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Report

Meetings Industry in Kaunas

Market research of international conference participants
on the example of Erasmus+ International Week 2018
in Kauno Kolegiija / University of Applied Sciences

Katowice 2019

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Preface

Dear Sirs,

There are growing interest of conference meetings in the world, under influence of economic development, dynamic changes in politics, and growing competition of cities (and using meetings as attractive promotional forms). The conferences are very interesting products many companies in the destination of the conference.

Total number of meetings in the world reached new record results by ICCA and UIA reports (the most important organizations collecting data of the meetings market) in 2017. Countries and cities from developed economies are on begging of leaders in the reports. There is the diversity of forms of conference meetings. It allows supposing that international conference meetings, also scientific ones, are important tourist products of smaller cities, too.

The European Union, through its organizational structures and various departments, creates great opportunities to co-finance various activities aimed at developing relationships and exchanging knowledge. It is the great possibility to use different funds for bigger motilities scientists on international market, to participate in many conferences.

Erasmus+ is the EU's project to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe. Its budget of €14.7 billion will provide opportunities for Europeans to study, train, gain experience, and volunteer abroad. Set to last until 2020, Erasmus+ has great opportunities for developing students, teachers, scientists and universities, cities, companies.

More than 200 Erasmus + International Week conferences have been registered every year since 2014 (in 32 countries, including EU and outside). The most meetings of this type are held in: Spain, Germany, Poland and Portugal. In Lithuania, 37 have already been registered.

Kaunas is a city that is not the administrative capital of the country, but at the same time a significant academic center (10 universities, over 30,000 students) in Lithuania.

Recognizing the needs of participants of international conference meetings, especially scientific ones, seems to be important for improving the process of tourist services in the city.

Participants in such meetings are significant people in their organizations, opinion leaders, involved in the conference participation process

and open to new contacts. They are an excellent medium for the promotion of the city, universities and other entities involved in the process of their service.

Erasmus+ International Week organized by Kauno Kolegija in March 2018, was one of the international scientific conferences in Kaunas. Over 90 people participated in it (including 57 from abroad, from 18 countries, from 29 different research centers).

Such events may be significant for the development of business tourism in Kaunas, or for the promotion of the city, especially on international markets.

We invite you to read

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Introduction

Total numbers of international trips in world reports are bigger year by year¹. Business tourism is also developing, measured by the number of trips related to business trips (including group meetings), business travel expenses as well as the number of business events and conference meetings. The development of business tourism is mainly caused by economic factors, but also by political, socio-cultural or technological changes in the world. The statistics concerning the business tourism market are dominated by large cities, economically well-developed countries in the world². It can be assumed that business tourism is an attractive product of cities³, as a business destination meeting the requirements of both institutional and individual clients⁴.

Demand on the business tourism market is generated mainly at the level of institutional orders, but participants are able to decide on choice some conference meetings, too.

Recognition of the needs of the participants of such meetings (where the participant decides to participate in a particular conference) may contribute to the success of event organizers and cities (destinations). It seems that improving the quality of services provided to participants requires recognition of their needs at every stage of involvement in the conference (before, during and after the stay in the destination).

¹ more in: *Tourism Highlights, 2017 Edition*. UN WTO, Madrid 2017

² *International Meetings Statistics Report 58th edition*. Union of International Associations (UIA), Brussels 2017; *The International Association Meetings Market 2016. ICCA Statistics Report*. ICCA, Amsterdam 2017

³ G.I. Crouch, J. Ritchie, Convention site selection research: a review, conceptual model, and propositional framework. *Journal of Convention and Exhibition Management* 1 (1) 1998, pp. 49–69; G. Crouch, J. Louviere, The determinants of convention site selection: a logistic choice model from experimental data. *Journal of Travel Research* 43, 2004, pp. 118–130; K. Cieřlikowski: Business Tourism As Innovative Product For Destination. *Innovative (Eco-) Technology, Entrepreneurship and Regional Development*. Conference proceedings, Kaunas 2015, pp. 26–33,

⁴ more in: M. Oppermann, Professional conference attendees' and non-attendees' participation decision factor. *The Society of Travel and Tourism Educators Annual Conference*, Denver, Colorado, 1995; M. Oppermann, K.P. Chon: Convention participation decision-making process. *Annals of Tourism Research*, 24(1), 1997, pp. 178–191; J. Jung-Eun Yoo, K. Chon: Factors Affecting Convention Participation Decision-Making: Developing a Measurement Scale. *Journal of Travel Research* 2008/ 47, 2008; DOI: 10.1177/0047287507312421

A contemporary delegate on international conference is also a tourist who manifests a great commitment to the process of preparing the services he intends to use, as well as in the process of contact with various entities implementing the conferences.

Creating appropriate (meeting the expectations of participants) conditions for the development of this involvement, may contribute to the participant's satisfaction with participation in the conference, generating positive memories and opinions about the city, country, university⁵.

The city of Kaunas meets the requirements of an attractive destination on the conference tourism market⁶ (the city has good transport accessibility compared to other cities in Lithuania, is a growing economic and scientific center, has a large number of universities, a suitable hotel base, a large and multifunctional arena, etc.). The use of such opportunities for the development of the meetings industry and effective management of business tourism in the city always requires support by public administrations - both local and state⁷.

The international conferences can bring significant economic and promotional effects to every entities engaged in process of the conference.

When considering this, the Authors decided to conduct research on the participants of the international Erasmus + International Week conference meeting at Kauno Kolegija. The description of the research, as well as the results obtained in the report, can be used to improve the organization and

⁵ K. Cieřlikowski: *Zarządzanie turystyką biznesową. Aspekty globalne i lokalne*. AWF Katowice 2016, p. 6;

⁶ H.E, Chacko, G.G. Fenich: Determining the importance of US convention destination attribute. *Journal of Vacation Marketing*, vol. 6, 2000, nr 3, pp. 211-220; H. Qu, L. Li, G.K. Tat Chu: The Comparative analysis of Hong Kong as an international conference destination in southeast Asia. *Tourism Management*, 2000, nr 21, p. 643-648; M. Oppermann: Convention destination images: analysis of association meeting planners' perception. *Tourism Management*. 1996, vol. 17. No 3 p. 175-182; M. Oppermann'a: Convention destination images analysis of association meeting planners' perception. *Tourism Management*. 1996, vol. 17. No 3 p. 176; M. Oppermann: Convention Cities – Images and Changing Fortune. *The Journal of Tourism Studies* Vol. 7, No. 1, '96, pp. 11-19; G. Hank-Haase: Der Tagung – und Kongressreiseverkehr als wirtschaftlicher Faktor in Deutschen Grosstaten unter besonderer Berücksichtigung von Wiesbaden. Trier 1992, pp. 7-8; A. Gugg, G. Hank-Haase: Die wirtschaftliche Bedeutung des Tagungs- und Kongress Reiseverkehrs in Deutschland, Frankfurt, Februar 1995, pp. 5 – 12

⁷ more in: K. Cieřlikowski K., A. Brusokas: *Determinants of Effective Management in the Sport with the Use of Large Sport Arenas in Selected Cities*, *European Journal of Service Management*, 2017, vol. 21, no. 1, pp. 5-10

service of conference participants, as well as for further research in other cities, or other conference meetings.

The purpose of the market research was to determine the success factors of a conference meeting by identifying the key criteria (characteristics) determining participation in the conference meeting (selection of this type of conference meeting, selection of destinations) and their evaluation by participants from abroad.

The participants of the international scientific conference Erasmus International Week were examined. Kauno Kolegija in Kaunas organized the conference from 19 to 23 March 2018.

To achieve the objectives, methods of analysis (subject literature, reports of institutions studying business tourism in the world), active (participative) observation as well as passive, using secondary sources and own research (questionnaire) were used.

The list of key factors of choosing the type of conference meetings by participants was prepared. Then questions were formulated and a questionnaire was developed as a research tool.

The questionnaire included both metric questions (for the general characteristics of the research sample), open and closed questions in which the criteria and the five-degree Likert scale were used.

Survey research was carried out from 15 April to 15 May 2018, using the survio.com website. The obtained indications were subjected to statistical analysis for the calculation of average validity (expectation) and fulfillment grades.

The report also includes the analysis of the seasonality of Erasmus + International Week, geographical distribution (by countries), a general description of this type of conference (organization process, financing, type of involved entities and participants) to show the specifics of this type of scientific conferences.

The research results allowed for:

- identification of used means of transport by participants of conference meetings,

- identification of the main motivations for participation in conference meetings,
- identification of conference selection criteria by scientific employees planning to participate in an international conference,
- analysis of meeting the expectations of Erasmus + International Week participants in Kaunas
- assessment of the level of satisfaction of the participants of this meeting,
- determining the key success factors of the Erasmus + International Week conference meeting, taking into account the needs of foreign participants at various stages of the preparation and implementation of the event.

The report consists of an introduction, four parts, a summary.

The first part refers to the general characteristics of the city of Kaunas, with particular emphasis on the hotel's accommodation base, base for the meetings industry, transport accessibility and the most important events in the city.

The next part is a reference to the terms and concepts used in the Report.

The following parts of the Report include the results of direct research of Erasmus + International Week participants in Kaunas and their analysis, preceding this information with the description of the research methodology and presenting the specificity of international conference meetings of the Erasmus International Week type.

The summary includes the most important results and conclusions from the market research of the participants of the Erasmus + International Week conference organized by Kauno Kolegija / University Of Applied Science in Kaunas.

1. Kaunas - an attractive destination for conference meetings and business events

Kaunas is a modern and dynamically developing city, the second largest economic and scientific center in Lithuania and one of the most important cities among the Baltic countries. It is the administrative capital of the Kaunas region (Kaunas County), one of the most attractive investment regions in the Baltic States.

The historical beginnings of Kaunas date back to the 14th century. The city and its castle were for the first time mentioned in historical chronicles in 1361 by the Arab geographer, Kaunas was a trading center, and his castle served as an important fortress against the attacks of the Crusaders. In 1408, under the Grand Duke of Lithuania, Vytautas - the city of Kaunas received Magdeburg rights, obtaining the status of urban autonomy.

The rapid development of the city was begun in the interwar period (1919 - 1939), when Kaunas was the capital of the Republic of Lithuania ⁸.

In the first decade of the 21st century, investments were initiated aimed at the reconstruction of the city center (among others: a shopping mall was established then, old streets and tenement houses were renovated, and the Zalgirio Arena was rebuilt). The airport was modernized, motorway connections with Vilnius and Poland were built, a new railway connection was opened.



Kaunas, as a provincial city, has one of the best in the Baltic states communication accessibility for the organization of big events. Near the city, there is the intersection of European transport routes ("E67" from Prague to Helsinki - so-called Via Baltica, "E85" from Klaipeda via Belarus, Ukraine, Romania, Bulgaria to Alexandroupoli in Greece).

And existing railway connections allow you to reach many cities in the country and abroad. A renewed main railway station in Kaunas, a bus interchange center as well as developing services for travelers - encourage people to visit the city using public transport.

⁸ <http://www.kaunokolegija.lt/en/staying-in-kaunas/> (accessed: 20-06-2018)

At a distance of 17 km from the city center of Kaunas, there is an international airport.

There are direct flights from the airport to 23 cities in Europe and Asia. They are serviced by LOT, Wizzair and Ryan Air airlines. Buses to the city center run from the airport. In 2017, the airport in Kaunas served 1.2 million passengers. More international flights operate at Vilnius airport about 100 km from Kaunas.



There is also a dynamically developing special economic zone in Kaunas ⁹. It consists of three areas:

- THE PRODUCTION AND LOGISTICS AREA
- THE AIRPARK (3 km next to the airport)
- THE BUSINESS STREET (area 12h off the A6 motorway)

Further investments in this area are conducive to the further development of the city and business events in the city¹⁰.

In Kaunas, in recent years, the hotel accommodation has been developing, and the extension and modernization of the conference facilities for the implementation of group meetings.

In June of 2018 in Kaunas were **24 hotels**,
in which there were **1,246 rooms**.
These hotels could accommodate **2,462 guests**.



⁹ <http://ftz.lt/about-kaunas-fez/> (accessed: 20-06-2018)

¹⁰ <http://en.kaunas.lt/business/why-investing-in-kaunas> (accessed: 20-06-2018)

Table 1. Hotels in Kaunas in 2017.

Categorization of hotels	number of hotels	Number of rooms	%	number of beds	%	average number of rooms in the hotel	average number of beds in the hotel
5*	0	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	-	-
4*	13	742	59.6%	1,518	61.7%	57.1	116.8
3*	9	415	33.3%	763	31.0%	46.1	84.8
2*	1	14	1.1%	31	1.3%	14.0	31.0
1*	0	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	-	-
no cat.	1	75	6.0%	150	6.1%	75.0	150.0
total	24	1,246	100.0%	2,462	100.0%	51.9	102.6

Source: K. Ciešlikowski, A. Brusokas - own research

Visitors to the city of Kaunas can stay overnight in 24 hotels of various categorizations (the most are four- and three-star hotels). 22 of them with standard 3 stars and 4 starts hotels have a total of 1,167 rooms.

In addition, 6 hotels in the city of Kaunas (25%) are chain hotels with 609 hotel rooms (48.9%) in the city for 1 126 guests (45.7% of the total hotel capacity of the city).



There are also many other meeting places prepared for the implementation of business events in Kaunas.

And almost every hotel has at least one conference room.

In addition, conference organizers can find rooms in one of the Universities or many cultural facilities (galleries, museums, cinemas, theaters).

The largest covered building is the Zalgirio Arena¹¹. It can accommodate a maximum of 20517 participants (during music concerts).

However, 12,300 permanent places are prepared in the stands (the places being added increase the capacity to 15 688 participants).

It is the largest indoor multi-purpose hall in the Baltic countries. Every year there are many sports events (mainly basketball), but also fairs, exhibitions, shows or conferences and congresses.



¹¹ <https://zalgirioarena.lt/en/zalgirio-arena/apie-arena/> (accessed: 20-06-2018)

The economic and political changes in the European Union, launching further targeted programs, also contribute to the development of the city of Kaunas.

The activity of the scientific community may also contribute to greater promotion of the city and further economic development, including through the organization of international conferences in Kaunas.

2. Basic definitions and concepts

Business tourism is the people's trips to group business meetings (related to their work), but not paid work at the destination. The terms "business tourism", "meetings industry", "business trips", are subject to various subject matter, and sometimes they are identified as the same. To describe them, the acronym MICE (meetings, incentives, conventions, exhibitions) is also used. Along with the research of the business tourism market in the world, to emphasize the economic importance in the region in which it is implemented (destination), the term "meetings industry" is used.

The division of the terms "business trips" and "business tourism" proposed by Rob Davidson organizes the terms and allows the use of the term "business tourism" in the right context.¹²

It should be recalled that according to this author, "business travel" are a superior category and mean all travels whose goals are related to the work or interests of the traveler. These include "individual business travels" and "business tourism", which he treats as group meetings (the UN WTO stated that the minimum number of people to consider a group meeting is 10)¹³.

The UN WTO in the reports on the meetings industry and the recommendations for statistics also refers to this division and distinguishes the following groups of conference meetings and business events: conference / congress, corporate event, incentive event and trade fairs / exhibitions.

Business tourism is therefore all business travels to various meetings, including: group meetings (many types of events, such as conferences, training seminars, launching new products or annual general meetings); motivational travels (usually luxury travel, to attractive places, financed by the employer to its employees, as a reward for winning a competition related to work or for activities within a team of traders); exhibitions (including fairs and consumer events); corporate tourism (luxurious entertainment offered

¹² more in: R. Davidson, B. Cope: *Business travel: Conferences, incentive travel, exhibitions, corporate hospitality and corporate travel*. Pearson Education, London 2003

¹³ *Global Report on the Meetings Industry*, UN WTO, Madrid 2014, p. 10; *Measuring the Economic Importance of the Meetings Industry. Developing a Tourism Satellite Account Extension*. UN WTO, Madrid 2006, p. 13

by companies to the most valuable clients or potential clients during prestigious sports and cultural events).

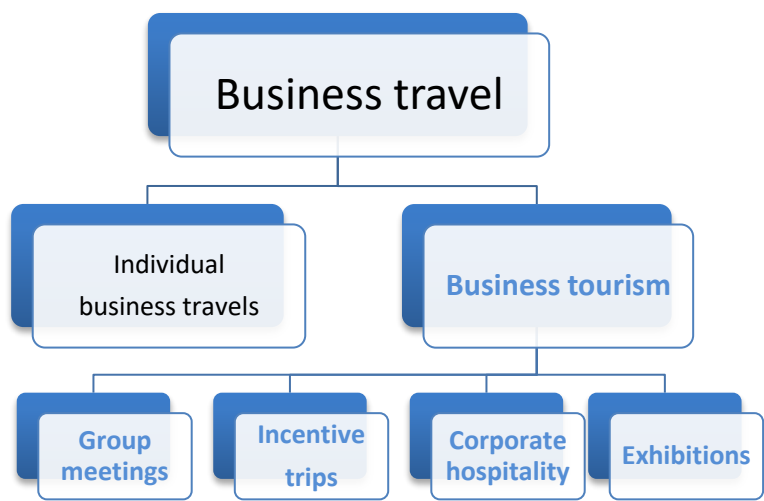


Figure 1. Business tourism sector

Source: R. Davidson, B. Cope: *Business travel: Conferences, incentive travel, exhibitions, corporate hospitality and corporate travel*. Pearson Education, London 2003, p. 4.

The conference meeting term used in this Report refers to meetings differ in terms of duration, number of participants, spatial coverage, purpose and subject of the meeting, degree of formalization, and method of financing the participation of participants.

Consequently, in practice, there can be distinguished between congresses, conventions, conferences, forums, assemblies, conventions, symposia, seminars or trainings, workshops, galas or conclaves.

Inside the report, a participant of an international conference (a delegate) is a "business tourist" (a business traveler who stays outside the place of permanent residence for at least 24 hours and uses a publicly available accommodation base).

The business tourism market consist of groups of entities:

- I group - deliverers / providers of individual services (accommodation facilities, facilities, transport services, catering services, support services, other local entrepreneurs)
- II group - operators - specialized companies acting on behalf of clients and acting on behalf of generators / service providers
- III group - institutional buyers and participants of conference meetings¹⁴.

The business market is dominated by institutional demand, which is created earlier than the demand of individual clients. However, participants of conference meetings (delegates) have some choice and freedom in choosing a meeting, place and various additional services (travel arrangements, organization of time in a destination, participation costs, etc. When they are choosing a meeting, they are guided by the official as well as unofficial (individual) motivations of participation, which in the report were also subjected to identification and evaluation.

The report includes the results of research on participants (guests from abroad) of an international conference meeting organized by the university in cooperation with public administration (city, state, European) and other private companies involved in the process of preparing the Erasmus + International Week event at Kaunas Kolegija.

¹⁴ K. Cieřlikowski: *Zarządzanie turystyką biznesową. Wybrane aspekty globalne i lokalne*. AWF Katowice 2015, pp. 27-30

3. The specific of research of conference meeting type Erasmus+ International Week

3.1. Research methodology

For the purposes of the market research of participants of international conference meetings on the example of Erasmus + International Week in Kaunas, the following were made: analyzes, characteristics and characteristics of Erasmus + International Week conferences and surveys of participants of one of them.

The general analysis and showing the specificity of Erasmus + International Week was based mainly on external sources (existing statistics and studies of other institutions).

The Erasmus + program and the European institutions involved in its implementation were presented. An analysis of the Erasmus + International Week events carried out since 2014 (in particular 2017) has been carried out, based on available statistics for presenting the distribution of these conference meetings during the year, as well as their spatial structure, including the countries where they were implemented.

As part of the analysis of the market of international conference meetings, the preferences, expectations of the participants of Erasmus + International Week at Kauno Kolegija in Kaunas and their fulfillment were also examined.

To achieve this objective, the survey method was used, using the questionnaire as a research tool. The direct research process was preceded by direct conversations with participants of this type of events in other countries. In order to formalize a wide list of features and possible questions, the methodology used in servqal surveys was used.

A questionnaire was created (Annex 1) which contained open and closed questions. In closed questions regarding the assessment of the meeting, a five-point Likert scale was used.

Closed questions concerned 17 features, important in the opinion of the authors for the success of a well-organized conference event of the Erasmus + International Week type. On a scale of 1 to 5 participants had to refer to each feature, where in the case of validity, 1 meant not important and 5 very important. Next, the participants assessed the fulfillment of these qualities by

Erasmus International Week in Kaunas, also evaluating on a scale from 1 to 5, where 1 meant little satisfied and 5 met very well.

The authors calculated the average grade for each feature, assigned the average values according to "validity" and "fulfillment" and compared the fulfillment of what the participants expected. A synthetic result was obtained in this way expressing some level of success of the organizers of the meeting.

The questionnaire was posted on 10/04/2018 on the website "survio.com". Eligible participants of the event (foreign guests only) received a personal invitation to participate in the study (request for a reply). In the period from 15/04/2018 to 15/05/2018 the participants were contacted several times (by email). 51 completed questionnaires were received.

The questionnaire was supported by direct contact with the participants and already announced at the Kaunas event, therefore for 57 eligible persons who received an invitation to the survey, as many as 51 of them returned completed questionnaires.

The analysis covered information obtained from 51 participants from 29 academic centers. Participants came from 18 countries (Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, China, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Georgia, Israel, Jordan, Latvia, Poland, Serbia, South Africa, Spain, the Netherlands, Turkey, and Ukraine).

The implementation of research in accordance with the above assumptions required direct and indirect contact (using e-mail and telephone) with conference participants and convincing them of the need to conduct research on conference participants.

The research process and included the following stages:

- I. Identification of the city and conference meeting for the implementation of research
- II. Determination of factors influencing the selection of conference meetings
- III. Constructing, verifying and testing a research tool
- IV. Conducting the study using the on-line questionnaire
- V. Entering and coding the obtained answers
- VI. Development of results and analysis
- VII. Preparation of the report (presentation of results)

A questionnaire consisting of open and closed questions, questions in the cafeteria structure, questions with the use of a 5-point Likert scale and a questionnaire was developed and tested for the purpose of carrying out the research and achieving the assumed goals.

Then, the collected information obtained was introduced and coded in a computer program for further analysis and drawing conclusions.

3.2. Characteristics of Erasmus+ International Week conference meetings

The subjects of the research are participants of the Erasmus International Week conference meeting organized in Kaunas by Kauno Kolegija on 19 to 23 March 2018.

There is a specificity of conference meetings of this type.

It results from the fact that the main purpose of participants' arrival is related to the work done for the academic or academic center they represent, in addition to the methods of financing and organizing the event and participation of delegates (from assistance programs addressed to universities) and various services and entities involved locally (accommodation, restaurants, taxi, cultural facilities).

The "Erasmus + International Week" conferences are events that usually consist of: scientific conferences, workshops and other events containing also an interesting leisure program (sightseeing of the destination, learning about the history of the city, country, cultural performances, etc.). i.e. (accommodation, restaurants, taxi, cultural facilities). They are implemented as part of the Erasmus + program by research centers, universities and schools in 34 countries (in European Union and beyond)¹⁵. The participation of participants is financed from EU funds.

Erasmus+ is the EU's programme to support education, training, youth and sport in Europe. Its budget of €14.7 billion will provide opportunities for over 4 million Europeans to study, train, gain experience, and volunteer

¹⁵ The Erasmus Impact Study. Effects of mobility on the skills and employability of students and the internationalization of higher education institution. The European Commission Educational and Culture, Brussels, 2014, p. 45

Table 2. Number of Erasmus+ International Week meetings in 2014-2018 by countries.

No.	country	Number of meetings Erasmus+ International Week in 2014-2018
1.	Spain	108
2.	Germany	73
3.	Poland	72
4.	Portugal	71
5.	Finland	48
6.	Czech Republic	37
	Lithuania	37
	Turkey	37
9.	France	31
10.	Italy	27
11.	Belgium	26
12.	Estonia	23
13.	Greece	22
14.	Hungary	21
	United Kingdom	21
16.	Cyprus	15
	Latvia	15
	Romania	15
19.	Austria	11
	Croatia	11
	Slovenia	11
22.	Norway	10
	Sweden	10
24.	Slovakia	8
25.	Bulgaria	4
	Denmark	4
	Switzerland	4
28.	Ireland	3
	Luxembourg	3
	Macedonia	3
	Netherlands	3
	total	784

Source: <http://staffmobility.eu/staff-week-archive> (accessed: 20-06-2018)

EIW - these are meetings in which usually 30 to 70 people participate, mainly from abroad.

abroad. Erasmus+ has opportunities for a wide range of organizations, including universities, education and training providers, think-tanks, research organizations, and private businesses¹⁶.

The number of Erasmus + International Week (EIW) conference meetings registered on the site "staffmobility.eu", implemented from 1/01/2014 to 30/08/2018, amounted to 784¹⁷.

Participation in the majority of such conferences is free. Delegates receive grants from the Erasmus + program funds, which covers all or part of travel, accommodation and other costs.

Analyzing the time of organizing such conference meetings in the period from January to December (Fig. 2), it can be noticed that the most of them are implemented from the beginning of April to the end of May (61.8%).

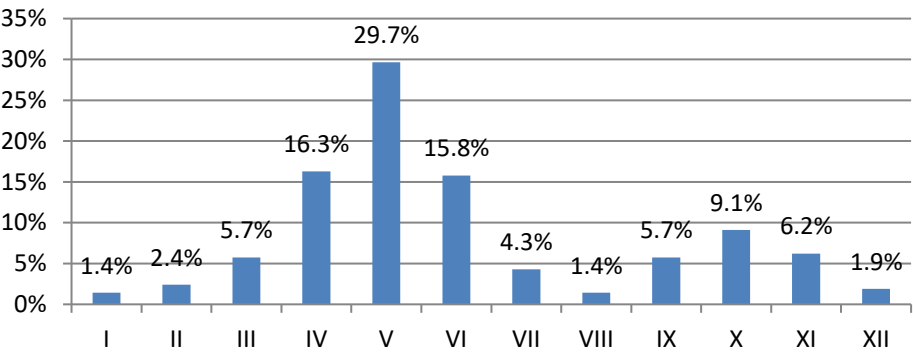


Figure 2. Seasonality of the number of Erasmus+ International Week events held in 2017

Source: author's elaboration based on <http://staffmobility.eu/staff-week-search> (20-06-2018)

The large share of spring months (in the period from IV to VI it was 61.8% of all conferences in a year) in the seasonality of implementation of International Week may be related to the organization of the academic year and the specificity of scientific activity. The spring months are the final period of the academic year (in June there are usually credits and exams) and are a great

¹⁶ http://ec.europa.eu/programmes/erasmus-plus/about_en (accessed: 20-06-2018)

¹⁷ <http://staffmobility.eu/staff-week-search> (accessed: 20-06-2018)

moment to make a certain summary, to show off the achievements / work experience, and to announce another academic year.

Therefore, the organization of an international conference in autumn, winter or early spring may allow the university to stand out from other EIW organizers and it is easier to attract participants.

4. Results of the survey of foreign participants of the Erasmus International Week at Kauno Collegium in 2018 and their analysis

4.1. Characteristics of the research sample

The research sample covered delegates of the Erasmus+ International Week in Kaunas.

Kauno Kolegija organized the conference from 19 to 23 March 2018.

Total numbers of respondents it was 51 people from abroad (from 18 countries).

Analysis of the age structure of study participants shows that 43% of respondents were aged 35-44, 29% aged 25-34, aged 45-54 -14%, and 55 and more - 14% (Figure 3).

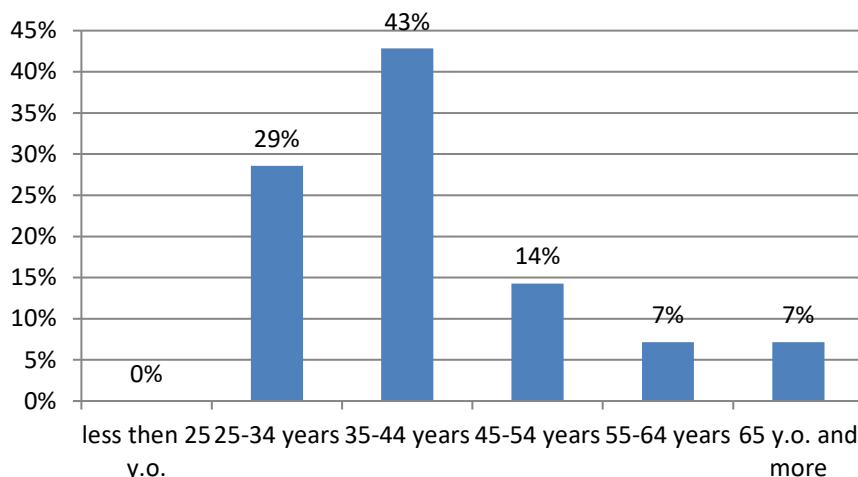


Figure 3. Age structure of respondents

source: K. Cieřlikowski – own research

100% of delegates participating in this conference meeting were represented by academic centers (29 different academic centers).

In addition, it should be noted that the share of women in the whole sample amounted to 58%, while men - 42% (Figure 4).



Figure 4. Delegates in research sample by sex

source: K. Cieřlikowski, A. Brusokas - own research

Taking into account the country of participants came from, it should be noted that the most participants came from countries in Europe (58%), but not Lithuanian neighbor K. Cieřlikowski – own research K. Cieřlikowski – own research

Respondents from neighboring countries accounted for 26% of the research sample.

And 16% of respondents from outside Europe (Figure 5).

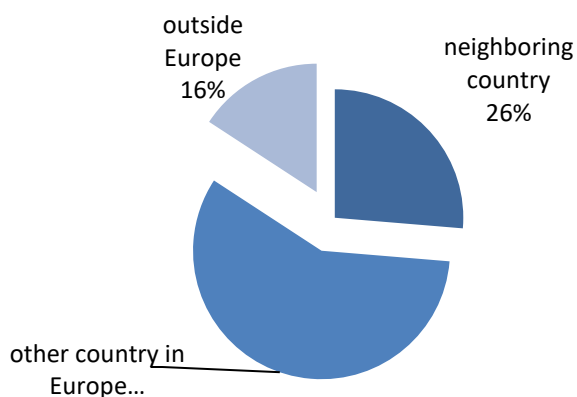


Figure 5. Territorial distribution of respondents

source: K. Cieřlikowski, A. Brusokas - own research

4.2. Conference activity of surveyed delegates

The respondents declared that in 2017 they attended in 222 meetings (this means one delegate spent an average of 4.3 conferences in 2017).

The highest number of responses (43.1% of all) indicated that in 2017 it participated in 3-4 conferences, and 7.8% of delegates were very active participants in the conference tourism market - they participated in 10 and more conferences (Figure 6).

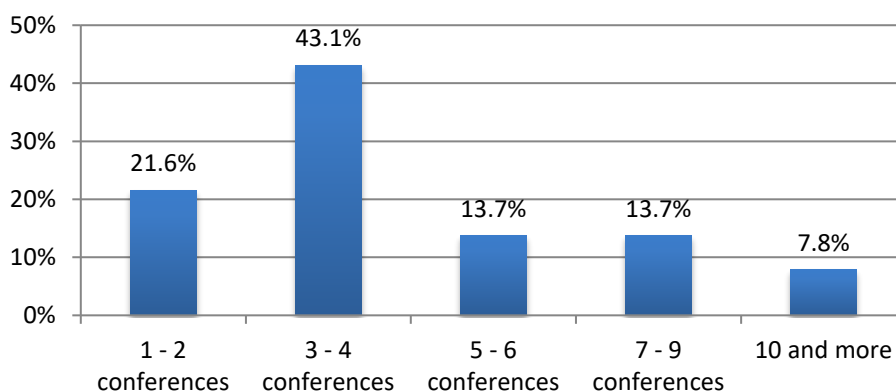


Figure 6. Distribution of respondents by number of conferences in 2017.

source: K. Cieřlikowski, A. Brusokas - own research

60.7% of the total number of conference meetings of delegates in which they participated throughout the year 2017 were carried out by them with accommodation (Figure 7).

Other conferences (39.3%) in 2017 were without accommodation.

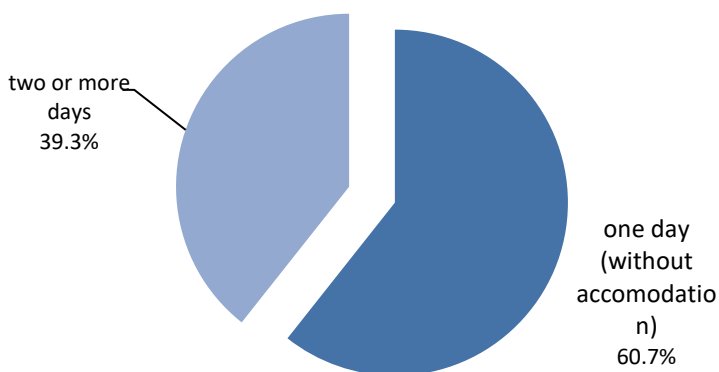


Figure 7. Distribution of respondents - participants of conference meetings, taking into account their length of stay at these conferences in 2017.

source: K. Cieřlikowski, A. Brusokas - own research

Foreign guests - participating Erasmus + International Week in Kaunas were also asked about the means of transport used to arrive at this conference.

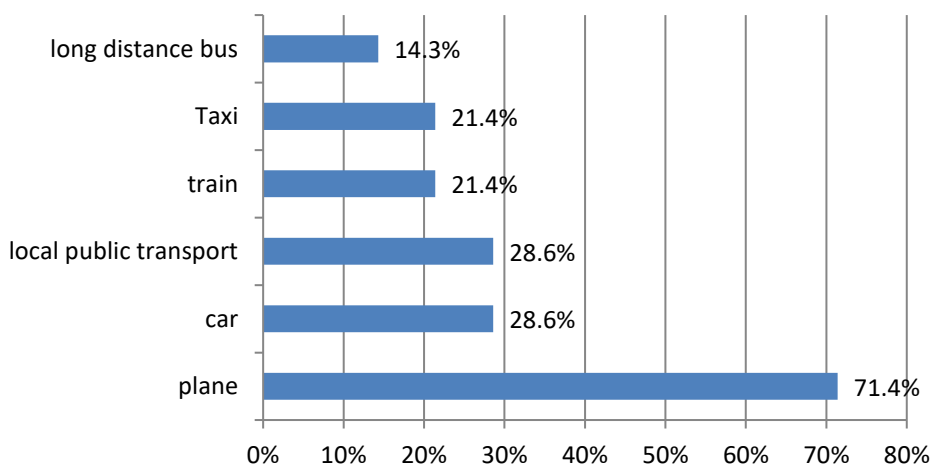


Figure 8. The distribution of respondents due to the means of transport used to arrive at this conference (Erasmus+ International Week in Kaunas).

source: K. Cieřlikowski, A. Brusokas - own research

71.4% of respondents indicated that they used the plane to get to Kaunas for this event. And 28.6% of respondents indicated a passenger car (Figure 8). Such popularity of air connections is related to the large distance of delegates from the place of the conference, as well as the relatively short distance of the international airport from the center of Kaunas (17 km).

The number of indications (answers) is greater than 100.0% because participants could indicate several means of transport that they used to participate in the conference meeting.

4.3. Identification of the main motivations for participation in the Erasmus + International Week at Kauno Kolegija

To determine the main motivations for participation in conference meetings, delegates indicated the importance of a specific factor for making decisions on arrival at the conference.

These indications were on the 5-point Likert scale, where 1 meant low-level in importance and 5 very important.

The authors have the awareness of many motivators influencing the decision to choose the conferences.

As a result of the analysis of foreign institutions' research, as well as the authors' experience, a list of 11 factors was adopted (3 official: acquiring knowledge, making new business contacts, promoting own institution and 8 unofficial ones, about which participants rarely mention their supervisor at work when they intend to go on conference).

Research on these respondents showed that the most important motivator of participation in scientific conference meetings (Table 3) is "acquisition of knowledge" with an average rating of 4.29 (on the five-point Likert scale, where 1 - "not a very important" and 5 - "very important"), next are "new professional contacts" (4.21); and "promotion of own organization" (4.00).

Table 3. Official and unofficial motivations for participation in Erasmus + International Week in Kaunas

No.	motivations	average rating
1.	acquisition of knowledge	4.29
2.	new professional contacts	4.21
3.	promotion of own organization	4.00
4.	personal public relations	3.86
5.	raising qualifications	3.57
6.	high reputation of the University (organizer of EIW)	3.57
7.	personalized participation certificate	3.43
8.	the possibility of recreation in your free time	3.36
9.	low participation costs	3.14
10.	other attractions, e.g. membership cards, freebies	2.64
11.	short distance from the hotel to the university	2.57

source: K. Cieřlikowski, A. Brusokas - own research

The least important for the participants of the conference meetings was the "short distance from the hotel to the university" (2.57), "other attractions such as freebies, membership cards" (2.64). Relatively low place among the main motivations for participation in an international conference of the Erasmus + International Week type took on the traits of "low cost of marriage" (with the validity of 3.14 on the five-point Likert scale).

4.4. Evaluating the Erasmus + International Week in Kauno Kolegja by delegates from abroad in 2018.

In order to evaluate the Erasmus + International Week in Kaunas, two questions were put in the research questionnaire addressed to participants from abroad.

One question allowed identifying the most important determinants of conference selection by guests from abroad (features were exchanged and participants were asked to respond to each of them by inserting "x" in a 5-point Likert scale from 1 to 5, where 1 - "not important", and 5 - "very important").

The second question (further on in the questionnaire) was related to the level of fulfillment of these factors by Erasmus + International Week organized by Kauno Kolegija in Kaunas in 2018 (the same features / factors were listed, 1 it's mean than the conference fulfills the factors "not enough", up to 5 - "completely").

The difference between the results of averages for individual features / factors of attractiveness (this is the difference between expectations and fulfillment in the opinion of delegates) allows to analyze the attractiveness of the University, the city, perceived by foreign participants of Erasmus + International Week.

Questionnaire surveys of International Week participants showed that the most important for the delegates during the selection of the conference meeting are: "new university" (average rate of 4.0) and "information availability of this International Week" (4.0). At the same time, 43% of respondents "information accessibility" is a very important factor of choice.

On the other hand, the least important for the delegates were: "accessibility of the city by car" (2.50), "many shopping centers", "other business conferences and events at the same time" (these two features with an average rating of 2.43). For these three criteria (features), over 50% of respondents indicated 1 or 2 on five scale of importance (tab. 4).

The respondents were also asked about the assessment of meeting the qualities important to them when choosing a conference meeting. The analysis of the results shows that foreign participants of the Erasmus + International Week organized by Kauno Kolegija on 19-23 March 2018 in Kaunas were very satisfied with the "earlier contact with this university" (the average assessment of the fulfillment of this feature is 4.5).

Table 2. Determinants of choosing the Erasmus + International Week meeting

No.	features (factors)	How important ...? (average rate)	Percentage of indications on ...:				
			"1"	"2"	"3"	"4"	"5"
1.	new university	4.00	0%	7%	14%	50%	29%
2.	information availability of this International Week	4.00	0%	7%	29%	21%	43%
3.	diversified conference program	3.93	0%	7%	29%	29%	36%
4.	the opportunity to explore the city and the surrounding area	3.93	0%	7%	14%	57%	21%
5.	previous contact with this university	3.79	0%	14%	14%	50%	21%
6.	new country	3.71	14%	0%	7%	57%	21%
7.	new city	3.64	7%	7%	14%	57%	14%
8.	faculties at this university are similar to my university	3.64	7%	14%	21%	21%	36%
9.	accessibility of the city of public transportation	3.64	7%	14%	14%	36%	29%
10.	many cultural facilities in the city	3.64	0%	7%	29%	57%	7%
11.	varied gastronomic base in the city	3.21	7%	14%	43%	21%	14%
12.	many green areas in the city	3.14	7%	21%	29%	36%	7%
13.	many cultural and sporting events at the same time in the city	3.00	14%	21%	29%	21%	14%
14.	varied accommodation base	3.00	0%	29%	50%	14%	7%
15.	accessibility of the city by car	2.50	29%	29%	21%	7%	14%
16.	many shopping centers	2.43	21%	36%	29%	7%	7%
17.	other conferences and business events at the same time	2.43	29%	29%	21%	14%	7%

* from 1 – „not very important” to 5 – „very important”

source: K. Cieřlikowski, A. Brusokas - own research

Table 3. Evaluation of the meeting the expectations of Erasmus + International Week abroad delegates.

No.	features (factors)	How fulfill ...? (average rate)	Percentage of indications on ...:					total
			"1"	"2"	"3"	"4"	"5"	
1.	previous contact with this university	4.50	0%	0%	0%	50%	50%	100%
2.	new city	4.21	0%	0%	14%	50%	36%	100%
3.	new country	4.14	0%	0%	21%	43%	36%	100%
4.	new university	4.14	0%	0%	21%	43%	36%	100%
5.	faculties at this university are similar to my university	4.14	0%	0%	14%	57%	29%	100%
6.	information availability of this International Week	4.14	0%	0%	14%	57%	29%	100%
7.	many cultural facilities in the city	4.00	0%	7%	29%	21%	43%	100%
8.	many green areas in the city	3.93	7%	0%	21%	36%	36%	100%
9.	diversified conference program	3.86	0%	14%	21%	29%	36%	100%
10.	accessibility of the city by public transportation	3.86	7%	0%	29%	29%	36%	100%
11.	varied gastronomic base in the city	3.86	0%	14%	21%	29%	36%	100%
12.	varied accommodation base	3.86	0%	0%	29%	57%	14%	100%
13.	many shopping centers	3.86	0%	0%	36%	43%	21%	100%
14.	the opportunity to explore the city and the surrounding area	3.71	0%	7%	36%	36%	21%	100%
15.	many cultural and sporting events at the same time in the city	3.64	0%	21%	29%	14%	36%	100%
16.	accessibility of the city by car	3.00	29%	7%	29%	7%	29%	100%
17.	other conferences and business events at the same time	2.86	21%	21%	21%	21%	14%	100%

* from 1 – „not enough” , up to 5 -" completely"

source: K. Cieřlikowski, A. Brusokas - own research

The features are taking place on the list (tab. 5): "newness of the city", "newness of the country", "newness of the university" as well as features "faculties at this university are similar to my university", "information availability of this International Week" (for these traits the average score rating was above 4).

The least satisfied were the features: "accessibility of the city by car " (3.00) and "other conferences and business events at the same time" (2.86). These features are also the least important when selecting the International Week conference by the participant (Table 5).

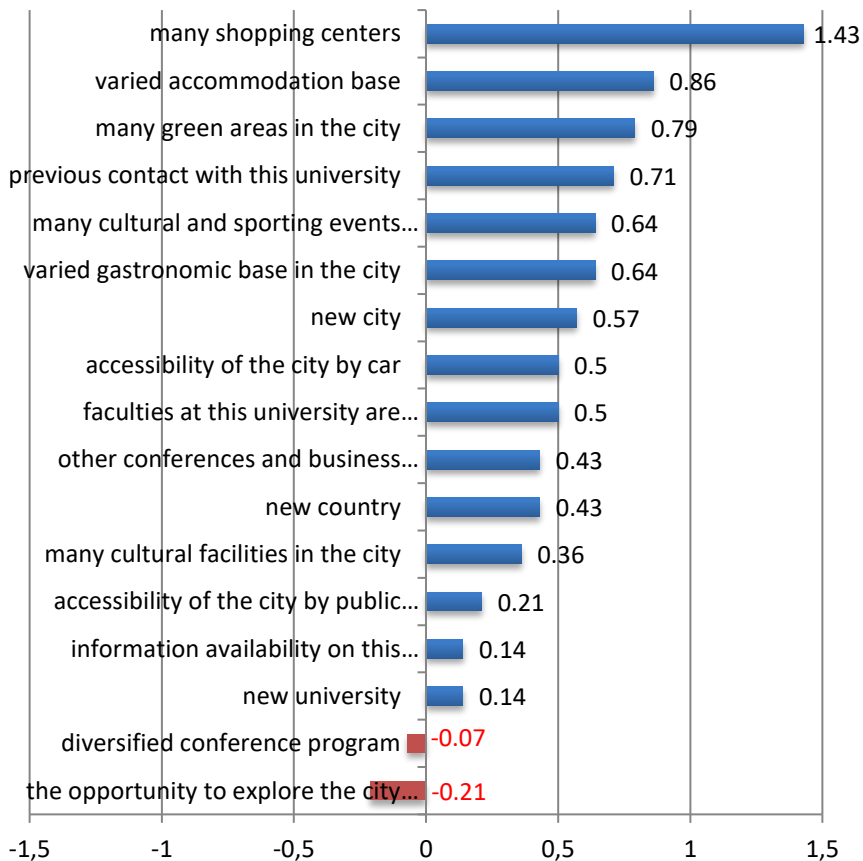


Figure 9. The level of satisfaction of foreign participants of Erasmus + International Week.

source: K. Cieřlikowski, A. Brusokas - own research

The success of the conference organizers can be a high level of participants' satisfaction. This means meeting or even exceeding the expectations of the delegates (important features of the conference).

The indicator of this success will be the difference between the results of average assessments of fulfillment (meeting) and the average ratings of the validity (expectations) of the assessed features (factors).

Table 6. The level of satisfaction of foreign participants of Erasmus + International Week in Kaunas in 2018.

No.	features (factors)	Expectation (importance)	Perception (fulfillment)	Results (gap)
1.	many shopping centers	2.43	3.86	1.43
2.	varied accommodation base	3.00	3.86	0.86
3.	many green areas in the city	3.14	3.93	0.79
4.	previous contact with this university	3.79	4.50	0.71
5.	varied gastronomic base in the city	3.21	3.86	0.64
6.	many cultural and sporting events at the same time in the city	3.00	3,64	0.64
7.	new city	3.64	4.21	0.57
8.	faculties at this university are similar to my university	3.64	4.14	0.50
9.	accessibility of the city by car	2.50	3.00	0.50
10.	new country	3.71	4.14	0.43
11.	other conferences and business events at the same time	2.43	2.86	0.43
12.	many cultural facilities in the city	3.64	4.00	0.36
13.	accessibility of the city by public transportation	3.64	3.86	0.21
14.	new university	4.00	4.14	0.14
15.	information availability on this International Week	4.00	4.14	0.14
16.	diversified conference program	3.93	3.86	-0.07
17.	the opportunity to explore the city and the surrounding area	3.93	3.71	-0.21

source: K. Cieřlikowski, A. Brusokas - own research

When comparing the average importance of particular factors (features) of the choice of a conference meeting and their fulfillment by Erasmus + International Week in Kaunas, it can be noticed that almost all factors (features) had got very results (tab. 6) in the difference between fulfillment and expectation (importance).

Only the "diversified conference program" (-0.07) and "the possibility of visiting the city" (-0.21) slightly did not meet the expectations of the EIW participants.

The factor (feature) "many shopping centers" is not very important in the selection of conferences by participants of scientific conferences, while Kaunas far exceeded the expectations of delegates (by 1.43).

Which may suggest that for participants from abroad shopping centers may be an interesting attraction of free time (outside the conference program) in this city.

An important element for the respondents was prior contact with the university (result of the importance of 3.79), the assessment of the satisfaction of this factor by the EMI at the level of 4.5 also allows to notice that it exceeded the participants' expectations by 0.71.

Therefore, an important success factor of the conference is also to identify the most important forms of collecting information about the conference.

Authors' surveys indicate (Figure 10) that foreign participants of Erasmus + International Week conference in Kaunas most often find any information about a conference from their supervisors (bosses) at work (43%).

29% of respondents indications were on ways of contact by: both "e-mail" and "from friends".

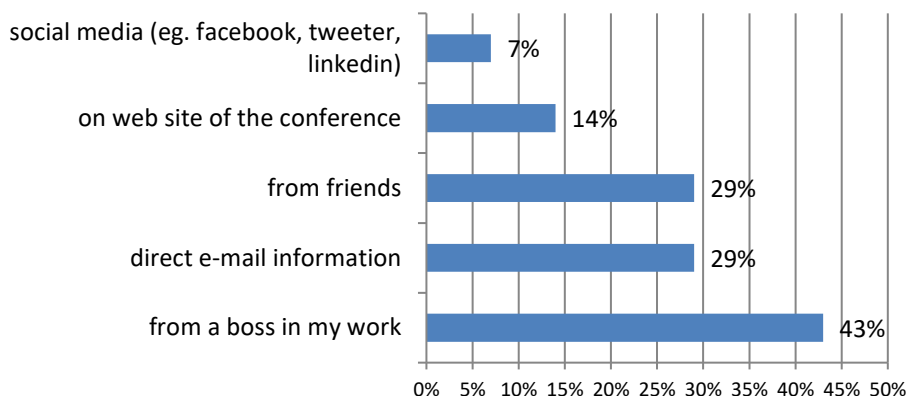


Figure 10. Ways of collecting information about Erasmus + International Week in Kaunas by participants

source: K. Cieřlikowski, A. Brusokas - own research

The analysis of these results allows us to note the importance of identifying key people in selected institutions and contacting them using direct marketing.

In addition, people who know the destination, the University can also be excellent ambassadors of the conference, therefore, you should attach great importance to post-conference contact with conference participants for the promotion of future events.

The survey (questionnaire) also included the question "What did you like most about this Erasmus + International Week in Kaunas?". The most frequent answers are shown below:

- The possibility of new professional contacts and interaction with other people of science

Particularly included in this:

- „Big opportunities for further research activities”
- „Interaction with colleagues and cooperation opportunities”
- „exchange of experiences and ideas between different countries / cultures”
- „Lots of interesting people among guest teachers”
- „Students and interesting people from different countries”

- The cultural program was very interesting
Particularly included in this:
 - „an event at the president's palace”,
 - „well-organized welcome ceremony referring to history and culture”,
 - „a cognitive tour of the university faculties”
- Great hospitality of the organizers ("nice atmosphere", "good contact throughout the conference")
- Others, e.g.: "Possibility to give lectures for students about information activities", "Learning about university and people" "Early contact with the university"

However, the next open question was „What can be improved in the next EIW?” most answers (over 33%) were "nothing to improve".

The following are the most common responses below:

- "More trips", "more trips together", "More opportunities to do something with the participants"
- „Adding new themes - Event management. Perspectives of modern innovations, such as e-sport”
- „A more detailed agenda”
- „suggesting in the program, for example, the topic of the week and the speaker”
- „More recommendations, information on where to go or what to do in the evening or in your spare time”

The international conference Erasmus + International Week organized by Kauno Kolegija in Kaunas was highly appreciated by the participants.

And 100% of respondents again want to come to the city of Kaunas and the University.

In addition, all respondents will recommend participation in the next Erasmus + International Week next year.

Conclusions

Scientific conferences may be an interesting tourist product of enterprises involved in their organization and service as well as a product for city administrations interested in the development and promotion of their region as well.

When analyzing the material and non-material potential of the city of Kaunas, one can notice a large number of higher education institutions (compared to other cities in Lithuania and the Baltic region).

Lithuanian membership in the European Union makes it possible to benefit from programs aimed at the development of societies, through exchange of knowledge and direct relations, and create the possibility of applying for the organization of conferences under such programs.

One of such programs addressed to the academic community is the Erasmus + program.

As part of this program, international Erasmus + International Week conferences are organized every year.

Kaunas is known for its good transport connection with other large Lithuanian cities and others in the Baltic Sea region. Today, Kaunas can be easily reached by car, plane and rail, and its geographical location is considered to be particularly convenient and attractive.

Visitors (interested in high level accommodation) can stay longer in one of 24 hotels. In the city area there are many group meeting places (conference facilities), including the largest multi-functional hall in the region - Arena Zalgirio. Every year, Kaunas is the host of many international business, cultural and sports events.

Among them are also scientific conferences implemented in the city by universities.

On 19-23 March 2018 Kauno Kolegija organized Erasmus + International Week. For 5 days, almost 90 people participated in it, including 57 from abroad.

The authors of the report conducted a direct questionnaire survey on participants.

The results of these studies are very interesting, especially for the organizers of similar events.

The result indicates that the most guests from abroad, in order to reach the international conference in Kaunas, used the plane (71.4%). Such a result shows the major role of the airport in the development of the city on international markets, including the business tourism market.

In addition, it was noted that the participants (foreign guests, representing various research centers) came mainly to acquire knowledge, get new professional contacts and promote their own organization and person.

There is therefore a great need to pay particular attention to the substantive part of the planned speeches in the process of preparing international conferences, as well as to create opportunities for frequent contacts between participants.

For Erasmus + International Week participants, the main (particularly important) criterion for choosing this conference and city was: "the new university" and "the information availability of this conference".

Therefore, when preparing the process of communication about such international conferences, particular attention should be paid to elements of the University's innovations that may intrigue, interest especially potential participants and prepare banners for the process and forms of communication with them.

The organizers of Erasmus + International Week in Kaunas (Kauno Kolegija and other institutions cooperating in Kaunas) met the expectations of foreign participants almost in every respect (it concerns especially "the possibility of contact with the university", "news of the city, country, university") and the results of the difference between "Assessment of fulfillment" and "assessment of validity" allow to state that the participants were delighted (in this case, particularly pleasantly surprised: "a large number of shopping centers", "diversified accommodation base", "a lot of green areas in the city").

When analyzing the results of these studies, it should be noted that re-inviting the same participants to the next EMI at the same university will be a difficult task.

Further contact with Erasmus + International Week participants in Kaunas can be encouraged by the friendship of other employees from the same University or new ones.

In addition, The same delegates can be invited to a new, completely different event to Kaunas or to universities.

Such management of events may contribute to the improvement of the business economics of many companies involved in the process of implementation and service of conferences, as well as the promotion of the city in the opinion-forming environment of scientific employees.

Analyzing the communication process of the conference, it should be noted that the good identification of decision-makers in the universities and direct contacts with them is very important.

Such activities may be initiated by universities on the level of scientific research or other forms of cooperation, but also supported by city administrations particularly responsible for the development of tourism in the city and its promotion (for example, transfer of information about their own city leaving abroad to researchers, co-financing of some trips, preparation of special promotional materials for participants of specific conferences in the city, etc.).

In 2020, the Erasmus + program will end in its current form, but it is worth observing such international conferences as it will probably be replaced by another project.

The participation of local universities in it may be conducive to the development of tourism and promotion of the city.

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Appendix

The most important events in Kaunas in 2017

1. January 7th , - World Lithuanian Sports Games, 3000 participants
2. January 24th , - Opening of the bus station (after reconstruction) - About 700 buses pass through Kaunas bus station daily. At the bus station in Kaunas, the daily flow of people reaches 10,000.
3. March 15th , - The announcement of the winners of the European Capital of Culture in the Town Hall Square, ~ 2000 participants
4. April 7th – 9th , - International Children's Games (ICG`0101), 2500 participants
5. May 12th – 20th , Museums Night, ~ 2500 participants
6. May 19th - 21st , " Hanza" days, - 200 000 participants
7. May 21st to June 2nd , - Steadfast Cobalt - 1200 participants organized by the NATO Communication Battalion every year.
8. August 15th , - Kaunas Airport Period (Vilnius Airport Reconstruction) - 3000 flights per period.
9. September 2nd – 8th , - Sugihara Week (first), ~ 250 participants
10. September 15th –November 30th , KAUNAS BIENNIAL. The Biennial is organized since 1997. 11th edition the Biennial in public spaces and at the Kaunas Picture Gallery. 2000 participants
11. September 19th , - „Baltic MedTech 2017" Baltic MedTech is the first medical technology conference to held in the Baltics. ~ 750 participants