

PRESS RELEASE

THE VATICAN MUSEUMS AT THE WORLD TRAVEL MARKET

The Museums of the Pope are participating for the first time in the XXXI Fair for the World Travel Market taking place in London from the 8- 11 November 2010.

The World Travel Market, the most important European Fair dedicated to the travel industry, represents an international appointment of great importance for those professionally involved in tourism, and specifically for cultural and religious tourism.

The Vatican Museums, “sanctuary of art and faith”, are visited daily by thousands of visitors who represent humanity of diverse origins, traditions and convictions. “Many visitors”, as the Holy Father Pope Benedict XVI affirmed, “are not Catholic, many are not even Christian and, perhaps, not even believers. Many visit only the Museums when visiting the Vatican State. This fact invites us to reflect on the extraordinary responsibility invested in such an institution such as the Church from the point of view of the Christian message”.

Aware of the role that the Museums play on a world level in education and in raising awareness, interpreters of the highest calling dedicated to welcoming and hosting visitors, the Vatican Museums consider it to be their professional duty to be present on such occasions enabling a meeting, an encounter and networking with other important cultural and institutional players. The European Fair for the World Travel Market represents, therefore, a valuable opportunity for the Vatican Museums, in which to “account” for itself in first person, without intermediaries, and to transmit in a personal and direct way its own particular identity.

“The Vatican Museums wish to speak to the whole world, as they represent the history, identity and destiny of the Catholic Church, which speaks to all people at all times,” with these words the Director of the Vatican Museums, Professor Antonio Paolucci, underlines the unique opportunity that the World Travel Market offers to the Vatican Museums, identifying this international meeting as an occasion to develop and to enrich itself, professionally and humanly.

Vatican City State, 20 October 2010