internet site review

http://www.europeancitiesmarketing.com/default.asp

European cities marketing

In this issue of journal Tourism a web site published by European Cities Marketing (ECM) association will be briefly presented. This new version of ECM's web site was launched during the General Assembly held in June 2008 in Belgrade, Serbia. European Cities Marketing is the leading European association of City Tourist Offices and Convention Bureaus dedicated to the promoting and building partnerships between European cities which are focused on the MICE (Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions) tourism market segment. Currently the membership of this organization consists out of 134 major European cities from 32 countries which makes this organization very reputable in the MICE industry. The ECM's headquarter is located in Dijon, France.

ECM's main goal is to promote Europe on the international tourism market as the unified MICE destination and to offer a platform for European cities to share expertise and work together in order to promote the idea that European cities are not only competitors on the tourism market but that they can also be collaborators that pursue common interests.

There is a variety of benefits available to ECM members. ECM serves as an open forum for discussion, learning and sharing experiences, it provides contacts and networking opportunities among fellow professionals, it offers reduced registration fees for all network meetings and conferences, access to ECM's intranet, access to ECM's electronic library, subscription to newsletter on the latest trends in European city tourism and meetings industry etc.

ECM's web site offers variety of information concerning different areas of interest that could be relevant for the MICE professionals. These areas of interest are divided in the different sections of the web site. They cover variety of topics such as activities carried out by the ECM association, events organized by the ECM, press releases, member list, latest news etc. One of the most interesting sections of this web site is section named "Destination Finder". This section features an application which has been design to allow to professional conference organizers (PCOs) to choose a destination for their meeting or event by allowing easy access to key information about the facilities available in ECM member cities. Another interesting feature of this web site can be found on the web page named "Members" which offers a complete list of ECM member cities and their geographical position in the form of Google maps mashup.

From the technical point of view it could be concluded that ECM web site, although technically not very sophisticated, has very good performance. The web site has very modern and clean design, it loads very quickly and there are no broken links. The navigation menu, which is located on the top static section of the home page, is clear and visible which makes this web site easy to navigate and very user friendly. Minor shortcoming of this web site is the fact that it does not feature many web 2.0 functionalities which could be very useful for informal networking of the ECM member cities and fellows professionals. The only technical problem encountered during this review was the fact that the RSS feeds located on the "Contact" page of the web site related to the ECM Events, ECM Trade Shows and ECM News were not working properly.

Finally one can conclude that ECM web site is a very useful, informative and should be a "must see" web site for every tourism professional specialized for the MICE market segment.

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