

**A** recently-established trade show and a leading international meeting planners association have joined forces to educate meetings personnel throughout Europe.

Project Europe is the initiative of Ray Bloom's international meetings exhibition IMEX (to be held in Frankfurt in May) and Meeting Professionals International, the Dallas based spearhead organisation with aspirations towards global expansion.

But more than teaching youngsters the basics and beauties of meetings management, Project Europe is to bring standardisation to the old continent. In fact, it is a three-pronged exercise: to expand education opportunities for meeting professionals



Picture by Popperfoto

# Back to meetings school in Europe?

and students, to encourage standardisation of meeting industry practices, and to promote the value of meetings within Europe.

The two organisations expect to launch joint marketing initiatives and conduct research as well.

Ray Bloom, owner and chairman of IMEX, eager as ever for something new, says, "We are thrilled to be working so closely with MPI in Europe and worldwide. The MPI Foundation shares common objectives with IMEX and by working together we hope to make lasting and beneficial changes to the future of our industry."

Across the Atlantic, a more sanguine David DuBois, executive vice president of the MPI Foundation added, "Thanks to a major sponsorship agreement from MPI European Partner IMEX, we will see one of the MPI Foundation's most significant campaigns for Europe move nearer to completion. Project Europe will strengthen the global meeting profession and promote the strategic value meetings can bring to all organisations." In detail, the project will:

- Develop student scholarships
- Advance the Certification of Meeting Management (CMM) and Certification of Meeting Professional (CMP) programmes across Europe
- Identify and develop a meetings' industry speaker database/resource
- Develop education modules for train-

the-trainer programmes to enhance what MPI European chapters can offer educationally

- Expand the current "European Standards" programme to include VAT, licensing and insurance.

Even women are to get a better deal. MPI's Women's Leadership Initiative' will conduct market research on challenges faced by European women wanting to advance their careers as meeting professionals. Results will be presented at IMEX 2004 in Frankfurt.

Women comprise 76 percent of the membership of MPI and the WLI was set up in 2001 to recognize, uphold and further their advancement. The WLI is the premier resource of research, education, mentoring and networking for and about women who aspire to lead in the meeting industry.

Meantime, MPI's own advancement in Europe races ahead.

From a membership in Europe of just 100 in 1991, figures have zoomed to over 1,200 at present. The 61st chapter - MPI France - was recently chartered. MPI's European headquarters is in Luxembourg.

MPI is the world's largest association for the meeting profession, with 18,000 members in 60 countries

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**Cynics might see it as an attendance and membership booster, but MPI and IMEX's Project Europe might not be all self-seeking.**