



HAPCO / EFAPCO Think FORUM

12-13|03|2015
King George Hotel
Athens

HAPCO PRESS RELEASE for EFAPCO Website

HAPCO/EFAPCO ThinkFORUM: The Greek meetings industry in the hands of the private sector

The HAPCO/EFAPCO ThinkFORUM organised by HAPCO, the Hellenic Association of Professional Congress Organizers, and held at a downtown hotel in Athens brought together professionals of the meetings industry from Greece and abroad.

Several presidents of tourist associations addressed the FORUM and stressed the importance of meetings and events in the joint endeavour to develop the Greek meetings industry. Moreover, representatives from numerous medical associations shared examples and experiences of outstanding medical conferences held in Greece that today constitute significant case studies.

In line with the honest co-operation developed among associations and private companies, **SETE announced that a special body is to be set up in co-operation with Marketing Greece and HAPCO with the exclusive objective to promote the Greek MICE product.**

Both the agenda and the debates focused on issues related to the daily operation of the meetings industry when inextricably linked to healthcare (medical conferences), technology (the adoption of new applications when organising events) and current developments in the MICE market and the brand “Greece” as a meetings destination at large.

The organisers benefited from technology and adopted innovative applications, thus enhancing the interactive character of the event, and allowing participants to assess all sessions and take part in a final voting session that produced the following results:



Greece and the Meetings Industry:

- 90% of participants believed that promoting the Greek meetings industry and Greece as a top meetings destination was an overriding priority.
- 73.33% of participants felt that synergy between the public and private sectors is vital in meeting that objective.
- 50% of participants found the existing conference/hotel infrastructure in Greece to be poor.
- 61.1% of participants said the state of play in the MICE sector in Greece was “mediocre” compared with other European countries.
- 75% of participants believed the political situation significantly affected the position of Greece in the world meetings industry map.
- 60% of participants found that “Greece” as a “branded” meetings destination was still weak internationally.
- 66.6% of participants considered the existence and active involvement of destination Convention Bureaus to be crucial.

Medical conferences:

- The Greek meetings market has been greatly affected by the EOF Circular and the SFEE Disclosure Code according to 53.3% of participants.
- 47% of participants felt that the workload of PCOs had increased sharply because of the applications to EOF while 23.5% felt it had increased considerably, 17.6% said it had increased somewhat and 11.7% greatly.
- 82.35% believed that EOF and SFEE should be aligned with regard to the approval of medical conferences.
- 61.9% considered that the EOF-SFEE regulations prevented some Greek areas with meetings infrastructure from attracting medical conferences.

New technologies and the organisation of meetings/events:

- 33.3% confirmed that they make great use of new technologies when organising an event, another 33.3% used them to a large extent and the remaining 33.3% agreed that they used them to a certain extent.
- 44.4% considered the use of social media indispensable for promotional purposes and image creation, as well as in the organisation of events/meetings, 44.4% believed so to a large extent, and 11.1% considered social media moderately important.
- 66.6% found the development of the Greek MICE market in terms of new technologies “mediocre” compared with other countries.



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Within the two-day programme the General Assemblies of HAPCO and EFAPCO

were held. The General Assembly of EFAPCO, the European Federation of the Associations of Professional Congress Organisers, celebrated its 10th anniversary “coming back home” to Athens, where it was launched in 2005, after HAPCO, one of the founding members holding the role of General Secretary in the EFAPCO Executive Committee, volunteered to organise and host the meeting.

The forum, according to participants, was crowned with **full success**, the only shortcoming being the “non-attendance” of government officials, who declined the invitations of the organising committee, preferring, instead, to be conspicuous by their absence both from the Opening Ceremony and the FORUM itself, thus, in essence, evading a dialogue with the industry’s stakeholders.

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