

Press Release



Church Development Service
(EED)

Ulrich-von-Hassell-Str. 76
53123 Bonn, www.eed.de

CSR Must Not Serve As A Fig Leaf

Label "CSR certified" helps tourists in their travel decisions

(Bonn/Berlin, 09/03/2009) "Their holiday is the last thing Germans would save on" – This long-time experience in tourism is not longer valid. The global economic and financial crisis has reached the tourism sector and is likely to determine corporate thinking and action for the foreseeable future. At the same time, sustainable and socially responsible holiday packages seem to be particularly resilient in times of crises.

At the coming International Tourism Exchange (ITB) in Berlin, we will see how much scope remains for sustainable holiday packages – packages offered by the travel and tourism in line with their corporate social responsibility. Events on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) will fill at least one full day at ITB, and the topic will also be present at various corners of the trade fair. "For a long time, sustainability had mainly been restricted to environmental aspects. Now, at last, the social impacts are entering the picture", said Heinz Fuchs, director at TOURISM WATCH, a desk of the German Church Development Service (EED), welcoming this new development.

EED TOURISM WATCH calls for more scrutiny when it comes to verifying the claims and realities of CSR concepts in practice: "In many cases, prestigious charity and social projects are highlighted as CSR, which are not actually part of the core tourism business. However, whether companies have a policy for the protection of children, whether they are committed to climate protection and whether people in the destinations have a better say in decision making processes and have more social rights, is a different matter. The term 'Corporate Social Responsibility' must not serve as a fig leaf".

The CSR debates at ITB hardly involve the people in developing countries and emerging economies who are suffering the most from climate change and the financial and economic crisis. Partner organisations of EED in Brazil and India place more emphasis on their governments' responsibility and on local communities' own initiative, rather than on voluntary CSR activities (for further information, see TourismWatch no. 54, <http://www.tourism-watch.de/node/1203>).

EED has co-initiated the newly founded organisation for certification in tourism "TourCert" in order to contribute to more transparency and credibility of CSR strategies in tourism. The label "CSR certified" will help tourists in their travel decisions.

The first pilot tour operators, members of "Forum anders reisen", will receive the new label "CSR certified" from former UNEP director Klaus Töpfer. The ceremony will take place on Wednesday, 11th March, 2009 from 11.00 to 11.45 am on the stage in hall 4.1.

**For any queries,
please contact:**

Johanna Laible
EED Press Officer
Tel.: 02 28-81 01 – 2503
Fax: 02 28-81 01 – 160

**During the trade fair,
contact us in Berlin:**

Heinz Fuchs
Mobile: 0 173-3176319
Antje Monshausen
Mobile: 0 176-82003259

Corporate Social Responsibility will also be the focus of an event organised by EED TOURISM WATCH on Friday, 13th March, 2009, 11.45 am – 1.30 pm in hall 4.1, under the title „Sun, Sand and Sustainable Tourism? Corporate Social Responsibility in Practice”.

At ITB, you will find EED TOURISM WATCH together with KATE Stuttgart at stall no. 202 in hall 4.1.

Tourism Watch is a desk of the German Church Development Service (EED), working together with international partners for sustainable and socially responsible tourism. The newsletter "TourismWatch" is published quarterly.