

The OIC's First Tourism Fair

Istanbul - Motaz Othman

Fifteen out of the fifty seven members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) took part in the first Islamic Countries Tourism Fair held in Istanbul from 24th - to 26th November 2005.



Iranian stand

نائب رئيس الجمهورية الإسلامية في إيران
السيد اسفنديار رحيم مشائي (وسط الصورة)
في الجناح الإيراني

The participation of the Islamic Republic of Iran was very strong because of the presence of a large delegation directed by the Vice-President, Mr. Esfandayar Mashaei, consisting of tourism professionals, travel agencies and hotel representatives. They were accompanied by Mrs. Marjan Sheikholeslami, General Director of the Iranian News Service, culture and heritage groups and the Iranian folklore group which presented successful shows.

The Iranian delegation organized a workshop with the participation of many Turkish travel agencies and some other countries. In his address, Mr. Mashaei expressed his satisfaction with regard to the activities of the fair and stressed the importance of co-operation between Iran and Turkey in the tourism, economic and

transport sectors, as these two countries are the pillars of the OIC. They have strong economies, large populations and vast territories with a rich tourism heritage.

The participation of Malaysia was also significant. The director of its office in Turkey briefly presented the various tourist products offered by his country and a documentary film of the main tourist attractions. Qatar, Egypt, Syria, Morocco, Palestine, Azerbaijan and Turkey had large, impressive stands, while those of Jordan, Lebanon and Kyrgyzstan were smaller.

Mr. Allal Rashidi, General Manager of the Islamic Center for the Development of Trade, an OIC organization, told Islamic Tourism that this is the first Islamic countries tourism fair organized with the agreement of the ministers of tourism. Previously, exhibitions were confined to

trade fairs. But currently, there is a great interest in tourism, which plays a major role in the economy of a number of Islamic countries. He added his satisfaction with the organisation of the fair, even if participation was modest; if one started with 15 participants, one expects a larger number at future fairs. The fair was held at the same time as the 21st session of the Islamic Countries Trade Commission Co-operation in which 32 ministers took part. Islamic Tourism magazine participated. The fair could have been better had the organizers invited tourism professionals from throughout the world, so that they could discover the numerous attractions of Muslim countries. In future fairs a tour of Istanbul is a must and a dinner party hosted by the Turkish Ministry of Tourism and Istanbul's mayor would be most welcome. ■