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## A comparative study for advantages and disadvantages of Istanbul in the world congress tourism market

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## ERSA-2002 IN DORTMUND

### A COMPARATIVE STUDY FOR ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF ISTANBUL IN THE WORLD CONGRESS TOURISM MARKET

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#### **Abstract**

Sharing of the information in connection with scientific advancements, and necessity of international organizations due to economic developments and socio-cultural relations have accelerated the growth of congress tourism. Its peculiarities such as high economic income, creation of new jobs, multiple effects on other sectors, causing the full tourism season, positive contributions to urbanization process, contribution to image of country and city are the facts that have already been referred to in the previous tourism studies. The demand for the congress tourism, which in fact, is improving with a larger pace than its international counterpart, creates alternative opportunities to varied tourism potential. Congress provide an advertising and development for the tourist congress places and are prestigious, while also are indicators for the success of the country in public management.

Congress represent a special kind of tourism. Large cities have many advantages for conferences including accessibility, accommodation, urban amenities and increasingly, as tourism districts are developed attractive physical environments.

It is being observed that major cities in Turkey are in an attempt to organize congress, also an infrastructure for accommodation, meeting halls organization experience and marketing is being established.

In this study, the place of Istanbul in the world congress market will be evaluated along with its potentials, peculiarities which are necessary for congress tourism in the cities, advantages and disadvantages, conditions of competition in the world congress tourism market compare with other cities which have great share in the congress tourism in the world. Conference and exhibition facilities of Istanbul in each of its districts, changes in the number of visitors, shares and revenues of the congress will be explained and corporate structures and strategies be investigated.

This study is a comparative study that compare the Istanbul's potential with respect to too many factors, with other world cities as Barcelona, Stockholm, Brussels, Copenhagen, Helsinki, London, Berlin, Budapest, Madrid, Paris, Lisbon, Prague, Vienna. At the end, strategies and suggestions will be made for development of congress tourism in Istanbul.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

The concept of tourism change along with the globalizing world and many states intend to create alternative tourism forms be able to speak knowledgeably in the sector. Many professionals have the opportunity to know new countries during the congresses and seminars they attend in relation with their businesses. The professional organizations even prefer to organize their congresses in the cities enjoying historical and natural beauties and such trends are effective in such prominent development of congress tourism throughout the world (Aksoy 2001).

Today, a non-harming tourism spread to four seasons as well as towards the land rather than the sea thereby relieving it from the holiday identity is sought in the entire world.

Each country should work for continuity in this sector realizing new tourism forms in consideration of its own structural realities. Before stating the potential for the entire tourism forms, the sector should be correctly oriented and certain criteria for its survival should be established. The most significant ones of such criteria are the foreign exchange revenue it shall raise, employment opportunities, getting rid of seasonality, pollution and low cost and its rather less influence on the local people. Such criteria should be compared with the country's realities and efforts should be made to apply the variety of tourism established after the conclusion (Aydın 1997).

At the foundations of these efforts aiming to find out the most profitable variety of tourism with the most benefit to the socio-cultural life, lay congress tourism, that is one of such tourism forms.

The number of the international meetings gradually increased right after the World War II. The reasons behind these are sharing of information in connection with the scientific improvements, economic developments due to the increase in the world trade volume and international organizations by the cultural relations. The developments took place thereby caused more frequent gathering of people also for negotiating purposes. The organization of transportation, accommodation and other needs created the congress tourism.

With the very fast technologic and scientific developments, the number of congresses where such developments are studied, addressed to the public and discussed also increase. Such increase put more emphasize on the congresses and the congress tourism. Because 30% of the tourism revenues in the world are raised by tourism and the revenue input by a congress delegate to the country he/she is visiting is triple that of a normal tourist, congress tourism has become one of the most profitable touristic activities. The

Congress tourism with constant development spread the activities to all seasons while making significant contributions to the national tourism revenue and structural changes (Aydın 1997).

In this study, Istanbul is compared with the world metropolitan cities taking a considerable share from the world congress market and the competing conditions. Moreover, its advantages and disadvantages shall be evaluated. In the second section, the properties that a city should have in order to be a congress center and the selection criteria for a congress city shall be explained while in section 3, the development processes of tourism and congress tourism in the world and in Turkey shall be explained, in section 4, examples from the world congress cities shall be stated and the congress capacities and conditions of such cities shall be evaluated and a comparative analysis for Istanbul shall be conducted, and in section 5, the properties of Istanbul in accordance with certain criteria shall be discussed and their advantages and disadvantages shall be criticized. In the conclusion, the proposals and strategies that Istanbul should enjoy in order to reach at the place it should be in the congress market shall be considered. This study, with a nature of a comparative analysis is aimed to have an enlightening study also for other tourism studies about Istanbul.

## **2. THE PROPERTIES THAT A CITY SHOULD ENJOY TO BECOME A CONGRESS CENTER**

### **2.1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A CONGRESS CITY**

Prior to choosing a congress city, the number of potential delegates and the paid companions, their income levels and the cost of the organization should be established. Under these considerations, evaluations shall be made in accordance with the potentials of the destination chosen. The interests and requirements of the attending delegates shall be examined and the organizers of the congress should choose the suitable congress city. But a congress city should have some characteristics. These characteristics also have some similarities with the factors that could have an influence on the congress tourism. The characteristics of a city are of significant importance for a congress.

**Natural Factors:** These are very important if the delegates consider having a holiday before or after the congress, particularly if they have companions.

- **Location:** The location of a city is very important with regard to easy accessibility, variety and quality of the transportation connections, a significant factor providing easier access. Transportation costs and the distance should be low.

- **Climate:** The suitability of the weather conditions in the tourism months (many

researches and statistics say that these months are September, October, May, June and July) create a great advantage for the city. Too warm or too cold climatic conditions are generally not suitable for congress tourism.

- **Natural and Historical Attractions:** The city's having natural and historical attractions make the city attractive for the delegate because, the delegate wants to visit natural and historical beauties of the city in his/her spare time. A variety in the city's activities naturally increases the economic input.

**Transportation Facilities:** A congress city should have fast, comfortable, assorted and cheap transportation means. Most significant is accessing the congress city fastly and through a rather short path. The people attending a congress usually have a duty and the fastest transportation vehicle would increase the level of success (Şakarcan 1987). In congress tourism, transportation is a means leading to the aim. Air transport is the most preferred one. Airport's distance from accommodation place and congress center and cost and duration of taking such distance is very important. If the congress city has railway, marine and highway connections, the city's competitiveness in the congress market shall increase. Further, urban transportation and its quality and variety are also important.

**Communication Facilities:** Rich communication infrastructure provide a considerable benefit with regard to congress organization. Audio-visual equipment, PC satellite access systems, phone, telex, fax and TV, press and public communication means are important. Following technological developments and utilizing state of the art technology are preferable.

**Travel Agencies:** Availability and quality of travel agencies, variety of the service they offer and their success make the congress city more attractive because these provide ease to the delegates both while attending and during the congress. Congress organization, welcoming at the airport, transfer to hotels, transportation services, city tours, various local and environment tours can be counted among the services offered by travel agencies (Şakarcan 1987).

**Tourism Potential:** Tourism potential is the country's or city's facility to attract and accommodate tourists. A city without a touristic potential can hardly take place in congress tourism market (Şakarcan 1987). The city's touristic resources can be counted as fundamental and auxiliary resources. Natural characteristics, cultural inheritance, conservation areas, archaeological sites, historical neighbourhood units reflecting traditional architecture and structure, monuments etc. can be counted as primary tourism

resources while hotels, restaurants, exhibition and congress centers etc. can be counted as auxiliary resources.

**Accommodation Facilities:** Congress centers should have sufficient accommodation facilities and bedding capacity. The hotel should be easily accessed with sufficient comfort. Accommodation and entertainment facilities should reach at a certain quality. Another important feature of the accommodation facilities is that they have meeting facilities which can provide congresses with meeting service supported by technical equipment in addition to bedding, food and beverage services. The city should also have clean medium class hotels to attract people from various lifestyles and students attending the congress.

**Congress Potential and Infrastructure:** It is for sure that the most important requirement for a candidate congress city is having a congress center. Today, having a congress center is considered as important as having a university or school (Şakarcan 1987). Also, the most preferable is congress center's being located at a central point. Its closeness to the center of the city as well as accommodation facilities, having large capacity transportation connections, suitability of the parking facilities and of course including the required technological and architectural facilities are musts.

**Other Urban Facilities:** The congress cities should have some urban facilities that delegates could spend their spare times after leaving the meeting. Such facilities can either be located within the congress center or be independent of it (Aksoy 2001). Delegates tend to learn cultural structure and physical construction of the city in their spare times. Cinema, concert, theatre halls, sporting fields are the facilities they may want to visit within their daily activities. University campuses and libraries, cultural centers and museums, recreation and entertainment fields, shopping centers all together increase the attractiveness of the congress center. Furthermore, sea-sand-sun trio can be counted among the factors increasing attractivity.

## **2.2. LOCATION CRITERIA OF THE CONGRESS CITY**

The features that the congress city should have will determine the location selection criteria (Lawson 1981).

**Dates:** The date appointed for a congress should suit with the conditions in the city prevailing at the time. This is something related with the timing of other events. The congress should not coincide with other activities (sporting events or festivals etc.) or with other congresses. This is important for making use of proper accommodation and infrastructure conditions.

**Rotation:** Places of congresses held in certain periods (annually etc.) are constantly changed to attract delegates from other regions. Choosing different cities at different locations is required for putting attraction on the congress.

**Attractiveness:** While choosing the congress city it should be evaluated with its existing cultural and natural touristic potential. The variety in the urban activities (entertainment, resting, cultural facilities etc.), natural conditions such as climate, air pollution, noise, traffic jams, safety etc. shall be taken into account.

**Accessibility:** For the vast majority of delegates, proper travel conditions and costs, entry formalities, proper local and mass transport facilities, arrival, departure and arrangements required during the congress, parking facilities, accessibility to the facilities and the connections between the touristic products are very important. Accessibility and travel time is of the primary importance for the congress tourism. The delegates take care of establishing a balance between the travel period and congress period. The congress organizers are therefore interested in the cities with easy access (Berg; Borg; Meer 1995).

**Accommodation:** The capacities, number and standards of the accommodation facilities should be taken into account by the organizers in accordance with the number and needs of the delegates.

**Servicing requirements:** This criteria include range of the support facilities extended to the delegates, technical equipment support and services.

**Interests and Needs of the Delegates:** Congress organizers consider the joint desires and tendencies of the candidate delegates when selecting the congress city. The preferences of the delegates is of considerable importance for attracting a large number of people. The interests and needs of the delegates should therefore be examined. The importance placed on entertainment, resting, cultural structure etc. is subject to the preferences of the delegates.

**Image:**

- **Time-Distance/ Cost-Distance Criteria:** While choosing the congress city, one of the factors given priority is determining the transportation distance and cost. Because congress visits are rather short, shorter transportation distance is preferred.
- **Safety:** The congress city should be safe and further, should have a positive safety image, which is very important for comfortable travel of the delegates. The attractiveness of the cities with a negative image (prostitution, narcotics etc.) is lower.

## - **Marketing/Presentation**

. **Cost:** The competitiveness of the prices and the benefits from exchange rates can be used for presentation of the country and thereby the city itself.

. **Weather conditions:** Such statistics are utilized in presentation of the cities with suitable weather conditions as required for the congress.

. **Natural beauties:** Mountains, lakes, forests, seashores and such other natural beauties are used for presentation and image creation.

. **Sports and entertainment:** Sports activities should be offered in a variety (golf, hunting, skiing etc.) to put attractiveness to the city. The peculiar entertainment facilities within the city could also attract interest of the delegates.

. **History:** The historical structure is the most effective factor attracting the visitors to the city and are therefore frequently used in presentation.

. **Culture:** National characteristics, language and ease in communication, traditions are important in presentation

. **Shopping:** Shopping is an important issue of marketing. Particularly local products (handicraft) attract people.

. **Entertainment:** Offering a range of entertainment addressing to all pleasures make the market more attractive

. **Sightseeing:** Sight seeing packages before and after the meeting could be important. These could either be a city tour or travel to a close destination. Reserve programs for the companions would particularly attract people.

. **Restaurants:** These create strength in variety of traditional food and alternatives

. **Infrastructure:** Airlines have a significant role in marketing activities. Organizing large scale meetings requires extensive ground services and air transport.

Local authorities might be helpful in presentation of the city through its entirety and influencing the meeting organizers in selecting the place. The information on the facilities and the attractiveness of the region may be provided by local authorities. This may include conference offices, list of the accommodation facilities, places of entertainment and restaurants, transportation and other services. In order to compare standards, local authorities generally categorize and limit facilities according to various levels and categories (Lawson 1981). Many prominent cities have their own congress and visitor offices. Such offices are assigned to provide local co-ordination (among hotel owners, tour operators, wholesalers etc.) and operate for presentation of the city

and have a congress.

### **3. DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM IN THE WORLD AND TURKEY AND CONGRESS TOURISM**

The number of international tourists rose in 1990 from 458 million to 636 million in 1998 (WTO). Europe continues to be most tourist attracting territory in the international level, followed by America and Eastern Asia, Pacific. The number of tourists aiming these three territories had increased while the number of tourists aiming towards Eastern Asia/Pacific exceeded the others. Another interesting development is that, the number of passengers visiting the countries not included in the foregoing had also increased (Kongar; Berksoy 2001).

Considering the market shares with regard to the number of tourists in the world, it can be seen that the continents of Europe and America continue to hold the largest market share. These two regions serve about two thirds of the world's tourism market.

On the other hand, the international tourist flows with regard to the number of tourists to a great extent is caused by the movements within the regions. 87% of the tourists travel within the continent. This percent is 71 for the continent of America, 72.6 for Eastern Asia/Pacific and 66 for Africa (Kongar; Berksoy 2001).

As for the tourism revenues, it is explicit that the continents of Europe and America rank foremost. America ranks first in 1998 with a revenue of 71 billion US\$, followed by Canada enjoying 9.9 billion US\$ and Mexico, 7.9 billion US\$. In Europe, France ranks first with a total tourism revenue of 29.9 billion US\$ in 1998 and followed by Italy with 29.8 billion and Spain with 29.7 billion US\$. Studying the market shares, it can be found out that Europe holds about half of the market while America holds half of the remainder (Kongar; Berksoy 2001).

In 1998 world economy realized 6.378 billion US\$ export revenue. The share of tourism revenues therein is 6.5%. The number of tourists increased by 5% from 1988 to 1997, while international tourism revenue increased by 9%. The rate of increase in tourism revenues was 11.4% from 1988 to 1992, this increased to 8.4% from 1993 to 1997 (Kongar; Berksoy 2001).

In the same period, the share of Turkish tourism in the international tourism revenues increased from 3 in one thousand to 1.5 Per cent. The tourism revenue reached to 7 billion US\$ in 1997 with 9 million 689 thousand visitors, this increased to 7.2 billion US\$ with 9 million 753 thousand visitors in 1998 and the bedding capacity certified by the Ministry of Tourism increased from 122 thousand to 312 thousand within the last

ten years period (Kongar; Berksoy 2001).

In the term from 1972 to 1998, the tourism revenues in Turkey increased 54 times with the number of tourists increasing 8 times. This rate of increase in the number of tourists and foreign exchange revenues makes Turkey world's best in this category (Kongar; Berksoy 2001).

### **CONGRESS TOURISM**

Turkey holds 3% share in European tourism market. Some positive developments are realized parallel to the increasing number of tourists and tourism revenue tendency by varying tourism, namely congress and winter tourism (Kongar; Berksoy 2001).

**Table 1: Purpose of Travel of Foreign Visitors Visiting Turkey, (SSI-98)**

<b>PURPOSE OF TRAVEL</b>	<b>NUMBER</b>	<b>%</b>
VACATION	4874299	54.90
CULTURAL	873818	9.84
SPORTIVE EVENTS	101378	1.14
BUSINESS RELATIONS	791165	8.91
PUBLIC SERVICES	28938	0.33
VISITING A FRIEND, RELATIVE	455485	5.13
<b>MEETING-CONFERENCE</b>	<b>145291</b>	<b>1.64</b>
SHOPPING	363828	4.10
EDUCATION-TRAINING	66965	0.75
HEALTH-THERMAL CARE	40786	0.46
RELIGIOUS	29967	0.34
WORK	341713	3.85
COMMERCIAL	421758	4.75
TRANSIT	59149	0.67
OTHER	284015	3.20
TOTAL	8878555	100

The share of exhibition and congress tourism is 2% within the entire tourism of Turkey, while it is some 30% in many other countries.

Business and congress tourism are considered most durable form of tourism, because, its development has not been effected by the economic developments and floating exchange rate. It shouldn't be considered only as a source of profit but also a provider of a thousands of employment position. In addition to the job itself, it creates an auxiliary services network connected to the congress organization as well as a continuous effect on the commercial exhibitions and other similar events (Aksoy 2001). The Europe hosts 59% of the all international meetings, that is it ranks first in the world.

In the year 2000, USA still continues its leadership in the congress tourism market while United Kingdom rose to 2<sup>nd</sup> position from 3<sup>rd</sup> and Germany to 3<sup>rd</sup> from 4<sup>th</sup>, and Spain fall to 5<sup>th</sup> from 2<sup>nd</sup> position. Australia rose to 5<sup>th</sup> position from 7<sup>th</sup> realizing a considerable improvement. This fast rise is primarily considered to reflect its success in Sydney Olympic Games (ICCA).

**Table 2: Number of International Meetings Per Country, (ICCA DATA)\***

1998	COUNTRY	1999	COUNTRY	2000	COUNTRY
268	USA	237	USA	234	USA
186	UNITED KINGDOM	166	UNITED KINGDOM	193	UNITED KINGDOM
178	GERMANY	165	GERMANY	161	GERMANY
174	SPAIN	163	SPAIN	152	AUSTRALIA
160	FRANCE	142	FRANCE	144	SPAIN
144	ITALY	133	ITALY	141	FRANCE
124	NETHERLANDS	111	AUSTRALIA	126	NETHERLANDS
117	JAPAN	106	FINLAND	116	ITALY
11	AUSTRALIA	105	NETHERLANDS	102	JAPAN
108	SWEDEN	98	JAPAN	91	CANADA
102	AUSTRIA	89	CANADA	85	FINLAND
92	CANADA	81	AUSTRIA	83	BRAZIL
88	FINLAND	77	SWEDEN	81	SWEDEN
85	PORTUGAL	75	BRAZIL	78	AUSTRIA
84	DENMARK	74	DENMARK	72	NORWAY
69	BELGIUM	72	HUNGARY	63	SWITZERLAND
61	SWITZERLAND	64	NORWAY	55	BELGIUM
58	ISRAEL	60	SWITZERLAND	52	HUNGARY
52	BRAZIL	54	BELGIUM	49	DENMARK
49	SOUTH AFRICA	48	SOUTH AFRICA	46	SOUTH AFRICA
46	HUNGARY	46	SINGAPORE	43	PORTUGAL
45	NORWAY	45	PORTUGAL	40	SINGAPORE
43	SINGAPORE	45	ISRAEL	39	THAILAND
32	THAILAND	41	THAILAND	36	ISRAEL
24	POLAND	27	POLAND	35	POLAND

In 2000, just 11% of the meetings were attended by more than 2000 delegates. This rate was 7% in 1997. The number of average delegates Per congress was 638 in 1993 which increased to 815 in 2000. North and South Americas held the congresses with greatest number of delegates. Europe was the continent hosting the most number of delegates with 54%, followed by North America realizing 17% and Asia, 13%. On country basis

USA ranked first, France second, Italy third, United Kingdom fourth (ICCA).

After a search on the places where the congresses in year 2000 were held, it can be seen that congress centers have not been acceptable when they did not have accommodation facilities or are far from the city centre while the hotels or university campuses including accommodation facilities have been preferred (ICCA).

As for the months when the congresses were held in 2000, September has been found as the most preferred month, followed by June, May, July and October. The average duration of the meetings is 4.8 days. Australia/Pacific region hosted longest and Europe hosted shortest meetings. Medicine is the dominant subject while scientific, technologic or industrial meetings are also of a considerable number (ICCA).

In 2000, the average congress attending fee Per delegate was 97 US\$, and average congress fee Per delegate was 439 US\$, average revenue from the meetings out of the meeting attending fee is 357.483 US\$ (ICCA).

#### **4. WORLD CONGRESS CITIES AND ISTANBUL**

In some cities, about 40% of the entire night accommodation facilities are occupied by congress and exhibition delegates (Law 1993). This data is important since it proves the extent of city's service to the purpose of the congress and positive contributions the congresses make on the cities. As referred to in the previous sections, congress tourism is an activity developing as an urban activity in many cities and is considered as the base for the touristic development (Law 1993).

Although it ranked 10<sup>th</sup> in 1999, Sydney rose to 5<sup>th</sup> position in 2000 thanks to its share in congress tourism. London increased its success in congress tourism by coming to 1<sup>st</sup> position from 15<sup>th</sup>, surpassing Madrid, Paris and Vienna. United Kingdom enjoyed a considerable growth and Glasgow came to 25<sup>th</sup> position from 37<sup>th</sup>, Edinburgh to 12<sup>th</sup> from 13<sup>th</sup>. When the shares of the congress cities within the congress market are evaluated, instantaneous changes could be realized. Istanbul's increasing share in 1999 dropped in 2000.

**Table 3: Number of International Meetings Per City, (ICCA)\***

	<b>1998</b>	<b>CITY</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>CITY</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>CITY</b>
1	83	VIENNA	64	VIENNA	56	LONDON
2	78	MADRID	55	COPENHAGEN	55	MADRID
3	64	COPENHAGEN	49	MADRID	55	PARIS
4	58	STOCKHOLM	48	HELSINKI	54	VIENNA
5	56	AMSTERDAM	46	SINGAPORE	49	SYDNEY
6	53	LISBON	46	BUDAPEST	48	STOCKHOLM

7	47	PARIS	43	BERLIN	47	RIO DE JANEIRO
8	44	BARCELONA	42	AMSTERDAM	46	AMSTERDAM
9	43	SINGAPORE	42	SYDNEY	40	BARCELONA
10	42	JERUSALEM	42	STOCKHOLM	40	HELSINKI
11	39	HELSINKI	42	BARCELONA	40	SINGAPORE
12	37	BERLIN	40	SEOUL	39	BERLIN
13	37	BUDAPEST	37	RIO DE JANEIRO	39	EDINBURGH
14	36	LONDON	36	PARIS	38	BUDAPEST
15	35	EDINBURGH	36	EDINBURGH	35	MELBOURNE
16	34	SEOUL	36	PRAGUE	33	COPENHAGEN
17	32	SYDNEY	31	LONDON	33	HONG KONG
18	30	BRUSSELS	30	HONG KONG	31	OSLO
19	30	ROME	29	ROME	29	REYKJAVIK
20	29	TOKYO	26	MELBOURNE	27	LISBON
21	29	PRAGUE	25	MUNICH	25	PRAGUE
22	28	MELBOURNE	25	VANCOUVER	24	MONTREAL
23	27	NICE	24	OSLO	23	BANGKOK
24	25	TAIPEI	24	LISBON	23	BRUSSELS
25	24	MONTREAL	24	BANGKOK	22	GLASGOW
26	22	MANILA	24	BRUSSELS	22	MUNICH
27	22	OSLO	23	JERUSALEM	21	BEIJING
28	21	VANCOUVER	23	TAIPEI	21	BUENOS AIRES
29	21	BUENOS AIRES	22	<b>ISTANBUL</b>	20	BERGEN
30	20	CAPE TOWN	18	DUBLIN	19	CAPE TOWN
31	18	DUBLIN	18	MANILA	19	FLORENCE
32	18	GENEVA	18	TOKYO	19	MAASTRICHT
33	18	HAMBURG	17	TORONTO	18	ADELAIDE
34	18	RIO DE JANEIRO	17	BEIJING	18	DUBLIN
35	17	BANGKOK	16	THE HAGUE	18	JERUSALEM
36	15	HONG KONG	16	GOTEBORG	18	ROME
37	15	BEIJING	16	NICE	18	SEOUL
38	15	FLORENCE	16	GLASGOW	17	GENEVA
39	15	GLASGOW	15	BERGEN	17	<b>ISTANBUL</b>
40	14	<b>ISTANBUL</b>	15	FLORENCE	16	CHICAGO
41	14	ADELAIDE	14	BUENOS AIRES	16	MANILA
42	13	GOTEBORG	13	MAASTRICHT	16	NICE
43	13	MUNICH	13	VALENCIA	16	TAIPEI
44	10	MAASTRICHT	12	CAPE TOWN	15	HAMBURG
45	10	THE HAGUE	10	REYKJAVIK	15	THE HAGUE
46	9	BERGEN	10	MONTREAL	15	TOKYO
47	9	CHICAGO	8	ADELAIDE	15	TORONTO
48	8	TORONTO	8	GENEVA	15	VANCOUVER

49	5	VALENCIA	8	CHICAGO	14	GOTEBORG
50	5	REYKJAVIK	7	HAMBURG	14	VALENCIA

**Table 4: Accommodation and Meeting Capacities of some Cities, (EFCT)**

	population	Number of hotels		Total number of bedrooms	Total meeting capacity
PARIS	2.152.423	****	106	14242	77205
		***	547	26185	
		**	613	26212	
		*	172	5018	
LONDON	7.000.000	First class and de luxe categories		30000	59354**
		Other categories		70000	
MADRID	2.866.850	*****	6	1519	62948
		****	744502	7442	
		***	420260	4202	
		**	123123	1231	
		*	88026	880	
HELSINKI	600.000	*****	8	2200	35500
		****	14	3150	
		***	14	1100	
		**	6	450	
COPENHAGEN	1.150.000	*****	2	690	10100
		****	22	4327	
		***	36	2908	
		**	14	2178	
BRUSSELS	1.000.000	*****	14	3916	36186
		****	42	4657	
		***	38	2714	
		**	27	705	
		*	19	494	
PRAGUE	1.217.000	*****	3	570	10539
		****	13	3664	
		***	7	1733	
LISBON	1.000.000	*****	9	2521	31519
		****	27	3877	
		***	31	2959	
		**	8	655	
BUDAPEST	2.000.000	*****	5	1720	42635

		****	18	4417	
		***	47	4297	
		**	18	1090	
		*	6	195	
BERLIN	3.500.000			19018	11758
BARCELONA	1.600.000	*****	6	1519	30530
		****	50	7442	
		***	60	4202	
		**	23	1231	
		*	26	880	
STOCKHOLM	1.600.000	*****	10	1700	51037
		****	35	5300	
		***	90	8600	
		**	95	5200	
VIENNA	1.600.000	*****	13	3078	35780
		****	113	9929	
		***	117	5100	
		**/*	105	3352	
ISTANBUL	<b>7.309.190</b>	*****	<b>19</b>	<b>6289</b>	<b>34895</b>
		****	<b>38</b>	<b>4548</b>	
		***	<b>53</b>	<b>3947</b>	
		**	<b>101</b>	<b>4248</b>	
		*	<b>29</b>	<b>1066</b>	

**Table 5: Transportation Facilities of some Cities, (EFCT)**

<b>PARIS</b>	Number of airport	Highways	Number of international trains daily	
	3	8	150	
<b>LONDON</b>	Number of airport	Highways	Number of seaport	Number of int.. Trains daily
	4	1	4	12 Eurostar arrivals
<b>MADRID</b>	Number of airport	Highways	Number of international trains daily	
	1	5	2	
<b>HELSINKI</b>	Number of airport	Highways	Number of seaport	Number of int. trains daily
			1	

	1	3	Number of departures weekly	3
			70	
<b>COPENHAGEN</b>	Number of airport	Highways	Seaport	Number of int. Trains daily
	1	3	1997 award winner for best Cruise Destination Europe	35
<b>BRUSSELS</b>	Number of airport	Highways	Number of seaport	Number of int. Trains daily
	1	4	3	90
<b>PRAGUE</b>	Number of airport	Highways	Number of international trains daily	
	1	2	59	
<b>LISBON</b>	Number of airport	Highways	Number of seaport	Number of int. Trains daily
	1	4	3	2
<b>BUDAPEST</b>	Number of airport	Highways	River port/number of departures weekly	Number of international trains daily
	1	4	14	62
<b>BERLIN</b>	Number of airport	Highways	Number of international trains daily	
	3	6	92	
<b>BARCELONA</b>	Number of airport	Highways	Number of seaport	Number of int. Trains daily
	1	5	1	15
<b>STOCKHOLM</b>	Number of airport	Highways	Number of seaport	
			1	
	1	3	Number of departures weekly	
			80	
<b>VIENNA</b>	Number of airport	Highways	Number of international trains daily	
	1	3	50	
<b>ISTANBUL</b>	Number of airport	Highways	Number of seaport	Number of int. Trains daily
			2	
	2	2	Number of departures weekly	2
			10	

For the example cities given above (table 4-5), number of rooms, meeting capacities, exhibition capacities and transportation facilities have been stated together. If we evaluate the situation generally, it should be noted that the most prominent feature of the cities that realized a success in congress tourism is accessibility. Most of the cities ranking in the top with regard to their share in meetings are European cities. All of them are located at the most suitable geographic places and took care of the infrastructure investments making access easier. Their air, land and sea (if applicable) connections are very strong. In addition to these, it is remarkable that there is a big variation in the ranking, this also shows that some other factors could also influence the congress tourism.

It is easy to guess that the success realized by a city in congress tourism would be provisional and a continuous renovation and follow up is necessary. For example, Copenhagen, ranking 2<sup>nd</sup> in 1999, dropped to 16<sup>th</sup> position in 2000 while London, ranking 17<sup>th</sup> in 1999 became the city hosting the maximum number of meetings in 2000 and ranked 1<sup>st</sup>. While ranking 29<sup>th</sup> in the world, Istanbul dropped to 39<sup>th</sup> position in 2000, which could be based on failure to continue the attempts. Barcelona, Berlin, Budapest, Lisbon, Prague, Brussels, Copenhagen, Helsinki and Madrid surpassing Istanbul has less accommodation capacity than Istanbul while the meeting facilities of Barcelona, Berlin, Lisbon, Prague and Copenhagen is less than that of Istanbul.

Furthermore, Istanbul can be claimed as much newer and qualified with regard to the centers of many other cities. In such a case, it is explicit that Istanbul's offer for the congress tourism is not insufficient and some other factors do have influence on such failure. Considering that its geographical location and touristic resources is no different from other cities, also having some pluses on the contrary, the reason of the problem should be thought thoroughly. Since London and Paris are renowned and leading metropolitans, the competitors of Istanbul could easily be known.

## **5. THE ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF ISTANBUL IN THE WORLD CONGRESS MARKET**

For the people travelling for business, accessibility, quality of the congress facilities, internationalization of the economic activities are very important conditions (Berg; Borg; Meer 1995). Of the 2 million visitors of Istanbul in 1995, about 33 thousand are conference, seminar and meeting attendants (SSI 1995). This 1.65% ratio is parallel to congress tourism statistics in Turkey.

**Table 6: Number of Visitors Visiting Istanbul (Istanbul Directorate of Tourism, (2000))**

MONTH	AIR		SEA		TOTAL	
	1999	2000	1999	2000	1999	2000
JANUARY	108458	101463	3190	5072	11648	106536
FEBRUARY	133773	119607	3049	9350	136822	128957
MARCH	129229	153958	5369	5903	134598	159861
APRIL	116421	183312	12863	12234	129284	195546
MAY	137140	182156	20215	21042	157355	203198
JUNE	145567	195289	16337	20240	161904	215529
JULY	168101	220355	16537	28017	184684	248372
AUGUST	154776	203703	20621	30550	175397	234253
SEPTEMBER	128572	216610	25848	39186	154420	249796
OCTOBER	138406	210556	16675	39186	155081	249742
NOVEMBER	122943	178522	6570	17449	129513	195971
DECEMBER	102928	157047	3704	4653	106632	161700
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1586314</b>	<b>2122578</b>	<b>150978</b>	<b>232882</b>	<b>1737338</b>	<b>2349461</b>

When we evaluate the number of visitors, it can be noted that September, October, May, June, July are the busiest months and the dominant transportation medium for tourists is airliners.

According to the results of the research made by Kongar; Berksoy 2001, conducted, the managers of various companies say that Istanbul has a 91.3% capacity to become a world touristic and commercial center. The point of the ones disagreeing with this is that Istanbul had insufficient infrastructure, education, qualified personnel and traffic. According to the research (Kongar; Berksoy 2001), the company managers attending the research were asked the question “What should be done for improving touristic potential”, and 54% said that the organizations should be surveyed, 15.4% said public security personnel and municipality should jointly inspect the standards of the business places in the touristic areas, 14.3% said that tourism offices should be more active, 10.3% said that the promotion efforts should be increased and 6% stated that the coordination between the touristic institutions should be reinforced (Kongar; Berksoy 2001). It should also be noted that the entire responses are related to the deficiencies in the institutional structure.

The managers of the security companies attending this research said that Istanbul had 83.3% capacity to become a world tourism and commerce center (Kongar; Berksoy 2001).

Further, the fair organizing company managers attending the research said Istanbul had a 100% capacity to become a world tourism and trade center but just promotion is not sufficient for that. Lack of education and the negative environment created by Turkish

opponents in abroad have negative influence on Istanbul. The budget and promotion studies conducted by the ministry are also insufficient (Kongar; Berksoy 2001).

The mayors of the districts of Istanbul listed the following as for the deficiencies and the concerns of Istanbul: A perfect transportation network should be established, air transport should be arranged, entire systems within the land transportation system (either railed or on land) should be operated at full capacity, the order and the cleanness of the city should be reviewed, accommodation places should be ordered, the municipalities should allocate their entire resources for making Istanbul a tourism and trade bridge with other countries, the number of conference halls should be increased, the district municipalities should open tourism information offices (Kongar; Berksoy 2001).

If we mention the findings of this research, which could suggest a course of action on the tendencies of tourists, it can be said that most of the visitors enjoy primarily historical places, natural beauties, food and entertainment life of Istanbul and found mosque, palace, closed bazaar, Mısır Bazaar and shopping centers as most interesting while the regions mostly visited were Sultanahmet, Topkapı, Çırağan, and Dolmabahçe Palaces, Eminönü and Laleli regions. It is thought-provoking that Beyazıt, Beyoğlu, Taksim, Galata and Boğaziçi are not among the places visited by the tourists. Traffic jams, peddlers, bans on the entertainment places, transportation and cleanness problem, street children and theft are among the issues complained by the tourists. 94.5% of the visitors find Istanbul a cheap city. The visitors mostly spend money on historical places, food, souvenirs and cultural sight seeing. The transportation means used frequently by them are shared taxis, taxis, buses and, though less frequent, sight seeing buses.

**After evaluating these opinions and determinations, the advantages of Istanbul in congress tourism are as follows:**

Istanbul is the only metropolis where two continents, namely Asia and Europe meet, that synthesizes two different cultures. Taking the advantage of its geographical location, it simply satisfies accessibility criteria, which is the most important for congress tourism. In addition to its location, the transportation infrastructure also makes importance, which seems as resolved by the second airport of Istanbul.

Istanbul has excess of the congress centers and accommodation facilities required for congress tourism both with regard to capacity and quality. Because these facilities are new and fully equipped and the congress center is located at the center (closeness to the city center and accommodation facilities), Istanbul enjoys a considerable advantage.

The other significant criteria is Istanbul's touristic potential and the originality of its touristic resources. In addition to its historical, cultural and natural values, Istanbul also has many urban facilities. Sheltering a considerable historical inheritance and urban construction as well as a spectacular nature, Istanbul has triple advantage: Culture, history and nature. Further, rich shopping facilities, museum, cinema, theatre, concert halls create a modern structure. It encompasses a tourism attractiveness and product originality, which many cities are starving for.

Its congress center and accommodation facilities as well as closeness of many urban facilities to each other are considerable advantages.

Another advantage is its temperate climate. Also, its cheapness when compared to its counterparts makes another advantage.

Variety of the shopping facilities, ethnic and modern bazaars, entertainment and cultural variety offered by it as well as a rich cuisine should be taken into account.

One of the most attractive points is its quality as a new market for annual or periodic meetings. Many organization institutions are in the search of new places in order to increase the attractiveness of their organizations and attract their delegates to the meetings.

**Disadvantages of Istanbul may be listed as follows:**

It is evident that Istanbul suffers some deficiencies with regard to infrastructure when compared to other world cities. Sea connections and land transportation are insufficient while rail transport, which is emphasized throughout the world, is nearly none. Because of the necessity to make the investments in this line and because the air transport opportunity should not be the only facility offered to visitors, though it is the most preferred one, these should be considered as to the transportation cost and the attractiveness of destination.

Another issue to be taken into account with the international accessibility is transportation within the city. It is important to reach the city using comfortable, quick, cheap and safe transportation as well as to the urban facilities. Traffic jams, crowd and lack of directing plates or their being in a language not understood by the visitors could also create problems and the unplanned and complex structure of the mass transportation system as well as parking problems are negative issues. In addition to the transportation infrastructure problem, also the general infrastructure problem throughout the city should also be taken into account.

Excessive population causes lack of education and consciousness in Istanbul's social

life, along with the cosmopolitan distribution. It should also be noted that peddlers, and theft most irritating the visitors can be listed within the negativities. Safety in the city is very important. In addition to these, weak tourism infrastructure, lack of qualified personnel and the regulations prevailing in the entertainment places are important negative factors.

The pollution throughout the city can influence the city negatively, and because the sea, a tourist attracting resource, cannot be used because of pollution can be counted among negative factors. In addition to the other touristic offerings in selection of the congress city, sea is a very significant factor to increase attractiveness. Istanbul can use this resource for sight seeing and visuality but cannot make use of it for the beaches.

Furthermore, one of the two considerable disadvantages is insufficient institutional structure, the other is promotion and image problem.

It is evident that the central government did not place relevant importance, nor it created required strategies. It failed to establish international and national connections. Since co-operation between public-public, public-private sector could not be established, there are deficiencies in the institutional structure and a general unconsciousness is suffered. Consciousness, first of all, is a feature that a city should have. Whatever the product is, it is impossible for a city to reach a success in tourism as long as the management is far from being professional and fail to resolve problems. It is evident that touristic infrastructure could not be established when tourism agencies and associations are not sufficiently qualified, but they can do nothing if there is no financial and moral support. It should also be noted that the sector suffers some problems with regard to integrity, a city cannot be marketed by persons only. Establishment of partnerships is a must.

It is also clear that the city suffers image and presentation problems, that the existing presentation campaigns are insufficient also incapable of producing slogans. It could also be said that touristic statistics are incapable of producing certain policies and reach some general deductions. For example, there are no certain information as to planning, projection and policy creating studies by the certain statistics. Technical infrastructure and problems of the Istanbul Congress and Visitor Office are evident, such efforts will, unfortunately, produce no solution for both traditional and congress tourism.

Each city has its own advantages or disadvantages. It is therefore important to offer advantages as great opportunities while converting disadvantages into advantages.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Development of congress tourism in a city requires communication and harmony between the local and central governments and different sectors as a must. A special event like an exhibition or congress organization is a catalyst for reinforcing the co-operation between the public and private sector. Organization capacity, financial structure, full performance by the responsible people and efficient operation of the tourism offices and agencies are important (Berg; Borg; Meer 1995).

Both Turkey and Istanbul, it is center, cannot take share it deserves from the congress tourism. About 7 thousand congresses are held throughout the world in various platforms, while 4 thousand thereof take place in various countries but only 25 to 30 in Istanbul (Aksoy 2001). Considering the advantages of congress tourism, the negative influences of such deficiency could well be understood.

Though criticized, Istanbul's 5 star hotels, increasing day by day, have increased their roles in the tourism and Lütfü Kırdar Congress center which is presented to the city with Habitat II has become complimentary for this quality. Istanbul has entered into a process which could be suitable for the congress market by the time. In order to compete, the city should be revised in its entirety in addition to establishing the units to serve congress tourism because congress tourism is also something related to the offers of the city with regard to touristic destination.

As the quality gets better, presentation activities should take place so that congress award goes parallel therewith. Image is very important. Istanbul should become a product or a mark.

Distributing just leaflets is not a method for presentation, the best presentation is pleased visitors leaving the city. International relations should be established correctly and soundly. Service quality should all the times be in the world's quality. Continuous follow up is necessary for that.

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\* Included in the association database are meetings that are organised on a regular basis, attract at least 50 participants and rotate between 3 different countries.

\*\* Also, the city boasts 150 hotels with meeting rooms for from 10 to 2000 people.

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