

# ITB Berlin comes to a successful conclusion: 90,127 attendees celebrate booming demand at the World's Leading Travel Trade Show

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The industry expects 2023 to be a record year despite economic challenges – Fully booked halls on the trade show's return: Personal contact crucial for tourism as a people's business – Positive response to the three-day focus on B2B customers – Growth in leading international buyers – 24,000 convention attendees at the leading travel industry event of its kind

*ITB Berlin 2023 has come to a successful end: With around 5,500 exhibitors from 161 countries, the World's Leading Travel Trade Show maintains its position as the leading platform for the global travel industry.*

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At ITB Berlin the international travel industry was delighted with the huge demand and people's desire for travel, despite the challenging market situation. Following the break due to the pandemic and taking as its slogan 'Open for Change', the World's Leading Travel Trade Show was back for the first time as an exclusively B2B event and confirmed its standing as the leading platform of the global travel industry. Over the three business days a total of 90,127 attendees from more than 180 countries were in Berlin. For ITB Berlin, the ITB Buyers' Circle with its 1,300 members was also an impressive success. Membership of this exclusive circle was limited to leading travel industry buyers. Their sales volume increased noticeably, and international participation grew from 50 per cent in 2019 to 70 per cent overall. The international nature and diversity of the approximately 5,500 exhibitors from 161 countries was equally impressive. ITB Berlin also attracted considerable media attention, with around 3,000 media members and 333 travel bloggers and high-profile international political figures at the event.

### **Big boost for the industry**

At ITB Berlin the industry agreed that 2023 could become a record year – people's desire for travel is back in many parts of the world. Only the Asia-Pacific region is lagging somewhat behind – due among other reasons to China opening up its borders late. "Over the past few days the tourism industry has displayed incredible confidence despite the difficult overall situation and geopolitical crises", said Dirk Hoffmann, Managing Director of Messe Berlin.

### **Personal contact crucial for the people's business that is tourism**

"This year's ITB Berlin was proof of the vital need to meet face-to-face. We are delighted with the trade show's spectacular comeback as a live event and the huge response from exhibitors and visitors. Our industry is a people's business, and not without reason – everyone at ITB Berlin agreed with that". Numerous networking formats including the ITB Speed Networking event, get-togethers and events on exhibitors' stands as well as evening events on the exhibition grounds and in Berlin's city centre were proof of the desire to meet in person.

The **ITB Berlin Convention** with high-profile figures attending offered wide-ranging orientation on specialist subjects. At 18 theme tracks, 400 internationally recognised top speakers took part in a total of 200 sessions and discussed highly pressing topics as well as current trends including digitalisation, Artificial intelligence and the skills shortage. Under the heading 'Mastering Transformation', experts presented ways to turn the pressing global challenges facing the industry into opportunities. A total of 24,000 attendees visited the lectures, panels and discussions at the leading international thinktank of the travel industry.

Notwithstanding the joy and euphoria following the global recovery of the markets, the industry also agreed that having overcome the pandemic it now faced enormous challenges. Prior to the pandemic criticism had already been mounting that “business as before” would no longer really be possible and that growth could only be achieved by taking all aspects of sustainability into account. Socially responsible tourism has long been on the agenda of the World’s Leading Travel Trade Show. This year it again offered a wide range of panel discussions, seminars and lectures, in order among other things to raise awareness for social responsibility in tourism. The Equality in Tourism Award, presented for the first time on International Women’s Day at ITB Berlin 2023, aims to draw global attention to gender equality in tourism. Three candidates made the final – the award went to the tour operator Travel Excellence from Costa Rica, followed by Adventure Women from the USA and Etur from Ecuador.

### **Fully booked halls on the trade show’s return**

Fully booked halls also reflected the industry’s positive mood. Exhibitor numbers were especially high in the Travel Tech and Cruise segments at this year’s show. Among individual regions the Arab countries were particularly well represented. Overall, many exhibitors occupied noticeably larger stands this year and a lot of tourism companies were back after a long break. Others in turn were newcomers at this year’s ITB Berlin. The new multi-purpose hall hub27 made a successful debut.

As well as ITB Berlin, the Official Host Country Georgia also welcomed visitors with open arms. Taking as its slogan ‘Infinite Hospitality’, the destination also presented its tourist attractions at a spectacular opening gala on the eve of the show, attended by both the host country and high-profile figures from the industry and politics. Over the next few days, B2B customers visiting the new multi-purpose hall hub27, Hall 4.1, the south entrance and attending many activities and events throughout the exhibition grounds were able to gain an insight into the wide-ranging tourist attractions the country in the Caucasus had to offer.

### **The next ITB Berlin will take place from 5 to 7 March (Tuesday to Thursday) 2024 on the Berlin Exhibition Grounds.**

\*The total number of exhibitors without additionally represented companies who as co-exhibitors solely distribute information material for example.

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