

# Istanbul is the meeting point of the world

Interview by Gorazd Čad, Editor in Chief

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Ibrahim Çağlar

## An interview with Ibrahim Caglar, President of Istanbul Chamber Of Commerce



**Q:** How is Istanbul positioned as a meeting destination today and what are its positive attributes that are often overlooked?

Istanbul is the pupil of the world with her thousands years of history, unique geography at the crossroads of East and West and the identity of melting different colors and cultures. As the 8th most visited city in the world, every visitor who came to this city witnessed the natural

beauty of the architecture, local values up to global realities and the spiritual climate of economic dynamism. 1.5 billion people living within four hours' flying time of Istanbul and being the only city on two continents gives the city a unique and privileged position. Istanbul has in-depth knowledge across many fields of expertise and the potential to absorb much more. Today, this unforgettable city is an ideal location for congresses and exhibitions with state of the art convention venues and vast accommodation alternatives.

**Q: What is the co-operation at the destination like? Are you satisfied with the promotion and work of Istanbul Convention Bureau?**

Istanbul Chamber of Commerce's main aim is to be worth of this city. Indeed, our main mission is to develop and introduce the values of this city to the world. In fact, Istanbul CVB continues to be an expression of our efforts and determination since 1997. Istanbul CVB is working in close coordination with its members and tourism industry associations, supported by the Turkish Ministry of Culture & Tourism, the Istanbul Chamber of Commerce and the Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality and Turkish Airlines, Istanbul CVB designs and implements strategic marketing initiatives and special events that raise Istanbul's profile as a conference and incentive destination. The number of congresses in Istanbul increased by 280% in the last decade. Undoubtedly this accelerated rise is a prominent success for Turkish economy. As Istanbul CVB, our main and primary goal is to retain this acceleration.

**Q: Can you tell us more about the future investments in tourism in Istanbul region?**

As one of most dynamic cities in the world, Istanbul is expanding rapidly. It has been ranked as the 2nd city in infrastructure investments (World Bank 2015). Here are some mega projects that are under construction;

- Istanbul Grand Airport (3rd international airport): Set to be one of the largest in the world in terms of passenger capacity (150 million per year). It will make Istanbul the largest airline hub in the world and is expected to be completed in 2018.
- Galataport is expected to increase the capacity of the port and will add value to Istanbul's tourism and make the city a key stop for cruise lines.
- Istanbul Sea Tunnel Mega Project and Canal Istanbul
- Recently completed projects are the 3rd bridge (Yavuz Sultan Selim) and Eurasia Tunnel.

In addition, Istanbul is constantly investing in accommodation facilities to welcome more visitors to the city; currently the city offers 104.000 beds and over 45.000 new ones are under investment. Istanbul has been and still is focusing on investments to increase its capacity and welcome even bigger congresses and events.

**Q: Where will Istanbul's hospitality and MICE scene go in the next decade?**

The number of congresses in Istanbul increased by 280% in the last decade. We had some decreases in the number of congresses last year. However, as ICVB, we work towards making Istanbul one of the most desirable destinations in the world for the meetings industry. Managing an ever growing business, our goal for 2023 is to position Istanbul among the top five in the world.

” In a nutshell, Istanbul is the meeting point of the world. As the President of Istanbul Chamber of Commerce, I would like to invite meeting planners to explore and plan their meetings and events in our fascinating city since Istanbul has it all for it at the highest standards.

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