

## Twenty years promoting Berlin as a congress location – Now post-Covid restart is the key task

- Since 2001, the *visitBerlin* Berlin Convention Office has been marketing Berlin as a destination for meetings and congresses, and acquiring events for the city
- Major economic factor for Berlin: Congress attendees account for 25% of annual overnight stays in the city's hotels
- Hygiene guidelines and the Berlin Congress Fund: Together with its partners, the Berlin Convention Office is actively supporting the relaunch of Berlin's MICE sector

**Berlin, 8 July 2021** Since 2001, the *visitBerlin* Berlin Convention Office (BCO) has been promoting the city globally as a congress and event metropolis. In this time, the BCO has worked together with partners such as the Berlin Messe to attract over 1200 events to the city, including European and world congresses held by many international associations. Today, the congress, meetings and conventions sector is one of the most important factors in the city's economy. On average, the congress and convention business accounts for one quarter of annual overnight stays in the city's hotels. Moreover, congress participants staying overnight in Berlin spend an average of € 222 a day\*, and thus more than private tourists (€ 205.80\*\*).

When the Covid-19 pandemic started, the Berlin Convention Office worked with partners from business and politics to actively support the MICE sector, among other things, by drafting hygiene guidelines for safe events and setting up the Berlin Congress Fund.

**Burkhard Kieker**, CEO *visitBerlin*: "Berlin is now one of the world's leading congress metropolises – the outcome of years of successfully marketing the city. At present, with the Covid-19 pandemic, the sector is facing its greatest challenge. It is our job to work together with our partners to ensure Berlin can again take its place among the top congress locations."

**Marco Oelschlegel**, Director Conventions, *visitBerlin* Berlin Convention Office: "Over the last twenty years, the Berlin Convention Office has played an active role in supporting Berlin as it moved in the top league of congress destinations. We are working closely with our partners to ensure the city can return to its former strengths once the pandemic is over. With the developments over the last weeks, there are good reasons to be optimistic – with the requisite hygiene schedules, indoor events can again be held in Berlin with up to 1000 guests. With our 'Plan Berlin' campaign and the Sustainable Meetings initiative we are preparing Berlin for the future."

### Promoting meetings and congresses in Berlin during the Covid-19 pandemic

With the start of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Berlin Convention Office focused its efforts on supporting the meetings and event sector, which has been so severely hit. In cooperation with *visitBerlin* Convention Partner and other partners in the city's event sector, this led to drafting [a Hygiene Framework Concept for Berlin's event industry](#). With measures such as Covid-19 antigen tests, a [number of pilot events](#) have evaluated how business-sector meetings and congresses of up to 500 attendees can be held safely.

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## Milestones from 20 years of promoting Berlin as a congress destination

The major milestones in 20 years of promoting Berlin as a congress location include establishing in June 2015 the *visitBerlin* Convention Partner, the Berlin congress sector network, and launching in 2016 the biennial [Berlin MICE Summit](#), the leading fair for the Berlin meetings and conventions industry. In addition, [Berlin Questions](#), the Berlin conference on the pressing questions of our time, was unveiled in 2017. The fourth edition of this event from 11 – 14 August this year again provides a forum for discussion and debate with invited experts and original thinkers from the fields of politics, business, science and culture.

## Congress highlights 2001 – 2021

Here, we are presenting just a selection of the many top-flight congresses Berlin has hosted over the past twenty years:

- The annual DGPPN Congress held by the largest medical association focused on mental health in Germany; approx. 10,000 participants annually
- 2002: European Congress of Cardiology; with 24,000 participants Berlin's largest congress as yet
- 2009: Joint congress of the European CanCer Organisation and the European Society of Medical Oncology; Europe's largest oncology congress with 15,000 professionals and experts from the area
- 2009: World Health Summit première event
- 2012: Annual European Congress of Rheumatology (EULAR); with 15,000 participants
- 2013: 21st United European Gastroenterology Week (UEGW); with a total of 12,000 participants
- Since 2013, DKOU German Congress for Orthopaedics and Accident Surgery; annually 11,000 participants
- 2017: Congress of the International Society on Thrombosis and Haemostasis (ISTH) and Annual Scientific and Standardization Committee Meeting (SSC) of the ISTH; a total of 9,700 participants
- 2017: 17th World Congress of Psychiatry (WPA); a total of 12,000 participants
- 2018: Annual Meeting of the European Association for the Study of Diabetes (EADS) and FEND Annual Conference; a total of 18,000 participants
- July 2021: International AIDS Society Conference on HIV Science (IAS); 6,000 participants expected, virtual event with a partner location in Berlin

\*Source: Kongressbericht 2019, Investitionsbank Berlin \*\*Source: "Tourism as an Economic Factor for the City of Berlin 2016"

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