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## CRUISE EU ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN BRUGES MARCH 2019



Picture: Conference at Zeebrugge Port

Ian McQuade General Manager - Commercial for Portland Port has just returned from Belgium where he visited Zeebrugge Port and Bruges. They were the hosts to the Cruise Europe Annual General Meeting and Conference from 4-7 March 2019. Whilst the AGM was held in Bruges the Conference was held at the new ABC-Tower multipurpose terminal in the Port of Zeebrugge. Top executives of leading cruise companies as well as port representatives all came together for one of the most important annual meetings of the Northern European Cruise Industry. Port of Zeebrugge Vice President Rik Goetinck was on hand to greet the 180 attendees who were all there to consolidate and increase the cruise business.

The event started at The Grand Hotel Casselbergh, guests were then welcomed with a reception at the Gothic Town Hall followed by beverages in the saloons of the Mayor. The following days programme was full with a combination of regional meetings, short excursions and the AGM itself. Wednesday was filled with the International Cruise Conference taking place in the Zeebrugge Cruise Terminal where attendees heard from industry leaders on developments within the cruise business, with a focus on the environment and sustainability. Mr. McQuade commented “the annual Cruise Europe conference has become a key date in the diary for industry professionals in northern Europe. This year’s event was another thought provoking and interesting session”. Guest speakers included

representatives from Royal Caribbean Cruises Ltd, Carnival UK, The Ritz-Carlton Yacht Collection and others covering a broad section of the industry. In addition to the formal sessions there was plenty of opportunity for networking between port and cruise line executives both during the day and at the evening's social events. "The Cruise Europe conference is always a great way to catch up with the cruise lines in a relaxed environment. It is also a great opportunity for Portland Port to showcase itself in a broader industry context. Events such as this are vital if we are to continue to grow and expand our presence in the cruise market. This year will be another record one for Portland Port with over 62,000 passengers expected and I am keen to build on this for 2020 and beyond" said Mr. McQuade.



Picture: Bruges

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