



European City Collaboration

Locum's chairman **Richard Tibbott** now goes behind the rhetoric to look at one example of city tourism collaboration - and assesses whether any lessons can be drawn from the example of the European Cities Tourism network.

City collaboration may sound wonderful in principle – but how does it work in practice? After all, different metropolises may have very different ambitions, attractions – climates even. I've been looking at how one pioneering network project attempts to find common themes and best practice in cities across our continent.

Over the last twenty years we have seen almost constant strong growth in 'city breaks', and this trends shows no sign of abating. Not only are the low cost airlines now making a wider range of cities accessible, they leave more in travellers' wallets for short break spending and for

encourage a pattern of more frequent short breaks. European holiday behaviour of the mid to affluent market segments continue to add 2nd, 3rd and 4th short breaks during the year. Now the original choice menu of London, Paris, Vienna, Madrid and Rome is supplemented with a

massive list of cities – Bilbao and Barcelona and Prague were the early additions; now Warsaw, Marseilles, Glasgow, Dublin and Prague have led a growing set of competent city destination-management organisations with ambitious programmes.

The European Cities Tourism network, started 15 years ago by French city tourism managers, now operates across the new Europe. It is a mature and confident network of city tourism managers, promoting and linking the interests of European cities. The network connects more than 85 major cities from 30 countries.

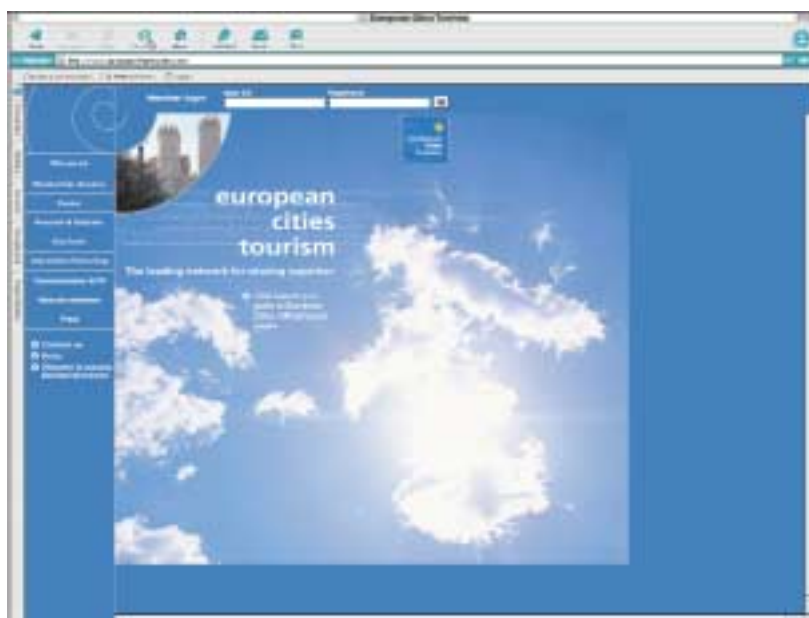
European Cities Tourism aims to strengthen city tourism by communicating information, sharing knowledge and expertise



*Claes Bjerkne, General Manager,
Göteborg & Co, Sweden
President, European Cities Tourism*

The impact and success of European Cities Tourism is as high as our mountains

Friedrich Kraft, Innsbruck, Austria



I find my membership provides me
with a helicopter view

Elizabeth Jeffreys, Jersey City

and working together on an operative level. It represents the cities' interests to the EU and other tourism organisations. This membership network provides an unrivalled forum for sharing challenges, and learning opportunities and providing contact with fellow professionals. Cities which comply with the following conditions can become members:

- more than 100,000 inhabitants
- more than 3,000 hotel beds
- conference facilities
- a significant monumental and historic heritage
- cultural events programme

The programme of network activity includes:

- A platform allowing professional peers to develop a personal network amongst 85 managing directors of city tourist destination management organisations
 - Seminars and conferences that are specifically designed for destination management. Members do not pay a registration fee for the network meetings in spring and autumn and enjoy reduced conference rates at the annual conference.
 - Free internet connection to www.visiteuropeancities.info, a portal of official city tourist board sites

- Bi-monthly newsletters on the latest trends in European City Tourism
 - Comparing each city's arrivals and overnight stays with the rest of Europe on a monthly and annual basis
 - The option to participate in joint marketing activities of European City Cards

- Negotiation of special prices for members with commercial partners such as publishers of guidebooks etc.

The ECT network takes collaborative initiatives on a broad front using the skills and expertise of a 'lead city' to spread good practice and develop a benchmark set of comparators. The current working groups focus on shared interests and development initiatives in IT, research and statistics, marketing and communications, and 'City Cards'.

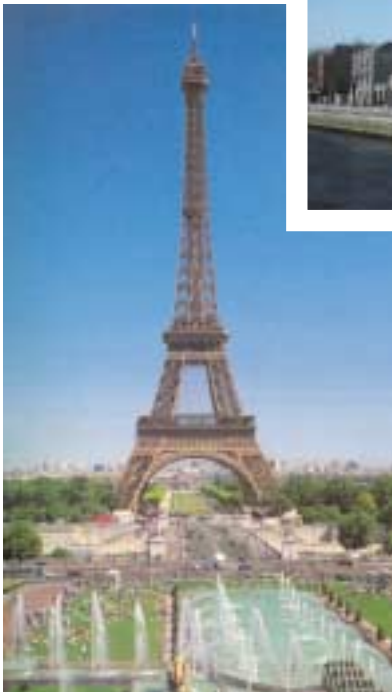
The research and statistics group provides free statistics such as nights and arrivals for more than 100 cities and 28 source markets and is available on a monthly basis for certain destinations. (Log onto the TourMIS site, then click on City Tourism in Europe). The programme provides an opportunity for exchange of information and effective co-operation. Co-ordination of research activities is encouraged. The collaboration can provide development of

At European Cities Tourism, you will meet friends and colleagues from tourist offices or companies in...
 Aachen, Germany
 Aix-en-Provence, France
 Amsterdam, Netherlands
 Andorra
 Barcelona, Spain
 Basel, Switzerland
 Bergen, Norway

Berlin, Germany
 Bern, Switzerland
 Bilbao, Spain
 Birmingham, UK
 Bonn, Germany
 Brussels, Belgium

Budapest, Hungary
 Cologne, Germany
 Copenhagen, Denmark
 Coruña, Spain
 Dijon, France
 Dresden, Germany

Dublin, Ireland
 Dubrovnik, Croatia
 Düsseldorf, Germany
 Edinburgh, UK
 Geneva, Switzerland
 Genoa, Italy
 Gent, Belgium
 Gothenburg, Sweden
 Glasgow, UK
 Granada, Spain
 Graz, Austria



Paris



Above: Dublin
 Right: Aachen



I would have wasted so much time and even more money if I had not talked to colleagues before going ahead with projects in my own city.

Dieter Hardt-Stremayr, Graz

an expert system to improve the comparability of existing data sources and promotes the development of comparable city tourism statistics using modern statistical methodologies.

With such a wide variety of city participants, the collaboration benefits from a pan-European viewpoint. Data is collected from more than 100 cities, and members can analyse and enter data directly into the system using an internet questionnaire. This allows for instant comparisons to be at a destination manager's fingertips. Yearly reports highlight the latest developments in European Cities Tourism: market share, market volume analysis, forecasts, etc. Competitive analysis of European city tourism marketing segments enable the development of a manual for the implementation of visitor surveys .

ECT Service Centre

The ECT network is managed out of an ECT Service Centre based in Dijon. The key officials are drawn from a broad set of countries – Claes Bjerkne of Goteborg (Sweden) is the dynamic President, the Vice-President is from Spain and the Treasurer from Austria. The service centre enables the

network to be well co-ordinated and for the network client services to be performed in a progressive way. Members have high praise for the system: "Working with professionals is a never-ending pleasure and stimulation", according to Brussels' Andre Vrydagh. The ECT is now a viable ongoing entity with membership fees and income from services and events, to ensure the sustainability of the organisation.

There are a number of working groups managing projects within the network which share best practice and encourage co-operative working.

Some of them are:

City Cards

Stockholm was the first promoter of a 'City Card', integrating transport, hotel, restaurants and attractions in one city. It is appropriate, then, that Stockholm chairs the working party which aims to promote the use of such cards. Already, the ECT network boasts 36 leading city cards in Europe. The group aims to share experience and knowledge in how to set up, run and sell a city card. A brochure - 'European City Cards at a Glance' - is produced for the travel industry.

Heidelberg, Germany
 Helsinki, Finland
 Innsbruck, Austria
 Jersey, UK
 Karlsruhe, Germany
 Lausanne, Switzerland
 Leipzig, Germany
 Lisboa, Portugal
 Liverpool, UK
 Ljubljana, Slovenia
 Lleida, Spain
 Luxembourg City
 Luzern, Switzerland
 Lyon, France
 Madrid, Spain
 Malta
 Manchester, UK
 Maribor, Slovenia
 Metz, France
 Monaco

Moscow, Russia
 Munich, Germany
 Nantes, France
 Nice, France
 Nuremberg, Germany
 Olomouc, Czech Republic
 Oslo, Norway
 Oulo, Finland
 Palma de Mallorca, Spain

Paris, France
 Prague, Czech Republic
 Reykjavick, Iceland
 Rotterdam, Netherlands
 Saint-Etienne, France
 Salzburg, Austria
 San Sebastian, Spain
 Sarajevo, Bosnia & Herzegovina

Sevilla, Spain
 Split, Croatia
 Stockholm, Sweden
 Stuttgart, Germany
 Tallinn, Estonia
 Tampere, Finland
 Tarragona, Spain
 Torino, Italy
 Turku, Finland
 Valencia, Spain
 Vienna, Austria
 Warsaw, Poland
 Zagreb, Croatia
 Zaragoza, Spain
 Zurich, Switzerland



Above: Brussels
 Right: Amsterdam



Stockholm

Exchange of experiences, facts and figures, benchmarks to improve our marketing.

Tilman Flaig, Bonn, Germany

Information and Communication Technology

This working group is chaired by Nice and is a forum for the exchange of information with regard to best practices in IT. As anyone who has recently tried to plan a holiday on the internet can attest, tourism websites may have come on in leaps and bounds over recent years: but there's still a long way to go. The group keeps members informed of the most up-to-date business practice through a series of open meetings. Reviews and evaluations are made of the development of city tourism marketing and e-commerce, and the performance of members' web sites benchmarked. The group intends to review and evaluate new opportunities for tourism marketing and sales arising from ICT, and to identify ways in which European cities can work together beneficially in its application to tourism information, marketing and sales.

There are, to be sure, massive differences between the various cities on the ECT network. But there are sufficient similarities for the network to thrive. Eddie Friel from Glasgow testifies to this: "Membership ensures that we remain at the leading edge of urban destination marketing,"

he says. Commonalities of best practice will undoubtedly filter throughout the network and will undoubtedly mean the ECT presents an invaluable model for the future development of cross-continental city collaboration.

www.europeancities tourism.com