



IFES-Kongress 2015 in Wien: „Die nächste Stufe“.

IFES World Summit 2015 in Vienna: "The next level".

IFES WORLD SUMMIT 2015

A birthday congress in Vienna

200 years ago the leaders of Europe changed the face of the continent in the Hofburg of Vienna among other venues. And the IFES celebrated its 30th birthday in the very same place. With a focus on “green” topics.

The setting was truly spectacular. The International Federation of Exhibition & Events Services (IFES) met in the Ceremonial Hall, the former throne room of the Habsburg dynasty. Together with the adjacent rooms, this provided a magnificent backdrop to the event. And with 266 attendees from 37 countries the IFES posted an all-time record. The motto was “Sharing Business” or “Friendship, Trust and Cooperation”, as IFES President Voicu Sferdianu put

it. The I.M. Austria Awards took place in this pleasant atmosphere on the first evening. In his eulogy Leslie P.C. Zech, President of the IFES World Summit 2015, paid tribute to the achievements of Rudolf Angermayr. The award was then presented to the Managing Director of Reed’s booth construction subsidiaries System Standbau and Expoxx.

The anniversary of the IFES World Summit featured regional cuisine and was a largely paperless event. Correspondingly the focus

of the presentations and workshops was on green topics. “Going by appearances, trade fairs and exhibitions are not considered a clean industry,” said speaker Simon Damböck. “Transport, materials, energy consumption and travel are responsible for this public image,” claimed the Managing Director of Atelier Damböck Messebau. “Nevertheless, there are definitely possibilities to reduce the environmental impacts,” he singled out LED technology as an example, which can save around 20,000 to 30,000 euros for large exhibition stands. Certifications are another option, as exhibitors force themselves to meet certain standards.

In reality, trade fairs are only “unclean”

on the face of it: “As many market players meet in only one location, they no longer need to travel so much,” pointed out Damböck. This realisation was confirmed by the UFI’s outgoing Managing Director Paul Woodward. He demonstrated to the IFES delegates that the number of business meetings would be more than 40 per cent higher without trade fairs. The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry UFI has been encouraging its members to act in an environmentally responsible manner since 2009. Many people know that it is important to save the world, claims Woodward: “But, when in doubt, their primary concern is to save their own company.” Hence, CEOs need to help raise awareness: “This makes it easier to implement green standards.”

Paul Woodward was also a jury member for the Sustainability Challenge at the IFES Congress. Ten start-up companies presented their sustainable business models. The winners of the challenge had travelled to the event from Rome. Their concept was to collect waste food at events and share it with those in need. Paul Woodward was also interested in establishing contacts. After all, there will probably be a lot of leftovers at the annual UFI Congress in Milan (page 9). And a glimpse behind the scenes of the 2015 Eurovision Song Contest in Vienna showed that sustainable events have even more advantages. The two to three per cent extra costs for a green approach are offset by higher revenues. “We gained sponsors who would normally never have supported an ESC,” said Hildegard Aichberger, Sustainability Officer of the Austrian public broadcasting station ORF. “But they were willing to sponsor a green event to enhance their ‘green cachet’” (www.ifesnet.com). PB ■