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How Technology, Medicine and Meetings are Driving Barcelona's Economy

January 13, 2015 By: [James Latham](#), [Jena Tesse Fox](#)



The 1992 **Summer Olympic Games** were pivotal in transforming **Barcelona's** reputation as a specialist host for large-scale events. Today, many of the business events staged in the Spanish port city are driving growth in priority sectors of healthcare and technology as gateways to economic growth.

Two such events--the **European Society of Cardiology Annual Congress** and the **Mobile World Congress** held annually in the city by the GSM Association--are attracting inward investment and talent beyond the tourism dividend delivered while in town as **Christoph Tessmar**, director of the Barcelona Convention Bureau, explained to IMR's **James Latham** during **EIBTM** in the city in November.

Christoph Tessmar at EIBTM from [International Meetings Review](#) on [Vimeo](#).

<http://vimeo.com/internationalmeetings/review/113927476/247539ce4f>

"The development of the infrastructure is very good," Tessmar said, noting that Barcelona has numerous new hotels as well as the Fira Convention Center. The city's airport is also growing, and Barcelona is also set to get a Metro that will connect the city center to both the airport and the convention center. "It will all be very easy and very fast to come in," he said, "and that's a very important thing for the organizers.

Tourism and events helped Barcelona get through the economic crisis, Tessmar continued. "Barcelona, of course, had suffered, and is still suffering a little bit," he acknowledged, but quickly added that the city was faring better than others in Spain.

The Mobile World Congress, Tessmar said, has made Barcelona a hub for next-gen technology as the world becomes increasingly wireless. "We are very happy to have a lot of corporate events," he added, noting that **Hewlett-Packard** and **Microsoft** are repeat visitors. SAP has held an annual event in Barcelona for the past 13 years, he added, and recently signed a contract for another three. "Mobile World Congress was a really great platform to get all these companies here," he said.

At the end of August, Barcelona hosted the European Society of Cardiology Annual Congress for the fourth time, and the event will return to the city again in 2017. "The had the most successful edition," Tessmar said, "and they are confident that when they come here, everything will go very well."