



MEDIA RELEASE

MALAYSIA HOSTS THE 35TH *DERTOUR REISEAKADEMIE* 2007

Germany's high-profile tour operator, Dertour, has chosen Malaysia as the host for its 35th *Dertour Reiseakademie*, an annual gathering of members which runs at Putrajaya International Convention Centre from 28 November to 11 December 2007.

Established since 1974, the *Reiseakademie* is an incentive programme combining familiarisation trips, workshops and seminars for 700 selected travel agents from Germany and Austria. The participants will be divided into two groups which will follow the same programme, each for duration of one week. About 10 German journalists are also invited to join the travel academy to generate media publicity on Malaysia.

The *Reiseakademie* programme aims to showcase Malaysia as a preferred holiday destination and a professional educational programme for the participants which includes training for active selling of the destination, product knowledge and networking opportunities.

Participants will experience the traditional Malaysian hospitality and explore Kuala Lumpur with visits to hotel properties, heritage sites and other tourist attractions such as Batu Caves, Karyaneka Craft Centre and Royal Selangor. Pre- and post-tours to Penang-Langkawi, Taman Negara (National Park)-Kuantan, Pangkor, Sabah and Sarawak are also offered to showcase Malaysia's wealth of natural assets and multi-cultural heritage.

With this practical knowledge and first-hand experience of Malaysia, the participants are in a better position to develop attractive holiday packages and advise future clients effectively to consider Malaysia as their holiday destination.

Malaysia is the first South East Asian country to host such an important event organised by Dertour after Dubai hosted the 34th *Dertour Reiseakademie* last year. Previous host countries included Switzerland, Germany, USA, Austria, Spain, France, Croatia, Italy, England, Australia, Canada, Ireland, U.A.E., Finland, South Africa, and the Peoples' Republic of China.

The event is organised by Tourism Malaysia in collaboration with Malaysia Airlines, Asian Overland Services (AOS), Starwood Group and Putrajaya International Convention Centre (PICC). This successful bid to host such prestigious event is another distinction to Malaysia in effort to become a premier MICE destination.

For the Malaysian tourism industry, the Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) component is an important segment. MICE arrivals for 2006 increased by 6.1 per cent to 820,243 compared to 773,562 foreign delegate arrivals in 2005. In terms of revenue, MICE contributed RM2.56 billion (about USD750 million) in 2006 compared to RM2.27 billion (about USD665 million) in 2005.

Germany ranked among the top 12 in the Malaysian MICE market last year recording a total of 14,823 delegates compared to 12,319 delegates in 2005, an increase of 20.3%. For the first half of 2007, a total of 544,697 conference arrivals was recorded compared to 434,313 for the same period in 2006, which is an increase of 25.4%.

In terms of overall tourist arrivals from January to August 2007, Malaysia registered a total of 14,047,276 tourists, representing an increase of 22% compared to 11,518,288 in 2006. A total of 50,866 Germans visited Malaysia from January to August 2007 which is an increase of 13.7% compared to 44,718 for the same period in 2006.

For more information on *Dertour Reiseakademie*, please contact Mr. Kevin Keogh, Vice President Marketing and Sales at k.keogh@DERTOUR.DE.

Background on Dertour GmbH & CO KG

DERTOUR GmbH & CO KG, while being part of the REWE Group Germany, is the third biggest tour operator on the German market. Based in Frankfurt, Germany, Dertour shares a huge office building with its “sister brands” Meier’s Weltreisen and ADAC Reisen.

Dertour has been selling Malaysia since 1993, featuring the destination on 18 out of 231 pages in its “Asia & China” catalogue. With regard to bookings to Malaysia, Dertour has always been Malaysia’s leading tour operator in Germany.

Tourism Malaysia supports Dertour’s marketing efforts from time to time in terms of participation in special promotions arranged by Dertour, such as the Dertour “Ferne Länder Tournee”, an annually organised event, and advertorials in the “On Tour” Magazine.

Dertour’s main promotional strategy is to educate its travel agents on tourism products, as it believes that travel agents still remain an important aspect in the bookings process. Only 2% out of its overall bookings are generated through the internet. The majority of long haul travelers still prefer to book their tours through travel agencies as a matter of confidence and personal trust.

Dertour owns 11,000 retail travel agencies, among them 1,000 agencies in Austria.

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