

NEW YORK CITY AND BERLIN SIGN FIRST-EVER CITY-TO-CITY TOURISM PARTNERSHIP

*—New Tourism Alliance Highlights Unique Connection and Support
Between Two Destinations—*

New York City (September 17, 2019) – NYC & Company, New York City’s official destination marketing organization, and *visitBerlin* today signed a first-ever official city-to-city tourism collaboration agreement. It marks the first time New York City has partnered with a city in Germany for tourism development and management purposes. Formalized this morning at a press conference at the Consulate General of Germany in New York, the new alliance includes a collaboration agreement between the two cities, the sharing of best practices in tourism marketing and a new **TestLab** initiative engaging **ArtCenter College of Design** students to develop real-time tourism solutions. NYC & Company president and CEO Fred Dixon was joined by Deputy Mayor / Senator for Economics, Energy and Public Enterprises of Berlin Ramona Pop, and *visitBerlin* CEO Burkhard Kieker for the announcement and signing ceremony.

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“New York City and Berlin are world-class destinations that share so much in common—from outstanding culture, attractions, entertainment, nightlife and events to beautiful, multicultural neighborhoods to navigate and explore, the two cities have extraordinary appeal. We’re so pleased to formalize our partnership with our friends at *visitBerlin* after many years of conversation and informal collaboration,” said NYC & Company president and CEO Fred Dixon.

“New York City and Berlin stand for internationality, diversity, cosmopolitanism and freedom. Our cities attract people from all over the world, bring new ideas in and support the economic development. Making Berlin an even more attractive and enjoyable experience for visitors goes hand in hand with increasing the quality of life for residents. Sustainability as a maxim for action to ensure Berlin tourism continues to develop in a way compatible for the city, economically, ecologically and socially. I am very happy to see a commitment to deepen the cooperation between our agencies NYC & Company and *visitBerlin* – especially on key questions of sustainable tourism, for the benefits of New York City and Berlin citizens,” said Ramona Pop, Deputy Mayor and Senator for Economics, Energy and Public Enterprises of Berlin.

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“We are excited to sign this first-ever tourism cooperation agreement between Berlin and New York City, both outstanding destinations that have unique appeal and showcase the best of what each country has to offer. We are eager to exchange experiences, learn from each other, and develop intensive out-of-the-box ideas with the TestLab students to develop new opportunities that benefit both visitors and residents alike,” said Burkhard Kieker, CEO of *visitBerlin*.

The city-to-city partnership includes the sharing of best practices in tourism marketing and destination management, including strategy around neighborhood promotion, sustainability and responsible tourism management.

Additionally, as part of the city-to-city partnership, *visitBerlin* and NYC & Company are collaborating with renowned ArtCenter College of Design on an innovative TestLab project, which will allow an international team of selected students from Southern California to visit New York City and Berlin to provide their design expertise and recommendations on how to improve the tourism landscape in both destinations. In 2020, students will visit ArtCenter Berlin's satellite studio as well as New York City to uncover new insights and create new solutions to address challenges and opportunities with tourism in New York City and Berlin. Faculty for the initiative will include ArtCenter professors Nik Hafermaas and Rob Ball; NYC & Company's executive creative director Elan Cole; and *visitBerlin*'s Director of Destination Management & Corporate Development, Sabine Wendt.

"Among the many high-profile TestLab Berlin projects we have conducted over the years, the TestLab Travelism New York/Berlin project is the first time where our students will immerse themselves consecutively in two creative capitals of the world. This will immensely broaden the horizon of everyone involved, informing the exploration, thinking and making of creative solutions towards responsible tourism," said TestLab Professor Nikolaus Hafermaas.

New York City encourages visitors to experience what NYC & Company is calling a "Monumental Year" for the destination this year. 2019 has been extraordinary for New York City tourism, defined by major new developments and openings as well as iconic big events and cultural activities. Hudson Yards, The Shed, the Statue of Liberty Museum on Liberty Island and Empire Outlets on Staten Island opened earlier this year. The "new" Museum of Modern Art will reopen on October 21 with expanded new galleries and spaces for performance and events. This past June, New York City hosted WorldPride—the first time the international LGBTQ+ celebration was held in the United States. This special event coincided with the historic 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Uprising and welcomed approximately 5 million people to the City. In New York City, 2019 has also been billed the "Year of Pride," with many cultural organizations offering special programming and exhibits throughout the calendar year.

In 2018, Berlin strengthened its position as one of Europe's top three travel destinations after London and Paris, with the US being its biggest overseas market. Berlin welcomed 451,887 American travelers last year, who spent a record 1,273,627 overnights in the city (a 5.0 percent increase over the previous year). The trend continues in 2019: from January until June, Berlin saw another 11.2 percent increase in American overnight stays.

Berlin is not slowing down. More cultural highlights, new attractions, special anniversaries and an ever-expanding calendar of events defy boredom in the German capital. Just a few of many highlights in 2019 include the openings of

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Futurium (House of Futures), James Simon Gallery (the future gateway to UNESCO World Heritage Site Museum Island), and the Bauhaus year celebrating its 100th anniversary. With the 30th anniversary of the Fall of the Wall, Berlin will be organizing a global event expected to attract over one million visitors to the city this November. The opening of the Humboldt Forum and the reconstructed Berlin City Palace as well as the highly anticipated opening of the new international Berlin Brandenburg Airport are highlights for 2020.

Germany is New York City's sixth largest source of overseas visitation and last year welcomed 613,000 visitors. In 2019, the City is expected to welcome 632,000 German visitors.

About NYC & Company:

NYC & Company is the official destination marketing organization for the City of New York, dedicated to maximizing travel and tourism opportunities throughout the five boroughs, building economic prosperity and spreading the positive image of New York City worldwide. For the official source on all there is to see and do in New York City, go to nycgo.com.

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About visitBerlin:

"Inspiring the world for Berlin." With this mission, Berlin Tourismus & Kongress GmbH, operating under the *visitBerlin* brand, has been promoting Berlin globally since 1993 as a tourism and congress metropolis. As a tour operator, Berlin Tourismus & Kongress GmbH, a private sector company, also offers hotel accommodation and issues the Berlin WelcomeCard, the city's official sightseeing pass. *visitBerlin* operates the Berlin Tourist Info Centres and the Berlin Service Center available on +49 (0)30-25 00 25. On visitBerlin.com, Berlin's official tourism website, Berlin visitors can find all the information they need about every aspect of their trip to the city. Find out more about visitBerlin on about.visitBerlin.de.

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