

HEADQUARTERS

Building bridges in the meetings industry

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INTERNATIONAL EXHIBITION LOGISTICS ASSOCIATION

A certain need for a global and strong network

IELA, the International Exhibition Logistics Association, is the only worldwide trade association dedicated to enhancing the professionalism of the transportation logistics and freight handling segments of the exhibition and event logistics industry. Christoph Rauch, IELA Chairman, tells HQ how they operate.



Christoph Rauch

HQ: Could you briefly present the Association?

Christoph Rauch: IELA's strict entry requirements focusing on exhibition & event expertise assure the highest level of quality services. Our members are recognised as the industry leaders and niche providers in their regions as well as around the

established the IELA Survey to improve the service level, quality and professionalism of all IELA members in March 1987. The IELA STANDARD OF PERFORMANCE SURVEY is the unique tool that benchmarks our member's performance. The winner of the respective category – Domestic Agent or Export Agent – receives the Best Agent Award at the annual

on average: IELA defines itself as a very active association driven by its members. During our annual congress our members brainstorm at the Working Group Sessions (Organisers & Venues, Standards & Customs, Membership, Training and PR & Marketing). This is the most important platform for members to contribute their opinions on important matters concerning IELA's future plans and projects. The IELA FORUM, taking place also during our Congresses, is the annual industry panel discussion where IELA builds the bridge between organisers, venues, exhibitors and our members.

THE NEED FOR A GLOBAL AND STRONG NETWORK OF HIGHLY SKILLED PROFESSIONALS IS GETTING MORE AND MORE ESSENTIAL TO SATISFY NOT ONLY THE EXHIBITOR'S NEEDS BUT SHOW ORGANISERS AND VENUE OPERATORS

globe. Currently IELA has 144 members and 32 affiliates in 49 countries.

IELA Congress, the highest quality recognition within the Industry.

HQ: Can you share your views about some of the challenges and opportunities your organisation faces?

Christoph Rauch: Our association seeks to professionalise all segments within exhibition and event logistics, set corresponding standards and ensure compliance with them. This is a hallmark of the high quality level of our members.

IELA faces since its beginning the challenge and responsibility of being recognized as the elite echelon of the world's best exhibition and event logistics providers. Therefore we

HQ: Can you tell us about the events you organise?

Christoph Rauch: IELA provides a platform for all companies, people and associations engaged in this field for sharing knowledge and information, for establishing business contacts and for further training.

IELA makes strong efforts on delivering Members benefits to all corporation levels having access to a full range of events:

- the *Annual Congress* addresses CEOs and Directors, with 220 participants

PAST AND FUTURE IELA CONGRESSES

- 2016:** 31st IELA Congress & General Assembly, Dublin
- 2015:** 30th IELA Congress & General Assembly, Singapore
- 2014:** 29th IELA Congress & General Assembly, Amsterdam
- 2013:** 28th IELA Congress & General Assembly, Munich
- 2012:** 27th IELA 2012 Congress & General Assembly, Barcelona
- 2011:** 26th IELA Congress, Seoul, Korea
- 2010:** 25th Jubilee IELA Congress, Paris

- the *Partnering Event*, open to the whole industry, is the most important networking platform worldwide with over 350 delegates every year.
- the *Winter Seminar*: Training and education ranks very high on IELA's agenda. Our Winter Seminar is an education and networking event, targeting our members young professionals. 194 students have been qualified for future tasks since 2002!
- the *Operations Summit* reaches out to the operational level. This new event is taking place in Hong Kong in January 2016 under the theme "The New Angle of Networking". During this event our member's staff from the operational level will experience a mix of social- and industry related events, taking advantage of workshops with renowned guest speakers of the Trade Fair business and benchmarking amongst industry peers.

What is the association's decision process concerning the events you organise? How do you decide on destinations and venues?

Christoph Rauch: Our events take place at member's destinations. Every member may apply to be next year's host. During the General Assembly every delegate votes for his/her favourite destination. The city with the most votes wins and becomes the venue of the next year.

Your 31st conference will be held in Dublin next year. Can you tell us how planning the event is like?

Christoph Rauch: The slogan and event spirit next year will be "INSPIRE BUSINESS – WELCOME TOMORROW". We are working now on our Congress content concept and are thrilled about some nice thinking-out of the box speakers that will inspire our members. We would be pleased to report HQ Magazine readers more about our event later in 2016.

What has the most memorable event been so far? Why?

Christoph Rauch: The most memorable event probably was our last congress in Singapore, where we celebrated our 30th anniversary in an outstanding environment.

The strong attendance in Singapore really highlighted the key role of IELA as a knowledge and networking platform and as the meeting point of the industry worldwide. 358 delegates representing 195 companies from 49 countries arranged a total of 3,247 meetings via MY AGENDA, IELA's online pre-arranged meeting software. At our Gala Dinner at Clifford Pier we were proud and pleased to award GBH Exhibition Forwarding Ltd UK as Best Domestic Agent 2014 and SWISS EXPO LOGISTCS AG as Best Export Agent 2014.

How would you summarise new trends in the association congress world?

Christoph Rauch: In the context of globalisation, digitalisation and sustainable development, our members as well as our organisation are facing several challenges. The need for a global and strong network of highly skilled professionals is getting more and more essential to satisfy not only the exhibitor's needs, but of equal relevance and importance for Associations, show organisers and venue operators. Our goal as an Association is to continue to focus on strengthening our network and education & training programme, boosting our brand and working on new projects giving our members more tools which support their daily work and business development.

www.iela.org



Celebrating IELA's 30th anniversary



Networking Sessions



Working Group Sessions 2015



Welcome Cocktail Partnering Event 2015