

# Greece

thetrueexperience

[www.visitgreece.gr](http://www.visitgreece.gr)



MINISTRY OF TOURISM - GREEK NATIONAL TOURISM ORGANISATION



The perfect place  
for business  
and pleasure!





Think of the perfect conference. And then visit Greece, where it will be planned and organized for you!

Go for a swim or slide down the slopes before breakfast, visit nearby archaeological site, museum or even shopping mall in-between sessions, attend a meeting under the shadow of a perennial plane tree and join the party at the end of the day.





# The Best Deal

Meetings



GREECE THE PERFECT PLACE FOR BUSINESS

# a Country Can Offer!

**G**reece is a unique destination that combines business and pleasure in the best possible way! It is one of the most charismatic locations in terms of natural beauty, with mild climate conditions, a combination of landscapes from sea to mountains and appropriate for vacation and conference activities throughout the year!

Currently, a large number of conference centers operate in the country, thus increasing its attractiveness for potential visitors!

Luxurious hotels with services that combine entertainment, leisure areas and excellent conference facilities, constitute yet another powerful incentive for someone to... even close a business deal in Greece!

Even museums can wonderfully combine a tour to an archeological site with a conference of philosophy, thus demonstrating the magnificence of ancient civilization through modern culture!

Moreover, there are innovative scientific centers and exhibition areas that can accommodate small or large scale conference events, with state-of-the-art technical facilities including audiovisual systems, teleconference means, auxiliary dining areas, and by utilizing specialized staff such as interpreters and translators.

At the same time, a number of public and private entities, such as Convention & Visitors Bureaus (CVB), are in operation both in Athens and Thessaloniki, while a new National CVB will be soon established, as well as a Metropolitan Conference Center in Athens.

The European Federation of Associations of Professional Congress Organizers (EFAPCO), which includes a large number of founding, associate and supporting members from around the world, has already been promoting the establishment and certification of the PCO profession (Professional Congress / Convention Organizer) in all European countries, a fact that will decisively boost business for the organized conference tourism firms operating in Greece.

At the same time, the Organization of Tourism Education & Training (O.T.E.K.) as well as a large number of private educational institutes elevates the sector's know-how year by year!





## Meetings



# One Country –

Greece is now dynamically entering the conference tourism sector on the global map.

The following factors have played a significant role in this development:

- The excellent climate conditions and rare natural beauty,
- The large monumental and cultural legacy, samples of which can be found in any corner of the country,
- Greek hospitality and high quality services,
- The exquisite Greek gastronomy,
- The modern hotel and conference units both in large urban centers and in Continental and Insular Greece,
- The upgraded image of Greece following the successful organization of the Athens 2004 Olympic Games,
- The specialized human resources that successfully accomplish the implementation of even the most demanding conference events.





# Many Attractions





## Meetings



# Live the

**G**reece is uniquely advantaged to compete with the largest convention destinations in Europe. In the Athens 2004 Olympic Games, the country was an excellent host to the biggest sports competition in the world.

With the construction of major infrastructure projects and a transportation network that has safely united the country from mountain to coast, Greece has also made a name as host to a number of important professional, corporate, scientific and cultural events. Thirteen conference centres and more than a hundred hotels at several key destinations including Athens, Thessaloniki, Crete, Rhodes, Corfu, Igoumenitsa, Alexandroupoli, Santorini, Kos, offer state-of-the-art facilities, back-up services of the highest standards, dedicated staff and a hospitable environment for the effortless exchange of opinions and ideas.

Experience a business conference, a team building exercise, a workshop or exhibition with all your senses.





# Experience!





## Meetings



# Athens! Here

With history that goes beyond 4,000 years, Athens is the most significant tourism destination in the country with visitors that exceed 3 million on an annual basis. A notable portion of tourist traffic refers to urban and conference tourism.

Greece's capital is no doubt the country's financial center, with its industrial areas and the port of Piraeus standing out. The city is traditionally the first stop for tourists before they depart for the famous Greek islands.

The most important "must-see" attractions of the city for the urban and conference tourists are the following:

- The Parthenon and Acropolis
- The ancient Greek, Roman and Byzantine monuments
- Many and continuously increasing museums (i.e. New Acropolis Museum)
- The historic center of the city (Plaka, Monastiraki, Thiseio, Psyrri, etc.)
- Large department stores





# is the City







# The beauty

## Meetings



GREECE THE PERFECT PLACE FOR BUSINESS



# of the North

**T**hessalonica, the second largest city in Greece has been demonstrating significant business activity during the past years. The image of Thessalonica as a convention mecca is attributed to a large extent because of Hellexpo (Thessalonica's International Trade Fair), which is the country's annual exhibition event each September, transforming the city to an international exhibition center!

The city's neighboring with the Balkan countries is yet another major factor that contributes to attracting conference tourism not only from neighboring countries but also from the broader Southeast European region.

Moreover, both public and private entities in the city have expressed particular will and zeal to promoting conference infrastructure. The establishment of the Thessalonica Convention & Visitors Bureau (TCVB) placed the city on the global conference map! The TCVB was the first such organization in Greece.

The aforementioned developments had quite impressive results in an almost 8-year period, as from 39 conferences organized in Thessalonica in 2001, the number grew to 224 in 2007 at the "association market" level (conferences by non-profit organizations, scientific or other entities with local or international scope). If one adds the "corporate market" conferences (conferences organized by companies and corporations), the total increases significantly. The average annual increase of conferences during the aforesaid period is 34%.

Year	Number of Conferences*
2001	39
2002	77
2003	157
2004	115
2005	131
2006	179
2007	224

\* Association Market. Source: TCVB.

The strategy adopted in order to boost conference tourism in Thessalonica is an excellent "recipe" for success for the entire sector in Greece!





## Meetings



# All roads lead

During the past 15 years, the transportation infrastructure in Greece has been significantly upgraded both in large urban centers and in the most important islands, a fact that has contributed further to attracting tourism.

There is a saying that says “there’s nothing like a first impression”! The new state-of-the-art Athens Airport “Eleftherios Venizelos” at Spata Attica, which is the first image experienced by the businessman or simple tourist when entering the country, leaves the best impressions!

At the same time, the “Charilaos Trikoupis” bridge (Rio – Antirrio), that connects the western Peloponnesus with western Greece, is an eye-catching attraction for tourists, as it is one of the largest cable bridges in Europe! Finally, the Attiki Odos motorway constitutes one of the most significant projects for traffic decongestion in the metropolitan area of Athens.

The ability for easy access to convention centers by metro, suburban railway and tram, as well as the upgraded ports of Piraeus, Rafina and Lavrio that are located in Attica – and which connect the country’s largest urban center, Athens, with the Greek islands – strengthen Greece’s “image” even further. Moreover, airport connections from Athens and Thessalonica towards all Greek cities and islands is yet another equally important factor towards the country’s ongoing tourism development, as well as for its selection as an ideal destination for conference activities in broader South East European region. This easy access network is supplemented by ferry connections between ports located both in continental Greece and the islands, as well as in neighboring Italy, which is the most significant portal – passage towards Greece.

Shortly, another large-scale project will be also completed: Egnatia Motorway which is a modern 680 km motorway that connects Northwest with Northeast Greece. Under completion are also the last sections of the PATHE road axis that connect the major Greek cities of Patra – Athens – Thessalonica, while there are direct plans for the construction of Ionia Odos motorway that will cross Western Greece from north to south.





# to Greece!





## Meetings



# Dynamic

Currently, the country aims at strengthening its market share in global conference events, to a level between 2.5-5% during the next 5-10 years. According to international studies, the Greek conference tourism market is developing with an annual growth rate between 5-7%, which is above the country's Gross Domestic Product (G.D.P.) growth rate and one of the highest in the world.

This fact has reinforced Greece's position on the global conference map, as according to the International Congress & Convention Association (ICCA), the city of Athens was recently amongst the top 20 positions for conference destinations from a total of 350 cities.

According to market estimations, total revenue for the sector approaches 500 million euros on annual basis, while conference attendees that visit Greece exceed 150,000 annually. The topics of conferences that take place in Greek cities – destinations, concern medical and pharmaceutical sectors, business and economy, technology and IT, politics – public administration, environment which constitutes a particular promising sector for conference activity, arts and culture, media, physical sciences, industry, etc.

Also, continuous demand is being observed for information regarding the Greek conference product, a fact that is reflected in all research findings.



# Growth!







## Meetings

# Social

Greece, as most European countries, has given priority to the crucial and contemporary issue of environmental protection and corporate social responsibility, which deeply concerns both the Greek society and the scientific – business community.

The past year, we have observed a steady increase of conferences in this category and the trend – as is the case nevertheless globally – is expected to continue with the same dynamism during the next 5-year period, featuring not only the professionalism but also the sensitivity of companies on issues that concern the environment and furthermore the society as a whole!

Conferences in this area include events about the Social Corporate Responsibility of the broader South East Europe held in Athens, the environmental initiatives adopted by Greek corporations, as well as meetings for the exchange of information and ideas in order to boost the corporate society's sensitivity towards environmental issues and formulate concrete actions to serve society's best interests.





# Responsibility







# Rich History –

## Meetings

Today, Greece is not just a destination with natural beauty and rich history, but an area with continuous growth and significant business opportunities. Conference tourism provides – implicitly – significant information on new developments and opportunities in the Greek market, which constitutes the Southeastern gateway to the European Union.

The importance of conference tourism for the Greek Economy is also reflected to the founding of HAPCO. The Hellenic Association of Professional Congress Organizers (HAPCO) is one of the most active entities in the conference tourism sector in Greece, with significant projects and missions that can be summarized as follows:

- Reinforcing conference tourism, in the context of promoting theme tourism in Greece,
- Strengthening competitive advantages of the Greek conference market with the aim of attracting tourism with a high income, social and educational level,
- Promotion of the adequacy and credibility of the association's members,
- Pursuing larger market shares for the sector both domestically and globally,
- Providing reliable information and specialized education on conference tourism issues in Greece.



# Bright Future





# Meetings

Regions hosting Conference Tourism  
Activities in Greece



- Central Greece
- Western Greece
- Thessalia
- Eastern Macedonia and Thrace
- Central Macedonia
- Western Macedonia
- Epirus
- Ionian Islands
- Peloponnese
- North Aegean
- South Aegean
- Crete

# Useful sites

- Hellenic Association of Professional Congress Organizers (HAPCO)  
[www.hapco.gr](http://www.hapco.gr),  
e-mail: [hapco@hapco.gr](mailto:hapco@hapco.gr)
- Association of Greek Exhibition & Conference Organizers  
[www.seoes.gr](http://www.seoes.gr),  
e-mail: [info@seoes.gr](mailto:info@seoes.gr)
- Thessalonica Convention & Visitors Bureau (T.C.V.B)  
[www.tcvb.gr](http://www.tcvb.gr),  
e-mail: [info@tcvb.gr](mailto:info@tcvb.gr)
- Association of Greek Tourist Enterprises (SETE)  
[www.sete.gr](http://www.sete.gr)
- Information about City of Athens  
[www.cityofAthens.gr](http://www.cityofAthens.gr)
- Greek National Tourism Organisation  
[www.visitgreece.gr](http://www.visitgreece.gr)







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