

2009 was a successful year for ICVB

Chairman of Istanbul Chamber of Commerce (ICOC), President of the Board of Directors of the Tourism Development and Education Foundation (TUGEV) and also the President of the Istanbul Convention Visitors Bureau (ICVB) Mr. Murat Yalçıntaş hosted Turkish tourism industry representatives and ICVB members at a luncheon held at ICOC Building on February 17, 2010.

The luncheon which started with a cocktail, continued with lunch where Mr. Yalçıntaş and ICVB General Manager Mrs. Handan Boyce took stage and evaluated year of 2009 and presented targets for 2010.

Mr. Yalçıntaş stated that 2009 was a successful year for ICVB. "At the latest excavations in Istanbul, it is discovered that the city has a history of 8,500 years. It housed the world's greatest civilizations, oldest cultures, and became the capital of many empires. Istanbul is the place, where continents meet, different ideas, different faiths and different cultures come together. And it is such a city that when you turn your head, you see the natural beauty and historical riches, as well as the intersection of trade here in Istanbul. In this sense, I believe that tourism sector and ICVB are extremely important and strategic for Istanbul," said Mr. Yalçıntaş.

Despite the global economic crisis, Mr. Yalçıntaş underlined that tourism industry continued its growth in 2009. "The total number of foreign visitors arrived Turkey in 2009 reached 27 million. The number of arrivals for Istanbul counted 7,5 million".

Stating that Istanbul became one of world's most important convention destinations, Mr. Yalçıntaş added, "In 2008, we were among the top 15 convention destinations of ICCA, rankings for 2009 is not



announced yet but I think that Istanbul moved further up in the rankings. We have hosted two big conventions last year; IMF - World Bank Meeting and World Water Forum".

Mr. Yalçıntaş clarifying their success will rise further in 2010, added that Istanbul will be on spotlight as the city of the European Capital of Culture 2010. With several cultural events in the city, Europe and world will follow cultural events in Istanbul.

A video presentation of ICVB 2009 activities was broadcasted during the luncheon. ■