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**Press Information Bureau
Government of India
Ministry of Tourism**

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Road Shows to promote MICE Tourism organized in France, Belgium & Switzerland;

e-Conference Visas for attending Government conferences: Shri. K. J. Alphons

The Ministry of Tourism has recognized Meetings, Incentives, Conventions and Exhibitions (MICE) as a 'Niche Tourism' product in order to overcome the aspect of 'seasonality' and to promote India as a 365 days' destination and attract tourists with specific interests to India.

While no targets have been fixed, the Ministry of Tourism promotes India as a preferred tourism destination in the tourism generating markets for its various attractions, tourism products and destinations of the country, including MICE Tourism for increasing India's share in the global tourism market. MICE Tourism is also promoted under the Global Incredible India media campaign, through Road Shows and Seminars conducted regularly by the India Tourism offices overseas. A Road Show to promote MICE Tourism was recently organized along with India Convention Promotion Bureau (ICPB) covering France, Belgium & Switzerland during 26-29 June, 2018. Further, the Ministry of Tourism has appointed a professional agency for conducting a research study to provide a road map for strengthening the MICE Industry in India.

The Ministry of Tourism provides financial assistance under Market Development Assistance (MDA) scheme to 'Active Members' of India Convention Promotion Bureau (ICPB) towards bidding for International Conferences/Conventions, thereby bringing more MICE business to the country. Ministry of Tourism also provides Central Financial Assistance to the State Governments/UT Administrations for development of tourism infrastructure including the setting up of convention centres under the existing schemes.

The Government of India launched the e-Visa scheme in 2014 and presently nationals of 165 countries are covered under this Scheme which also includes the category of e-Conference Visa. The e-Conference Visa is for attending a conference/seminar/workshop organized by a Ministry or Department of the Government of India, State Government or UT Administrations and their sub-ordinate/attached organizations and PSUs.

The India Convention Promotion Bureau (ICPB) has been set up under the patronage of the Ministry of Tourism to promote India as a venue for International Conferences and Exhibitions with members comprising national airlines, hotels, travel agents, tour operators, tourist transport operators, conference organizers, etc.

This information was given by the Minister of State (I/C) for Tourism Shri. K. J. Alphons, in a written reply in Lok Sabha today.

NB/JP/PS