

Sweden's still top

By: *Claire Quinn*

The charming city of Gothenburg sits on the south-west coast of Sweden, at the mouth of the river Älv. The city proper has a population of 506,083 and is second only to Sweden's capital, Stockholm. Today it is thought of as a city of industry, a harbour, trading centre and cultural meeting place at the crossroads between Copenhagen, Oslo and Stockholm. Founded in 1621 by King Gustavus Adolphus, the city's look was heavily influenced by Dutch city planners who were contracted to build the city due to their specialist skills in dealing with marshy ground. The town itself was planned to have canals like Amsterdam, and the blueprint for the canals of Gothenburg are actually the same as those used for Jakarta. Dutchmen initially won political power and it was not until 1652, when the last Dutch politician in the city's council died, that the Swedes acquired political power over Gothenburg. Also influential in the areas make-up were the Scottish and unusually for Sweden names such as Glenn and Morgan are still prevalent. In the 18th century, fishing was the most important industry. However, in 1731 the Swedish East India Company was founded, and the city flourished due to its foreign trade with highly profitable commercial expeditions to Asian countries.

In the 19th century, Gothenburg evolved into a modern industrial city and that continued on into the 20th century. In more recent years however, the industrial sector has faced a recession, which has spurred the development of new sectors such as increased merchandising, tourism, cultural and educational institutions. Most prominent of these is the tourism and business tourism trade, because of its unique setting and unrivalled

facilities Gothenburg now features as a major centre for convention and business hosting.

The first exhibition centre to open up in Sweden, the Swedish Exhibition Centre, had 530 exhibitors and was inaugurated in 1918 by His Majesty Carl Gustav. Five years later the city of Gothenburg celebrated its 300th anniversary and arranged the World Expo for which a large exhibition hall of 40,000 m2 was built. Over time the city has established a world class reputation for event hosting and today the Swedish Exhibition Centre consists of 148,000 m2, right in the heart of the city.


Gothenburg Convention Centre, the Swedish Exhibition Centre's conference and congress department, was developed at the beginning of the 1970s. In 1984 the tower shaped Hotel Gothia was built and eight years later the Congress Hall was completed. The Congress Hall can seat up to 1500 people and has often hosted international symphony orchestras, media launches, book fairs and great events with authors and artists ranging from Paulo Cuelho to Harry Belafonte and Jennifer Brown. In order to meet a growing demand and to better facilitate the 2001 EU-summit an additional 410 rooms were opened up at Hotel Gothia Towers, making the venue Scandinavia's largest and Gothenburg's tallest hotel.

Close by and with great choice of European flight routes is Gothenburg City Airport, one of the fastest growing airports in Sweden. In 2008 the terminal accommodated 844,000 passengers, most of them with low cost carriers. The airport also plays host to a lot of flights that serve the community, e.g. planes for the Swedish Coast Guard, Police, air ambulance and Rescue

Services. With close links to Gothenburg City Airport, just 15 km away the airport coach can transfer guests in just 20 minutes. The terminal is also uniquely placed and avoids conventional traffic build up, thus attracting many business and air taxi services. This in combination with its many years of experience allows Gothenburg City Airport to provide a little extra VIP service.

Those businesses thinking of choosing Gothenburg as their convention location will have 41,000 m2 of exhibition and conference premises to choose from. The large surfaces and the construction of the halls create a capacity and flexibility to host large congresses or several smaller exhibitions and conferences at the same time. About 30 different exhibitions with more than 8000 exhibitors and 1,000,000 visitors are annually hosted at the site. TUR, the Swedish International Travel and Tourism Trade Fair, Gothenburg International Book Fair and trade fairs such as Scanpack, Scandinavia's number one packaging fair, stand out as some of the most well known brands. The Swedish Exhibition & Congress Centre will also provide you with a close-knit team working side by side with you to achieve your event - to create the best possible scope for bringing about a truly successful meeting. Dedicated to efficiency, service, convenience and safety, the team will work with you from concept to conclusion. From arrival, delegates will have access to resources for virtually everything, all gathered together under one roof. So no matter how large or small your event your guests can work, stay and eat in a professional, feel-good atmosphere.

In addition to world class accommodation the SEC contains 5 superb restaurants ranging from relaxed Italian cuisine to the impressive Heaven 23, a restaurant and bar located on the 23rd floor of the Gothia Tower. Here you can enjoy traditional West Swedish seafood dishes, fashionable contemporary food and gourmet cuisine. Without doubt the icing on the cake for delegates is the proximity of Gothenburg's amenities. You are close to every imaginable form of leisure and relaxation. Minutes from the SEC is Gothenburg's famed parade street and just around the corner is the Liseberg amusement park, the Universeum Science Discovery Centre, Sweden's new World Culture Museum, the Scandinavium and Ullevi world cup arenas, as well as popular venues for nightly entertainment and culture.

Those companies building on their corporate social responsibility can also bank on the SEC's impeccable environmental record and ethos. 



01. Modern Building of Gothenburg Opera.



02. Gothenburg city near big harbour.

*Comment from the mayor
Anneli Hulthén, Mayor and Chairman
of the City Executive Board*

The future holds more bright and vast opportunities in Göteborg. We have always met challenges by innovative ideas and together with our sustainable resolve and open-mindedness - this forms a trademark for our city. Our strengths lie in being future-oriented, every day proving our innovative ability and creativity by laying a firm ground for sustainable job-growth. Göteborg is on the forefront when it comes to new sustainable business opportunities, especially in developing new energy-efficient technology based on research and development. Being the center for two world-class excellent universities, we have the knowledge in science and technological development, together with our longstanding industrial competence.

Our excellent cooperation between business, academia and the city has been a proud tradition in Göteborg. Our latest achievement is being chosen as the focal point together with four international partners for the world-leading foundation for strategic environmental research, Mistra, and the multidimensional city development project Urban Futures. This puts Göteborg on the very edge of business-driven sustainable development.

The city is ever growing and has enormous development potential. This is really the place for developing new ideas, a place for your business to expand and develop. Göteborg has a long and proud history of international relations, and the city's attractiveness is ever growing. An increasing number of international cooperations have seized this opportunity, and this year we continue to see an increase in new foreign business establishments.

Göteborg continues to be the city for seizing opportunities and realizing dreams.