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ACTE DEFINES OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES AT INAUGURAL EXECUTIVE FORUM IN MOSCOW

Moscow (16 April 2009) – This ancient capital hosted a landmark event in the business travel industry on 3 April 2009, when business travel managers from across the country and Europe converged in Moscow to participate in the [Association of Corporate Travel Executives' \(ACTE\)](#) first Executive Forum held in Russia. Seventy-three participants from the largest corporate entities in one of the world's biggest economies met to discuss the role of the travel manager, the function of travel management companies, and how to advance the industry through partnership.

"Seventy-three participants is a significant number for a first time event," said ACTE Executive Director Susan Gurley. "This level of interest demonstrates considerable market potential and that a strong core of high-volume travel service buyers recognize the opportunities available through ACTE's international educational programmes. Plans are already being discussed to host the next event in Russia. In fact, several sponsors have already come forward."

Some of the most important findings to come out of the Moscow Forum concern the professional development of travel managers and travel management companies. With an immediate market value conservatively estimated at \$8 billion (USD), global companies interested in doing business in Russia need to be mindful of challenges that could inhibit the success of managed travel programmes in the region.

The position of the business travel manager is relatively new in this market, according to Winifried Barczaitis, Partner, Trust Management Consultants GmbH. "In Russia, true travel management is still a work in progress, both with regard to travel agents and with corporate travel managers," said Barczaitis. "At the same time, we have to keep in mind that Russia, and the surrounding markets of the CIS, are a very specific and different business environment."

At the Moscow Executive Forum, Irina Kuznetsova, Administrative Director for PriceWaterhouseCoopers Russia B.V. encouraged representatives of travel management companies, global distribution systems, airlines, hotels, and corporate buyers to "step into each others' shoes" to understand the true value of a partnership approach.

"In addition to the development of travel management functions, it is apparent that outside companies looking to conduct business in Russia will require a thorough understanding of how corporate hierarchies are structured, how business communications are presented, and how relationships are built," said Caroline Allen, Regional Director, Northern and East Central

Europe and Russia. “The region has approached ACTE, as a neutral global association, to provide the network that will help professional travel management grow in Russia. In addition to planning future Executive Forums in Russia, [ACTE’s Global Education Conference in Prague \(25-27 October 2009\)](#) will address many technological, strategic, and advanced managerial issues relevant to this region.”

The meeting was held at the five-star Hilton Moscow Leningradskaya Hotel. Considered one of the Russian capital’s key landmark buildings, the hotel is one of the seven famous ‘Stalin’ towers that define the Moscow skyline. Originally constructed in 1954 but completely refurbished, the hotel reopened in August 2008. Contemporary yet retaining its historical importance and exquisite architecture it quietly resonates grandeur. With competitive corporate room rates, impeccable service and excellent meeting facilities, including the grand ballroom, the hotel is a superb choice for the business traveller.

Look for an announcement in the next few weeks on a new ACTE Country Champion in Russia – the first ever for the association in this country.

ABOUT ACTE:

The Association of Corporate Travel Executives (ACTE) represents the global business travel industry through its international advocacy efforts, executive level educational programs, and independent industry research. ACTE’s membership consists of senior travel industry executives from 82 countries representing the €463 billion business travel industry. Our members serve more than 12 million business travellers worldwide. With the support of sponsors from every major segment of the business travel industry, ACTE develops and delivers educational programs in key business centers throughout the world. ACTE has representation in Africa, Asia-Pacific, Canada, Europe, Latin America, Middle East and the United States. For more information on ACTE, please go to www.acte.org.

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For more information, contact:

Caroline Allen
Regional Director, Northern & East Central Europe and Russia
Association of Corporate Travel Executives (ACTE)
t: +44 (0) 203-1756967
e: callen@acte.org

Jack Riepe
Communications Director
Association of Corporate Travel Executives (ACTE)
t: 610-719-8396
m: 610-719-8396
e: riepeacte@aol.com