



PRESS RELEASE

ECM, organised by Madrid City Council, will gather tourism marketing professionals together to debate new city branding models

Madrid hosts the *European Cities Marketing* meeting for the first time

- Robert Govers, founder of the International Place Branding Association, Fred Dixon, president of NYC & Company, and Frans Van der Avert, director of Amsterdam Marketing, are some of the experts scheduled to speak at the event.
- *Welcome to the age of democratic city branding* is the theme of the meeting, which will explore the challenges faced by professionals in the tourism industry.
- The cities of Copenhagen, Munich, Istanbul, Nantes and Davos, among others, will share their branding experiences.
- The meeting, from 24 to 27 February, will bolster the process of strengthening the Madrid brand that the city is currently engaged in.

Madrid, 25 February 2016

For the first time ever, Madrid will host the spring meeting of European Cities Marketing (ECM), a non-profit organisation that promotes networking between convention, leisure and city branding professionals from Europe's largest cities for the purpose of sharing knowledge and best practices.

Madrid, which is a member of ECM, has been chosen to host the latest edition of the meeting from 24 to 27 February. The event will draw international tourism professionals who will debate and work on the challenges facing the sector in the global and changing context of today's world.

The Madrid Destino Tourism Department, which is organising this edition of the meeting in conjunction with ECM, will present a programme focused on "democratic city branding".

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Over the course of the meeting, various experts will speak on the subject of city branding. These include online reputation and destination branding expert Robert Govers, NYC & Company president Fred Dixon and Amsterdam Marketing director Frans Van der Avert. Their lectures and presentations represent an opportunity to strengthen the process of reflection and adoption of best practices that is currently being pursued by the city.

Under the theme of *Welcome to the age of democratic city branding*, ECM's first meeting of the year will analyse city branding, a process that is now more complex than ever due to the emergence of social networks. In the digital era, the city belongs to the people. Its image and brand are shared 24 hours a day on global platforms around the planet. Photos of trips on Instagram, recommendations on Facebook, opinions on TripAdvisor and online blogs with reputation rankings play a crucial role in determining a city's image.

During the meeting, participants will be able to attend lectures providing the keys to understanding the tourism industry of the future, and presentations describing experiences in other destinations. This edition of the meeting will share how Copenhagen gave its people a voice and a vote in its advertising, how Nantes changed its image from "old industrial city" to "new global city", how Munich is defying stereotypes and how Istanbul is marketing itself as a dual city. Hamburg and Paris will also provide examples to inspire other tourism professionals.

The meeting will also feature presentations on Davos, which turns into the global hub of power and influence once a year, and on the aspirations of Billund, the headquarters of the Lego company, which aims to become the children's capital of the world.

In addition to acting as host of the European Cities Marketing meeting, the Tourism Department of Madrid City Council's Madrid Destino, will familiarise conference attendees with Madrid's gastronomic variety and its wide range of leisure and cultural activities, through informal meetings held at Corral de la Morería and the Santiago Bernabéu stadium, as well as tapas routes and tours for lovers of art and architecture.

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