

### Congress tourism in Romagna, focusing on the Palacongressi Rimini and the Riviera

2016 was certainly an impressive year for Rimini and the Riviera, with over one million, one hundred thousand participants in meetings and conferences around the Romagna region. A 4% rise is expected in the number of participants and events for 2017. Excellent positioning on the domestic corporate market was recorded, as well as significant growth, from 8-11%, in the number of medical-scientific conferences. The Palacongressi di Rimini hosted 149 events, attracting 280,000 conference delegates, which is an 8% increase on the 2015 figures.

Rimini, 29 May 2017 – A positive outlook and numbers on the rise for Rimini and the Riviera. This is what has emerged from the data collected for the Executive Summary 2016 **by the Congress Tourism Observatory of the provinces of Forlì, Cesena and Rimini** (\*), produced by Andrea Guzzardi, Professor of Advanced Studies in Tourism at the University di Bologna (Rimini satellite campus). The research was endorsed by the “**Chamber of Commerce of Romagna Forlì-Cesena and Rimini**” in collaboration with the “**Italian Exhibition Group**” (Event & Conference Business Unit).

The presence of tourists in the Rimini area during 2016 marked an increase of 3.1% and overnight stays rose by 1.6%. The figures continue to improve with an analysis of the **congress tourism industry: +6.7% events and +5.4% delegates**. These percentages translate into **1.1 million participants and 549,000 overnight stays**. A positive trend confirmed also for **2017**, with an expected **growth of 4.4% in events** and +4% in visitors. Of significant importance is the figure relating to the economic value of the meeting industry, and the consequent economic impact on the local area. Revenue from the industry in the Riviera produced a turnover of approximately **€200 million** in 2016. Of this figure, **only 37% refers to actual rental of the venues**: the remainder is related to staging, catering and accommodation.

The **Palacongressi di Rimini** contributed to these statistics with **280,000 conference delegates**, an increase of **8% compared to 2015**, thanks to the **149 events it hosted in 2016**. 85 of these were national events, 7 international, 51 local and 6 regional. The result was made possible by the total synergy between the IEG Event & Conference Division and its expo activity.

To this end, the report underlines the results achieved by the Palacongressi in the medical-scientific conference sector, which accounted for **11%** of the total number of events held in the venue. This sector provides the added value of a longer duration, on average 3 days, and in 2016 it brought **20,000 people to Rimini, with over 50,000 overnight stays**. Such events, for that matter, by their nature are not influenced by economic trends and they can be planned well in advance with the destination.

On the international scene however, the average size of events organised in Rimini is smaller compared to cities such as Rome or Milan. According to researchers, the main problems in penetrating the international market are above all "suprateritorial". From the positioning of the image of the Italian brand, to the gap in terms of longer transport times that the Riviera poses compared to Rome or Milan. Yet despite these difficulties, in 2016, the Palacongressi di Rimini held **7** exclusively **international events and congresses** with over 8,000 foreign participants.

(\*) *The survey was carried out via an online questionnaire sent out during the period 6/11/2016 - 6/2/2017 to the managers of 303 venues active in the meeting industry. The variable of interest is the number of participants per venues offered. The 62 companies that replied – representing 69% of the available venues in the area – were then subdivided based on number of room and the type of facility, so as to guarantee the most accurate results possible.*

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