

Press release | 13 February 2019

## **The IAPCO annual meeting: a small congress with a big impact.**

**From 14 to 17 February 2019, a conference is being staged at the Congress Center Basel (CCB) which will only have some 130 attendees. Despite this, it counts as the most important conference of the year for the local economy, since the participants are members of the International Association of Professional Congress Organizers (IAPCO).**

The non-profit organisation aims to raise the standards of service in the congress industry. And this is also the motto for its annual meeting, which will be celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary when it is staged in Basel. "Since our conference has been held outside Europe for the past three years, we are delighted to be returning to the continent again", says President Mathias Posch in explaining the choice of venue. "With Basel, we are now guests in what is a new destination for us, after the city's representatives went to great lengths to bring our event to their city."

And there are good reasons for this commitment. "IAPCO members must have at least five international congresses in their portfolio before they can be accepted at all", explains Jonas Scharf, Managing Director of the CCB. "Since they are involved in deciding where these conferences will be held in future, they are naturally a particularly valuable target group for us." The Association was convinced by the good accessibility, the professional infrastructure on offer and an attractive accompanying programme. A further decisive point, however, was the support offered to IAPCO by the city. Assistance was provided by the Congress Board Basel, in particular, which assesses the eligibility of conferences for sponsorship on behalf of the Basel government. "Specialist international congresses generate added value for tourism and are high-quality platforms for key industries in the city of Basel", says Samuel Hess, Head of Economics at the city of Basel's Office of Economic Affairs and Labour. And the hotel trade is not the only sector to benefit from this. The restaurant sector and other suppliers can also look forward to additional income if even more major congresses are held here in future.

The fact that it is of great importance not only for the city of Basel but also for Switzerland as a whole to present itself to the members of IAPCO is borne out by the presence of the national congress marketer, Switzerland Convention & Incentive Bureau (SCIB). On the one hand, Director Barbra Steuri-Albrecht will be there and, on the other hand, the Bureau's President Daniel Egloff, who, in his dual role, will also be representing Basel Tourism. "With meetings, congresses and incentive trips, we generate an estimated annual turnover of 2.2 billion Swiss francs", he explains. "Through our presence, we too wish to emphasise that we appreciate just how relevant IAPCO is for our country."

Jonas Scharf sees it as a good sign for 2019 that the year is starting with such fanfare. "Although the acquisition of congresses is a long-term affair, we are confident that Basel will present itself in a good light to these high-quality attendees, and this will doubtless not be without consequences", he says. The participants at this year's IAPCO conference can thus look forward to a warm welcome from all the parties involved.

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Congress Center Basel outside view | © MCH Messe Basel



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