

Malta Declaration on the Role of Market Intelligence in the development of European tourism  
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The European Travel Commission (ETC) has been at the forefront of tourism market research in Europe for 20 years through the work of its Market Intelligence Group. To mark this important anniversary, ETC declared 2006 the Year of Market Intelligence and staged the organisation's Second Executive Summit and Symposium on Market Intelligence in Malta on 4 October.

Led by Mr. Arthur Oberascher, ETC President and Malta's Minister for Tourism & Culture, Dr. Francis Zammit Dimech, the Symposium provided the launching pad for the Malta Declaration on the Role of Market Intelligence in the Development of European Tourism which was adopted by the members of the European Travel Commission - 37 National Tourist Offices (NTOs) in Europe - at their General Meeting held in Malta the previous day.

The premise of the Malta Declaration is that "Market intelligence is vital to the successful development of tourism worldwide, being the bedrock on which all effective marketing is based. It is a core competence of the European Travel Commission (ETC), adding value by transforming market data and information into a market knowledge management system..... ETC, in its drive to make market intelligence part of its 'culture' as a knowledge agency for tourism markets and marketing, provides market intelligence services to support its member NTOs".

The objectives for organizing the Symposium & 2nd Executive Summit were to provide a platform for the presentation of a number of topics by a range of speakers from various disciplines on a variety of Market Intelligence issues and insights. Perspectives from the national, intergovernmental and commercial sectors were represented by the speakers.

'Information is the basis for effective marketing, and transforming information about markets into market intelligence is at the heart of the mission of national tourist organisations: to act as intermediary between guest and product', said Oberascher.

These days the importance of market intelligence comes into particularly sharp focus as Europe's tourism industry sets its sights on new source markets in parts of the world such as India, Brazil, Russia and China.

To this end, ETC also announced the imminent launch of a new study on the Chinese Outbound Tourism, produced jointly with the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) which provides a fascinating look into the travel trends and potential for future business to Europe from this exciting emerging market - highlights of which were presented at the Symposium.

The Symposium and Executive Summit, which was attended by top officials and CEOs of the NTOs who are members of ETC, together with marketing and research directors from a selection of NTOs plus representatives from the trade, was addressed by:

- œ Prof. Dr. Walter Schertler - University of Trier, Germany - Using Information & Communications Technologies for Tourism Market Intelligence.
- œ Ms Sandra Carvao - World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), Spain - The Role of Market Intelligence in UNWTO
- œ Rolf Freitag - IPK International, Germany - Using Market Intelligence in the Commercial World
- œ Tom Jenkins - European Tour Operators Association (ETOA), U.K. - The Chinese Outbound Travel Market
- œ Prof. Tony Seaton - University of Bedfordshire, U.K. - Exchanging Best Practice in the Field of Market Intelligence - Segmentation Methodologies.
- œ Prof. Egon Smeral - Austrian Institute of Economic Research and University of Innsbruck, Austria - Meeting the Needs of the Tourism Industry - Evaluation & Measurement.

The Summit was drawn to a close by the Chairman of ETC's Market Intelligence Group, Mr Leslie Vella (Malta Tourism Authority), with the adoption of the Malta Declaration.

The full text of the Malta Declaration & presentations from the Symposium can be found on ETC's website:

<http://www.etc-corporate.org/modules.php?name=Content&pa=showpage&pid=199>

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