



### **A short report from the EFCT Summer School 2006 in Berlin**

The 20<sup>th</sup> edition of the EFCT Summer School, which has taken place in Berlin from 26 to 30 August, has welcomed this year 50 students from 18 countries to a very interesting educational program, driven by a dedicated Faculty of fourteen highly experienced speakers from different professional backgrounds and countries and representing a wide span of the meetings industry sector.

The seminar concept has retained a combination of plenary sessions combined with practical aspects and site visits, and once again speakers have been much appreciated for generously sharing throughout the duration of the course their knowledge and experience with a new generation of students. All Summer School attendees were also delighted by accurately planned social events that allowed in a limited time to get a real taste of the German capital. A most informative walk to the Brandenburg Gate with currywurst and champagne next to it, a visit to the "Story of Berlin" exhibition and the closing dinner at the Kaisersaal – a prime and elegant historic setting at Potsdamer Platz, featuring a performance by the "revived" diva Marlene Dietrich provided an excellent platform for both networking and fun.

While celebrating the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Summer School, EFCT is extremely proud that several hundred students (approx. 560 in the last ten years alone!) have already attended this seminar and gained a first or better insight in what the meetings industry, the work of a convention bureau or a meeting specialist means. For many younger industry professionals it proves to be the educational event that brings them the full picture and highlights the key elements of the international meetings industry, with a stronger stress on marketing.

An interesting feature from this year's seminar is the fact that for the first time, staff from national or city convention bureaux / tourist boards were not a majority. The job profile namely brought staff working for venues – congress centres or convention hotels – in a higher number. Other categories among the participants were also DMC's and a corporate meeting planner. The strongest national teams this year came from Estonia, Slovenia and Croatia, with a half of the total coming from one among the 10 new EU member states.

A valuable aspect of this seminar is also the chance for students to build a strong network with peers in many different countries, which many previous generations of Summer School participants have succeeded in maintaining over the years.

With the support of both the Berlin Convention office and some major partners in the meetings industry, EFCT has been able to offer the students a wide range of professional speakers and enjoyable social events, keeping its traditional family-like atmosphere. Heike Mahmoud, Director of the Berlin Convention Office welcomed the Summer School by saying that Berlin will make our hearts beat faster – and she was very right indeed!

Do not forget to mark in your calendars the dates for the EFCT Summer School next year - in yet another attractive host city, TALLINN, from 25 to 28 August 2007.