



## Expanded IMEX on Target for Landmark Year:

Growth both from existing and new exhibitors, together with an expanded hosted buyer programme is the key feature of IMEX 2007. AEO (Association of Exhibition Organisers) award-winning meetings industry exhibition, IMEX, is on course for a record-breaking show when doors open on Messe Frankfurt's Hall 8 on April 17<sup>th</sup>.

The hosted buyer programme is expected to top 3,500, with the strongest ever participation of buyers from the longer-haul markets, specifically from North America, as well as a doubling of buyers from Australia. The programme continues to receive the support of the major international hotel chains, as well as airlines including Air Tahiti Nui, American Airlines, Iceland Air, Lufthansa and Swiss. Airline groups including the Star Alliance and SkyTeam will both be bringing hosted buyer groups to the show for the first time, as well as offering discounts on flights from around the world to IMEX for pre-registered visitors and exhibitors. For domestic visitors, German national rail network, Deutsche Bahn, will be offering its best ever fare price to IMEX in the form of a first class return for just 59 EUR.

An expanded English and German-language seminar programme together with high numbers of new exhibitors means that IMEX has once again succeeded in developing and refreshing its offering for both visitors and exhibitors.

### Strong appetite for stand space

Previous exhibitors have also shown a strong appetite for additional exhibition space with over 30 exhibitors already having opted to increase their space in 2007. Significant increases have been seen from exhibitors as diverse as Argentina, Carat Tours, Cox and Kings, Costa Rica, Egypt, Germany, Mexico, Morocco, Paris, Peru, Sri Lanka, Tourism Australia and Visit London. Marriott Hotels & Resorts and Fairmont Hotels will also be amongst the hotels increasing their presence at the exhibition. In line with industry trends the Eastern European presence continues to grow with increased space taken by Croatia, Czech Tourist Authority, Estonia, Moscow, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia and St Petersburg.

New exhibitors at IMEX will include Deutsche Messe (Hannover), Dubai International Convention and Exhibition Centre, Wyndham Hotel Group, Feria Valencia, Montenegro, Vienna International Hotels, Zimbabwe and Lebanon. The Canaries will also take their own stand for the first time. This is in addition to this years IMEX Wild Card winners – Addis Ababa, Ethiopia; Mures Country, Transylvania and the Cape Verde Islands – who have all won these sought after free of charge places at the exhibition awarded to new industry destinations.

### Bigger educational programme

In response to growing demand from visitors and exhibitors, IMEX organisers have focussed on extending and improving the show's educational programme. The global trade show now offers 35 educational seminars and events, aside from such New Vision initiatives as the Future Leaders Forum and the Politicians' Forum. The IMEX team has also worked closely with official partners, the German Convention Bureau, to make further inroads into the German buyers' market. As a result the number of German-language seminar sessions has more than doubled this year, with sessions running morning and afternoon every day. Each has been planned to appeal to specific audiences within the German meetings and incentive market. The programme has also been adapted to suit different knowledge levels so that seminars for beginners are clearly distinguished from those aimed at more experienced professionals. The new programme will be heavily promoted throughout Germany in the run-up to the show.

The popular Association Day programme has also been expanded and is forecast to attract over 250 association buyers from around the world to IMEX, with new groups of buyers attending including the AMC Institute, PCMA, Experient and Not-for-Profit.

IMEX's enduringly popular New Vision initiatives continue to attract some of the leading speakers in the global MICE market. Many of these projects now also provide continuity, increased profile and partnership opportunities all year round. High on the agenda for 2007 will be the Corporate Responsibility Centre, which will be constructed by Expoforce out of environmentally-friendly materials. This is intended as a live demonstration of what other exhibitors can achieve. 'Green' products and services will also be highlighted in the exhibitor manual to make it easier for exhibitors to make more environmentally-friendly choices. IMEX has also extended its commitment to environmental good practice by encouraging all participants to offset their travel to Frankfurt. A carbon calculator will be available on the website together with a link to an approved offset scheme.

### **New technologies on the rise**

The continued rise in demand for value-added event and meetings technologies means that the dedicated Tech Tap pavilion will showcase 11 exhibitors this year. They will include new exhibitors Pep-EVENT, Creator International, Sosoon and Option Finder.

The IMEX Women's Forum will also offer an especially strong line-up. Entitled, "Communicating for Success in a Global Environment", it will be moderated by Pat Durocher, MD of HelmsBriscoe International and Mary Power, President of the Convention Industry Council. Panellists include Anne Shutte, VP Global Sales North America, Accor Hotels and Resorts; Denise Macdonald, Director of Agency Sales, EMEA, Intercontinental Hotels Group; Kip Horton, Director of Sales EMEA, Starwood Hotels & Resorts; Hattie Hill, CEO Hattie Hill Enterprises Inc and Michael Gates, Group Managing Director of Richard Lewis Communications.

### **Future Leaders in six places**

The highly successful Future Leaders Programme (FLF), which is run in partnership with MPI, has undergone considerable expansion since its launch. Student forums will now take place in six separate locations in 2007: Warsaw, Frankfurt, Mexico, Montreal, Turkey and Thailand. The FLF during IMEX is being supported by Starwood Hotels, Frankfurt who will provide accommodation and host a drinks reception for the 130 potential MICE industry graduates. This year's speakers will include Didier Scaillet of MPI; Hattie Hill, CEO of Hattie Hill Enterprises; Patrick Delaney of Ovation

Group; Jurraien Sleijster, Executive VP of MCI HQ; Avinash Chandarana of MCI HQ; Michael Gates of Richard Lewis Communications and Ann Holmes, Senior Partner of AnnFacil Meetings and Management.

In addition, this year's Multicultural programme will concentrate on how to do business effectively in the emerging markets of China and India. The Politicians' Forum will again follow last year's model with a briefing to European political guests prior to a tour of the show followed by case study demonstrations.

The popular Professional Development Pavilion will showcase 30 exhibitors and deliver nine short educational sessions scheduled over three days. Sponsored by the Convention Industry Council, the pavilion has been redesigned to make information gathering easier and quicker. There will be a special emphasis on human resources issues plus a mentoring clinic thanks to the participation of UK coaching organisation, SHINE People and Places.

Says IMEX Chairman, Ray Bloom, "IMEX has now developed a world-class reputation and we are delighted that so many participants return year after year as a result of the positive business opportunities created. We have continued to innovate over the past year to introduce new and improved initiatives for both our visitors and exhibitors with a specific focus on improving business efficiency and effectiveness. We are looking forward to welcoming the industry back to Frankfurt in April for what is shaping up to be the busiest IMEX to date."

ENDS

[www.imex-frankfurt.com](http://www.imex-frankfurt.com)

Editors Notes+ IMEX 2007 will take place from 17 – 19 April in Hall 8, Messe Frankfurt. IMEX has announced it's dates until 2011 and these can be found on the IMEX website+ Over 3,300 companies representing 150 countries will exhibit at IMEX 2007+ Over 3,500 hosted buyers from almost 60 world markets will attend IMEX 2007, amongst an overall trade visitor total of more than 7,500+ A virtual exhibition continues online throughout the year at [www.imex-frankfurt.com](http://www.imex-frankfurt.com)

+ An extensive library of IMEX research and industry research can be downloaded from <http://www.imex-frankfurt.com/dataexchange.html>

+ Copies of all previous press releases and an extensive photo library can be found on the IMEX website

+ Awards IMEX has won:

- 2006 AEO (Association of Exhibition Organisers) award for 'Best Trade Show'

- 2005 AEO (Association of Exhibition Organisers) award for 'Best Visitor Experience at a Trade Show'

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