

First-time tourism co-operation with Polish regions

After five years of Oder partnership, the region continues to grow together

Berlin, 10 March 2011 The partners from the Oder region will significantly step up their co-operation in the field of tourism. For the first time *visitBerlin* and the Polish partners co-operate directly. The goal is to raise the awareness of the region with the metropolis Berlin amongst regional residents. Moreover, the Oder region will in future also be marketed on third markets, such as the USA and Russia, as an attractive destination. The new co-operation meets with a large response in the Polish regions in the run-up to the UEFA Euro 2012. The project was launched at the International Tourism Exchange (ITB) by high-ranking political representatives of the Voivodeships and cities of the Oder partnership.

"Through the tourism co-operation with our Polish partners we add another building block to the Oder partnership which has been successful for five years already", states Harald Wolf, Mayor and Senator for Economic Affairs, Technology and Women. "We want to leverage the high potential of the booming tourism industry in the capital region. My ministry provides active support by means of funding tools. Our goal: interconnection of the region on the two sides of the River Oder and its economic strengthening. The metropolis Berlin gives the decisive impulsions. Together with *visitBerlin* we want to reinforce the tourism dynamics in the Oder region through the international charisma of the capital. A central role is played by the international airport Berlin Brandenburg (BBI): it turns Berlin into a gateway for guests from all over the world which is to establish further attractive destinations within the Oder region."

"With this co-operation we make a major step forward in order to strengthen the region across the borders and attract more international visitors", says Burkhard Kieker, CEO of *visitBerlin*. "It is a wonderful symbol that we announce this co-operation at ITB, where Poland is this year's partner country." *visitBerlin* will work together with the Polish partners on concrete tourism programme modules and bookable offers. This will be accompanied by joint image brochures, Internet information on the region, press trips for journalists, selective trade fair appearances and road shows on third markets like the USA and Russia with information for local tour operators.

Already five years ago economic policy representatives of the Federal States of Berlin, Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Saxony and the four western Polish Voivodeships - Greater Poland, Lubusz, Lower Silesian and West Pomeranian Voivodeships - started to build an inter-regional German-Polish network.

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