

CLOSING REPORT

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ITB Berlin 2018: Business is booming in the global travel industry

An economic boost from Berlin – All signs point to growth and a record year – ITB Berlin reaffirms its standing as the World's Leading Travel Trade Show

With a five per cent increase in business volume at ITB Berlin 2018 compared to last year, and excellent business being forecast for the coming months, the international travel industry is well on course for a record year. As ITB Berlin concluded, the global travel industry presented itself in good health and in an optimistic mood, more so than for a long time. The results of the five-day exhibition on the Berlin Exhibition Grounds mirrored the good atmosphere. The show, which had been booked to near capacity for months, impressively confirmed its role as a reliable economic indicator and forward-looking trendsetter. With around 110,000 trade visitors from Germany and abroad, ITB Berlin was able to reaffirm its standing as the World's Leading Travel Trade Show. Despite the warm spring weather around 60,000 members of the general public flocked to the display halls on the weekend to find out about the wide range of information available from exhibitors. The ITB Berlin Convention, which examined current issues such as overtourism and digitalisation, also underlined its role as the global travel industry's leading think tank.

The main reason for the industry's positive mood is the positive economic climate in the eurozone which according to leading economic institutes is better than at any time since the turn of the millennium. **Dr. Christian Göke, CEO of Messe Berlin GmbH:** "The consistent forecasts of sustained global economic growth for the next two years decisively contributed to the positive mood among exhibitors and visitors these past few days. Against the backdrop of a booming economy, record low employment and good wage settlements, more and more consumers are willing to spend money. Furthermore, because of the strong euro and correspondingly weak dollar holidaying in numerous countries outside the eurozone is becoming noticeably cheaper."

Dr. Christian Göke continued: "The extremely positive economic trend in the travel industry should not blind us to the fact that the industry faces great challenges around the world. The digital transformation of an entire industry continues to move forward apace and affects every company and provider, regardless. On the other hand, issues such as the need for greater security on one's travels, the increasingly important and controversial phenomenon of overtourism, and the globally changing face of travel brought about by companies such as Airbnb are decisively influencing the social discourse on the future of tourism. This year, ITB Berlin again presented itself as a platform that without exception debated all the important trends and the current issues in accordance with the industry's future needs."

From 7 to 11 March 2018, over a period of five days, more than 10,000 companies and organisations from 186 countries and regions exhibited their products to visitors in 26 halls on the Berlin Exhibition Grounds. Once again, there was a high percentage of buyers in a decision-making capacity: two-thirds of trade visitors said they were directly authorised to make buying decisions for travel products. Around 74 per cent of the ITB Buyers Circle attended in a decision-making capacity, with budgets that exceeded one million euros. More than one-third of the buyers present even had ten million euros and more at their disposal.

At this year's ITB Berlin attention focused on the partner region Mecklenburg-Vorpommern. It organised the opening ceremony, which for the first time left a zero-carbon footprint. Over the five days of the show the German federal state exhibited its wide range of tourism products in two halls. With its Baltic coastline and well-known Lakeland region, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is one of Germany's most attractive



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federal states. Ever since 1991 the state has been an important exhibitor at ITB Berlin. In Berlin the aim of the federal state in Germany's northeast was to attract greater international attention and at the same time to increase awareness for tourism in Germany. **Harry Glawe, Economics Minister of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern:** "Mecklenburg-Vorpommern overall successfully attracted the attention of visitors with its diversity and wide range of tourism attractions. The opening gala, the state's participation as a whole and its involvement with activities and events were well received at the show. This was clear from the many conversations and reactions from visitors. The show again demonstrated how important it is to draw attention to oneself. We would like to thank everyone involved who helped make the state's appearance an unforgettable event. We look forward to being back next year."

The huge prospects that **medical tourism** has to offer the global tourism industry were highlighted at ITB Berlin. Due to high demand this segment, which was introduced only last year at the World's Largest Travel Trade Show, was relocated to a larger hall (21b). This year again, Travel Technology was one of the segments which displayed strong growth. Exhibitors including eNett, Traso, Triptease and Paymentwall, which increased their display areas, returning exhibitors, among them Travelport, as well as the Hospitality Industry Club, a newcomer, highlighted the excellent prospects of this fast-growing segment. The large increase in Chinese exhibitors there was particularly noticeable. The online portal Ctrip displayed its products in Berlin for the first time.

Two new formats celebrated their debut in Berlin, reflecting strong growth in the Luxury Travel segment. With the new [Loop Lounge @ ITB](#) organised in collaboration with Loop, the trade show for luxury products, ITB Berlin had created a new platform for networking in an exclusive atmosphere with a select group of exhibitors, and with the first ITB Luxury Late Night the show provided an opportunity for visitors to cultivate contacts. Currently, luxury travel accounts for seven per cent of the market and annual growth is in double-digit figures. **David Ruetz, head of ITB Berlin:** "Luxury travel is booming and with our innovative formats we are responding to this welcome development. With this initiative we are also establishing ourselves in a role that devotes even more attention to this growth market and are showcasing this trend on the exhibition grounds."

For the third year running ITB Berlin organised the ITB Chinese Night, where visitors were able to find out more about the Chinese travel market, exchange views and establish new contacts. The event was held in collaboration with Jin Jiang International and Ctrip for around 300 representatives of the travel industry. Potential exhibitors also received information about ITB China 2018, which from 16 to 18 May will be taking place for the second time in the major city of Shanghai.

For the ITB Berlin Convention, the global travel industry's leading think tank, which hosted around 150 sessions featuring over 300 outstanding speakers, the event was also a success. Messe Berlin had been able to secure Zambia as the Convention & Culture Partner. Situated in the middle of southern Africa, this country is still largely untouched by tourism. However, it is gradually establishing itself as a popular travel destination. Other partners of the ITB Berlin Convention included the World Tourism Cities Federation (WTCF) in the role of co-host, Ctrip.com International, the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), and the Ministry for Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey.

Malaysia will be the official partner country of ITB Berlin 2019. "We want to increase tourism and establish Malaysia as a tourism destination", said **Dato' Sri Abdul Khani Daud** from Tourism Malaysia at ITB Berlin.

Wolfgang Waldmüller, president of the Regional Tourism Association of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern: "In its role as the partner region of ITB Berlin, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern was able to focus international attention on the diversity of the state that is Germany's most popular tourism destination. By showcasing the best of everything that Mecklenburg-Vorpommern has to offer between the Baltic and Lakeland region, particularly its nature attractions, we were able to attract the attention of international buyers, opinion-formers and potential visitors on an unprecedented scale and drew a huge response from the media. Whether it was the

spectacular opening gala to which more than 3,000 guests from 110 countries had been invited, our participation in the first Berlin Travel Festival, or the ITB Grand Finale, Germany's northeast left a lasting impression. We will continue where we left off and ensure that this tourism destination profits from the contacts we established."

Norbert Fiebig, president of the German Travel Association (DRV): "The desire of German citizens to travel could be felt in every hall at ITB Berlin and the foundation has been laid for 2018 to be a great success. ITB Berlin is not only a place for marketing destinations, but also an early indicator of how tourism bookings will develop for the summer travel season. In that respect the basic mood within the industry was very positive. This year, overtourism was a key topic at the show. Growth and responsibility go hand in hand and the travel industry is keenly aware of its responsibility. Once again, ITB Berlin picked up on the current trends and formulated new ones."

Dr. Michael Frenzel, president of the Federal Association of the German Tourism industry (BTW): "At ITB Berlin 2018 we witnessed everything: impressive figures, dominant themes and innumerable outstanding tourism products from Germany and around the world. Over the past few days reports of record figures, positive survey results and inspiring tourism products for upcoming holidays have made us optimistic that providers and visitors can look forward to 2018 being an outstanding year for tourism. ITB Berlin again proved that in our industry nations and people working together to understand each other goes without saying, and not just on the exhibition grounds. Hospitality, a cosmopolitan outlook and bringing people and cultures together – that is what we and our tourism products stand for."

The next ITB Berlin will take place from Wednesday, 6 to Sunday, 10 March 2019.

About ITB Berlin and the ITB Berlin Convention

ITB Berlin 2019 will be taking place from Wednesday, 6 to Sunday, 10 March, and from Wednesday to Friday will be open to trade visitors only. ITB Berlin is the World's Leading Travel Trade Show. In 2018 a total of 10,000 companies and organisations from 186 countries exhibited their products and services to around 170,000 visitors, including 110,000 trade visitors. Parallel with the show the ITB Berlin Convention, the largest event of its kind, will be held from Wednesday, 6 to Saturday, 9 March 2019. Admission to the ITB Berlin Convention is free for trade visitors and exhibitors. More details are available at www.itb-berlin.com, www.itb-convention.com and at [ITB Social Media Newsroom](#).

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