



Utrecht Region: growth continues

Large-scale internationalization effort

The coming years, Utrecht Region experiences an enormous growth. This not only concerns the number of inhabitants of the city of Utrecht, but also the number of companies that establish themselves in the region, and the hotel capacity. This gives a great boost to the knowledge development and the profiling of Utrecht Region as ideal destination for congresses and knowledge events.

It is expected that the number of residents in Utrecht city alone will increase from 350,000 to 440,000 in 2030. This growth is already anticipated by means of the large-scale renovation of the area around the central railway station which will last until 2030. "On the side of the Jaarbeurs event location the station has been completely renovated and rearranged", says Business Researcher Liza Verkroost. "It forms a second access gate to the city where besides a completely new event square next to the Jaarbeurs event location, a mega movie theater was developed and where several offices were built. You will also find there a WTC with small-scale offices, shops and catering facilities which create more liveliness. On the right-hand side of the station the Hoog Catherijne shopping mall was completely renovated into a modern connection to the medieval city center."

INTERNATIONALIZATION

Partly responsible for this growth is the course towards internationalization set by the province of Utrecht.

Jointly by the Netherlands Foreign Investment Agency, the municipalities of the province of Utrecht, the knowledge institutions present and the corporate community efforts are undertaking the creation of an attractive international location climate. The objective is that foreign companies are attracted, foreign companies already established here are retained, and preconditions for an appealing international location climate are realized.

"Utrecht region appeals to regional and foreign companies because of the groundbreaking research done here and the unique collaboration between the various parties", says Monique André de la Porte, account manager at Utrecht Convention Bureau. "A great example of this is the Princess Máxima Center, worldwide the third largest center for pediatric oncology. Here, the focus lies on integral treatment of children with cancer. At this location, all clinical care and clinic-scientific research as well as training courses taking place in the Netherlands is concentrated. This approach is pioneering in the international medical world. An other important player is the Hubrecht Institute which focuses on development biology and stemcell research. Here, work is done on pioneering fundamental research that can contribute to the treatment of cancer, diabetes and cardiovascular diseases."

PIONEERING RESEARCH

Education, research, entrepreneurship and healthcare, amongst other items, come together at the Utrecht Science

Park. With its more than a hundred companies and institutions constitutes the largest Science Park in the Netherlands. Here, for instance, the UMC Utrecht does research, by means of mini-lumps, on brain tissue into the cause of brain diseases. MRIguidance is working on the development and implementation of BoneMRI. This is a software solution with which, with the use of conventional MRI scanners, unequaled 3D visualizations of bone structures can be made. The success of the special collaborations has led to a second location of the Science Park in the nearby village of Bilthoven. There, the focus is on product development, product improvement and production of vaccines. "As a congress destination we benefit greatly from these pioneering researches and developments", says Verkroost. "Because they enhance the profiling of Utrecht Region and form an appealing factor for international knowledge events in the areas of green, health and smart."

EXPATS

More corporate activity also attracts expats and vice versa. To take advantage



of this development, more and more information on residing, living and recreating in Utrecht Region is offered in English. "An increasing number of expats find their way to Utrecht, but also to the nearby picturesque city of Amersfoort", says Verkroost. "At the moment, more than 200

children are educated at the Internationale school Utrecht. The cultural offer shows consideration for the growing number of international inhabitants. In the framework of the national concept Language No Problem, various shows and exhibitions are offered with subtitles or without spo-

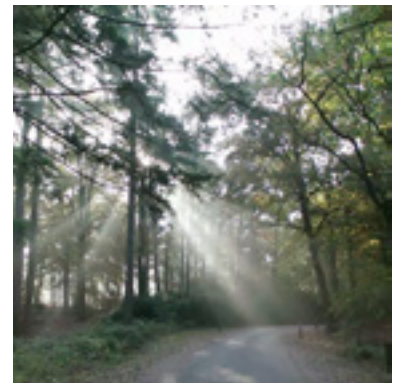
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Amersfoort
Photography: Kostas Brejaart

ken language. At the same time, expats are immersed here in the authentic Utrecht atmosphere and stimulated to act like locals. Congress participants also get on very well here thanks to the helpfulness of the residents and items like city maps provided by the Utrecht Convention Bureau in various languages.”

UTRECHT REGION PASS

What makes traveling and staying in Utrecht Region even more easy, is the Utrecht Region Pass that was introduced in 2017. “With this multifunctional mobility card the international business traveler can explore Utrecht Region and the rest of the Netherlands in a sustainable manner. Besides this, soon you can even pay the entrance fee to a number of regional attractions with it”, André de la Porte explains. “The pass can be ordered online, you pick it up at Schiphol Airport and start your trip right away. The big advantage is it’s a pay-as-you-go pass. Also, the card is linked to your creditcard. In fact, a statement of expenses will be sent to you once you are on your way home. The Utrecht Region Pass makes it even easier to organize your congress in the Utrecht region.”

LOCATION OFFER

Not just the corporate community and the knowledge themes are getting a significant impulse, the hotel capacity is also extended considerably. “In the next few years, mainly in Utrecht city the number of rooms will increase by 1,500 rooms.

This makes a total of 4,200 hotel rooms we can offer”, says Verkroost. “This development means a great deal to Utrecht Region as destination. We can not only host larger congresses, more knowledge events can also take place at the same time.” “Organizers can choose between the compact center of the city of Utrecht, or opt for the woody environment of the Utrechtse Heuvelrug and the somewhat smaller city of Amersfoort”, André de la Porte adds. “Particularly the guests who have stayed at a location in the region are pleasantly surprised by the tranquil, green environment and like to come back. It also offers options for social programs which make it possible to combine the

About Utrecht Convention Bureau

Organizers planning to organize a knowledge event in and around Utrecht, can count on the support of Utrecht Convention Bureau. The agency offers free of charge, independent and expert advice on the possibilities for congresses and informal program options in Utrecht. It also provides a bid fund, among other things. Initiatives like Hotel Service Utrecht, a free online reservation service via which congress and event participants can easily and safely make reservations and pay for their hotel rooms, also make it easy to organize international meetings. Besides, from Schiphol Amsterdam Airport the city of Utrecht can be reached within half an hour by train or car. Price-wise, the region has very favorable rates compared to other European cities.

bustle of the city and the quiet of the nature in one single program. You see that in all aspects, Utrecht Region is experiencing an enormous growth towards maturity.”

Interested in the possibilities in the region of Utrecht? More information can be found at www.utrechtconventionbureau.com. Or acquire more information personally at the Holland stand (F30) during IBTM World 2018.



Muntgebouw (Mint) Utrecht - Photography: Renzo Gerritsen