

German Travel Mart

Attracts more and more Arab visitors

>Armin Gemmer

The German Travel Mart (GTM) is an event organized by the German National Tourist Board in which Germany presents itself as a travel destination and introduces its new campaigns to international buyers and media representatives. This year this event took place in Munich.

The focus was business networking, customer acquisition and closing concrete business deals. The two day workshop is the central element of the GTM. Buyers and exhibitors are using this platform.

With over 670 international participants from more than 40 countries, among them more than 100 journalists, the GTM was visited exceedingly well this year. Ernst Hinsken, Federal Government Commissioner for Tourism, presented the current campaigns of Germany as a tourist destination and was proud to announce that 2007 with more than 360 million accommodations broke the previous year's record set by the football world cup by 3%. Petra Hedorfer, CEO of the German National Tourist Board afterwards presented its marketing strategy. The annual themes till 2012 focus on city and cultural tourism, spa and business travel. In 2010 Germany presents itself through the European cultural capital "Ruhr 2010". The CEO of the German National Tourist Board made time for a short interview:

ITM: I have seen in your statistics for Munich that visitors from the Gulf States have become the third largest group of foreign visitors. Are you also observing an increase in the number of tourists from the Arab region in the whole of Germany?

Hedorfer: Yes, this trend can also be seen in other regions.

ITM: Specifically which regions?

Hedorfer: Well, it is mostly a combination of advantages. Munich profits not only because of its medical facilities but its proximity to the Alps. Otherwise the visitors are naturally gravitating towards the big cities, particularly Berlin, then Hamburg, Cologne and Düsseldorf. Wiesbaden with its spa facilities is also very popular.

ITM: How important are these target groups to you?

Hedorfer: Well, naturally we also want to open up to these markets and have our

own office in Dubai. Let me add that at this moment we have fewer visitors from the USA because of low dollar exchange rates. We are trying to compensate this by having more tourists from China and the Gulf region.

ITM: Are there any special offers for the Arab target group?

Hedorfer: Yes, we are particularly interested in marketing our heart treatment centers and spa facilities. Naturally our office in Dubai is always busy to satisfy the needs of our Arab tourists. ■



Petra Hedorfer

بترا هيدورفير