

## UFI gathers global exhibition industry in Valencia to “Bridge Continents – Link People”

*Paris/Valencia: November 9, 2011:* The 78<sup>th</sup> UFI Congress, hosted by Feria Valencia from November 9-11, 2011, will once again serve as the principal international forum for the leaders of the global exhibition industry. This year’s theme, “Bridging Continents – Linking People” will bring together almost 400 delegates from 52 countries to examine key industry issues from a global point of view as well as from an in-depth perspective. This outstanding 2011 participation breaks the record for UFI Congress’ in Europe.

Feria Valencia’s President Alberto Catala Ruiz de Galarreta, described the current business environment saying, “While the ever-changing political, economic and international climate makes it difficult to determine in which direction the world is headed, UFI’s members will take a “time-out” in Valencia to share information and strategize on the pitfalls and opportunities ahead for the exhibition industry.” Trade fair organizers, exhibition centre managers, national and international industry associations and partners of the exhibition industry will interact with leading business professionals, top academic experts, and researchers to benefit from a broad exchange of views and experiences.

Moderated by Håkan Gershagen of easyFairs, Belgium, the 78<sup>th</sup> UFI Congress will be off to a running start with a competitive outlook for 2012 and beyond by Professor Stephane Garelli (Institute of Development Management, Switzerland). Garelli feels “the industrialized world will reemphasize the importance of manufacturing, technology and exports and that we are entering a world of massive competition on brands: a formidable opportunity for the exhibition industry!” Former Peruvian Finance Minister, Professor Mercedes Araoz, will link this to the increasingly important role in the global economy played by Latin America and the opportunities the region’s growth will offer in the future. Exhibition Industry expert, Jochen Witt (jwc GmbH) will take a close look at global developments as they apply to the exhibition industry. He’ll also present the views, expectations and conclusions of UFI’s closed-door session of industry leaders resulting from the UFI Group CEO Think Tank held in Valencia on Nov. 9. A panel of events industry experts - Rod Cameron (AIPC), Martin Sirk (ICCA), and Denzil Rankine (AMR International) - will take a broader look at the meetings industry as they exchange views and examine the role of face-to-face events in tomorrow’s world of business.

Moving to the world of technology, Spencer Kelly, Technology Presenter for the BBC’s “Click”, will explore advanced technology options, ranging from 3D telepresence to robots, which will drive the way we all do business in the future. The 2011 winners of UFI’s annual awards: UFI Marketing Award winner VNU Exhibitions, (Netherlands); Operations Award co-winners Freeman, (USA) and Bologna Fiera, (Italy), and ICT Award winner IFEMA, (Spain), will each present a brief summary of their award winning initiatives.

## UFI gathers global exhibition industry in Valencia to “Bridge Continents – Link People” (continued)

Eric Everard, UFI President 2011, expressed his enthusiasm for this 78<sup>th</sup> UFI Congress saying, “If we can do our bit to convince business that, when times are tough, exhibitions and events are the place to focus their marketing dollars, then there will have been a silver lining in those storm clouds for our industry. Our UFI Congress in Valencia is a sure way to ensure that collectively we maintain the momentum to keep our industry moving forward.”

UFI’s Congress is the occasion for a number of additional UFI meetings including several ‘firsts’ this year. A better understanding of the research work under way around the world is high on many members’ agendas and the annual UFI Congress is an ideal occasion to move forward on a global research agenda. So, an exhibition industry researchers’ meeting will take place for the first time with a view to developing a better understanding of who is doing what work and how. UFI is also organizing several unique special interest sessions for delegates focusing on large venue issues and privately owned exhibition businesses. UFI’s Board of Directors, Regional Chapters, Sustainable Development, Education and Associations’ Committees will also meet during the three day marathon session.

\*\*\*\*\*

*UFI is the global association of the world’s leading tradeshow organizers and exhibition centre operators, as well as the major national and international exhibition associations and selected partners of the exhibition industry. UFI’s main goal is to represent, promote and support the business interests of its members and the exhibition industry.*

*UFI represents over 571 member organizations in 84 countries around the world. Almost 900 international trade fairs proudly bear the UFI approved label, a quality guarantee for visitors and exhibitors alike. UFI members continue to provide the international business community with a unique marketing media aimed at developing outstanding face-to-face business opportunities.*

For additional information, please go to [www.ufi.org](http://www.ufi.org) or contact Lili Eigl, UFI Communications Manager [lili@ufi.org](mailto:lili@ufi.org)