

August 2010

International association meetings shrug off financial pressures: good attendance figures for 2010 and optimism for future growth

Results from a survey jointly carried out by ICCA and IMEX amongst the international association hosted buyers who attended the most recent IMEX in Frankfurt paint a very positive picture for this most resilient sector of the meetings industry.

More than 100 executives (one third of Association Day attendees) responded to the survey, three-quarters of whom organised or were about to hold meetings for more than 500 delegates in 2010, and over 15% of whom organised events of over 5,000 delegates. An impressive 31% reported higher actual or planned attendance for their 2010 events than in previous years and 46% indicated no change, with only 14% reporting slight reductions and fewer than one in ten reporting a "significant" fall in numbers. However, the financial pressures are clearly continuing: only 20% reported higher income from sponsors and exhibitions, 40% showed no change, but the remaining 40% suffered falls in financial support from this side of their budgets.

When asked about their projections for 2011, these executives painted an even more positive picture: almost one-third of associations will be running more meetings in 2011 than in 2010, with only 8% planning to organise fewer; and a massive 53% are projecting higher attendances than in 2010, compared to a tiny 6% who expect their delegate numbers to fall. This is the most positive forward forecast that these regular surveys have ever produced.

Martin Sirk, ICCA CEO responded to the results: "These results provide further powerful evidence that the international association meetings sector is holding firm through these economically rocky times. Like everyone they're faced with more conservative budgeting by their corporate sponsors, but their key constituents, the association members who attend their major meetings, are proving once again that they are loyal and willing to invest their time and money. Combined with ICCA's own statistical research showing the continued creation and growth of new association meetings, these results should reassure every destination and company targeting this sector that they have made the right strategic decision."

Carina Bauer, IMEX Group CEO added: "International associations will continue to be a key hosted buyer sector for IMEX and for our new IMEX America show in 2011. We understand just how strategically important their meetings are to our exhibitors, especially during recessionary or turbulent times, and we are committed to invest in their customised programmes at both shows to make sure their numbers continue to grow strongly. IMEX Association Day 2010 attracted the largest ever gathering of international association executives to take place in Europe, and we intend to keep breaking this record, year after year."

- Ends

Editors' notes:

The next IMEX will take place 24 - 26 May 2011 at Messe Frankfurt.

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- All IMEX press releases can be viewed or downloaded from www.imex-frankfurt.com/press.php
- High-resolution photographs of the show are available at www.imex-frankfurt.com/imexphotos.html
- Visitor and buyer statistics can be viewed at www.imex-frankfurt.com/stats.html

- IMEX is a previous winner of the AEO Trade Show of the Year Award and AEO Best Visitor Experience Trade Show Award. The show was also shortlisted for the UFI (the Global Association of the Exhibition Industry) Best Innovative Web-based Application for Exhibitors Award 2009.
- The IMEX Group has launched **IMEX America** - America's worldwide exhibition for incentive travel, meetings and events. It will take place at the Sands Expo and Convention Center at the Venetian/ Palazzo from 11 – 13 October 2011. www.imexamerica.com and on Twitter #imexamerica