

PRESS RELEASE

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ITB Berlin Convention: Digitalisation and sustainability are decisive for the industry's future

Two key topics dominate the agenda at the travel industry's leading think tank – ITB Responsible Destination Day to launch on 4 March – Convention programme is available online

Digitalisation and sustainability are two topics that are currently of decisive importance in the global tourism industry. They are key for tourism professionals everywhere, regardless which market they represent. Without an elaborate digitalisation plan and a far-reaching sustainability strategy it will be impossible to ensure solid progress and long-term opportunities for the future. These are the aspects and topics that participants will address at the ITB Berlin Convention 2020 as part of the outstanding programme of events at the CityCube Berlin. Experts, researchers, industry executives as well as policymakers will provide information in their keynote speeches – with numerous discussions and interviews also on the agenda. Admission to the ITB Berlin Convention (4 to 7 March 2020) is free for trade visitors, the media and exhibitors at the World's Largest Travel Trade Show. The programme is available online at www.itb-berlin.com. For the first time all events contain keywords to make it easier to search for formats by topics such as 'business travel' or 'destination marketing'.

Sustainability: one goal – many aspects

A new event will be kicking off the convention: on 4 March at the first [ITB Responsible Destination Day](#) participants can explore the topic of socially aware travel behaviour. The focus will be on the prospects for reaching sustainability goals. At the 1 p.m. session the key question will be how expedition cruises can be made environmentally friendly. Hosting the event, renowned cruise analyst, university lecturer and maritime trade journalist Thomas P. Illes will debate the issue with four leading expedition cruise experts from this sector. At 5 p.m. at the Ministers' Roundtable qualified experts will discuss various sustainable destination best practices.

On 5 March the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) will hold the [ITB Tourism for Sustainable Development Day](#) for the fourth time. At 3 p.m. Norbert Barthle, the parliamentary secretary of state at the BMZ, will hold a keynote speech. Topics of the day will include partnerships in tourism and opportunities for women. At the ITB Deep Dive sessions at the CityCube, taking the topic of Wise Dodo on Mauritius as an example, Sören Hartmann, CEO of DER Touristik Group, and the Hon. G. P. Lesjogard, the tourism minister of Mauritius, will discuss the prospects for destinations in the face of the growing trend towards sustainability. The WWF and Futouris will each present their concepts at two afternoon Deep Dive sessions where the focus will be on plastic waste. Martina von Münchhausen (WWF) and Prof. Harald Zeiss (Futouris) will hold the introductory presentations.

On 6 March, [ITB CSR Day](#), a keynote speech by the climate expert Prof. Hans Joachim Schellnhuber on 'Climate Change, Global Warming, Weather Extremes' at 11 a.m. will kick off events on day three. Afterwards, Hot Seat participants will examine the facts and discuss the conflicting views of Fridays for Future and tourism operators. Taking part will be two Fridays for Future representatives, Dietrich Brockhagen of Atmosfair and Lucienne Damm of TUI Cruises. Other participants are to be announced soon. The Studiosus Discussion, an established event, will take place at 1 p.m. under the heading 'It makes sense to travel. But does it really?'. Taking part will be Helena Marschall (Fridays for Future), Antje Monshausen (Brot für



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die Welt) and Studiosus managing director Peter-Mario Kubsch.

No progress in the tourism industry without digitalisation

In line with the growing importance of this topic, digitalisation will occupy a prominent role at the convention. For without digital technology there can be no future progress. On 4 March at the [ITB Future Day](#), Nils Müller will launch straight into this topic in front of the convention audience. The CEO of TrendOne will have information on the trends, technology and developments necessary for a successful future. The main feature of this session is its interactive format. Listeners will be able to actively influence the event with voting cards. At the session to follow, at a discussion about the impact of digitalisation and the failure of Thomas Cook, Samih Sawiris, CEO of Orascom Development, will be among those to take the stage. Afternoon events will include 'Future Air and Ground Mobility' at 4 p.m. and 'Artificial Intelligence, Big Data, Robotics & Co' at 5 p.m. Dr. Manuela Lenzen, a science journalist and researcher, will hold the keynote speech.

On 5 March at 11 a.m., at the CEO Interview on [ITB Marketing & Distribution Day](#), the first interview will take place with Sean Menke, CEO of Sabre. Afterwards it will be the turn of Friedrich Joussen, CEO of TUI Group, to take his seat. At 1 p.m. Thomas P. Illes will talk to Pierfrancesco Vago, executive chairman of MSC Cruises, about trends and challenges in the cruise market. At 2 p.m. David Peller, global head of Travel and Hospitality at Amazon Web Services, will take part in a Q&A.

On the Friday of the convention at the [ITB Destination Day](#) at 11 a.m., participants will explore the options for personalised travel experiences. Social media is playing an increasingly important role in tourism too. Mike Yapp, chief creative evangelist, Google, will provide an insight into the 'Future of Destination Marketing: Youtube and Video Marketing' at 1 p.m. At 4 p.m. a discussion will take place about the underestimated challenges facing destinations in the age of Instagram influence and other social media. Lastly, at the ITB Deep Dive session at 12 noon, the focus will be on what Amazon Alexa and Google Assistant can offer and their associated risks.

About ITB Berlin and the ITB Berlin Convention

ITB Berlin 2020 will be taking place from Wednesday, 4 to Sunday, 8 March, and from Wednesday to Friday will be open to trade visitors only. ITB Berlin is the World's Leading Travel Trade Show. In 2019 a total of 10,000 companies and organisations from 181 countries exhibited their products and services to around 160,000 visitors, including 113,500 trade visitors. Parallel with the show the ITB Berlin Convention, the largest event of its kind, will be held from Wednesday, 4 to Saturday, 7 March 2020. The World Tourism Cities Federation (WTCF) is co-host, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), MC Group and Trip.com are Platinum Sponsors and Studiosus is Gold Sponsor. Admission to the ITB Berlin Convention is free for trade visitors and exhibitors. For more information please visit www.itb-berlin.com, www.itb-convention.com and the ITB Social Media Newsroom.

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