

antees the participation of people with disabilities in the venue's facilities and services. It appears that sometimes the interests of design and those of accessibility clash. Ortega regrets that at times the centre directors want to adapt their facilities to make them more accessible but it is the architects who, brandishing intellectual property rights, impede reforms in the building.

In short, PREDIF's technical director describes Spanish convention centres as "fairly standard" with regards to accessibility.

Signage, you can never have enough

All centres consulted claim to have various signs in the city in which they are situated, but from our own experience and that of others, we know that this does not guarantee anything. Who amongst us has never experienced, when

making our way to a convention, and undertaking arduous task of locating the centre, has not wished for more signals to facilitate our search and ensure that we are heading in the right direction? This is even more crucial when it comes to finding our way around an unfamiliar city. A centre with a few signs is no guarantee of being directed successfully to our destination, especially if it is a large city.

Without doubt, this is work that should concern the centre itself, but which must be facilitated by the town council where the centre is located.

It is not enough to have just a sign at the entrance to the town, one in the centre, and another once we are inside the centre itself. A route needs to be established - one that is convenient, direct and as simple as possible - as well as signs or directions to the centre.

It's not a question of pointing the finger at any city or centre but to provide a figure over

The image of Spain as a destination for meetings is one of the most dynamic and positive in Europe



What opinion do you have of Spanish convention centres?

Nicolas Le Brun

Chairman of EFAPCO (European Federation of the Associations of Professional Congress Organisers)

"The image of Spain as a destination for meetings is one of the most dynamic and positive in Europe. There is a clearly different global offer, with not just the major cities offering a large number of spaces, but also other "smaller" destinations that boast attractive proposals. One of the most attractive destinations is, for example, Malaga, with an efficient Convention Bureau and a convention centre that is the envy of other European destinations.

But when assessing different destinations for a future convention, it is not only the venue that is taken into account. Services are also crucial and, although in some cases they still need to improve their English language skills, the standard of providers has rocketed in recent years.

Perhaps some hotels appear to be more dynamic than the majority of convention centres, hosting more international events. Whatever the case, it is true that Spain, especially through its diversity, has become a key destination for the conventions in Europe."



Edgar Hirt

Chairman of AIPC (International Association of Congress Centres)

"Given that many convention centres have recently been built or reformed in Spain, the product is very competitive and lives up to the industry's expectations. The success of the Spanish centres in attracting conventions and exhibitions proves this. At the same time, what we have seen indicates that the quality of management and services is also very high, which is a very important factor in the industry today.

Many of the Spanish centres are members of AIPC, demonstrating their interest in quality management and continuous improvement of their facilities and services. At the same time, it is important to note that the destination is an important part of the meetings product; the location of many centres in the attractive and culturally diverse Spanish cities adds much appeal to the product too."