

PRESS RELEASE

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Focus on sustainable and responsible tourism at ITB Berlin

Adventure Travel & Responsible Tourism is an expanding sector – 12th Pow-Wow for trade visitors with topical subjects and exemplary projects on all aspects of astro-tourism, adventure holidays and ecological travel – Hall 4.1b fully booked

Responsible travel and the designation by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) of the “International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development “ are the main themes at the world’s largest travel trade fair. The importance of this vigorously expanding market is reflected by the fact that Hall 4.1b, the venue for Adventure Travel & Responsible Tourism, is fully booked for the first time. From 8 to 12 March 2017 nearly 60 exhibitors from 35 countries will be presenting their latest offers and products for adventure and ecological travel, and for economically and socially responsible tourism.

The 12th Pow-Wow for Tourism Professionals, from 8 to 10 March 2017, is the meeting place for visitors, exhibitors, business partners and sponsors. This year’s slogan for this unique symposium is “Gazing into the night skies’ sparkling diamonds – A journey through the vast universe”. During the papers, panel discussions, workshops and networking events more international tourism executives and experts than ever before, including those from the Caucasus, Germany, Mexico, Russia, Kenya, Spain and Iran, will be explaining and debating controversial issues concerning responsible tourism, climate change, sustainability, geoparks, wildlife and astro-tourism.

David Ruetz, Director of ITB Berlin: “There is an increasing awareness in society about the need for a more responsible approach. Nowadays most people realise that this form of travel is a conscious recreational experience. Because of the internet and their own personal research, travellers are significantly better informed than they were just a few years ago. As long ago as 2004 an extensive platform for the sectors of adventure holidays and eco-tourism was being made available at ITB Berlin. In this way we want to support companies in their efforts to design tourism products and services that are economically, socially and ecologically responsible.”

Astro-tourism as a magnet for tourists

The 12th Pow-Wow is being opened by this year’s partner country Botswana with a cultural attraction that offers a foretaste of the show by the #lovebotswana ensemble. On the first day the main theme is that of astro-tourism. Botswana is one of those destinations with natural, clear night skies that are free of any light pollution. Trade visitors will be shown the importance of heavenly bodies for life on earth. Experts will explain the challenges facing the international travel industry as it seeks to implement astro-tourism in a sustainable and responsible way, and the impact on eco-systems of the increasing light pollution caused by artificial light. As an example, Dr. Andreas Hänel, an astronomer and the director of the planetarium at Museum am Schölerberg, Osnabrück, will present a paper entitled “The many facets of astro-tourism”, pointing out that 60 per cent of Europeans and 80 per cent of North Americans can no longer see the Milky Way.

In his keynote speech Harald Bardenhagen, astronomer and director of the Eifel National Dark Sky Park, will explain the importance of darkness for human health and biodiversity. He will also be presenting a workshop on astro-photography, with details about the right equipment for observing stars and planets. Tim F. Horn, director of the Zeiss Planetarium in Berlin, will conduct visitors on a tour of the universe. This



Neu 2017!



Pressekontakt:
Messe Berlin:
Emanuel Höger
Pressesprecher und Leiter
Presse- und Öffentlichkeitsarbeit
Corporate Communication
Unternehmensgruppe
Messedamm 22
14055 Berlin
T: +49 30 3038-2270
F: +49 30 3038-2279
hoeger@messe-berlin.de
www.messe-berlin.de
Twitter: @pr_messeberlin

ITB Berlin / ITB Asia / ITB China:
Julia Wegener
PR Manager
Messedamm 22
14055 Berlin
T: + 49 30 3038-2269
F: + 49 30 3038-912269
j.wegener@messe-berlin.de
www.messe-berlin.de

interactive presentation will offer live simulations of natural phenomena such as solar eclipses. The Astro-Tourism Day will end with a discussion by experts entitled "Challenges and benefits of astronomy and dark nights for sustainable development" and the "One-Minute Pitch Networking Cocktail", which is sponsored by Mexico. In addition, the Minister of Tourism of Mexico, Lourdes Berho, will give a welcome speech and a short lecture.

Focus on human rights

The second day of the Pow-Wow is also devoted to socially compatible tourism. Here exhibitors and experts will be explaining how others can learn from the experience of those who are already engaged in sustainable tourism. One example is provided by Slovenia. The Convention & Culture Partner of ITB Berlin 2017 is one of the few countries that has set itself the aim of becoming comprehensively "green". The discussion entitled "Slovenia makes you green!" will feature five tourism specialists from Slovenia who will be presenting the programme "Slovenia Green".

A highly topical issue for many years, to which ITB Berlin has always made its own contribution in the form of numerous initiatives, concerns human rights and the protection of children. Rika Jean-Francois, the CSR official of ITB Berlin and a Board Member of the Code, will be chairing a panel discussion on this subject. The speakers on "Child Protection in Tourism" will include Dorothy Rozga, Executive Director ECPAT International, and Damien Brosnan, Programme Manager, The Code. Afterwards other tourism companies will officially sign the "Child Protection Code". This will be followed by a discussion by the Round Table for Human Rights in Tourism, on the thorough implementation of human rights in the hotel industry.

Geoparks and the protection of species as an important legacy for future generations

UNESCO geoparks make a valuable contribution to the sustainable development of regions with geological sites and landscapes of international geoscientific importance. Prof. Dr. Nikolaos Zouros, President UNESCO European Geoparks Network, will be presenting new projects and significant activities in this field. Activity holidays are a rapidly expanding sector all over the world, and form the subject of the subsequent group of topics, under the heading of "Culture, Biodiversity and Adventure Tourism". Experts from Mexico, India, the Balkans, Russia and the Caucasus will be discussing various aspects, including: How can tourism experts develop sustainable adventure travel?

Using the "Race for Rhinos" as an example, the ITB partner country will be documenting successful projects for the protection of species. Jillian Blackbeard, Executive Marketing Manager Botswana Tourism Organisation and Secretary Tlhokomela Botswana, Endangered Wildlife Trust, will be reporting on the largest rhinoceros relocation programme in southern Africa, and will be showing how the country's tourism sector benefits from the continued survival of these animals, which are under threat of extinction.

A boom in bicycle tourism and wildlife watching

The "Responsible Tourism Clinics", on Friday, 10 March 2017, offer participants an opportunity to engage in direct discussions with experienced specialists from the field of sustainable tourism. In the panel discussion on "Developing successful cycle tourism products" Ádám Boder, EuroVelo and Advocacy Director European Cyclists' Federation, Kevin Kalfels, Press and Marketing Officer Romantischer Rhein, and Carolien Ruebens, Project Officer European Cyclists' Federation, will explain how and why cycle tourism has developed from a niche product to a booming sector. The other sessions will deal with "Certification for Sustainable Tourism", using the TourCert in the Danube region as an example, and "Community-based Tourism" as demonstrated by Kayah State (Myanmar), Sierra Gorda de Querétaro (Mexico) and Gems of Kenya.

During the afternoon of the final day of the Pow-Wow the focus will shift to "Wildlife Watching Tourism". Following a keynote speech by Anja Domnick, Project Officer UNESCO Wadden Sea World Heritage, there will be a master class seminar entitled

Weitere Informationen:

www.itb-berlin.de
www.itb-kongress.de

Geschäftsführung:

Dr. Christian Göke (Vorsitzender / CEO), Dirk Hoffmann (CFO)
Aufsichtsratsvorsitzender: Peter Zühlsdorff
Handelsregister: Amtsgericht
Charlottenburg, HRB 5484 B

”Make bird watching fit for tourism“. Afterwards Elmar Mai, a biologist and journalist, and Fabian Ritter, biologist and scientific advisor to Whale and Dolphin Conservation (WDC), will speak about the green paradise and whale watching in the Dominican Republic. There will then be papers on pristine Mongolia and the presentation of a new tourism model for Macedonia, as well as the initiative “Following the footprints of wildcats“ by the Selva Bananito Lodge and Reserve in Costa Rica. To conclude the day the Blue Yonder Responsible Tourism Clinic will be explaining about ways of communicating and marketing sustainability, before this year’s Pow-Wow closes with the 9th ITB Responsible Tourism Networking Event, giving everyone an opportunity to briefly pitch their own views and ideas.

About ITB Berlin and the ITB Berlin Convention

ITB Berlin 2017 will take place from Wednesday to Sunday, 8 to 12 March. From Wednesday to Friday ITB Berlin is open to trade visitors only. Parallel with the show the ITB Berlin Convention, the largest event of its kind, will be held from Wednesday, 8 to Saturday, 11 March 2017. Admission to the ITB Berlin Convention is free for trade visitors.

More details are available at www.itb-convention.com. Slovenia is the Convention & Culture Partner of ITB Berlin 2017. ITB Berlin is the World’s Leading Travel Trade Show. In 2016 a total of 10,000 companies and organisations from 187 countries exhibited their products and services to around 180,000 visitors, who included 120,000 trade visitors.

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