

HEADQUARTERS

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FRANCE
ALL THE INGREDIENTS
FOR A PERFECT MEETING

FRANCE

ALWAYS ON THE MOVE

IT'S THE SECOND TIME IN A FEW MONTHS HQ HAS PUBLISHED A SPECIAL FEATURE ON FRANCE. OBVIOUSLY THE COUNTRY HAS MANY MORE SECRETS YET TO BE REVEALED. FRANCE INDEED NEVER STANDS STILL, WITH NEW HOTELS OPENING UP, CONFERENCE CENTRES BEING RENOVATED OR EXTENDED, SPECIAL OFFERS FOR MEETING PLANNERS BEING SET UP. LET'S FIND OUT WHAT MAKES FRANCE SUCH A GREAT ASSOCIATION DESTINATION.

TEXTS ROSE KELLEHER



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A city that needs little introduction, the feast of monuments and mode that is **PARIS** has been a staple destination since as long as we can remember. Why? Reliable, resourceful and drop dead gorgeous. See page 6.



The friendly northern city of **LILLE** has been transformed in recent years. It has a big heart and big facilities, and some fantastic culture and cuisine. See page 7.



NANTES is a cosmopolitan port city that bursts with creative energy and all the mod-cons, surrounded by an exceptional natural environment ready to be explored. See page 8.



BORDEAUX'S bounty of architecture, plus its proximity to the sea and the world's most celebrated stretch of wine country, make this chic metropolis a favourite destination for business and leisure. See page 10.



THE 18 INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS CLUSTERS IN FRANCE

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Aerospace Valley (aeronautics, space and embedded systems - Toulouse) 2. Alsace BioValley (health and life sciences - Strasbourg) 3. Axelera (chemistry and the environment - Lyon) 4. Cap Digital Paris Région (digital content - Paris) 5. EAU (Ecotechnologies - Montpellier) 6. Finance innovation (finance - Paris) 7. Images et réseaux (information technologies, telecommunications and multimedia - Lannion) 8. Industries et Agro-ressources (biorefinery - Laon) 9. I-Trans (transport - Lille) | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 10. Lyonbiopôle (health: infectious diseases - Lyon) 11. Medicen Paris Région (health and new treatments - Paris) 12. Minalogic (nanotechnologies - Grenoble) 13. Mov'éo (private cars and public transport - Rouen) 14. Pôle mer Bretagne (activities linked to the sea - Brest) 15. Pôle mer PACA (security and sustainable development in the Mediterranean - Toulon) 16. Solutions Communicantes Sécurisées (ICT - Nice - Sophia Antipolis) 17. System@tic Paris Région (digital systems - Paris) 18. Végépolys (plant specialists - Angers) |
|---|--|



Visitors love **TOULOUSE**. The pink city is a lively and animated, young and funky. This sun-baked corner of southwest France is the place where things are happening. See page 10.



LYON, nicknamed the City of Light, is a refreshing riverside style capital that has the space and the time for all kinds of visitor - and an intensely visible legacy of culture, heritage, style and, particularly, gastronomy. See page 6.

Just over the bridge from Germany, **STRASBOURG** is an extremely pleasant European capital with a special sense of identity, at once mesmerisingly Middle Ages and ultra-modern. See page 9.

Dipping its feet into the sparkling blue Mediterranean, **NICE** is shimmeringly pretty and full of major museums and Roman ruins, wonderful hilltop vistas and upscale resorts. See page 9.

Innovative, fast-growing and self-confident, **MONTPELLIER** lives along the gorgeous southern coast and always has lots going on, plus some unmissable sites and one of the most pedestrian friendly centres in the country. See page 8.

MARSEILLE is all Mediterranean character and terra-cotta roofs, scattered between charming districts and the dazzling deep blue sea. Its heady mix of professionalism and party are a huge draw. See page 7.

FOREWORD

A WORD BY CHRISTIAN MANTEI, CEO OF ATOUT FRANCE

Dear Congress Planners,

With this supplement, we wish to introduce a number of French cities, internationally renowned for their infrastructure, rich history and embodiment of the French 'art de vivre'.



Christian Mantei, CEO of Atout France

France is the world's #1 tourist destination and has been respectively ranked 3rd (UIA) and 5th (ICCA) as a destination for congresses. France annually hosts approximately 400 international congresses of varying size.

It is for this reason that our strategy is to continue to invest in tourism services, quality hospitality and infrastructure to meet your expectations.

It is France's economic dynamism, its 18 internationally recognised clusters, and initiatives such as the new hotel classification allowing quality establishments to be easily identifiable that convince association planners to choose France.

This combination of culture, infrastructure and hospitality makes France the ideal destination for welcoming your next congress/event.

We look forward to welcoming you to France,

Christian Mantei, CEO of Atout France



The sustainable Palais des Festivals in Cannes

WHAT'S SO SPECIAL ABOUT FRANCE?

WITH AN AVERAGE OF 80 MILLION VISITORS PER YEAR, FRANCE IS THE WORLD'S #1 TOURIST DESTINATION, THANKS TO A HIGH LEVEL QUALITY TOURIST OFFER PLUS A RICHNESS OF HERITAGE, NATURAL AND CULTURAL RELIABILITY AND UNPARALLELED BEAUTY. MOST WELL-KNOWN IS THE FEAST OF MONUMENTS AND MODE THAT IS PARIS, BUT FRANCE IS ALSO HOME TO A HOST OF OTHER GREAT GLOBAL CITIES LIKE LYON, BORDEAUX AND MARSEILLE, WITH AWARD-WINNING DINING AND SHOPPING SERVICES. FOR CONGRESS ATTENDEES, FRANCE OFFERS DEPENDABLE FACILITIES AND MULTILINGUAL TEAMS WITH VAST EXPERIENCE IN WELCOMING INTERNATIONAL GROUPS.

FRANCE AT A GLANCE

According to the International Monetary Fund, France is the 5th largest economy in the world and the 2nd largest in Europe. Tourism makes up 7% of GDP. There are more than 612,000 rooms in 17,487 hotels of different categories, plus 120 convention centres, 80 exhibition complexes and 18 international business clusters. In 2010, there were 5,681 events in France, of which 623 were congresses. France was ranked number 5 and number 3 in the world for association meetings in 2010, according to the ICCA and UIA respectively.

France has always played an important role as a **centre of high culture** and art. Enthusiasm for the French way of life has not waned among international visitors, and many still flock to the country specifically to sample cultural highlights and traditions that vary by region. The enjoyment of **fine food**, in particular, is of *haute* priority across France. Despite already boasting **37 UNESCO world heritage site listings**, the UN body elected to add the gastronomic meal of the

French to the UNESCO Intangible Heritage List last year - a world first for food. In addition, the Minister of Tourism, Frédéric Lefebvre, announced the creation of the Fête de la Gastronomie festival to take place every year in September. And cooking is only one of a number of skills for which the French are famous. There are more than 3 million practicing artisan crafts, guaranteeing high-quality French made produce.

WELL-CONNECTED FRANCE

With **11 international airports** including two in Paris and one each in Bordeaux, Lyon, Marseille, Nice, Strasbourg and Toulouse, France is well-connected. Paris Charles de Gaulle Airport (also known as Roissy Airport) is one of the world's busiest airports, with 58 million passengers a year. It is connected by TGV (high-speed train) and local RER to Paris centre. There are **12,000 kilometres of quality motor-way**, **29,000 kilometres of railway lines**, and **650 TGV services every day**. The increase of cross-borders trains eases access to France. For instance, the Eurostar train

crosses the English channel over 30 times per day between London, Lille and Paris. The high-speed Thalys train connects major French hubs with cities in Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands. New train connections such as Lyon-Turin and the launch of the LGV (Ligne à Grand Vitesse, ie high-speed railway lines) Rhin-Rhône are other assets for France.

POOL OF TALENT

France is a pool of talent thanks to a recognised education system. Intellectual and innovative prowess is spread over **71 different clusters** throughout the country. These clusters help to boost the region's appeal, and synergies are constantly being developed between the clusters and the meetings industry. Following a positive first phase of the French government's cluster policy, a further €1.5bn was allocated to a



New hotel rating signs affixed to the front of the hotels



> INTRODUCTION



second phase for 2009-2011. This continued support for R&D is essential to boost the competitiveness of the activities across the varied clusters, which span Aerospace (Toulouse) to Health and Life Sciences (Strasbourg).

IN THE NEWS

The **law on the development and modernisation of tourism services** was passed in July 2009, calling on all hospitality professionals to improve quality of service and guarantee consumer protection. Regulations pertaining to incoming agencies have been simplified, requiring mandatory registration with Atout France by July 2012. As of November 2011, 5121 operators were registered, including 1156 new ones.

Atout France was given the task of creating and promoting **new standards for rating tourist accommodation**, in order to improve the quality of the range available. One development has been the **creation of a five-star category**, a move guaranteed to highlight the highest quality accommodation in France.

This will enable visitors to prepare for their business and other trips in France with ease and with complete trust, by providing a guarantee of comfort and service suitable to the required category. In July 2012, when the old rating system ceases to apply, the only point of reference for customers will be the stars according to these new standards.

Announced in November 2010, the creation of the **'Palace' hotel category** aims to identify establishments among five-star hotels that are particularly exceptional and that embody high-quality French excellence. Nine establishments were awarded Palace status in 2011.

In 2011, the Tourism Ministry introduced a **charter aimed at improving quality in the hospitality industry**. A number of commitments will be undertaken in order to standardise the quality of the visitor experience. Examples of initiatives include the Paris Charter whereby hotel operators have committed to offering specific conditions to non-profit organisations. The Lyon Hotels Charter also

aims to harmonise the offerings of different hotels in Lyon and to facilitate negotiations in the purchasing process for large associations. A new standardised classification label, **Vignobles & Découvertes**, was created in 2010 to recognise destinations that offer high standard tourism services around the theme of wine. This label makes it easier to identify venues and accommodation in true 'wine country' that are committed to maintaining special quality requirements.

FRANCE IS GREEN TOO

Thanks in part to a huge wealth of renewable energy resources, the Environmental Performance Index identifies France as #7 in the world for environmental performance. **Sustainable development** is a priority in France's agenda, and there have been a number of recent initiatives. The Environmental Round Table, set up in 2007, anticipates €450bn to be invested in green construction, renewable energy, eco-technology and sustainable transport by 2020. Included is a plan for 2,000 new kilometres of railway lines to add to France's already vast network.

65% of French venues are also either certified or working towards being certified by entities such as ISO. For instance, the Palais des Festivals in Cannes was the first European centre to get a triple certification for Quality (Iso 9001), Environment (ISO 14001) and Safety (Security) (OHSAS 18001) Their website **eco-evenement.org** was launched in 2011 with the aim of developing an information service for the meetings industry and to ultimately promote environmentally responsible events. In addition, Nantes was recently awarded the title **'European Green Capital in 2013'** by the European Commission.



► TEN CITIES WITH FLAIR

1 | PARIS What more can be said about Paris, the most visited city in the world? Apart from old favourites like the Eiffel Tower or Le Louvre, there are thousands of other must-sees. Shopping in the city is second to none, and



visitors love the left bank's shops, the department stores, the Champs Elysées and the Marais district. And Paris is renewing itself all the time. Some new additions include the Gaîté Lyrique, a new museum dedicated to digital culture.

For congresses, La Cité de la Mode et du Design is an upcoming venue sitting on the banks of the Seine. Eurosites les Docks de Paris is one of the largest meeting centres in the capital, set in La Plaine Saint Denis in the midst of the traditional warehouse area, and can host events of up to 6,000 people.



Associations report between 10% and 30% higher attendance for meetings held in Paris. The city is a major attraction as a destination for a meeting, and many attendees opt to tag some leisure time onto their trip. Some of Paris' most illustrious sites even double as meetings venues: the Eiffel Tower's can host up to 350 people for dinner, and the Carrousel du Louvre up to 1,600 for a conference. The nave of Le Grand Palais accommodates up to 6,300 in outstanding surroundings.

PARIS IN NUMBERS

- + Time to Brussels by train: 1h20
- + Time to London by train: 2h15
- + Largest expo space: 130,000 m²
- + Museums: 1,346
- + Hotels: 1,466
- + Number of flights per week: 14,000
- + Number of high speed trains per day: 425
- + Recent congresses: Congress of the European Association of Percutaneous Cardiovascular Interventions at Le Palais des Congrès de Paris (12,000 participants - May 2011), International Conference on Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders at the Paris Porte de Versailles (5,000 participants - July 2011)

2 | LYON Lyon, the second largest urban area in France, is nestled into the country's south-east. This important metropolis is the capital of the Rhône-Alpes region and the second largest contributor to the French economy. Lyon is a hard-working city, with a rich architectural heritage that spans 2,000 years. Here lies the capital of French gastronomy: Lyon has the largest number of Michelin-starred restaurants in the country.



Lyon has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1998, thanks to a feast of beautiful renaissance architecture. It has been nicknamed the 'City of Light' and every evening, more than 100 sites across the city light up. Lyon has numerous museums, including Le Musée des Beaux-Arts, the Lumière Museum (where cinematography was invented) and the Textile and Decorative Arts Museum.

Important dates on the cultural calendar include the biennial Contemporary Art and Dance festivals, the Grand Lyon Film Festival and the Fête des Lumières (Festival of Light). Lyon's biggest meetings spot, the Lyon Convention Center prides itself on ticking all the boxes for international planners, and congress visitors can benefit from the city's excellent Pack 1500 which features a range of discounts and free services for large-scale gatherings of 1,500 or more.

LYON IN NUMBERS

- + Time to Paris by train: 2 hours
- + Daily trains between Lyon/Paris: 23
- + Hotel rooms: 12,188
- + Michelin-star restaurants: 16
- + Number of auditoria: 3
- + Total expo space: 25,000 m²
- + Meeting rooms: 26
- + Maximum capacity: 3,000
- + Distance to airport: 25 km
- + International flight routes: 95
- + Recent congresses: Congress of the European Science Education Research Association (1,000 participants - September 2011), 13th AFTES Congress (1,000 participants - October 2011), both held at Lyon Convention Center

Visitors to Lyon love the symphony of flavours and colours of the local markets, and wandering the city streets is a pleasure.

3 | MARSEILLE

Known for its Mediterranean coastline and major harbour, Marseille is the second-biggest city in France. The city is home to sun-drenched sandy beaches and the famous Calanques. The Old Port is vibrant with the memory of the city's origins, and accommodates nearly 3,500 pleasure boats. Visitors are encouraged to try out the famous bouillabaisse or lounge on Marseille's Parc Balnéaire du Prado. Marseille is

a city of art mixed with living history and busy bazaars and street markets. It is a regional centre for culture, with an important opera house, historical and maritime museums, several art galleries and lots of clubs, bars and restaurants. Marseille-Provence has been named European Capital of Culture 2013, and all year more than 400 cultural and artistic events will take place throughout the region. Marseille offers the Congress Pass Ticket, that allows unlimited travel on all buses

and underground lines for three consecutive days from the first validation. As for venues, the Palais du Pharo is a historic building and a modern congress centre well-situated on the Vieux-Port. The Palais des Congrès et des Expositions is a complex that offers 7 exhibition buildings, and the Velodrome Stadium, one of the most famous in France, can host events, seating over 67,000 in theatre.



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MARSEILLE IN NUMBERS

- + Train time to Paris: 3 hours
- + Train time to Brussels: 5 hours
- + Trains to Paris per day: 17
- + Hotel rooms: 6,700
- + Kilometres of coastline: 57
- + Flight time to Paris: 75 minutes
- + Total expo space: 40,000 m², plus 52,000 m² of esplanades
- + Recent congresses: Congress for Semiology at the Palais du Pharo (1,200 participants - November 2011), Chartered Accountants Congress at the Palais des Congrès et des Expositions (5,000 participants - October 2011)

4 | LILLE

Lille is a beautiful historical city that

combines Flemish influences in architecture and French way of living. The Vieux-Lille (the old district) with its cobbled streets and luxury shops perfectly reflects this elegant mix. Neo-Flemish houses from the 15th century, listed belfries as UNESCO Heritage sites and designed buildings mirror the diversity of the city. Since Lille was named European Capital of Culture in 2004, flitting between masterpieces of its 20 museums and contemporary art galleries and

exhibitions is easy! The Fine arts museum of Lille is the second in France in terms of collections and the beautiful Musée de la Piscine, a former swimming-pool from the thirties, is just unique. If you feel hungry, take your pick between Michelin-starred restaurants, waffles, beers, seafood, French fries, cheeses and typical estaminets, a crossover of English gastropubs and Parisian cafés. Another beloved attraction of this perfect destination? Its world-famous flea market attracting over 2 million visitors every 1st weekend of September.

But Lille is also a delightfully up-to-date meetings destination, and it plays host to several regional competitiveness economic clusters and scientific universities. Lille Grand Palais Convention & Exhibition Centre right in the middle of the city centre accommodates under the same roof 20,000 m² of exhibition, 3 auditoria up to 1,500 seats and a concert hall up to 7,500 seats. Lille is extremely accessible thanks to its position along the London-Paris-Brussels route.

LILLE IN NUMBERS

- + Train time from Paris: 58 min
- + Time from London: 80 min
- + Time from Brussels: 35 min
- + Number of daily trains to/from Paris: 25
- + International and national economic clusters: 5
- + Hotels rooms: 7,000
- + Capacity of the largest space: 4,500 pax
- + Size of the largest space: 20,000 m²
- + Recent congresses: 42nd Union World Conference on Lung health at the Lille Grand Palais convention centre (2,200 delegates - October 2011). International Society of Behavioral & Cognitive Vascular Disorders at the Convention centre (700 delegates - September 2011)



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© Maxime Dufour Photographies

► TEN CITIES WITH FLAIR

5 | NANTES

The Atlantic-side city of

Nantes, elected European Green Capital 2013, was once the capital of Brittany and France's foremost port. Now it's more like a lively, open-air museum, a cultural hotspot full of history - boasting the last Castle of the Loire Valley, the Château des ducs de Bretagne - and an excellent destination for urban tourism.

Nantes boasts an array of must-see tourist sites, particularly along the city's old shipyards, where the Machines de l'Île were

founded, a bestiary of living machines at the crossroads of the 'invented worlds' of Jules Verne (a native of Nantes), of the mechanical universe of Leonard da Vinci and of Nantes' industrial activities. Moreover, 2012 will be full of happenings such as the opening of the Memorial Museum dedicated to the Abolition of Slavery and the last edition of the contemporary art festival Estuaire, a permanent art installation along the river Loire. Visitors are also urged to check out the Lieu Unique, the old biscuit factory where the famous Petit-Beurre used to be made, and which was transformed into an atypical venue.

A few steps away, in the city centre, the eco-friendly La Cité Nantes Events Center boasts 3 auditoriums (450, 800, 2,000), 30 break-out rooms and 6,000 m² of exhibition space. It celebrates this year its 20 years of experience in hosting cultural and business events, from national conventions to international association meetings.

NANTES IN NUMBERS

- + Number of must-sees: over 30
- + Hotel beds: 7,035
- + Capacity for conferences: 3,000+
- + Total exhibition space: 6,000 m² (over 63,000 m² at the exhibition centre)
- + Number of events per year at La Cité: 300
- + Destinations served with direct flights: 50
20 minutes drive from the airport to La Cité
5 minutes walk from the TGV train station to La Cité (instead of Distance to train station...)
- + Daily trains to/from Paris: 23
- + Distance to train station: 5 minutes walk
- + Recent congresses: 7th Congress of the European Association of Dermato-Oncology (400 delegates - June 2011), EPSC-DPS Joint Meeting (1,500 delegates - 14 000 visitors)



6 | MONTPELLIER

For a city filled with youthful energy, Montpellier sure is old. Featuring no less than sixteen fabulous squares in the main centre, from the grand, humming Place de la Comédie to some charming oases scattered throughout the winding streets of the old quarter, this Mediterranean mélange of cultures was lucky

enough to have once welcomed both Rabelais and Nostradamus as students.

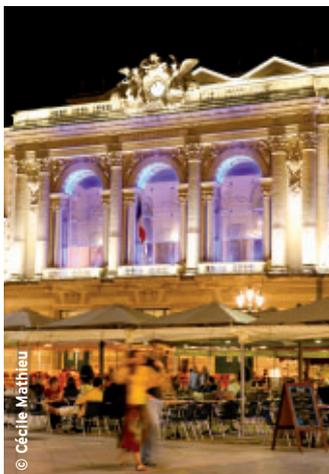
Now Montpellier's medieval centre is a wanderer's paradise. Some unmissable sites include the University of Medicine, the Fabre Museum and the Castle of Flaugergues... Visitors can dip into the city's incredible gastronomic experiences at Le Jardin des Sens (two Michelin stars) and La Réserve Raimbaud (one Michelin star) and the nearby Canal du Midi and Carcassonne, a beautiful fortified city and UNESCO world heritage site, built by the Visigoths. Montpellier's location makes it an

ideal point of departure of excursions: wine tours, the Mediterranean seaside and its fantastic private beaches, or to the local countryside and adorable typical villages, or even nearby Spain. Montpellier combines the Mediterranean lifestyle with all the resources of a major urban area. Le Corum Congress Centre, with its capacity to host

2,000 persons in its main auditorium, is at the heart of this human-sized city: everything is accessible on foot or tram to facilitate the organization of events. Facing the international airport and combined with the Exhibition Centre, the brand-new Park&Suites Arena, the first new-generation multifunctional hall in France, can host a plenary for up to 7,500 people, up to 14,000 persons if it's a sport event or a concert.

MONTPELLIER IN NUMBERS

- + Days of sunshine per year: 300
- + Competitiveness clusters: 7 - based on 5 excellence centres
- + Hotel rooms: 7835
- + Indoor exhibition space: 60,000 m²
- + Distance to nearest airport: 8 kms
- + Flight time to Paris: 1 hour
- + Number of flights to Paris per day: 11
- + Daily trains to/from Paris: 22
- + Time to Paris by train: 3h15
- + Capacity largest space: 7,500
- + Recent congresses: Euromat Congress (2,500 participants - September 2011), Origins 2011 (500 participants - June 2011), both held at Le Corum, Congress Centre



7 | STRASBOURG

Strasbourg is all half-timber houses and narrow lanes, set against a backdrop of ultra-modern EU institutions. Situated on the Franco-German border, Strasbourg has its own opera, France's only national theatre outside Paris, and three international music festivals. The Grande Ile is the ancient heart of the city and a listed UNESCO World Heritage site. It lies in the middle of the River Ill and houses Strasbourg's biggest landmark, the Cathédrale Notre-Dame and the stunningly picturesque Petite France, the city's medieval quarter.



© ATOUT FRANCE
Jean-François Tripelot-Jarry

The Route des Vins is a popular excursion from the city. Food from the region is synonymous with conviviality, and substantial dishes include baeckeoffe, flammekueche, choucroute, and fleischnacka. Strasbourg has been attracting visitors to its famous Christmas market since 1570, a huge draw for the city.



But Strasbourg is also refreshingly up-to-date. The Strasbourg Convention Centre & Exhibition Park welcomes about 350 events a year. Facing off with the European Parliament building, the centre is easy to get to. The city also offers the 'Strasbourg Pass' for discounts on the city's attractions, and a special public transport package for large groups staying a minimum three days. This eco-friendly ticket is valid for the tram and bus system for an unlimited number of journeys.

STRASBOURG IN NUMBERS

- + International and national clusters: 5
- + Hotel rooms: 8,000
- + Number of direct international flights per day: 25
- + Number of daily trains to/from Paris: 16
- + Time to Paris by train: 2h20
- + Time to Brussels by train: 5 hours
- + Total expo space: 50,000 m² on two levels
- + Recent congresses: 2nd International Conference on Multifunctional, Hybrid and Nanomaterials (1,200 participants - March 2011), 12th International Conference on Methods and Applications of Fluorescence (400 participant - September 2011), both held at the Palais des Congrès

8 | NICE The 5th largest city in France, Nice is an active modern capital that has preserved its art of living over the centuries. This authentic city finds its energy in the sea and from the mountains around Baie des Anges, cultivating its modernity and dynamism with a policy of constantly improved services.



Nice has a beautiful backdrop that has proved a great inspiration for Matisse, Picasso and Chagall. It is full of secret passages and narrow pedestrian lane-ways in the romantic old town. Festival fans descend for all sorts of events like the Jazz and Nice in July or the Nice Carnival in February. Foodies go crazy for socca, pissaladière and estocaficada. Nice is accessible from the coastal resorts of Saint Tropez, Cannes and Monaco and nearby ski resorts.

Nice is close to Sophia-Antipolis Technology Park, a leading centre of scientific and medical research. In the heart of the city,



the Acropolis Congress Centre is located 15 minutes from Nice Côte d'Azur International Airport. The main train station has been preserved in its original condition and is served by high-speed trains link up with Europe's main cities. The predominance of nature serves as the foundation for a new green policy, and becoming a benchmark for ecology among Mediterranean 'green cities' is a priority for Nice.

NICE IN NUMBERS

- + Shows and exhibitions per year: over 2,000
- + Largest space: 30,000 m²
- + Distance from business park to city centre: 15 minutes
- + Hotel rooms: 10,000
- + Weekly flights to/from Paris: 210
- + Weekly flights to/from London: 55
- + Number of daily trains to/from Paris: 12
- + Time to Paris by train: 6 hours
- + International direct flights: to New York and Dubai
- + Recent congresses: Tissue World 2011 (2,000 participants - March 2011), the European Materials Research Society (1,000 participants - May 2011), both held at the Acropolis Congress Centre

► TEN CITIES WITH FLAIR

9| TOULOUSE Situated in the heart of Southern France, Toulouse is a city of contrasts with an exceptional heritage. The cosmopolitan 'Pink City' mixes lifestyle, great cultural events, rugby fever and festival pleasures. The capital of Midi-Pyrénées region can be explored by foot, by bike or by boat along the Canal du Midi, a UNESCO World Heritage site, and the Garonne river.

Visitors can enjoy the Natural History Museum or the Augustins Museum for Fine Art, and in 2012, the Caravages temporary exhibition. Other highlights include the Abatoirs Museum of Modern Art and the Basilica Saint-Sernin the Capitole or the the Space Adventure Park. With various daily markets and five Michelin-starred restaurants, lovers of good food take great pleasure in savouring local products like the famous cassoulet.

Toulouse's competitiveness cluster in the aeronautic and spatial areas as well as the presence of the aircraft manufacturer Airbus

position the city as a leader in the world. With 115,000 university students, Toulouse excels in the transmission of knowledge. With 4 universities and 14 engineering institutes, it is ranking first after Paris. This economic dynamic provides an outstanding power of attraction. In 2015, Toulouse will inaugurate the new 'Parc des Expositions de Toulouse' that will have the capacity to welcome 5,000 people for congresses and 8,000 for live performances.

TOULOUSE IN NUMBERS

- + International air routes: 68
- + Daily flights from Paris: 72
- + Number of hotel rooms: 12,299
- + Number of listed attractions: more than 40
- + Distance to nearest airport: 20 minutes from the city centre
- + Number of daily trains to/from Paris: over 40
- + Largest convention space: Centre de Congres Pierre Baudis - 2400 m² of exhibition space
- + Capacity of largest auditorium: 500 seats
- + Number of modular spaces: 24
- + Seating for delegates: up to 1,200
- + Recent congresses: 22nd Annual Symposium of the European Chapter of the Society of Flight Test Engineers (June 2011), 5th World Conference of the Spatial Econometrics Association (July 2011)



© OTB



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10| BORDEAUX

Bordeaux is an ancient and historic land of majestic chateaux, superb vineyards and vintners whose passion for growing grapes and winemaking has made the region France's largest producer of fine wines. The wine region of Bordeaux takes its name from its principal city, France's fifth largest, that sits at a bend of the Garonne River. Bordeaux is the capital of Aquitaine, a fruitful land that is laced with rivers, fringed with fine Atlantic beaches, dotted with medieval villages and Romanesque churches.

Bordeaux is also a vibrant and expanding centre of trade, industry and business. With a population of 750,000, this historic port city has matured into a 21st-century metropolis, while protecting and restoring its 18th 'golden age' monuments such as the splendid town houses of the Chartrons district, the Grand Theatre and the Place de la Bourse.

Bordeaux has a high-tech public transport system, and all the amenities for hosting

large international gatherings. The Bordeaux Convention Centre is the flagship of the city's new, quality, business tourism offer, and proposes a range of top-level services in a contemporary space. In terms of access, not only has it got an international airport, but also the TGV Atlantique high-speed train that puts Bordeaux close to Paris and Lille. The line also stops at Roissy-Charles-de-Gaulle airport.

BORDEAUX IN NUMBERS

- + Bordeaux Convention Centre capacity: 1,300 seats in the main auditorium
- + Exhibition Centre space: 80,000 m²
- + Hotel rooms: 8,500
- + Time to Paris by TGV train: 3 hours
- + From airport to city centre (with the shuttle): 30 minutes
- + Time from Brussels by plane: 2h30
- + Recent congresses: 7th International Conference on Inertial Fusion Sciences and Applications (550 participants), International Pigment Cell Conference (700 participants), both held in September 2011 at the Palais des Congrès



© Agence Sofiacome

Paris Nord Villepinte



La Cité Nantes Event Center

> CASE STUDIES

THREE CASE STUDIES

WHY THEY CHOSE FRANCE

FRANCE HAS A WIDE RANGE OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES: THE COUNTRY CAN HOST EVENTS OF ALL SHAPES AND SIZES. BELOW ARE THREE CASE STUDIES: A VERY LARGE CONGRESS, A BIG MEETING AND A SMALLER CONFERENCE.

ESC CONGRESS IN PARIS 32,000+ participants



Nata Nambatingue

The annual ESC Congress is the biggest medical congress in Europe, with participants from 54 European and Mediterranean national cardiac societies. It aims to be the European forum for the latest research in cardiovascular disease. Paris was chosen by the ESC board as the host city for 2011, an event that attracted a record number of attendees.

'The ESC operates as a PCO and we do everything internally. We have a bit of support from a local agent, in this case MCI' says ESC congress manager Nata Nambatingue. In 2011, the congress booked approximately 15,000 hotel rooms, and welcomed a record 32,946 attendees. *'For a congress, that is quite big!'* he says. Paris was chosen using criteria that include local authority involvement and support, venue capacity and layout, sufficient number of bedrooms (20,000), and sustainability.

'There are two main criteria to consider before going to a destination. We need roughly 100,000 square metres of space' Nambatingue says. The second criteria is the accommodation: *'As you can imagine, selling Paris as a destination is very attractive. It would have been possible to have all of the people lodged near the airport, but you have to understand: if you go to Paris, you have to be in the city.'* The venue was a bit of a distance from the accommodation clusters. But, says Nambatingue: *'That's often the case for the kinds of venues we need. A transport committee was put in place by the convention bureau. It was a great help.'* During the congress, the ESC arranged with the local authorities to double the frequency of trains from Gare du Nord to Paris Nord Villepinte. *'That was something that was extremely well-managed. This transport committee was a pilot project for the convention bureau, and it worked extremely well.'*

'This year what were the highlights? It was a record attendance' says Nambatingue. *'We have been analysing the reaction of the participants with a survey that we sent out after the congress. The feedback was very positive.'*

EPSC AND DPS CONGRESS IN NANTES 1,500 participants



Olivier Grasset

In 2011, the European Planetary Science Congress was held in conjunction with the congress of the EPSC's American counterparts, the Department of Planetary Science in Nantes. *'All scientists agree that we have too many meetings!'* says Olivier Grasset from the University of Nantes and local host. *'These two meetings are two weeks apart from each other, so we agreed that we should combine them.'* Everyone, he says, readily agreed on France as the destination, and it was decided it should be Nantes' turn to play host to the event, which was both a scientific meeting and a public exhibit.

'It was huge. We didn't know how many people were going to come. We were expecting around 700 at the meeting, and we were 1,500 in the end, including over

NEW APP FROM FRANCE CONGRÈS WILL FACILITATE PLANNERS' SEARCH

In 2011, France Congrès introduced a new app for smartphones and tablets that facilitate professional meetings planners' search for suppliers.

The app can be used to look for venues and destinations capable of accommodating conferences and corporate meetings. It is an easy-to-use tool that allows planners to search criteria such as number of participants, rooms etc. and quickly gain access to one or more proposals. The application also allows for searches by city, capacity, or area of interest. Following the introduction of a new layout, flash code and ebook version for the 2011 Guide, the France Congrès network, comprising 53 cities, expects this move to improve its communication service to professional meetings planners.

To download the free application for iPhone and iPad:
www.france-congres.org

500 participants from the US. For the exhibit, we expected about 3,000 - and we ended up with 13,000. But there was no problem with space.' As it was a pilot project for the two organisations, there were a couple of issues: 'It was somewhat difficult because it was the first time we've had a joint meeting.

Americans prefer plenary sessions, whereas Europeans prefer parallel sessions, so we were a little bit worried. We had to arrange to have a compromised facility, and flexibility was needed at all levels. On this matter, the Convention Center and the planners were marvellous.'

Olivier Grasset continues: 'We got many positive reviews. We organised a big banquet for the scientists and got the big elephant from the Royal Deluxe Theatre Company to accompany the participants to dinner. It even walked with us along the harbour! It's something the participants will never forget. Jim Green from NASA emailed me to say he said he would certainly be willing to come back for another joint meeting.'

'It was a great success. It was the first time we've been responsible for organising something quite so international' says Jodie Bricout, from the LCA platform. 'We chose Lille because we wanted to show off the city. For the venue, we selected the Espace International, just across the road from Lille Europe international train station. In terms of logistics, you just can't beat it. We had a lot of participants from Québec, the US and the UK, Nepal... and we were quite worried about the translation for it is a very technical topic which usually translates very badly. But because everything in the building is geared towards international relations (it houses bodies such as the International Chamber of Commerce and the World Trade Centre), they have all facilities on site, like built-in translation booths. Our guests were very impressed.'

Everyone was lodged in the four-star Crowne Plaza, which is in the same building as the venue. 'It was funny because people were coming out of the train station and calling me and saying "Ok I've arrived, where is the hotel?" and I just had to say "Look up!".' Everyone, says Mrs. Bricout, was extremely positive about the event. 'The great thing about this region is that it is extremely strong on environmental issues' she says. 'We arranged some site visits outside the city to show some of the businesses driving the environmental reconversion of the Northern France region, and we were able to maximise interaction with real businesses working in this area.'

LCA CONFERENCE IN LILLE 281 participants



Jodie Bricout

Non-profit expert centre for ecotechnologies, CD2E, organised the first international Life Cycle Assessment Conference in November 2011 in Lille. The conference, featuring more than 40 speakers, brought together 281 businesses people, public authority representatives and international experts from 21 countries.

Lille Grand Palais



SPECIAL VENUES

VENUES WITH A CERTAIN 'JE NE SAIS QUOI'

MANY OF THE VENUES THAT MADE THIS LIST ARE, FOR THE PURPOSE OF THE EXERCISE, DUBBED 'UNUSUAL'. HOWEVER, THESE SPOTS ARE NOT SO MUCH *ODD* AS THEY ARE *EXCEPTIONAL*, AS IS THE CASE WITH MANY THINGS IN THE GRAND OLD FRENCH REPUBLIC. THESE ARE SPACES THAT, ASIDE FROM HOLDING A SPECIAL CULTURAL, HERITAGE OR SCIENTIFIC SIGNIFICANCE, ARE PERFECTLY SUITED TO GATHERINGS FOR THE PURPOSE OF SHARING, LEARNING, NETWORKING AND CELEBRATING, WITH MORE THAN A LITTLE FRENCH CHARM. THAT WHICH IS DIFFERENT AND UNIQUE IS INHERENTLY MEMORABLE (AND IN THE CASE OF FRANCE'S BEST 'UNUSUAL' VENUES, ALSO WELL-EQUIPPED, FLEXIBLE AND AFFORDABLE).

MUSEUMS & MONUMENTS

Centre Pompidou Metz

A relatively recent arrival, the **George Pompidou sister centre in Metz** is an incredibly beautiful and monumental new museum space,

a stunning modern architectural masterpiece with an atmosphere of lightness, thanks to its pale wood and white-painted walls. Here, groups of up to 2,800 can flutter through multi-level spaces for grand events and soirées. There is an excellent audiovisual setup, and a central buffet layout to let guests flow in and out and around like breeze skirting delicate cloth. The spectacle of the outside of the building is, in a word, staggering. It's right near the TGV station, with 20 trains per day to Paris.

Musée Jacquemart-André

The **Musée Jacquemart-André in Paris** is a museum located on the stylish Boulevard Haussmann. What used to be the private home of an art collector is now a beautiful public space with galleries and music rooms that can hold up to 500 people. Located in the heart of Paris, its walls graced by precious and priceless art, this outstanding and opulent museum is a unique venue for those pursuing the most glittering of receptions, plus guided tours, cocktail parties, gala dinners and conferences.

Machines de l'Ile

The more industrial-looking and sounding **Machines de l'Ile in Nantes** is part of a project initiated by the city of Nantes that aims to build the city's identity as a creative metropolis. The designers let their imaginations roam

when they got their hands on this one. There are some great urban sculptures open to the public, plus a number of spaces for up to 350 eating, up to 800 sipping cocktails, and up to 200 enjoying a sit down in theatre. It's 2 hours from Paris by TGV, with 20 trains per day.

Piscine de Roubaix

The **Piscine de Roubaix**, an old swimming pool, is located just 10 kms from Lille. It is a museum of art and industry, with a renowned art deco interior, that invites groups to grace their gardens, auditorium and exhibition rooms. They even extend that invitation to the emptied pool for up to 500 people for all kinds of 'do's'.

Abbaye du Mont Saint-Michel

The **Abbaye du Mont Saint-Michel**, a rocky tidal island in Normandy, is a beautiful and memorable venue. The population of the entire island is 41, and the abbey was one of the most amazing construction projects of the Middle Ages. Happily, it can be hired for meetings, cocktail receptions and press conferences, with four different spaces to hire, each holding up to 250 guests.

Palais des Papes

The **Palais des Papes in Avignon**, just 45 min from Marseille airport, is a historical palace that was one of the largest and



Centre Pompidou Metz



Machines de l'Ile

© Nautiue/Nantes



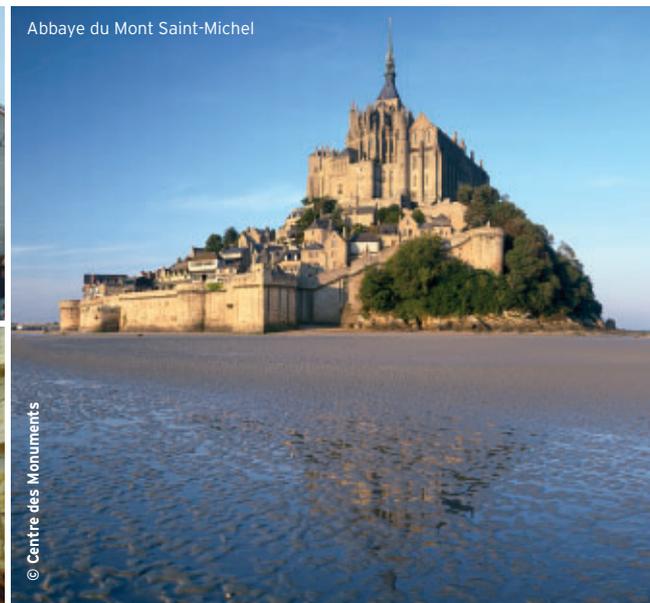
Musée Jacquemart-André

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Abbaye du Mont Saint-Michel

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Palais des Papes

© Yann De Farcins-Noir d'Ivoire



Château de Vaux le Vicomte

© Béatrice Lecuyer-Bibat



Château d'Arsac et La Winery

© Alain Souleumiac



Opéra Garnier

© Guillaume Leblanc



Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild

© Thomas Dupaigne



Business Solutions - Disneyland Paris

© Yohan Bréjod



Planétarium, Cité de l'espace

© Manuel Huynh

most important medieval Gothic buildings in Europe. In 1995, it was classified as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The International Congress Centre, a prestigious convention and meeting venue, is located inside the Palace, in the very heart of the city, and offers 14 rooms for conventions, meetings and exhibitions.

Opéra Garnier

The **Opéra Garnier in Paris** is an elegant 1,979-seat opera house, built between 1860 to 1875 for the Paris Opera. It houses a prestigious concert hall whose ceiling was painted by Marc Chagall in 1964, plus a reception areas, a library-museum and many rehearsal studios. From the splendour of the grand staircase to the fabulous foyers, this marble palace is decorated with paintings and sculptures that make it as much a museum as a theatre. There are 6 spaces from between 80 to 2,000 people for dinner, cocktails, meetings and conferences.

GARDENS & CHÂTEAUX

Château de Vaux le Vicomte

The **Château de Vaux le Vicomte**, just 40 minutes outside Paris, is a baroque French château and exceptional venue, a 7th-century masterpiece set amidst 1,200 acres of forests and gardens. It was created by the three great artists, Charles Le Brun, Louis Le Vau and André

Le Nôtre and offers 11 areas for everything from business seminars to wine tastings. The garden's use of a baroque axis that extends to infinity is an example of its beautiful style.

Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild

The **Villa Ephrussi de Rothschild**, 15 minutes from Nice, is a French seaside palazzo constructed between 1905 and 1912. A member of the prominent Rothschild banking family, Béatrice de Rothschild built this rose-colored villa overlooking the sparkling Mediterranean Sea and charitably gifted the property and its collections to the Académie des Beaux Arts upon her death. Up to 350 people can be accommodated for events, guided tours, cocktail parties and gala dinners.

Château d'Arsac et La Winery

The **Château d'Arsac et La Winery**, just outside Bordeaux, is an ultra-modern property with a new approach to appreciating wine. With its wine cellar of 1,001 world wines and its 'bistronomic' dining menu, people from all over the world come to gather in this unique facility surrounded by contemporary art. From private functions for ten, through to seminars of up to 200, La Winery organized more than 180 events last year.

UNUSUAL VENUES

Business Solutions - Disneyland Paris

Business Solutions is a team dedicated

to help you organize your congress at the all-in-one venue Disneyland® Paris. With its own on-site Eurostar/TGV terminal, it's just 10 minutes from CDG airport and 35 minutes from Paris. In addition to the well-known theme park, the site offers all the equipments for 'serious' events as well. Business Solutions experts create tailor-made offers to fulfill the professional events objectives of associations and international federations. The destination has extensive meeting and exhibitions facilities, hotels, restaurants and activities. It's a single location where everything is at walking distance. There are two versatile convention centres that can be configured for meetings, catered events and exhibitions, for groups of 20 to 2,300 people, plus event venues of 2,000 to 6,500 m², accommodating up to 4,000 participants. Altogether, more than 95 meeting rooms are available. All with Disney® quality service of course.

Cité de l'espace

The **Cité de l'espace in Toulouse** is a theme park oriented towards the exploration and conquest of space. It's only 15 minutes from well-connected Toulouse city centre. More than 4 million visitors have already passed through its doors in its 13 years of bold space exploitation in the south eastern part of France. There are 15 gathering areas (35 to 700 m²) from 30 to 800 people, available for private bookings.



Roissy Charles de Gaulle Airport

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MEETING IN FRANCE FOR MORE INFORMATION

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www.franceguidepro.com

TRANSPORT

IN & OUT FRANCE

AIR FRANCE KLM

Air France KLM is the first ever airline to offer a product dedicated specifically to the meetings industry. Their Global Meeting Planner is a booking tool designed to facilitate the planning and management of travel to France. For events with a minimum of ten participants, planners can register from two months to five years in advance by following a few simple steps. Once the event is approved, a unique Event ID code entitles planners and participants to special conditions. Participants receive a communication kit and up to 47% off the cost of their flight ticket, and planners receive accumulated credits to be used for reward flights. Attendees can buy their discounted airline tickets individually or via a registered Travel Agency. On top of that, Air France KLM has also introduced a new calculation tool to help you calculate the CO₂ emissions generated by the trip.

See their website for information on www.airfranceklm-globalmeetings.com

mail.servicecongres@airfrance.fr
T. +33 (0) 1 56 93 74 59

SNCF

For group travel by rail, France's national rail carrier SNCF is 'on board'. Planners can contact SNCF's group travel desk and take advantage of special discounts and extra-special arrangements. They offer a group tariff at between 20-60 % off full train fare for first and second class travel, one way or return, for ten people or more. Carriages can be booked privately, and the interior can even be kitted out with whatever equipment needed to get your meeting underway before you arrive at the venue. This includes microphones and drop-down screens, plus catering and even music for more lively events. An entire train can be booked for a group of up to 1,000, or an entire carriage for smaller groups of between 60 and 120. At the station, groups can avail of audio announcements, a welcoming committee, a red carpet, floral decoration, an orchestra and baggage handling. The offer can be discussed with SNCF's group travel desk.

acvgroupes@sncf.fr
p.pascual@sncf.fr
T. +33 (0)6 34 19 26 85

UPCOMING 'RENDEZ-VOUS EN FRANCE'

- + 2012: Opening of the 'Cité de la mode et du design' in Paris
- + End of 2012: Opening of Louvre-Lens Museum
- + 2013: Marseille Provence, European Capital of Culture
- + 2014: World Equestrian Games in Normandy
- + 2016: Euro 2016 - UEFA European Football Championship
- + 2018: Ryder Cup



FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE 10 CITIES WITH FLAIR

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