LGBT Tourism as a Promising Start

High level tourism professionals share their experiences and also strategies on LGBT touristic ventures.

1. **Austria**
   Thomas Bachinger, Vienna Tourist Board

2. **Belgium**
   Peter De Wilde, VisitFlanders (Toerisme Vlaanderen)
LGBT TOURISM AS A PROMISING START
GENERAL
together with all the tourism actors, stimulates and develops tourism in and towards Flanders and Brussels in a sustainable way, in order to create more welfare, employment and well being.

A knowledge and strategy driven marketing organisation that supports the tourism industry.

**CORE FUNCTIONS**

- DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT
- DESTINATION PROMOTION
- IMPROVE HOLIDAY PARTICIPATION
3 STRATEGIC GOALS

1. Increase economic impact of tourism in Flanders

2. Develop Flanders’ reputation as a tourism destination of high quality

3. Increase holiday participation in Flanders (social tourism)
CONTEXT BELGIUM/FLANDERS

- Belgium
  - *Legalization same-sex marriage since June 2003*
  - Belgium 2\textsuperscript{nd} on ILGA-ranking (among 49 European countries)

  The number of same-sex marriages in Belgium is increasing:
  - 2013: 1717 marriages
  - 2014: 1898 marriages
  - 2015: 1968 marriages

- Flanders
  - *Actively promoted as LGBT-friendly destination since 2007*
• 23 Central & Eastern countries included in ranking
• Only Austria, Hungary, Germany & Croatia score over 50%
LGBT

Our aim is to evolve to a community where sexual preference is not being questioned but handled with integrity and respect for the individual character of our potential visitors.

CORE CHARACTERISTICS

- INCLUSIVE TOURISM
- ‘ACCESSIBLE’ OFFER
- BREAKING DOWN BARRIERS
LGBT

With Antwerp & Brussels, Flanders will become the best kept secret in between ‘gay capitals’ such as London, Paris and Amsterdam. Our aim is to evolve to a more ‘tolerant’ destination and ‘hub’ where in general sexual preference is not questioned but accepted and furthermore being supported by an active LGBT-community and sustained by a diverse offer of cutting-edge craftsmanship.

CORE CHARACTERISTICS

ACCESS GATES ANTWERP & BRUSSELS

DIVERSE CULTURAL OFFER

ACTIVE COMMUNITY & (INT.) AMBASSADORS
Experiences in Flanders

+ LINKED TO SPECIFIC DESTINATIONS
  (E.G. DIAMANT, LACE, MINING HERITAGE, WO I, FESTIVALS)
Target groups + Markets

1. INTERNATIONAL CULTURAL TRAVELLER

Cultural experiences decisive to choose destination
= *heritage, art, creative industry, local culture*

Including youngsters, families, LGBT, ....

Priority = neighbouring countries
+ Markets/regions with highest potential for Flanders in terms of economic impact and reputation.
OPPORTUNITIES

- Focus on Press & Public Relations

  • EuroGames 2007 @ Antwerp
  • IGLTA Convention 2010 @ Antwerp (during Antwerp Pride)
  • World OutGames 2013 @ Antwerp (during Antwerp Pride)
  • Sponsoring TomOnTour Party 2011 (ITB Berlin)
  • Various individual presstrips (eg. Pride Brussels)
  • …
EuroGames 2007 @ Antwerp

- 12-15/07/2007
- Antwerp host destination for EuroGames 2007
- Ideal occasion for VISITFLANDERS to invite international GLBT-press to promote Antwerp/Flanders as GLBT-friendly destination
- Starting point of various international targeted actions
Int. Presstrip following IGLTA Convention

- Antwerp host city for IGLTA Convention 2010
- International presstrip in cooperation with VISITANTWERP

- 2010 (24-27/06/2010)
  - 40 journalists
  - 35 publications (subject to change)
  - Scope = 984,342 views/readers
Int. Presstrip following World Outgames

- Antwerp host city for World Outgames 2013
- International presstrip in cooperation with VISITANTWERP

- 2013 (08-11/08/2016)
  - 37 journalists
  - 30 publications (subject to change)
  - ROI: €173,554
LGBT-STRATEGY DIY
Tips & Tricks: DO’s!

- Look before you leap!
- Stay true to your DNA!
- Use local LGBT-community as ambassadors
- Let the international press do the ‘talking’!
- Train & Sensitize!
Tips & Tricks: DONT’s !

- Stay away from stereotypes (in communication) !
- Do not promote what is not developed (& vice versa)
- Promote more actively when supported by favourable legislation
A long weekend in Antwerp left me exhausted but effervescent, satiated and smiling. Forget any preconceived ideas you have about this glorious city. There really is something for everyone. Flanders is faaaaabulous!“

Matt Joshua, QX Magazine
Questions ?

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