

IFEMA Palacio Municipal, the new venue of Feria de Madrid

Belén Mann, Ifema's Conventions Department Director tells us about the prospects of IFEMA Municipal Palace (the congress centre IFEMA just started to manage), a key venue for congresses, conventions and concerts in Madrid since its inauguration 25 years ago. She explains how Ifema is facing this period of transition and the changes it is experiencing, such as the hiring of a new human team, and the benefits of having an additional infrastructure.

A bit of information... "The IFEMA Palacio Municipal has never been closed and has always been running normally except between November 2012 and April 2013, a short period of time," Belén points out.

What does it mean for Feria de Madrid to expand its facilities? "For Ifema, it makes it possible to host events that for lack of availability we could not confirm. In the end, this is a space that offers a larger auditorium than the one we have in the North Convention Center (1,812 seats vs 1,100) it has a large number of rooms and its Multipurpose Space, ideal for exhibitions and catering services", says Belén.





Human team. “We have strengthened IFEMA’s Conference and Convention Department with people in the commercial field who will develop their work focusing on this new venue. This is the case of Estela García, who joined us a year ago in anticipation of the management of the Palace. During this time she has been learning our commercial policy and quality standards in the service with the support of the current teammates. We also have Silvia Sancha who comes, as Estela, from the world of events. And finally, we have Carmen Aguirregomezorta with us, a very well-known person in the industry, who worked for 10 years in the Palace, and since then, has always been linked to the MICE world. She knows the infrastructures and the space in depth and her contribution is being very important.

As regards the technical areas, it is being managed as one more asset of the IFEMA portfolio, making use of the same set of professional resources of our organization.

And the offices? “They are located in the IFEMA Palacio Municipal, so that the specific team assigned to this site is always close to the client.”

What kind of events does it host? “Congresses with and without exhibition, conventions, graduation ceremonies, conferences, concerts and shows, especially directed to families, amongst others. The venue is an extension of Ifema. In fact, for some congresses and events, the client requests the additional rooms he needs in our South building, which is the closest”, says Belén.

Since the management has resumed, what is the most outstanding event that has taken place? “The most outstanding event of January was Madrid Fusión. From February to the end of the year, there are more than 40 events of various kinds confirmed. The typology of the acts and the type of client is very similar to the one we already had in Ifema Convenciones y Congresos”.

Has it been improved or changed at a technical level? “It’s still very soon. In terms of audiovisuals, there are no pre-installed elements. But the client has the option to work with his own supplier or hire this service through us. We have already equipped the building with a free wifi network. In terms of repairs and improvements, we are working on those of lesser draft and preparing the bidding documents for those that require higher investments. In short, the entire infrastructure is being analyzed to determine priorities. There is an investment plan of 10 million euros to ensure this unique space can be marketed in optimal conditions.”

Injection of activity in the surroundings. “The IFEMA Palacio Municipal already provides the environment with significant activity. But our goal is to grow in number of events, because the current occupation calendar allows it. We must bear in mind that some of those that we have rejected from Ifema Convenciones and Congresses due to lack of space, have opted for other cities. From now on, with a greater offer, it will be possible in many cases to retain them in Madrid”.

Transportation offer. “The Feria de Madrid subway stop is common to both buildings, in fact there is an exit that faces IFEMA Palacio Municipal and another in front of Ifema. There is a taxi stand, and buses that stop there. In addition, there is a parking lot in the building that is rented to an external company and which is operated with subscribers who work in the area. When this contract expires, the idea is to take control of the rental of parking for those attending the events. In addition, we must not forget that Ifema has almost 14,000 parking spaces and thanks to its proximity, many events held in the Palace rent spaces from us,” says Belén.