

## **PRESS RELEASE // FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**26<sup>th</sup> February 2009**

### **Thinking out of the Box**

This was the message at the recent “Sponsorship: Future Strategies” session held in Ghent at the 2009 IAPCO AM&GA. Sylvia Fondanèche, representing IPCAA, the International Pharmaceutical Congress Advisory Association, confirmed that the current highly regulated and legislative environment in which we live was greatly affecting the pharmaceutical industry and their support for healthcare meetings. With the current rash of patents due to expire and the tighter sales and marketing budgets putting pressure on all departments, new self-regulatory guidelines were being imposed throughout the pharma industry. “As a result marketing budgets will” says Sylvia “tend to shift focus from promotional activities such as exhibition stands, sponsorship of promotional and social items and advertising to high quality scientific and healthcare related programmes and activities which, in themselves, will provide alternative opportunities and means of communication“. Congresses will change but they will not disappear completely by any means.

It was therefore up to André Vietor, immediate past-president of IAPCO, to determine how this shift in healthcare meetings can be accommodated in the current meetings marketplace. “It provides both challenges and opportunities“, says Vietor “opportunities, include the increasing importance of CME and the need to attend congresses for earning credits is, and will continue to be, paramount to the medical profession, and there will be a higher number of corporate educational events“. There will be the creation of new sponsorship packages / opportunities by way of educational grants, with innovative ways and methods for long term business partnerships between associations, the PCO and industry. PCOs have to lead the change, and IAPCO, with its close links to the pharma industry via the HCA – Healthcare Congress Alliance – is in a unique position to do this. Thinking “out of the box”, and being communicative and creative is the name of the game.

**ABOUT IAPCO: Meeting Quality**

IAPCO, founded in 1968 is the worldwide association representing professional congress organisers. With over 100 members, IAPCO organises every year its annual meeting and general assembly in a different city and plays a leading role in the promotion of the professionalism of congress organisation throughout the world (Annual Wolfsberg Academy, Regional Seminars, political actions). IAPCO also publishes a number of documents including a code of ethics, a dictionary of technical terms (in 14 languages) and working brochures. IAPCO is a member of the Joint Meetings Industry Council [JMIC] and the Convention Industry Council [CIC].

**For further information, please contact:**

**IAPCO Head Office :** Brambles House, Colwell Road, Freshwater, PO40 9SL, UK

Email: [info@iapco.org](mailto:info@iapco.org)      [www.iapco.org](http://www.iapco.org)