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Munich turns into a 'City of Cardiologists'

- Preparations for the congress of the highly respected European Society of Cardiology (ESC) at the end of August have been in full swing for months. Over 3,000 participants are expected to attend.
- Munich's congress sector is pulling out all the stops to ensure the cardiologists receive an especially warm welcome in Munich.

From Saturday, 30 August to Wednesday, 3 September 2008 Munich is turning into a 'City of Cardiologists'. Around 30,000 heart specialists from all over the world will be travelling to Munich to take part in the five-day congress of the renowned European Society of Cardiology, which is being held at the ICM and the New Munich Trade Fair Centre. Munich's congress and meetings industry is putting on a special welcome for the international guests, and over the last few months has devised a unique marketing and activities package. All around the city, participants in Europe's largest medical congress will be able to see signs with the words: *Munich Welcomes ESC Congress 2008*.

"To ensure everything was just right for the success of this internationally very coveted major congress here in Munich, all those involved in the congress and meetings industry in Munich have been working very closely together, in a way that is unique throughout Europe," said Norbert Bargmann, who is the managing director of Messe München GmbH responsible for the International

Congress Centre Munich (ICM). Speaking on behalf of all the partners, he was summing up the successful concerted efforts over recent months.

Munich flies the flag

Specifically the parties involved in the congress sector – the City of Munich, Munich's hotel and catering businesses, industry and trade, Munich Airport and the ICM – have devised and implemented a whole host of initiatives and ideas for the ESC Congress. For example, at central positions in the city, the flag of the European Society of Cardiology will be flying. Taxis and buses will be sporting a 'Munich Welcomes' branding, specially developed for the ESC Congress – and 'Welcome Buttons' have been produced in the same design for all the hostesses and employees of the participating firms.

At Munich Airport, the ESC logo is being displayed on the info screens to welcome congress delegates. And hostesses and guides will be available at the airport, the central station, Marienplatz and selected underground railway stations to answer questions from arriving participants. The signage directing participants to the exhibition centre also sports the special branding. In the hotel rooms, too, the international guests will find a welcome gift waiting for them – a booklet about the city and a scented pillow in the ESC design, plus a personal letter from Munich's Mayor, Christian Ude.

International competition intensifies

In the competition among congress venues, these days it's the attractiveness and identity of a location that decides on the success of an event. In addition to a functional congress centre or exhibition centre, and specialised services, international organisers, such as the ESC, also look for easy accessibility and excellent transport and air connections. Organisers and visitors are also demanding ever higher standards of hotels and restaurants, and they want a destination that offers plenty of opportunities for relaxation and enjoyment. Munich offers an ideal combination of all these locational advantages, as Jörg Bauler, Head of the Munich Congress Office underlines. As such it is predestined for the successful organisation of large-scale congresses: "The Bavarian capital combines the professionalism of a high-tech location, with a tremendous diversity of cultural and leisure opportunities. In addition it has an excellent infrastructure and one of Europe's top congress centres, with adjacent

exhibition centre." For this reason, the players in the Munich congress industry would in future be continuing their joint activities in international marketing to promote these unique locational advantages.

Everyone benefits

All those participating benefit when a congress of this size is a success: The cardiologists' congress alone injects around 70 million euros of purchasing power into the City of Munich and the region – statistics show that each participant spends 657 euros per day (cf. a 2008 study by the ifo Institut für Wirtschaftsforschung).

For Norbert Bargmann, these multiple benefits are reason enough, and indeed an imperative, for continuing with targeted integrated city marketing, in order to further expand Munich's leading position in the international competition for destinations.

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About the International Congress Centre Munich (ICM)

ICM, the International Congress Centre Munich, is one of the leading congress and convention destinations in Germany and Europe thanks to its modern architecture and first-rate amenities. Located adjacent to the New Munich Trade Fair Centre, and with a direct covered link to it, the ICM offers planners tremendous flexibility and scope for organising events of all kinds. As an independent profit centre of Messe München GmbH, the International Congress Centre Munich promotes its services and facilities to customers in the German and European meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions market. The ICM also acts as a platform for the academic and scientific programmes and congresses accompanying the events held at the New Munich Trade Fair Centre, organised by Messe München.

Messe München International (MMI)

Messe München International (MMI, Munich Trade Fairs International Group) is one of the world's leading trade-fair companies. It organises around 40 trade fairs for capital and consumer goods, and key high-tech industries. Each year over 30,000 exhibitors from more than 100 countries, and over two million visitors from more than 200 countries take part in the events in Munich. In addition, MMI organises trade fairs in Asia, Russia, the Middle East and South America. With six subsidiaries abroad – in Europe and in Asia – and with 66 foreign representatives serving 89 countries, MMI has a truly global network.

For **additional information** and **photos** to download, go to: www.icm-muenchen.de

Press contact:

Kerstin Bürger, ICM Project Communications, Tel. (+49 89) 949 20722,
e-mail: kerstin.buerger@messe-muenchen.de