

## CONFERENCE REPORT

### **24<sup>th</sup> EuroCHRIE Congress: In Search of Excellence for tomorrow's Tourism, Travel and Hospitality**

*International Conference hosted and organised by the University of the Aegean, 26-28 October 2006, Thessaloniki, Greece*

This year's EuroCHRIE conference was another distinctive success with several knowledge sharing sessions, great fun, social events, excellent networking and a set of new standards to be exceeded in the future!

The theme of the 24th EuroCHRIE Congress was "In Search of Excellence for tomorrow's Tourism, Travel and Hospitality". Nothing in today's chaotic tourism, travel and hospitality environment stays the same long enough... achieving and sustaining excellence, either in the private or the public sector, is a major challenge for all relevant stakeholders! Excellence has also been strongly linked with success. The search for success through excellence is always with us, the world is changing constantly, and the impacts of change are critical for tourism, travel and hospitality management and education. Success may generate even more excellence, both at macro-environmental and micro-environmental level. Excellence can be small-scale or large-scale. Excellence can also be seen as a constant revolution, having an impact on political, social, cultural, technological and economic environments.

Any stakeholder in tourism, travel & hospitality, and any industry practitioner, educator or researcher, is facing vital questions like:

- How to prepare excellence?
- How to accept excellence?
- How to manage excellence?
- How to optimize excellence?
- How to survive with excellence?
- How to sustain excellence?
- How to teach excellence?
- How to research excellence?



In order to address such questions, 5 parallel and a poster session were organized addressing more than 15 significant and challenging academic topics, namely: tourism and hospitality curriculum; food & beverage – eating and consumer behaviour; sustainable tourism development; information and communication technologies in the travel industry; knowledge management; branding and image in tourism and hospitality; interdisciplinary issues in tourism and hospitality marketing; internships, training & personal development; alternative forms of tourism; tourism destination management & planning cases; information and communication technologies in hospitality; contemporary management issues in hospitality industry; customer attitudes and satisfaction in tourism & hospitality; economics and strategy in tourism, travel, leisure and hospitality; teaching & learning in tourism education; sustainable tourism development; heritage, sport tourism and entrepreneurship; financial management in travel, leisure & hospitality; excellence in hospitality industry; tourist motivation, attitude and buying behaviour; tourism development cases from Europe; hospitality education; multidisciplinary issues and impacts of tourism; sustainable tourism development; service quality and service research; operations and performance management; leadership and motivation of human resources; marketing communication and promotion in tourism & hospitality; multidisciplinary issues in tourism & hospitality; current issues in tourism education; sociology and social impacts of tourism; human resources management; tourism destination marketing; food, beverage & hospitality – contemporary issues. Exquisite physiognomies of the international academic world chaired and guided the constructive and in depth academic discussion held in each session offering both presenters and attendees rigorous criticism and food for thought, namely: Maja Uran, Karl Brandmeir, Ioannis Spilanis, Hilary Murphy, Nicholas Hadjis, Nick Johns, Gregory Dunn, Marie Connolly, Jacqueline Mulligan, Efstathios Velissariou, Clark Kincaid, David Aiey, Nigel Hemmington, Rozenn Perrigot, Bill Samefink, Will Munsters, Philip Gibson, Andreas Papatheodorou, Rai Shacklock, Andrew Lockwood, Paul Barron, Dogan Gursoy, Hailin Qu, Jay Kandampully, Aran Upneja, Sandra Watson, Stefan Zagelmeyer, Audrey McCool, Paris Tsartas, Alexis Saveriades, Olivia Kyriakidou, Spyros Avdimiotis, Thomas Mavrodontis, Robert Harrington and Peter Jones.

The congresses proceedings featured 193 refereed full papers and 18 refereed work-in-progress papers and 19 posters from a pool of 240 papers submitted from 41 countries in 5 continents. 2005, was the first year EuroCHRIE achieved such a remarkable submission record, a fact

that comes to no surprise to the academic community since the research networking is a highly promising activity, the congress hosts put together a brilliant professional and social program for all delegates, needless to mention the attractiveness of a city like Thessaloniki.

During the three days of the conference, the outstanding speeches given by the keynote speakers, namely: Haris Coccosis (Special Secretary for Strategic Planning at Ministry of Tourism in Greece, Professor of the University of Thessaly in Greece); Ms. Poppy Eleftherakou (Director of sales of Classical Hotels); gave a fantastic opportunity for reflecting on a number of interesting and cutting edge topics. A great opportunity for the academic community to disclose their views and anticipations around tourism education was facilitated by the panel discussion, titled "Excellence in Tourism Education", chaired by Professor Nigel Hemmington. Insightful questions were addressed to the panel attendees, who offered a great interdisciplinary and cross-cultural blend, comprised of Professor David Airey, Professor Robert Harrington, Professor Jay Kandampully, Professor Audrey McCool, Professor Harris Coccosis and Professor Paris Tsartas.

The 24th EuroCHRIE conference also featured a PhD Methodology Workshop that was carried out with great success and enthusiasm of its participants. The nice blend of PhD students and well established academics was a true learning experience for the former for two major reason: a) the gain of a great and constructive feedback and b) the rewards they can accumulate from social networking with people sharing the same research interests.

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