



**PALACONGRESSI
DI RIMINI**

Press release n. 8

The conference business on the Rimini Riviera

The Province of Rimini's consolidated vocation for conference tourism features excellent know-how and a market with substantial figures. The first steps towards this business date back to the late Sixties, with the first agreements to market a product that proposed an alternative to seaside tourism, useful for completing the offer provided and extending the season for the tourist trade. The area's conference industry is represented by the Convention Bureau della Riviera di Rimini (a member company of the Rimini Fiera Group), chaired by Mauro Ioli and managed by Stefania Agostini, whose mission is to work alongside the sector's key players to offer the best organisation opportunities for successful conference events in the province of Rimini. The area's conference facilities are extremely appealing to professional organisers: just a few miles from the venues, a wide choice of accommodation is ensured by over 2,000 hotels (not to be found anywhere else in the country), of which over 100 belong to the 5 and 4-star categories. In recent decades, a network of highly professional businesses has grown up around the conference industry and today there are over 400 operating in the sector full time. The degree of quality they offer is reflected in the fact that the Convention Bureau has awarded no fewer than 200 companies the "Rimini per i Congressi" quality certificate, which certifies their compliance with the quality standards set for the various segments of the conference tourism sector.

"Rimini's new Palacongressi – says Mauro Ioli, President of Convention Bureau della Riviera di Rimini – offers the area an exceptional asset with which to face international competition. With this huge investment we are also making a contribution to our country, which is not doing too well in the conference business stakes. Luckily, Rimini is holding its own and actually improving its performance; this should not make us complacent, however, since it is vital to keep innovating all the time. I really believe that at this point, the de-seasonalization process can count on firm foundations and that something more should be done on the mobility front".

"In our particular world – explains Stefania Agostini, Director of Convention Bureau della Riviera di Rimini – people are well aware that the new Rimini convention centre will shortly be up and running and we have been 'selling' it for some time already. I would like to underline that this new venue completes an already very professional offering. In this area we can count on a network of first-rate professionals and companies able to satisfy the demands of an increasingly sophisticated clientele. The new Palacongressi has to comply with the very highest standards if it is to play a leading role".

The Rimini Riviera conference market (first half 2009)

In a domestic picture determined by the economic downturn that has reduced investments by event promoters (companies, associations, organizations and political parties) and the disposable income of delegates and has set the conference sector back by five years, the Rimini Riviera can boast a more dynamic reaction than the rest of Italy.

The Conference Observatory – promoted by **Convention Bureau della Riviera di Rimini** and directed by **prof. Attilio Gardini of the Rimini Campus of Bologna University** – reports that in the current negative situation, the Province of Rimini "is gaining competitive edge, subtracting market share from other Italian destinations, improving its own position and recording a few positive signals".

In the first half of 2009, **delegate days on the Riviera were up by 4.89%**, while shrinking by 8.82% nationwide. Another positive aspect: the delegates' average stay was 20.25% longer than the figure recorded in other Italian cities with an average of two nights per delegate, thanks to competitive rates and the area's excellent leisure opportunities.

Overall, in the first half of 2009 the Rimini Riviera hosted **3,798 events** (-6.04 compared to the same period in 2008) with a total of **830,328 delegates** (-5.91%) and **1,535,586 delegate days** (+4.89%).

Delegate satisfaction

Rimini's conference network achieved excellent results in terms of customer, or in this case, delegate satisfaction. The general satisfaction index, from 0 to 10, is 8.42 for the conference part and 8.36 for the hotel part. Above all, delegates liked their hotel rooms (8.09), whereas they were critical about accessory services and about fitness/wellness facilities with appraisals below the average in both cases (7.19 and 7.09 respectively).

As far as the specific conference services are concerned, the quality of the audiovisual services came out top (8.02), followed by information



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services (8.01) and by the event location (hall, lighting and air conditioning with a score of 7.97). Restaurants did well: 8.05; as did catering in the event venue. Service in the hotels was considered good quality (7.84 and 7.78 respectively).

In conclusion, top quality was recorded for "specific conference services" (hall, conference services) while information also received excellent appraisals.

These were followed by leisure services (7.95), hotel services (7.7) and urban infrastructure (7.16). The Rimini conference segment is therefore characterized by a good quality offering distributed fairly uniformly over every part of the system.

Work in progress

In this market context, the Rimini conference industry is making sizeable new investments to improve its offering.

2001 saw the inauguration of the new Expo Centre with its 21 halls plus conference services. The current Rimini conference centre – featuring 10,000 seats and a 6,000-seat plenary hall – is shortly to be replaced by the new, world-class Palacongressi convention centre. Lastly, since May 2008 Riccione too has a new Palazzo dei Congressi, a multi-functional, 2300-seat venue.

Facts & Figures in the Province of Rimini

1 convention centre (the largest in Italy) – the Riccione convention centre – the new Rimini Palacongressi convention centre as from 2010 - 6 conference centres - 84 conference venues – 1 international airport – over 2,000 hotels - 1 expo centre - 700 restaurants and trattorie - 100 pubs - 50 clubs - 10 cinemas - 5 theatres - 26 museums and collections - 7 water parks - 21 theme parks - 1 car race track - 2 marinas with a total of 930 moorings - 14 yacht and sailing clubs - 12 stables and horse riding centres - 2 18-hole golf courses - 2 spas - 5 sports arenas - 12 stately homes - 7 Malatesta castles.

FURTHER INFO FOR THE PRESS

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Updated on 13.12.2009