

PRESS RELEASE // FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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80 of the world's PCO leaders meet in Athens

Professional Congress Organisers (PCOs) are meeting in Athens for their annual gathering to discuss issues and answers to this tough economic period and to show that face to face meetings are still very important in such times. Greece has the honour to host the **41st IAPCO Annual Meeting and General Assembly**, held in **Athens in Grande Bretagne Hotel on 18-21 February 2010 – www.iapco2010.gr**

The programme includes a wide range of topical subjects that cover all aspects of event planning and organization including procurement, long-term forecasting in Vision 2020, and the position of the pharmaceutical companies within today's market and the collaboration between PCOs and the Convention Bureaux. The delegates will also get updated on other issues such as sustainability in the congress industry, the involvement of clients and the impact on today's business. Delegates will also participate in working groups and think tanks focusing on specialized topics.

IAPCO leaders also gather in Athens to show that the meetings industry can be seen as an engine for economic growth. IAPCO strongly believes that there are opportunities to be had in these tough economic times. Despite the current slowdown of the world's economy, the results of the IAPCO annual survey continue to show that meetings are still a crucial factor of economic growth and a strategic element of an association or company's development.

"An event is an opportunity to create a face-to-face experience and an opportunity to reach out and communicate a brand, a new technology, a new study", said Patrizia Semprebene Buongiorno, President of IAPCO, "Meetings have a strategic value because they are part of the corporate business marketing mix".

Conferences in the Greek market

The developing conference market in Greece and especially Athens represents an interesting challenge. Undoubtedly the development of conferences is one of the key priorities of the GNTTO (Greek National Tourism Organisation), offering a unique opportunity to limit the seasonality of Greek tourism and of course awareness of Athens is quite high because of its unparalleled history. This competitive advantage may prove very effective, given the right and targeted communication.

ABOUT IAPCO: Meeting Quality

The **International Association of Professional Congress Organisers (IAPCO)** was founded in 1968, is registered in Switzerland and represents today more than 100 professional organisers, meeting planners and managers of international and national congresses, conventions and special events from 35 countries. IAPCO members organise in excess of 5000 meetings annually, totalling some 1.9 million delegates and representing an economic impact in the region of 3.1 billion euros.

IAPCO is committed to raising standards of service among its members and other sectors of the meetings industry. Today IAPCO membership offers a unique quality assurance, since entry into membership of IAPCO is by meeting strict criteria and by continuous quality assessment.

The high quality standards are secured by means of continuing education and interaction with other professionals. The 'Wolfsberg' seminar and the Annual Meeting and General Assembly of its members are the highlight events of IAPCO.

For further information, please contact:

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