

World's largest travel and tourism show lifts industry mood



Mr Sudhir Vyas, the Indian Ambassador to Germany (left), with Mr. Anand P Seth, Dy. Director General, FIEO.

The Federation of Indian Export Organizations participated in ITB Berlin held from March 10-14 in the Germany Capital. The world's leading travel and tourism show, ITB Berlin provides a B2B platform for trade visitors, an excellent opportunity to meet business partners and to conduct business. As the Indian economy is increasingly getting globalised, next to leisure travel, business travel has become an important and profitable pillar of the travel industry. ITB Berlin is the perfect place to learn about new trends, concepts and cooperation possibilities and to deepen existing business relations.

With more than 180,000 visitors – of whom 108,000 are trade visitors – and over 11,000 exhibitors from 180 countries, ITB Berlin is the leading B2B-platform of all tourism industry offers. In addition, the world's largest tourism convention, Market Trends & Innovations, provides unique opportunities to benefit from the leading think tank of the global tourism industry. All levels of the value added chain were present at the show.

Inauguration

ITB Berlin was inaugurated with much fanfare and cultural events. There was a big presence from representatives of trade associations, ministries, government bodies, etc, including Mr Klaus Wowereit, the Governing Mayor of Berlin, Mr Klaus Laepple, President of the Federal Association of the German Tourism Industry, Mr Taleb Rifai, Secretary-General, World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Ertuğrul Günay, Minister of Culture and Tourism of Turkey,



From left, Dr. Eckart Cuntz, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany in Ankara; H. E. Ertuğrul Günay, Minister of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Turkey; Klaus Wowereit, Governing Mayor of Berlin in the opening ceremony.

Mr Rainer Brüderle, Federal Minister of Economics and Technology. The highlight of the opening ceremony was a colourful show by Fire of Anatolia from Turkey, the partner country. Participants at the show included tour operators, booking engines, destinations, airlines, hotels car rentals, travel agents, business tourism, health, spa tourism, sports tourism, travel technology, experience adventure and eco tourism, adventure tourism, education cultural tourism, hotels, travel agencies, car rental companies, tourism training schools, tourism associations, restaurants and cafes and travel related publications.

FIEO Participation

This was the first time that FIEO participated in ITB Berlin. The Federation's delegates came from trade in



Pavillion of Indian Tourism



FIEO participants interacting with foreign businessmen.

services in travel, tourism, and the medical tourism sectors. FIEO got prime space in ITB Berlin 2010 which proved to be an added advantage to the delegates. After the 2009 slowdown in the travel and tourism sector, FIEO participation was aimed at providing a platform to look ahead again to better times, now that the worst appears to be over. Both leisure travel and holiday travel are likely to make a comeback. ITB Berlin kicked off on a positive note as the event was sold out despite deep budget cuts around the world. The general mood at the event was much better than last year, again according to regulars, as exhibitors and visitors look ahead to better times. One trend, however, is clear: due to lack of time, ITB visitors are packing more and more appointments during the show. The event provided a unique opportunity to participants to deliver their brand message to the movers and shakers in the travel and tourism industry. It was also an excellent place to soak up market intelligence and get trend analysis to promote their respective business in travel and medical tourism.

FIEO members were able to avail of exhibition space at a highly subsidized cost. The Federation charged only Rs 45,000 for a fully furnished booth which included a table and

two chairs. Most other exhibitors paid double the price for the same facilities at ITB Berlin. Adjacent pavilions, including Bhutan's, offered similar space for \$1100; Sri Lanka sold for 1650 euros and the Indian Tourism Ministry for around 1600 euros.

Seminars were organised at the event by various countries to lure tourists in their countries. These seminars proved to provide a solid base of interaction between trade agents and trade visitors. DDG (Services) attended the seminar and introduced FIEO members who have the potential to deliver comfortable and tailor made options for Chinese outbound tourism.

Meeting with Indian Ambassador to Germany

DDG (Services) met Mr Sudhir Vyas, the Indian Ambassador, Ms Renu Pall, the Deputy Chief of Mission and Mr Ashok Kumar, Counsellor (Commercial). Mr Vyas and Ms Pall appreciated FIEO's endeavour to promote India's travel and tourism sector. He hoped that the FIEO delegates would develop long term business contacts at the event. They said that the total number of foreign tourist arrivals in India during 2009 was 5.11 million and the foreign exchange earnings amounted to Rs

54,960 crore as compared with Rs 50,730 crore in 2008. Both Mr Vyas and Ms Pall hoped that FIEO participation in such international events would help in increasing the inflow of tourists to India. Mr Ashok Kumar visited FIEO pavillion during the show. All the three senior diplomats extended their support to enable the participation.

Since Sri Lank pavillion was just opposite FIEO pavillion, DDG (Services) took opportunity of meeting Sri Lankan Ambassador to Germany and he appreciated FIEO initiatives in promoting the travel and tourism sector. Further, he was of the view that a lot of new avenues should be explored in this sector and hoped to increase the inflow and outflow traffic of tourists between India and Sri Lanka. He was briefed about various trade promotion initiatives initiated by FIEO and its participation in various international events.

Media Coverage and Awareness

ITB Berlin was extensively covered by the electronic and print media worldwide. More than 7,200 journalists attended, of whom 1,700 came from outside Germany. In addition to the industry's leading trade magazines, business and travel journalists from 90 countries reported on the latest travel trends and products. ■