



**UNIVERSITY OF CYPRUS
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

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To whom it may concern

Reference Letter for Dreamscape Travel

I had the opportunity to collaborate with Dreamscape Travel for the organization of the 5th Conference of the European Society for Research in Mathematics Education which was held in Larnaka , Cyprus, in February 2007.

Pre-conference assistance and preparation

Our collaboration with Dreamscape Travel started in 2006 with all the pre-conference arrangements. During this period Mr Stratis (the Managing Director of Dreamscape Travel) has assisted us in organizing our budget. This was highly important in setting the appropriate amount for the conference registration fee. Furthermore, although our collaboration with Mr Stratis started after a decision was made in regard to the hotels that were going to be used for the conference, he offered very important assistance in negotiating the prices with the hotels and making the package deal more attractive to our participants as well as offering a better venue for the conference. He was also very helpful in finalizing our agreement with the hotels and the items that were going to be included for the lunches, coffee breaks and organization of meeting rooms during the conference. Mr Stratis joined the organizing committee in several meetings with the hotel managers before the conference so as all people involved in the organization would have a common and clear picture of the way in which things would run during the days of the conference.

Dreamscape Travel also offered assistance in finding and ordering materials and services needed for the conference, such as bags and their content, poster, dj for the gala dinner, buses and tour guides for the excursion.

Furthermore, Dreamscape Travel had the responsibility of designing the webpage of the conference and maintaining it during the conference. It needs to be highlighted that this webpage needed frequent updates (first announcement, second announcement, new committees, presentation of papers etc) and the company took good care of the whole process. Dreamscape Travel also provided all the non-academic information on the webpage. More specifically information was offered about Cyprus, Travel and Accommodation.

As the conference was approaching Dreamscape Travel had continuous communication with the participants in regard to all the non-academic matters (payments, travel, food, accompanying persons etc). At the same time, Mr Stratis was in contact with the president and secretariat of the conference, informing us about all the developments and consulting us when joined decisions needed to be made. He and his staff were very efficient in resolving matters by themselves but also informing and consulting the organizing committee. Thus at no point were we (organizing committee) either overwhelmed with unnecessary details or unaware of potential problems or serious requests.

Mr Stratis was also very proactive. He had requested to get to know all the postgraduate students that would have been offering assistance during the conference as well as having a list of all the telephone numbers of people involved in order to be well prepared during the days of the conference. Since it was necessary to use three hotels for our conference, a plan was made prior the conference on how to best utilize the resources and assistance that we would have at the conference.

During the conference assistance

A day before the conference began Mr Stratis and two members of his company arrived at the hotels where the conference was going to be held in order to make the appropriate preparations for registrations, set up all the notice boards and check whether everything was arranged as agreed with the hotels staff. They set up a registration office (with computer, printer, copy machine) and had all their records, receipts, certificates, bags, name-tags ready. They also offered an extended schedule for registration and thus there were no queues for registration and the staff of Dreamcape Travel had the opportunity to offer all the necessary information to the participants as they were arriving.

During the days of the conference Mr Stratis was in constant contact with all the hotel managers, as well as with the organizing committee, making sure that things were progressing smoothly. He was also visiting all three hotels and was making sure that the meeting rooms, food and other arrangements were up to the standards agreed. It was obvious that Mr Stratis had a good working relation with the hotel staff and also gained their respect.

In several cases that further assistance was needed, for example an accompanying person arrived on a wheel chair, two participants had to leave earlier due to unforeseen emergencies, Mr Stratis and his staff offered immediate assistance which was well appreciated by these participants.

Overall, both prior to the conference as well as during the days of the conference Mr Stratis and his staff had an excellent communication with the participants as well as with the organizing committee and staff of the three hotels. They were pleasant, active and helpful but at the same time very efficient and demanding the highest standards from all involved in the organization. Mr Stratis and his staff also had the ability to be calm and pleasant and in no instance did they show any signs of fatigue or discomfort although they were at the hotels where the conference was held continuously for the five and a half days that the conference was held.

Post-conference assistance

After the conference Mr Stratis had the full responsibility of finalizing all accounts both with the participants as well as with the hotels and other companies and individuals who offered their services.

Summing up, I believe that our conference would have not been so successful if it was not for Dreamscape Travel. The staff of this company knows very well its job and our collaboration was very pleasant and productive. Even in cases where we did not share the same view Mr Stratis was either ready to accept our views or patiently explained the advantages of his proposal. I have to admit that my appreciation for him and his office had grown along the way of the conference preparation. It is amazing how many things we are not aware of when setting off to organise a conference. I also found that there is a large number of things that I would have either been unable to deal with in the way that Mr Stratis has done or would have simply not liked to be involved in. Dreamscape Travel took care of all these matters in a very professional manner.

I genuinely recommend Dreamscape Travel for the organization of any conference or large venue. It was a pleasure working with this company and I will certainly collaborate with them in the future.



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