

EDITOR'S NOTE

From Science to the Market, via Ethics

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The growing influence of tourism in all areas of society was accompanied by an ever increasing number of researchers and research centers dedicated to study the phenomena of tourism. In this context of affirmation and internationalization of knowledge in this area, it is natural that an increasing number of scientific publications devoted to tourism should arise, as well as a proliferation of specialized international conferences in various tourism topics.

It was precisely in order to support this dynamic of internationalization of knowledge in tourism that GITUR - Tourism Research Group from the Polytechnic Institute of Leiria (Portugal) decided to publish the *European Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Recreation* – EJTHR in 2010. In the spirit of actively contributing to the development of Tourism Sciences, the editors of the *European Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Recreation* scheduled for June 2012 the 1st edition of an international conference dedicated to the topic: “Destination Branding, Heritage and Authenticity”. To ensure that this conference will have a truly international character, it was decided that it should always take place every two years in a different European country. It is therefore a scientific meeting whose organizational structure is formed by an international consortium of institutions that cooperate in a network, and all imbued with a common goal.

The University of Santiago de Compostela (Spain), through its Center of Tourism Studies (CETUR), was the entity chosen to host the first edition of the conference, which will take place from 21 to 23 June 2012. It was also decided that the second edition to be held in 2014, will take place at the University of Salento in Lecce, Italy. Thus, thanks to a long-term planning and the collaboration of prestigious partners, the novel EJTHR begins a two-year cycle of conferences in association with reputable players in the production and dissemination of science.

Interestingly, following an Internet search we detected the following curious fact: in 2012 there will be two conferences entitled "Destination Branding, Heritage and Authenticity". In addition to the conference held by EJTHR, there is another to be held in Perth, Australia on 6-7 December 2012. Worried about the existence of two scientific conferences with the same name, we decided to investigate what lies behind this coincidence, and here we present the results of our research, which are summarized in the following Table:

Table 1: Conferences organized in 2012 by the self-designated "World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology (WASET)"

Meeting	Dates	Amount of Conferences	Conference Venue and Accommodation
1. Spring Meeting in Phuket	March 12-13	61	Patong Beach Hotel
2. Spring Meeting in Madrid	March 28-29	49	NH Alcala Hotel
3. Spring Meeting in Venice	April 11-13	103	NH Laguna Palace
4. Spring Meeting in Paris	April 25-26	46	Holiday Inn Paris
5. Spring Meeting in Amsterdam	May 13-14	98	NH Naarden Hotel
6. Spring Meeting in Tokyo	May 29-30	49	Narita Tobu Hotel Airport
7. Summer Meeting in Copenhagen	June 11-12	50	Scandic Copenhagen
8. Summer Meeting in Paris	June 27-28	106	Holiday Inn Paris
9. Summer Meeting in Zurich	July 5-6	47	Geroldswil Swiss Quality Hotel
10. Summer Meeting in Stockholm	July 11-12	41	Courtyard Stock. Kungsholmen
11. Summer Meeting in Toronto	July 19-20	54	Ryerson University
12. Summer Meeting in Amsterdam	July 25-26	103	NH Naarden Hotel
13. Spring Meeting in Paris	Aug. 22-23	56	Holiday Inn Paris
14. Spring Meeting in Oslo	Aug. 13-14	94	Scandic Vulkan
15. Winter Meeting in Kuala Lumpur	Aug. 28-29	47	Pacific Regency Hotel Suites
16. Winter Meeting in Penang	Aug. 30-31	46	Pacific Regency Hotel Suites

(Continued)

(cont.)

17.	Autumn Meeting in Singapore	Sept. 12-13	47	River View Hotel Singapore
18.	Autumn Meeting in Berlin	Sept. 19-20	58	nhow Berlin Hotel
19.	Autumn Meeting in Rome	Sept. 26-27	47	Hotel Royal Santina
20.	Autumn Meeting in Dubai	Oct. 8-9	83	Crowne Plaza Dubai – Deira
21.	Autumn Meeting in Lucerne	Oct. 15-16	109	Hotel Winkelried
22.	Autumn Meeting in Bali	Oct. 24-25	47	Ramada Resort Benoa
23.	Autumn Meeting in Venice	Nov. 14-16	106	NH Laguna Palace
24.	Winter Meeting in Paris	Nov. 28-29	80	Holiday Inn Paris
25.	Winter Meeting in Perth	Dec. 6-7	106	Mercure Hotel Perth
26.	Winter Meeting in Bangkok	Dec. 22-23	68	Amari Watergate Bangkok
27.	Winter Meeting in Phuket	Dec. 24-25	69	Patong Beach Hotel
Total amount of conferences:			1870	

Source: Author, based on information found at <http://www.waset.org/conferences.php>

A self-designated World Academy of Science, Engineering and Technology (WASET) defines itself as a scholarly open access, peer-reviewed, interdisciplinary, monthly and fully refereed journal focusing on theories, methods and applications in Science, Engineering and Technology. But as shown in Table 1, it is a real massive producer of conferences and publication of conference proceedings supported by reference indexes. Participants in any of the 1870 conferences, organized by WASET, every year are informed that “International Refereed Conference Proceedings will be blind peer reviewed by three competent reviewers and indexed by Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA), Google Scholar, Scopus, Compendex, Thomson Reuters, WorldCat, EBSCO, GALE, Embase, Reaxys, Engineering Village / Engineering Index (EI), Library of Congress, British Library, Electronic Journals Library will be internationally distributed both in Electronic CD-ROM Format and Proceedings Book”.

It should also be noticed that the 1870 conferences will take place in hotels and not in universities. Moreover, a deeper analysis of the programming of these “hotel multi-conference meetings” clearly shows that WASET is at the service of academic curricula inflation and trivi-

alization, in return of 450 to 500 euros per participant. To demonstrate this, here is a statistic that we drafted on the Spring Meeting in Madrid, which brings together in one place (NH Alcala Hotel) and the same dates (28-29 March 2012) participants enrolled in 49 conferences (!). Although the meeting takes place in Madrid (Spain), only 1 of 67 enrolled participants (equivalent to 1.4%) is of Spanish nationality! The 67 subscribers are distributed across 29 countries, but a significant majority (60%) comes from Asian countries, far from the actual location of the “hotel multi-conference meeting” (see Chart 1).

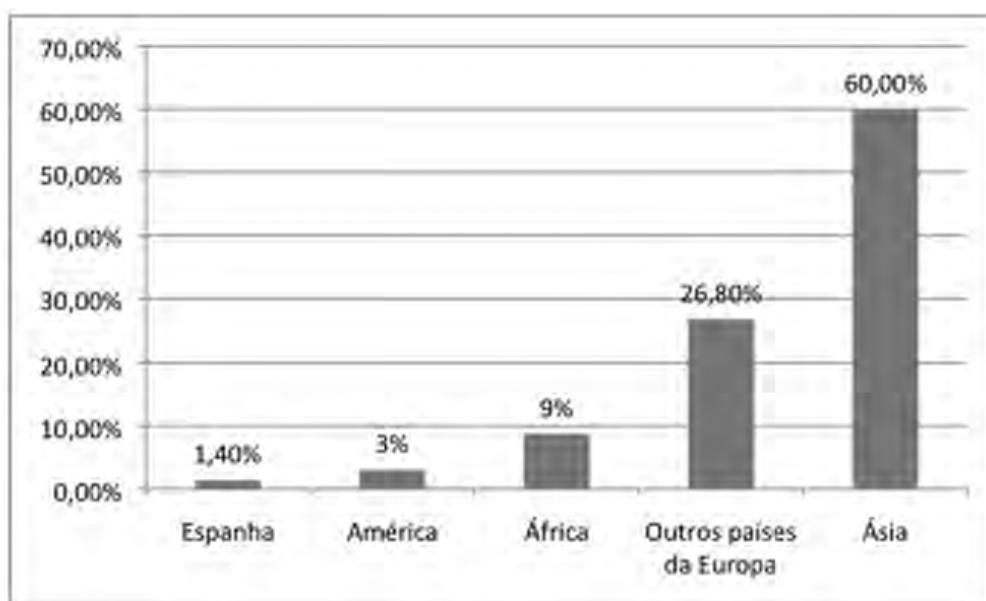


Chart 1: Origin of the participants in the *Spring Meeting* in Madrid

In other words, thanks to the Internet and the creative ingenuity of a self-titled WASET, 67 people from very diverse academic profiles (linked to any area of science, technology or engineering) and originating from 29 different countries enrolled in the most disparate conferences (from a wide range -49-of conferences offered), and all were gathered together in a hotel in Madrid for the WASET Spring Meeting. And among these 67 people, only one is Spanish and most are from Asia. Hail to proselytizing and to the accelerated internationalization of knowledge! And this is just one of the many “multi-conference hotel meetings” that are organized by WASET throughout the year. A similar carousel of hotel conferences occurs cyclically throughout the year in winter, spring, summer and autumn meetings in places like Venice, Paris, Tokyo, Berlin, Singapore, Amsterdam, Rome, Dubai, Lucerne, Bali, Perth, Oslo or Toronto.

For responsible organizers of scientific conferences, this phenomenon seems very strange, but from the point of view of the globalization of competition in terms of academic careers, this case may seem

trivial, because in fact we are witnessing the trivialization of academic curricula, and an intense competition for ratings in ISI rankings.

However, the above-mentioned case of WASET conferences is nonetheless disturbing because it highlights two opposing models of production of academic curricula: on the one hand, scientific conferences organized by universities, which are part of a logical stimulus to the production and sharing of knowledge, and on the other hand massive production of conferences, many of them with plagiarized themes (such as the international conference on Destination Branding, Heritage and Authenticity), which have a dual purpose: (1) to create a market for science tourism that benefits hotels where the multi-conference meetings take place and (2) to inflate the academic curricula at the expense of the vulgarization of papers of dubious quality, but with a guaranteed impact factor.

It appears that a more forceful, demanding and overwhelming new reality stands between Science and Ethics: the Market. And it is precisely in the academic titles and rankings market, where all researchers are required to compete, that we watch the appearance of less reputable institutions, which aim to meet the needs of those who eagerly want to have an academic career. Entities like WASET are well aware of their target market: citizens from emerging countries who want a career in their country or aspire to work in a European or an American university. In conclusion, the European Journal of Tourism, Hospitality and Recreation (EJTHR) was created to support and elevate the production and dissemination of scientific knowledge within tourism and, therefore, designed an international scientific conference (Destination Branding, Heritage and Authenticity) in partnership with prestigious universities in Europe. And in pursuing these objectives, the EJTHR takes a frontal opposition to entities producing scientific conferences in massive doses, according to a logic that sacralizes and defies the "market", ignoring ethics and university institutions. The existence of two conferences entitled *Destination Branding, Heritage and Authenticity*, one by the EJTHR and the other by WASET, is an emanation of the visible confrontation between conflicting ethical positions on the market rules of scientific dissemination.

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