



Madrid, 4 December 2021

The Spanish capital is co-organising this annual event held by BestCities Global Alliance, a network of cities that host international conferences

## Madrid explores the enormous value of conference legacy at Global Forum 2021

- This event will bring the alliance's 11 member destinations and 20 international associations to Madrid, where they will be able to discover the city's MICE amenities *in situ*
- One of the forum's highlights is the "Madrid Challenge", a charter of commitment to be included in the BestCities standards which will foster the introduction of legacy in all of the member cities' conference bidding processes
- Global Forum 2021 includes training and networking activities as well as talks by professionals and associations, and is a testimony to Madrid's ability to organise safe events guaranteed to be successful that take sustainability and legacy criteria into account

The city of Madrid is currently hosting the Global Forum 2021. This annual event is organised by BestCities Global Alliance, an international network of cities that are premier conference, convention and professional meeting destinations. The Spanish capital, which has been a member of the alliance since 2017 via Madrid Convention Bureau (MCB), is co-organising the event, which will bring the alliance's 11 member destinations and 20 international associations to the city.

At the Madrid edition, Global Forum will once again focus on one of the most topical subjects in the MICE tourism sphere: conference legacy. In this regard, it will examine how associations can add value to their conferences by promoting this aspect linked to environmental, social and economic sustainability, which creates positive, lasting benefits for the whole of society. Following the Global Forum in Madrid, in 2022 the host city will be Vancouver, with a new edition that will also revolve around legacy and, in particular, measuring the return on legacy initiatives.

As host of this year's forum, Madrid will have a chance to promote its specialised MICE offerings *in situ* amongst the attendees as part of its commitment to fostering these sorts of in-person, in-destination promotional activities, which are very effective and increasingly demanded by professionals. At the same time, the event will support and promote the image of the companies in the city's tourism sector that are affiliated with Madrid Convention Bureau (MCB), which are collaborating on the programme of activities.

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Global Forum 2021 provides a great opportunity to continue to demonstrate that Madrid is a leader in this area, with a range of first-rate offerings that are constantly adapted to suit the sector's needs and the latest trends, in addition to providing every guarantee of health safety. For this reason, this in-person event includes all of the prevention measures currently required. It will also enable Madrid to bolster its image in the MICE industry media by holding a parallel press trip for four foreign journalists.

### **Madrid Challenge**

One of the highlights of this professional meeting is the "Madrid Challenge", a charter of commitment signed by the alliance's 11 members and the associations attending Global Forum 2021, with the aim of contributing to the creation of legacy projects associated with the conferences that they host.

From now on, this charter will be part of the BestCities standards and will entail a yearly audit on the alliance's members to verify that they are working to further the development and introduction of legacy in their conference bidding processes and to identify local agents that they can work with to implement these sorts of actions. It also lays the foundations for any association to take on the challenge of including legacy in its destination requirements. In parallel, BestCities is inviting attendees to take part in "Engage for Good", an activity that will benefit the Spanish Red Cross.

### **A programme underpinned by sustainability and legacy criteria**

The forum's organisation and its programme, which includes various training and networking activities, aim to show that Madrid can host safe events guaranteed to be a success that are designed with sustainability and legacy criteria in mind. In view of this, throughout Global Forum 2021 zero single-use plastic will be employed, the use of natural lighting and ventilation will be preferred, surplus stock in food and beverage services will be managed to avoid waste, information will be offered in digital rather than paper format and items distributed to participants will be able to be reused in the future (for example, the accreditation is made of seed paper and can be planted). Moreover, the event's management meets gender equality criteria and the sending of sexist messages will be avoided. Participants will also be informed of the sustainability measures that have been taken.

The programme was designed to take into account essential aspects like accessibility and the inclusion of disadvantaged groups via two activities: a visit to the Ilunion Suites hotel to take part in a blind breakfast and another, to the Red Cross, to learn about the role it can play as a local partner and the projects it is carrying out in Madrid. Part of the

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programme will also be devoted to putting some of Madrid's MICE tourism ambassadors in contact with the different international associations taking part in the event.

In addition, the forum will include a number of talks given by various professionals and associations on some key areas linked to legacy and sustainability. Armando del Rey (Corral de la Morería flamenco club), for instance, will give a talk entitled "Living in the Now with an Eye on the Future", and Gastón Martínez Heres (La Osa Co-op), Rodrigo Ciórraga (Refood España Association), Manuel Cobos (Cobos Catering) and Javier García (World Central Kitchen) will discuss zero food waste at events.

With respect to legacy in particular, the forum will feature esteemed presenters such as Kai Troll (Association World/Best Buddies EMEA/ISCA), as well as Natalia Carballo (Clínica Anderson) and Alessandro Cortese (European Society for Radiotherapy and Oncology), who helped to design ESTRO, the first congress that Madrid won due to its legacy proposal, and Fernando Riaño (ONCE).

### **About BestCities**

Berlin, Cape Town, Dubai, Dublin, Copenhagen, Houston, Melbourne, Singapore, Tokyo, Vancouver and Madrid make up the BestCities Global Alliance. Their mission is to work together with the aim of achieving excellence in the organisation of international conferences./

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