



The Olympics: Tourism Bonanza?

The Debate Will Ignite at European Tour Operators' Summit

25th October 2006

Governments hosting the Olympic Games have justified the enormous pound investment on the grounds that doing so will provide a valuable impetus to infrastructure development and will boost inbound tourism.

Whilst the infrastructure renewal is straightforward, demonstrating stimulation of inbound tourism is not. In July, the European Tour Operators Association (ETOA) released findings of a study that revealed there was no benefit to tourism as a consequence of staging the Olympic Games. The report drew on an analysis of inbound visitors to the previous five Olympic cities: Athens, Sydney, Atlanta, Barcelona and Seoul. In all cases, there was a drop off in inbound tourism in the year preceding the Games and recovery in tourism growth typically took at least two years longer. At the time of the study's publication, Tom Jenkins, Executive Director, ETOA, called for a serious debate and a plan of action to make sure that the same effect does not afflict London around the time of the 2012 Olympics.

The serious debate will begin in earnest at ETOA's Annual Summit meeting on 2nd November when Tom Wright, CEO Visit Britain, James Bidwell, CEO Visit London will make presentations.

The panellists will not restrict their comments to this topic alone but will consider practices at previous Games that have been both helpful and detrimental to inbound tourism. They will also propose what action is needed from government, the event organisers and the industry itself to ensure the Olympics really does deliver a boost to inbound visitors in the years surrounding the Games.

Delegates at the Summit will also be able to contribute to the discussion with comments and questions. They will comprise senior managers from Europe's major tour operators, hotel groups, tourist attractions, coach, rail and cruise companies and local tourist boards. Collectively, as buyers, they spend over €6bn a year on Europe's sights, hotels and transport on behalf of their customers.

The event will take place at the Copthorne Tara Hotel, London W8 on Thursday 2nd November 2006. For further details and to find out how to take part, please contact ETOA on +44 (0) 20 7499 4412.

To view ETOA's Olympics study and the Response to this study from Visit Britain go to <http://www.etoa.org/Default.aspx>

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About ETOA

Since its foundation in 1989, ETOA has grown exponentially to include over 400 member organisations, of which over 100 are Tour Operators. Collectively, ETOA represents over €6 billion spending on accommodation and travel services annually.

ETOA provides representation at the European government level for companies that bring tourists to Europe. The Association promotes greater awareness of the benefits provided by the group travel industry in Europe - particularly increased income and employment. ETOA also influences European tourism policy and legislation.



European Tour Operators Association

Areas of specific activity include:

- Promoting Europe as a tourism destination
- Establishing codes of conduct and guidelines for its members
- Establishing commercial opportunities between buyers and sellers
- Working with other travel & tourism associations to raise the industry's profile

Notes for the Media

For further information on the Summit and to gain accreditation as a journalist, please contact Irena Smith, Tel: +44 (0) 20 7499 4412, Email: ISmith@ETOA.org.

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