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Forbes

ITB Berlin 2025: A Transformative Event for the Future of Travel



Albanian Prime Minister, Edi Rama, addresses ITB

ITB Berlin 2025 once again proved its status as the world's leading travel trade show, bringing together industry leaders, innovators and stakeholders to shape the future of global tourism. With fully booked halls and a 5% increase in exhibitor participation, the event reflected the resilience and adaptability of the travel sector. Over 5,000 exhibitors from 170+ countries participated, solidifying ITB's reputation as a premier hub for business networking and strategic partnerships. This year, Albania took center stage as the Official Host Country under the theme "Albania All Senses." Attendees experienced the country's unspoiled landscapes, rich cultural heritage and emerging agri-tourism sector through immersive exhibits. With a dedicated tourism app and interactive displays, Albania effectively highlighted its diverse offerings, from pristine beaches to historic cities and culinary excellence. Prime Min-

ister Edi Rama emphasized Albania's transformation and the significance of hosting ITB Berlin, particularly as 374,000 German tourists visited Albania in the past year. Beyond Albania's showcase, ITB Berlin 2025 placed a strong focus on technology-driven advancements in tourism. The event featured 35 AI-powered solutions, including AI travel assistants, streamlined booking platforms and seamless payment solutions from companies like Visa, Stripe and leading AI firms. The industry's commitment to sustainable travel and digitalization was evident, with many exhibitors promoting slow travel, rail connectivity and eco-friendly initiatives.

One of the standout additions this year was the ITB Transition Labs, which facilitated in-depth discussions on sustainability, digital transformation and evolving consumer behavior. Experts noted the growing influence of social media platforms like YouTube and Reddit in shaping travel trends, underscoring the shift towards user-gener-

ated recommendations. And, as ITB Berlin 2025 came to a close, it reaffirmed its vital role in driving the tourism industry forward, fostering innovation and setting new benchmarks for the future of global travel.



Official ITB opening ceremony by Albanian delegation along with prestigious attendees

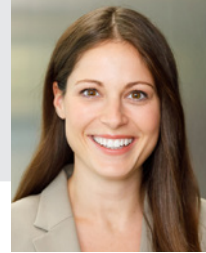


"As we have in Berlin and in many other parts of the world, when people can travel freely and when everyone can benefit from tourism, they are more likely to back peaceful resolutions and work together. And peace and security allow us to achieve our vision for the future. Our focus on education, innovation and investment is ensuring that tourism is not only a driver of economic growth but also a vehicle for empowerment and sustainability."

ZURAB POLOLIKASHVILI
Secretary-General, UN Tourism

FACES OF CHANGE

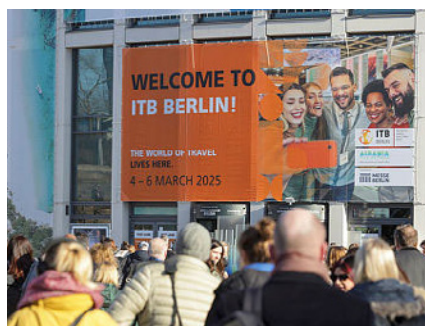
Leaders Making a Difference at ITB Berlin



DEBORAH ROTHE
Exhibition Director, ITB Berlin

What are the key themes & travel trends at ITB Berlin? Why do German-speaking markets matter?

Since 2023, ITB Berlin has been a pure trade visitor show and is consistently driving international expansion with strong synergies with our ITB events in India, China and Singapore – and our latest addition, ITB Americas, which will debut in Mexico in 2026. This year's ITB Berlin reflects the strong momentum in global travel with fully booked halls, 5,800 exhibitors from 170 countries and over 100,000 attendees on-site. Key trends include growth in Southern Europe, Asia and Africa, a booming cruise industry, and the rise of AI-driven travel technology. Sustainability remains a priority for us, with travelers seeking meaningful and eco-friendly experiences. The German-speaking markets are also crucial as the world's second-largest source market. With high purchasing power and a strong passion for travel, they remain resilient despite economic challenges. These high-value travelers are both loyal and open to new destinations, making them a key audience for the industry's future growth.



ADIA SAKIQI
Albanian Ambassador to Germany

How is Albania using ITB Berlin to attract investment & promote sustainable tourism?

We are proud to be hosting this year's ITB Berlin, a major opportunity to showcase Albania's tourism potential and investment opportunities. We are highlighting our commitment to sustainable tourism, focusing on eco-friendly initiatives, cultural heritage and digital tools that enhance visitor experiences. Our strategy goes beyond traditional tourism—we aim to attract investment in tech-driven tourism services, smart infrastructure and green energy projects. Albania's new airports and improved connectivity make it more accessible to visitors and investors. We are also presenting investment opportunities in high-quality accommodations, rural tourism and adventure travel, ensuring that growth aligns with environmental protection. Our collaborations with Germany and other EU partners at ITB help strengthen Albania's image as an emerging destination. Through ITB, we engage with global stakeholders, promote high-quality tourism and position Albania for continued sustainable economic growth.



LUSINE GEVORGYAN
Head of Tourism Committee
Ministry of Economy, Republic of Armenia

How is Armenia utilizing this event to drive tourism growth & attract new markets in 2025?

ITB Berlin is a platform for us to showcase our rich cultural heritage, breathtaking landscapes and diverse tourism experiences to a global audience. We are engaging with global partners and industry professionals to forge new connections and expand our presence in various markets, including the German-speaking market. By highlighting Armenia's ancient history, dynamic culinary scene, thriving wine industry and exhilarating adventures, we aim to position Armenia as a must-visit destination for travelers worldwide. Armenia's tourism sector holds great potential and we anticipate continued growth in 2025. Our key objectives include increasing international visitor numbers, expanding air connectivity and enhancing the overall travel experience. With ongoing infrastructure development, new investments and strategic international partnerships, we expect a substantial rise in tourist arrivals. Through events like ITB, 2025 will further strengthen Armenia's position as a rising travel destination.



ROBERTA FRISONI
Tourism, Trade & Sport Councillor
Emilia-Romagna Region, Italy

How is the region using ITB to promote its tourism offerings?

Emilia-Romagna has participated in ITB Berlin for years. This year, we focused on active holidays and slow tourism, as well as eco-sustainability, highlighted by the complete renovation of the seafronts along the Emilia-Romagna Adriatic Coast. These efforts complement our already internationally established tourism drivers. The Motor Valley is home to corporate museums of the world's most beloved two & four-wheeled brands—Ferrari, Lamborghini, Ducati, Maserati, Dallara, and Pagani—as well as numerous events at the region's four circuits. Additionally, the Food Valley boasts 44 PDO and PGI



products, including Parmigiano Reggiano, Traditional Balsamic Vinegar of Modena and Reggio Emilia, and Prosciutto di Parma—a European record in quantity.

How is Emilia-Romagna enhancing sustainable tourism & accessibility?

The renovation of our waterfronts has led to complete pedestrianization—the use of sustainable materials, natural sand dunes, native plants, wellness areas with sports equipment, children's play areas and bike paths. This intervention strengthens our

position in the active holiday and sustainable tourism sectors. We also gained global visibility from hosting a Tour de France 2024 stage, making it a prime destination for road cycling enthusiasts and cycle tourists. With over 9,000 km of cycling routes, the bicycle is becoming the best way to explore the region. Next year, Rimini will host Velo-City 2026, the world's leading cycling event. Also, to improve accessibility, we are expanding rail and air connections, and will host Routes 2026—the premier event for the aviation sector.

What is Emilia-Romagna's tourism growth expectations for 2025?

In 2024, many German-speaking tourists chose the region and its Riviera as their holiday destination. According to data from the Regional Tourism Observatory, last year we recorded an +8.7% increase in overnight stays (4,029,307 overnight stays) and a +8.1% increase in arrivals (966,912 arrivals) from guests coming from the DACH region (Germany, Austria & Switzerland), which maintains a share of over 33% of the region's international tourism flow. From 2019 to 2024, we have seen +29% growth in the German market, and for this year, we anticipate a further +5% increase compared to 2024. The feedback we have received from industry operators at ITB has been very positive. Thanks to new air and rail connections, we expect a successful 2025 tourist season.





LAURA PLAKU

Executive Director, Albanian Investment Development Agency (AIDA)

How is AIDA using ITB Berlin to boost investment & strengthen ties with German markets?

At this year's ITB Berlin, AIDA is showcasing Albania as a top investment destination across tourism, energy, infrastructure and sustainable development. Our strategy focuses on attracting international investors, promoting Albania's expanding tourism sector and fostering partnerships with global stakeholders. The German-speaking market—Germany, Austria and Switzerland—plays a crucial role in Albania's economic growth. Germany is a leading source of tourists, and investors from the DACH region significantly contribute to hospitality, renewable energy and key industries. To strengthen these ties, AIDA offers investment incentives, streamlined business procedures and access to Albania's emerging market opportunities. Our presence at ITB Berlin reinforces Albania's commitment to economic cooperation, supporting SMEs and unlocking opportunities in eco-tourism, adventure travel and luxury investments, ensuring long-term partnerships with German-speaking investors.

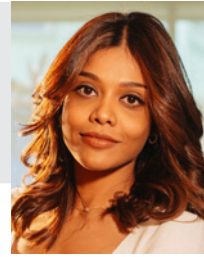


FRANTIŠEK REISMÜLLER

Director of CzechTourism Ministry of Regional Development Czechia

How is Czech Tourism using ITB Berlin to promote diverse travel experiences beyond Prague?

We are leveraging ITB Berlin to showcase the country's wealth of offerings throughout the Czechia. With over 20 participating companies, including hotels, various travel agencies and experience providers, we emphasize Czechia's evolving tourism landscape. While Prague remains a key attraction for all visitors, we address concerns about over-tourism by promoting active tourism, spa tourism and outdoor adventures such as hiking and cycling in other parts of the country. The German-speaking market is crucial, as travelers from Germany, Austria and Switzerland seek both cultural heritage and outdoor escapes. We highlight gastronomy tourism, farm-to-table dining and sustainable travel, emphasizing Czechia's extensive railway network for slow travel experiences. By showcasing scenic train journeys and lesser-known regions, we encourage visitors to explore beyond the capital, ensuring a balanced and immersive travel experience that aligns with modern tourism trends.



KHADHEEJA SANA

Director of PR & Marketing Villa Resorts, Maldives

How is Villa Resorts using ITB Berlin to showcase the Maldives & attract German travelers?

Villa Resorts is leveraging ITB Berlin to highlight the Maldives as more than just a beach destination. With a dedicated office in Frankfurt, the Germany-speaking countries of Europe remain a key market, and ITB provides a powerful platform for sales, PR and partnerships. Our booth recreates the Maldives experience, immersing visitors in the beauty of our islands. This year, we are showcasing Villa Haven, our flagship brand, reflecting evolving travel trends. German-speaking travelers increasingly seek authentic, experience-driven tourism, looking beyond sun and sand to culture, heritage and local traditions. As a family-run Maldivian business with nearly 40 years in the industry, we understand these shifts. We aim to provide a deeper connection to the Maldives, preserving not just our environment, but also our culture and way of life. ITB allows us to share this story, ensuring that travelers experience the true essence of the Maldives beyond its stunning landscapes.

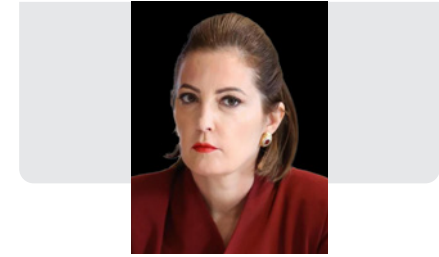


BILJANA STEFANOSKA

Director of the Agency for Promotion & Support of Tourism, Republic of North Macedonia

How is Macedonia promoting tourism growth, & what key markets are you focusing on in 2025?

Macedonia is driving tourism growth through targeted promotion, subsidies and strategic partnerships. Our agency operates directly under the government, focusing on advertising, attending fairs and supporting travel agencies. We offer subsidies of up to €65 per tourist, encouraging foreign tour operators to bring visitors via charter flights. At ITB, we established new agreements with German tour associations and plan a FAM trip to showcase Macedonia's attractions. Currently, our top visitor markets are Turkey, Serbia, Poland, Germany and the Netherlands. Looking ahead, we aim to expand into Switzerland, France, Italy and Scandinavia. A dozen new destinations are now available from the two domestic airports, providing a significant boost to air traffic, more competitive travel options and expanded choices for passengers. By leveraging strategic initiatives, we expect significant growth in 2025, further positioning Macedonia as a prime travel destination.

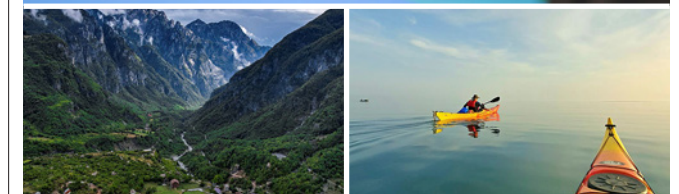


ELIRA KOKONA

Executive Director, Albanian Investment Corporation

How is AIC using ITB Berlin to attract tourism investors & promote Albania's key projects?

AIC is leveraging ITB Berlin to showcase Albania's investment potential, targeting German and global investors. As a guest country, Albania presents a compelling case for investment—not just in tourism, but as a place to live and do business. Two major projects stand out: Durana Tech Park, the region's first virtual tech park, fosters IT startups and supports digital nomads, with a focus on tourism technology. Meanwhile, hospitality infrastructure projects restore state-owned historic buildings, integrating them into global hotel brands. AIC facilitates investments by offering public land and properties through transparent bidding. We ensure secure property rights and minimal bureaucracy, backed by partnerships with major banks. With 12 million tourists annually and rising hotel demand, Albania is attracting investors in hospitality, medical and religious tourism. ITB helps us strengthen these opportunities, positioning Albania as a prime destination for sustainable growth.





Experience Berlin – central, stylish, unforgettable & right by the River Spree.

Berlin, Germany's vibrant capital, seamlessly blends its rich cultural heritage with modern development. From UNESCO-listed landmarks to internationally renowned events, the city showcases its diversity while embracing sustainable tourism. This dynamic metropolis continues to attract visitors, offering an inspiring environment where history & modernity coexist in perfect harmony. Berlin is not only a place to explore & live but also an outstanding destination, where tradition & progress go hand in hand.

AMERON

BERLIN
ABION SPREEBOGEN WATERSIDE

Althoff Hotels