovnik, will present their respective measures to counter overtourism.

On 7 March, the Wednesday of the show, under the heading of 'Smart Destinations', speakers will talk about technology for controlling visitor flows. In his keynote speech on Thursday, 8 March, Doug Lanski will ask whether, faced with overtourism, digitalisation and new forms of travel, destination managers should perhaps start thinking in terms of 'smart destinations'. Also on the Thursday, at 2.30 p.m., speakers on the eTravel stage will ask whether overtourism has also become an issue in Germany.

On Friday, 9 March, Destination Day 2, tourism experts will highlight how digital technology can help to manage visitor flows outside cities too. On CSR Day, tourism experts will discuss the difficulties and opportunities that the booming **sharing economy** presents. Furthermore, for the first time at ITB Berlin, the OECD will present its findings on **financing the development of sustainable tourism**. Michael Lutzeyer, manager of the Grootbos Private Nature Reserve South Africa, and Prof. Dr. Niko Paech of Universität Siegen, will take part in the unconventional **Hot Seat** format and discuss the ambivalent relationship between tourism and sustainability.

On Thursday, 8 March 2018, ITB Berlin 2018 will see a continuation of last year's theme, the International Year of Sustainable Tourism declared by UNWTO, in the shape of the Sustainable Development Day. Together with the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BIZ) and the German Society for International Cooperation (GIZ) speakers will spend the afternoon discussing this topic in Room 7.1a.

Once again, the show will dedicate a day to **barrier-free access**, and on Thursday, 8 March 2018 at the CityCube the DZT will hold the Accessible Tourism Day. On



Press contacts: Messe Berlin

Emanuel Höger
Press Spokesman and
Press and Public Relations
Director
Corporate Communication
Messe Berlin Group
Messedamm 22
14055 Berlin
www.messe-berlin.com
Twitter: @messedamm22

ITB Berlin / ITB Asia / ITB China:

Julia Wegener
PR Manager
Messedamm 22
14055 Berlin
T: +49 30 3038-2269
j.wegener@messe-berlin.de
www.messe-berlin.com

Additional information:

www.itb-berlin.com
www.itb-convention.com

Management board:

Dr. Christian Göke (CEO),
Dirk Hoffmann (CFO)
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Board: Wolf-Dieter Wolf
Commercial Register:
Amtsgericht Charlottenburg
(District Court)
HRB 5484 B
(Commercial Code)

Wednesday, 7 March, this year's Studiosus discussion will examine the impact of the recent tourism boom in **Greece**.

Focus on CSR at numerous other events

The seminar on **Gender Equality in Tourism** at the Palais am Funkturm on Thursday, 8 March, International Women's Day, will be of special significance. On average, women in the tourism industry continue to be paid less and seldom occupy higher positions. This seminar, which will be the start of a new series, will deal with this topic and let women from various parts of the world have their say.

Directly afterwards, the presentation will take place of the **Celebrating Her awards**. Held for the third time, the event is organised by the International Institute for Peace through Tourism (IIPT) India in cooperation with ITB Berlin and will honour five women from around the world for their important contributions to tourism.

Also taking place at the Palais am Funkturm, ITB Berlin's new awards venue, will be the **Sustainable Destinations Top 100 Awards** on Wednesday, 7 March, and the **ToDo! Award** on Thursday, 8 March. Presented by the Study Group for Tourism, this award recognises participation by local communities in tourism projects. The show has supported the ToDo! Award for many years by co-organising it and providing members of the jury.

Numerous activities by partners

Mecklenburg Vorpommern, the official partner country of ITB, will feature numerous sustainable tourism projects. Attractions will include a solar-powered boat on which visitors can take round trips of the National Park in the Peene region. Together with ITB Berlin the partner country is organising this year's **opening event on Tuesday, 6 March, which for the first time in the show's history will leave a zero carbon footprint**. In addition to specifically choosing local products ITB Berlin has become a forest shareholder in Fleesensee, a town in Mecklenburg Vorpommern, in order to offset any unavoidable CO2 emissions.

Zambia, the Convention and Culture Partner 2018, will by no means be in the shadows. At the **Zambia Forum** on Friday, 9 March, the focus will be on the sustainable development of culture tourism and promotion of cultural heritage sites in remote rural areas.

Hall 4.1 – the place to head

As in previous years, the events on **both stages in Hall 4.1** will focus on ecological and social responsibility. Thus, at the Youth Forum a workshop held by Prof. Heike Bähre, HWR Berlin, will invite visitors to examine the opportunities for **integrating refugees in the tourism industry**. Also taking place on the large stage will be a discussion organised by The Code and the working group ECPAT on the dangers of **voluntary tourism work**. Key topics will include protecting children from sexual abuse.

This is the fifteenth year that the PowWow for Tourism Professionals will take place on the small stage in Hall 4.1. On Wednesday, 7 March, the main topic will be coastal protection. Taking the North Sea as an example, a presentation by Universität Oldenburg will examine ocean pollution by plastics. Other programme highlights will include a panel discussion on **'Land and Resource Rights of Coastal Fishing Communities in the Era of Tourism Development'** as well as a presentation on sustainable fishing practices.

On all the days open to trade visitors it will be possible to gain an insight into sustainable activities at numerous destinations, including Iran, the Oder Delta, the Azores, Formentera, Dominica, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, as well as Kenya, which has much more to offer than 'Big Five' game hunting.

On Friday, 9 March, ITB Berlin will host **Cycling Day**. Coinciding with the anniversary of Hall 4.1, where sustainability is the key topic, will be the invention of the bicycle,

which took place 200 years ago. Over the course of the day numerous themed lectures will promote eco-friendly travel by bike, ranging from cycle tours in Iran's deserts to riding side by side with elephants in Kenya.

Rounding off the trade visitor days, ITB will be inviting visitors to the international **Responsible Tourism Networking Event** on Friday, 9 March at 6 p.m., which this year will take place for the tenth time at ITB Berlin on the small stage in Hall 4.1b.

About ITB Berlin and the ITB Berlin Convention

ITB Berlin 2018 will be taking place from Wednesday, 7 to Sunday, 11 March, and from Wednesday to Friday will be open to trade visitors only. ITB Berlin is the World's Leading Travel Trade Show. In 2017 a total of 10,000 companies and organizations from 184 countries exhibited their products and services to around 169,000 visitors, who included 109,000 trade visitors. Parallel with the show the ITB Berlin Convention, the largest event of its kind, will be held from Wednesday, 7 to Saturday, 10 March. Admission to the ITB Berlin Convention is free for trade visitors and exhibitors. For more information please visit www.itb-berlin.com, www.itb-convention.com and the ITB Social Media Newsroom.

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