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MAGAZINE

BUILDING BRIDGES IN THE MEETINGS INDUSTRY

# Headquarters

NOV. 2017 - N°80

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# MEDELLIN RISES THROUGH THE RANKS

**Medellin, one of Colombia's liveliest cities, has become one of the fastest-growing destinations on a global scale, going up 146 places since making its first appearance in the ICCA destination ranking reports in 2007.**

According to the data published by ICCA (International Congress and Convention Association), the most important ranking in the associative meetings industry, Medellin was ranked 62th in ICCA above cities such as San Francisco, Miami, Los Angeles, The Hague, Geneva, Frankfurt, Cancun, and Punta Cana.

Medellin secured the 62th place in the 2016 ICCA city ranking, a huge leap from the 208th in 2007. Rapid growth can be observed in various markets: in the American ranking, Medellin is the city that reported the biggest growth over the last nine years, by 320% in terms of the number of events reported to ICCA. Lima and Panama City are the two destinations behind Medellin's growth: 145% and 132% increased respectively in the last nine years.

Such remarkable growth can be attributed to the extraordinary transformation that the city has undergone into one of the most innovative and livable cities in Latin America in less than a decade, and the combined efforts by the Mayor's Office and the Medellin Convention & Visitors Bureau, who recognise the importance of the meetings industry and the benefits the industry can bring to the city.

The results speak for themselves: Medellin not only won a slew of accolades for its social transformation and innovation, most notably the Lee Kuan Yew World City Award, known as "The Nobel of Cities", in 2016, it has also reported sustained growth as a touristic and business destination, attracting prestigious international events such as World Urban Forum (2014), General Assembly of the World Tourism Organisation (2015) and The World Economic Forum for Latin America (2016). This December, Medellin will host the World of Business Ideas (WOBI), and in 2018 will host the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).

International hotel chains such as Hampton By Hilton and Marriott are also eyeing the city and developing new projects that will add more than 1,800 new spaces to the city's room capacity.

Medellin has also welcomed famous artists and celebrities in recent years, such as Guns N' Roses, Madonna, Beyoncé, and Pope Francis.

As the meeting industry evolves, more event organisers are looking for different and innovative destinations, and Medellin is well positioned to make a bigger mark on a global stage.



## MORE INFORMATION

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# PALACONGRESSI DI RIMINI HAS BEEN RECONFIRMED THE **LEADING CONFERENCE FACILITY IN ITALY**

**Still basking in the success of last year, the Palacongressi finds itself in the limelight yet again at BEA 2017, the Festival of Italian events and live communication. A new and important accolade for the “Event&Conference Division” of “Italian Exhibition Group”: The Rimini facility took home the award for best location in the category of Italian conference centres and auditoriums.**

The jury, made up of experts from leading companies and agencies in the communication and events sector, assessed various types of venues for meetings and events, from “unexpected locations” to sports and cultural spaces, and concluded that the Palacongressi di Rimini is Italy’s most appealing, versatile, functional and top quality location in the meeting industry.

The Palacongressi was deemed a venue capable of perfectly combining aesthetics, design and functionality. In fact, its 39 excellently equipped modular rooms, with noise absorbing and soundproofed walls are ideal for parallel sessions or varying types. Italian style furniture by Frau and Moroso, décor, stages and mobile technology allow for the design and staging of high-profile events and conventions both on a national and international scale. And without forgetting of course, that this year the Rimini convention centre switched to full HD technology, upgrading from a 4K network to Over IP, as well as the installation of external mega led walls and an overall improvement of internal hardware and software.

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- Because you care about the environment. And here, in the Riviera, we believe in environmental policies, in projects of social responsibility and solidarity.
- Because the future has already begun and change is underway, but our soul remains true.



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# AUSTRALIA **ROCKETS TO SUCCESS** WITH IAC 2017

**Australia rocketed firmly into the multi-billion-dollar space industry with the hosting of the 68th International Astronautical Congress (IAC) in Adelaide in September 2017 - the largest conference to be held in Adelaide to date, exceeding delegate attendance by 67 per cent, and the first to be held at the newly expanded Adelaide Convention Centre.**

The Paris-based International Astronautical Federation (IAF) is the world's leading space advocacy body whose members include all key space agencies, companies, societies, associations and institutes across 66 countries.

The annual conference of the world's 'space family' is the largest gathering of the space industry in the world. Each year, the IAC changes country, theme and local organiser. The Adelaide Convention Bureau, in conjunction with the Space Industry Association of Australia, commenced researching and pursuing this congress almost ten

years ago. In 2014 the announcement was made that Adelaide was to host IAC2017, defeating Germany, Turkey and the United States.

#### **COMPLEX PROGRAM**

The program for IAC2017 was extremely complex, and used every part of the new East Wing of the Adelaide Convention Centre. In addition to breakfasts, lunches, dinners and networking sessions, there were eight plenary sessions, several highlight lectures, and more than 250 technical sessions, with at least twenty occurring concurrently each day. There was also an

exhibition where 80 exhibitors from the space sector showcased their latest offerings and developments.

"As the first major event since completing our redevelopment, IAC was always going to be a great test to our team. Utilising every inch of area we had, in various configurations, it was a great demonstration of the flexible nature of our venue, and I'm thrilled to report that all ran smoothly with positive feedback received from the organisers and delegates alike," said Alec Gilbert, Chief Executive of the Adelaide Convention Centre.



Elon Musk presentation at Adelaide Convention Centre



## STELLAR HIGHLIGHTS

The program featured many highlights including a presentation by SpaceX founder, Elon Musk, on 'Making Humans a Multi-Planetary Species'. Lockheed Martin unveiled an update to their plans for human exploration of Mars in the 2020s; and many new business opportunities and relationships forged during the week-long event, such as Italy's largest privately-owned space company SITAEL signing a letter of intent with local start up Inovar to jointly establish a multi-million-dollar company in South Australia.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As the host city, the event brought greater visibility to Adelaide's expertise in the space sector, complemented by community outreach programs. More than 700 school children attended the large interactive exhibition in a dedicated event space; while 3,500 members of the public attended the 'open' session of the exhibition on Friday morning. The State Library of South Australia staged an exhibition titled 'From Outback to Outer Space: Woomera 1955-1980' and the South Australian Museum hosted a 'Spectacular Space' exhibition.

"This amazing event is the epitome of what hosting conferences is all about. The IAC absolutely captivated the city and in addition to the large economic benefit for tourism operators, it is the value of the incredible legacies that come into play well after the last delegate has returned home that truly highlight the importance of winning these large-scale industry events for South Australia," said Damien Kitto, CEO of the Adelaide Convention Bureau.

## TRAVELLING BEYOND

Technical site visits to some of South Australia's key locations were also arranged including the Woomera Test Range; the Institute for Telecommunications Research at the University of South Australia; Adelaide Planetarium; and an excursion to Stockport Observatory. Several pre- and post-touring options were organised for delegates and their families to take maximum advantage of their stay in Australia, including visits to the Adelaide Hills, the award-winning Barossa Valley wine region; and wildlife-rich Kangaroo Island. Tours to Broken Hill in New South Wales were also arranged for outback astronomy and star gazing.

## LASTING LEGACIES

Perhaps more importantly than the immediate benefits bought about by hosting a conference are the legacies they leave. The Australian Federal Government, buoyed by the build up to the event, chose its opening day to announce that Australia will launch its own Space Agency. The South Australian Government also announced that a space industry centre would be established in the state.

In summarising the event, Brett Biddington, CEO of IAC 2017 said: "Adelaide has been a splendid host city for IAC 2017. Its collaborative approach from the City Council, Library and Museum through to the Convention Centre and Convention Bureau have simply been exemplary. Our delegate numbers have by far exceeded our expectations proving that delegates will travel from long distances if the content of the conference is right and for the amazing experiences that Australia offers. This conference has set the benchmark for IAC events and Adelaide, Australia should be justifiably proud of the legacies it will leave."

# FAST FACTS

### EVENT:

International Astronautical Congress 2017 (IAC2017)

### WHERE:

Adelaide, Australia

### FLIGHT CONNECTION:

Adelaide Airport services 10 international airlines, including direct flights from Dubai, Doha, Singapore and Hong Kong.

### VENUE:

Adelaide Convention Centre

### WHEN:

September 2017

### WHO:

Adelaide Convention Bureau; International Astronautical Federation; Space Industry Association of Australia; All Occasions Management (PCO)

### ATTENDEES:

5,000 from more than 60 countries

### THEME:

Unlocking Imagination, Fostering Innovation and Strengthening Security.

*"The IAC2017 conference is testament to the capability of Australia's business events industry to deliver an extraordinary event that exceeds expectations. When you pair these attributes with Australia's beautiful landscapes, unique wildlife and excellent food and wine, it's not surprising that the appetite for Australia as a leading business events destination continues to grow,"* said John O'Sullivan, Managing Director, Tourism Australia.

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# THE 2ND INTERNATIONAL **CYBER SECURITY WEEK**

**Cybersecurity has been labeled as one of the biggest concerns of 2017, according to Forbes. As global prevalence of cybersecurity attacks is growing, the issue attracts more attention from both the public and experts. The industry is expected to grow more than 10% annually and surpass \$200bn worldwide by 2021, according to research firm Markets and Markets. This trend is also finding resonance in the professional event industry with more and more congresses, round-tables, and hackathons organized every year around the world.**

The Hague, in the Netherlands, is a base for one of the largest cybersecurity clusters in the world, and is also home to the recurring International Cyber Security Week (CSW). This year's edition of the event was a perfect opportunity to delve deeper into the intricacies of this complex subject.

The Hague, where a network of venues offered a perfect and diverse setting for the extensive programme of the event, reflects the spirit of championing security both within and outside the web.

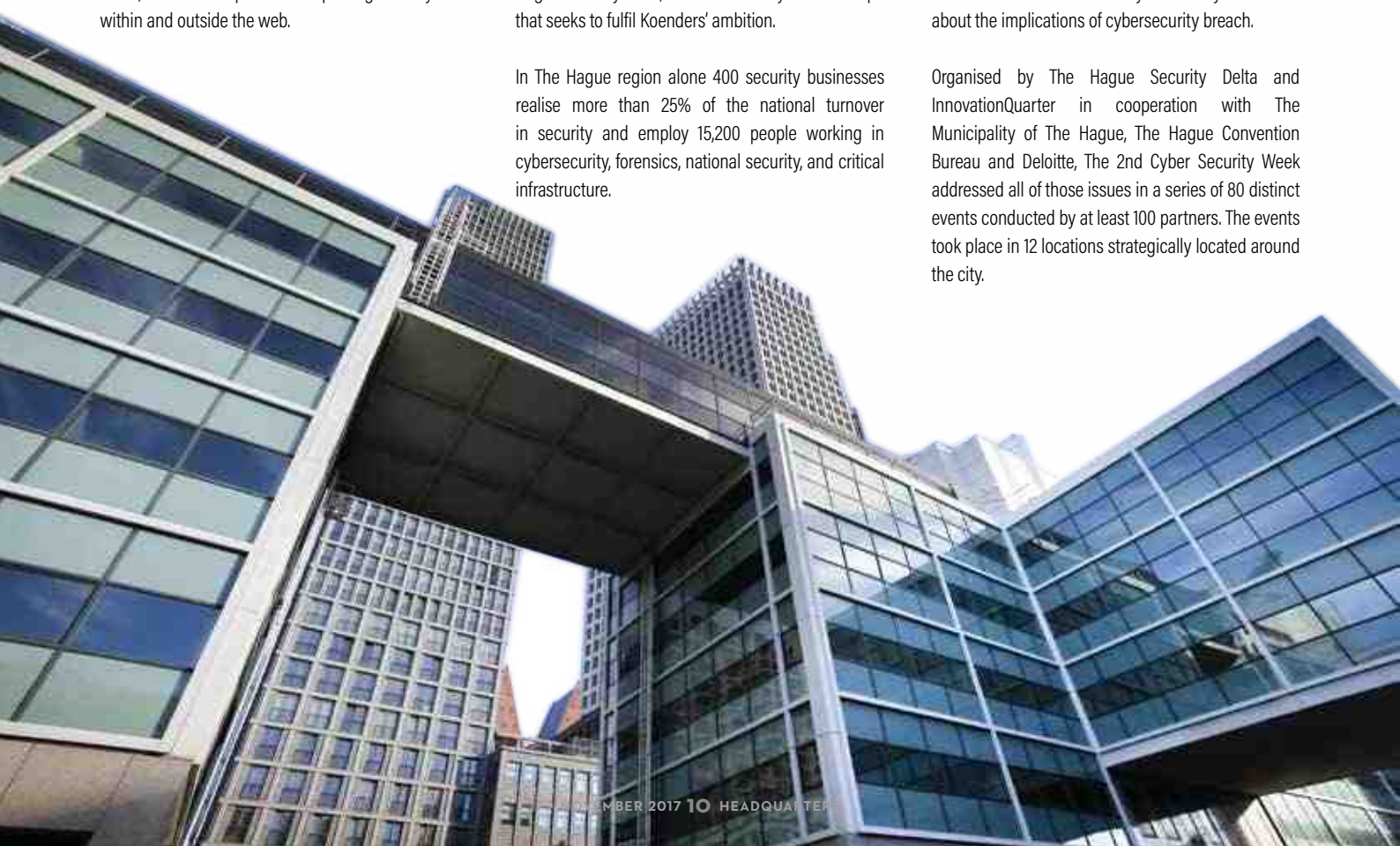
The Dutch minister of foreign affairs, Bert Koenders, announced earlier this year that the Netherlands shall take a leading role in the building of a strong cyber defence alliance and partner with other countries to track down cybercriminals.

The city of The Hague plays an important role in this, as it is known for its commitment to International Peace & Justice as well as Security, and is home to The Hague Security Delta, the main security hub in Europe that seeks to fulfil Koenders' ambition.

In The Hague region alone 400 security businesses realise more than 25% of the national turnover in security and employ 15,200 people working in cybersecurity, forensics, national security, and critical infrastructure.

However, cybersecurity activities do not boil down to only prevention of cybercrime. Individual data protection and personal awareness constitute another crucial piece of the puzzle. To address the former, General Data Protection Regulation will come into force within the EU in May 2018. Its purpose is to strengthen and rationalise data protection for all individuals across the EU. On top of this legislative measures, individuals are advised to educate themselves on matters of cybersecurity and learn about the implications of cybersecurity breach.

Organised by The Hague Security Delta and InnovationQuarter in cooperation with The Municipality of The Hague, The Hague Convention Bureau and Deloitte, The 2nd Cyber Security Week addressed all of those issues in a series of 80 distinct events conducted by at least 100 partners. The events took place in 12 locations strategically located around the city.



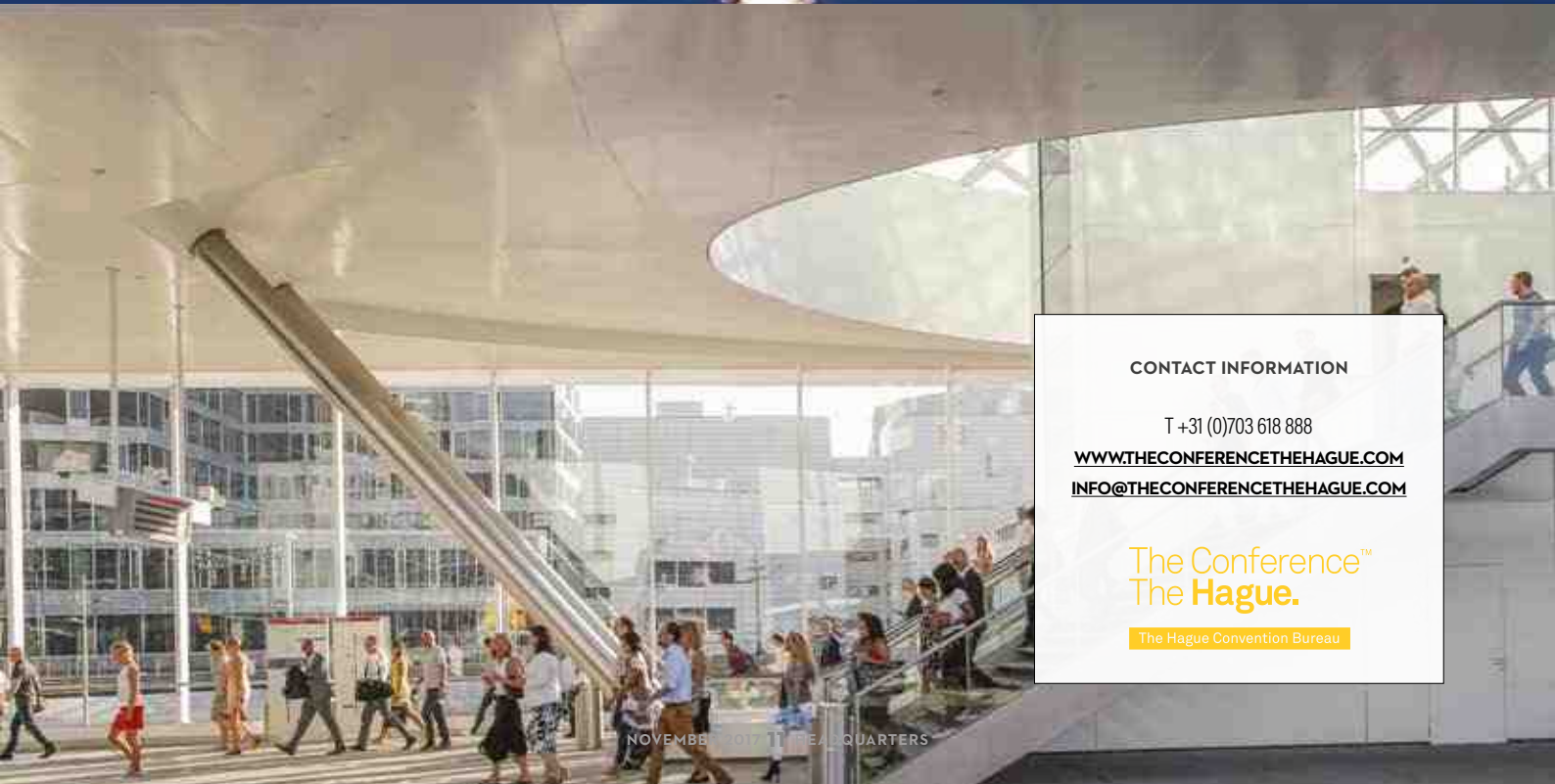


According to Saskia Bruines, The Hague's alderman for the Knowledge Economy, International Affairs, Youth and Education, all-hands-on-deck approach is vital for tackling cybercrime: "Cybersecurity is one of the biggest challenges in today's society, but it also provides many business opportunities which were explored during the event in much detail."

CSW adopted an interactive, thought-provoking approach towards knowledge and resource-sharing. Every day focused on a specific topic, such as access to talent, access to capital, access to market, and access to knowledge in the field of cybersecurity. Such urgent questions as privacy versus cybersecurity, security risk mitigation, and ethics of cybersecurity provoked lively discussions and animated debates.

If you are organising a meeting with a serious ambition, The Hague could be your perfect destination. Please contact the team of The Hague Convention Bureau to find out more.

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# COMMITTED TO QUALITY

**Adopting the motto “Together we are stronger”, Switzerland’s ten biggest and best-equipped congress centres have joined together to form an alliance – the Swiss Convention Centres. Over the past nine years, the Centres in Basel, Bern, Davos, Geneva, Interlaken, Lausanne, Lucerne, Lugano, Montreux and Zurich have presented themselves jointly on the international market with the aim of strengthening their position. National and international organisers benefit from having a clear overview of the wide range of high-quality congress locations in Switzerland.**

Space to accommodate congresses and events for 500 to 5000 participants and an exhibition area of at least 1000 square metres per venue, plus an experienced and professional team to assist organisers from the very first contact right through to the debriefing. This is what the ten partners of the Swiss Convention Centres have to offer, all of which have their own individual advantages in addition to the qualities that they share.

In joining together to form the Swiss Convention Centres alliance, the partners have undertaken a joint commitment to quality. The best reward they can receive for their exacting standards is to be honoured with industry awards. Hence, in June 2017, the KKL Lucerne received the Swiss Location Award for the best congress location in Switzerland for the second time. And, at the start of 2017, the Congress Centre Kursaal Interlaken received the Swiss MICE Award for the “Congress Centres” category.

The Swiss Convention Centres’ quality standards take effect at various levels, including for sustainability. This is borne out by the long tradition of Davos and its Congress Centre with their “Energy City” label, and also by the four beehives that the Centre International de Conférences Genève (CICG) has installed on its green roof, making a valuable contribution to biodiversity in the urban Geneva environment. The Congress Center Basel works with a Green Meeting checklist which enables clients to hold their congresses in a more sustainable manner.

Despite the shared quality standards that unite the centres, each centre also exudes its own individual charm. The Palazzo dei Congressi in Lugano offers a Mediterranean atmosphere and a delightful location on the Lago di Lugano. And the 2m2c Montreux Music & Convention Centre also benefits from a picturesque lakeside location in a town that is known, not without good reason, as the “Pearl of the Swiss Riviera”.

An all-in-one offer with the congress centre, hotel and restaurants all located under the same roof? No problem at the Congress Centre Kursaal Bern. In Zurich, people are already looking forward excitedly to September 2020, when the Kongresshaus and Tonhalle will be reopening in new splendour following a complete revamp that is taking three years.

This combination of high quality aspirations shared by all the partners and the specific advantages of the individual locations means that clients of the Swiss Convention Centres can obtain a tailored solution that meets all their needs.



# Swiss Convention Centres



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# **CROATIA** A VIBRANT EUROPEAN COUNTRY THAT IS PERFECT FOR **COMBINING BUSINESS WITH PLEASURE**

With ten sites under the protection of UNESCO, eight national parks, 11 nature parks, and many other examples of an outstanding cultural and natural heritage, Croatia is in the eyes of many the most beautiful European garden. Therefore, it is not surprising that the country is the choice of many congress organizers, for business meetings and team-building and incentive programs because in Croatia they will have all of the necessary preconditions for a successful event.



This vibrant European country is perfect for combining business with pleasure and ensuring successful business events. Surrounded by breath-taking natural beauty, endless coastlines, diverse gastronomy, adventure, sports and wellness, Croatia offers ideal conditions for business events. Year after year, on a global scale Croatia is becoming a well-known European business events destination. The country is becoming increasingly attractive for organizers of business meetings, whether they are focused on conference and congress or incentives. Investments in congressional capacities have sensibly

elevated the quality of Croatian business events offers. With increasing capacity growth and spectacular results achieved year on year nationally, it is safe to say that this tourism segment is booming in Croatia. This is underpinned by research, such as that of the specialized portal Business Tourism according to which as many as 70 percent of the hotels specialised in conference and incentive tourism expected the growth of business meetings and the revenues they bring. The advantages of business events tourism in Croatia are direct accessibility, an excellent road network and of course the hotel offer which is very respectable in 4\* and 5\*. Numerous investments for an estimated total value of 800 million euros are planned for 2017 in the hotel sector, with numerous luxury hotel establishments along the Croatian coast and charming boutique hotels. But, as is often the case, experience often offers a much more colourful

picture than the statistics, so you can say that - when your country has been chosen as a destination for companies like Google, Dell or Mercedes, better proof of the attractiveness of the Croatian business events offer is not required.

So, whether exploring the old city of Dubrovnik, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, island-hopping around the Split archipelago, truffle hunting in Istria, paragliding across the Plitvice Lakes, delving into Zagreb's streets and hidden passages, birdwatching in Kopački rit, partying the night away at Zrće beach in Novalja or taking a walk along world famous Opatija promenade, there truly is something for everyone in Croatia.



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## TOUR OPERATORS AND MICE

**MARCEL A.M. VISSERS**  
EDITOR IN CHIEF

HeadQuarters magazine

During a familiarisation trip in August to the poetically green Hangzhou in China, I met the Director of MICE for TUI China Travel Co. Ltd, Mr. Xiang Weng, an inspiring and very cheerful person. He told me about the power of the German Travel Company TUI around the world, which also has a department actively involved in the organisation of conferences in China. Tour operation and MICE never caught my interest before, but after hearing his stories I became more positive.

Strangely enough, soon afterwards various studies came to my attention, all originating from tour operators: TUI, American Express, Expedia, etc. Again, usually I'm quite cautious about tourism approaching MICE too closely. However, I've come to appreciate the serious side on their reports a bit more.

Tour operators are real experts in two areas: transport and accommodation, two main factors in determining the price of a trip. That's something conference attendees are very sensitive to nowadays. So what do these giants have to tell us? TUI's general message is that prices for transport and hotel visits in Asia should remain constant for 2018, with slight fluctuations at the

most. That's promising news for Asian destinations. On a global level, Issa Jouaneh, Senior Vice President and General Manager, American Express Meetings & Events, states:

*"Following the shifting sentiment in 2017, next year should be more positive around the world in terms of spend, number of meetings and attendees. Meanwhile, meeting owners are prioritizing attendee experience and engagement over scale. As a result, we expect to see shorter, more focused meetings."*

The aforementioned studies prove the high value placed on knowledge and expertise by the MICE departments at major tour operators these days.

A delegation of nine members of the major MICE departments for Dutch tour operators travelled to Athens early this month. This study trip was organised by TravelMarketing and transavia.com, in collaboration with the Greek DMC Horizon. I have to admit, I've been ignoring these Meetings Industry developments for too long. To the members of ETOA (European Tour Operators Association – over 900 members) I say: keep an eye out for my articles in the future.

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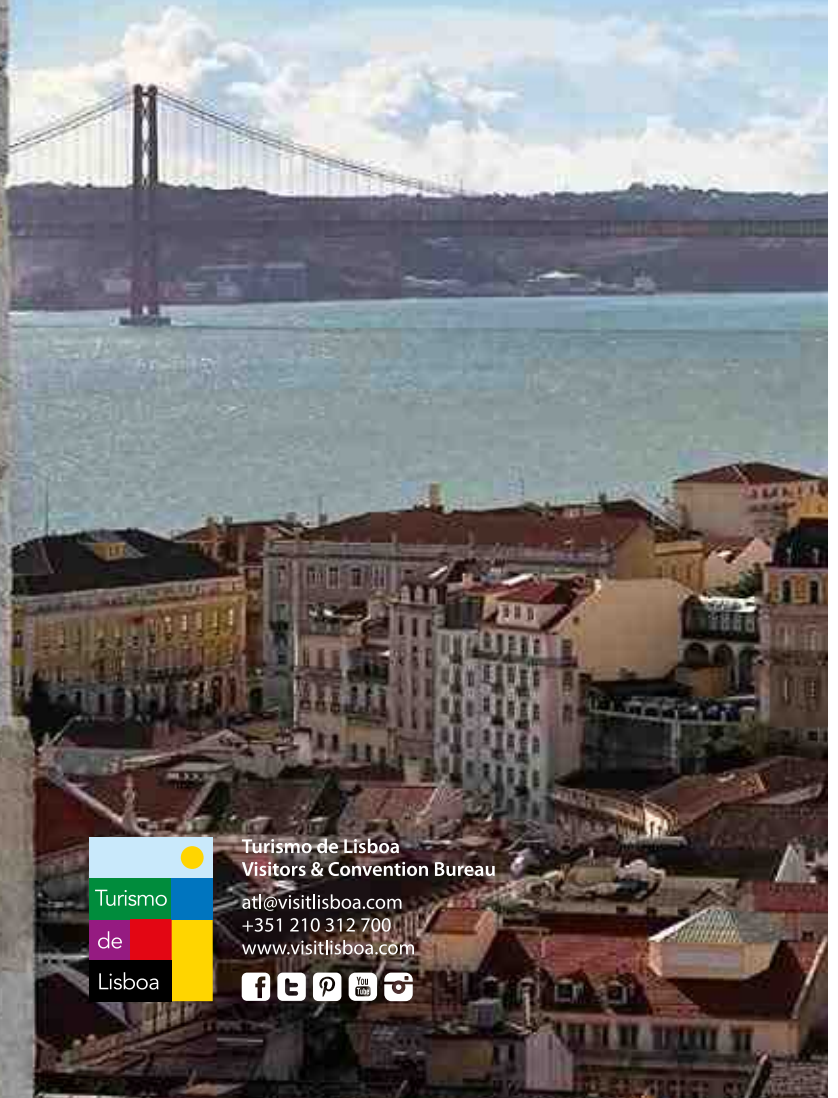


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1

## SEOUL, A COMPLETE CONVENTION CITY WHERE NEW AGE MEET OLD TRADITIONS

It's almost unfair for one city to have it all! In a short 60 years of the miracle on the Han River, Seoul finds itself in the middle of a global renaissance - a daring city made of dizzying heights and blinding lights with pockets of the past tucked into the folds of the cityscape. Home to some of the biggest MICE events over the years, Seoul has repeatedly made its mark on the world stage with unparalleled state-of-the-art facilities and a unique approach of mixing work with play! From Asia's biggest underground mall to the world's fifth tallest skyscraper, from medieval palaces, hanok and hanbok to Gangnam style, from beaming with a bowl of bibimbap or from the bee venom in your K-beauty miracle cosmetics, from heavenly nature to tech nirvana - Seoul will leave you wanting more! Join us as we escape to Seoul in the latest edition of our HQ supplement.

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4

## THE 4TH DETECTION OF GRAVITATIONAL WAVES AT THE MOST IMPORTANT SCIENTIFIC CONGRESS IN VALENCIA

For a week, the Valencia Conference Centre will be the scene in which topics such as gravitational wave astronomy and all its new developments will be debated together with cosmology, relativistic astrophysics, numerical and mathematical relativity, string theory or quantum gravity.

This congress is co-chaired by the professor of the Faculty of Physics of the Universitat de València José Antonio Font and the professor of the Universitat de València and researcher at the Institute of Corpuscular Physics (IFIC), José Navarro.

These two meetings, the 22nd International Conference on General Relativity and Gravitation and the Edoardo Amaldi Conference on Gravitational Waves, of great relevance in their respective fields, will gather for the first time in Spain.

[WWW.PALCONGRES-VLC.COM](http://WWW.PALCONGRES-VLC.COM)

2

## CHILE VOTED BEST TRAVEL VIDEO IN WTO COMPETITION

"Find your Chile" is the name of the International Tourism Promotion video series from the "Open Nature" program, a high-impact campaign which highlights outdoor, adventure tourism and post-congress tours in Chile. The series was named the best travel video in the Americas by the World Tourism Organization (WTO). The 28-video series has been translated in 6 languages: Spanish, English, Portuguese, German, French and Italian, and is part of the Chilean Government's International Marketing Plan.

The videos are a part of the country's ongoing tourism and business travel campaign to promote Chile abroad. They target visitors who make their travel decisions based on the Internet, as 70% of travellers claim to have seen videos online before planning their visit.

[WWW.CHILE.TRAVEL](http://WWW.CHILE.TRAVEL)

5

## ICC WALES WOWS ASSOCIATION GUESTS WITH THE VENUE'S FIRST FAMILIARISATION TRIP

ICC Wales pulled out all the stops for a specially selected group of Association conference managers who formed the first ever official familiarisation trip to the venue, due to open in 2019. One of the event highlights was a unique opportunity to enjoy samples of the ICC Wales "Mind, Body and Soul" culinary offering whilst sitting in a specially-constructed temporary marquee right in the middle of the building site for the venue which is on track and on time to open in two years' time.

Delegates were taken through the detailed plans for ICC Wales at the newly opened marketing suite for the venue, which also offers a bird's eye view of the construction site as the new building begins to emerge from its spectacular setting among acres of natural woodland on the outskirts of Newport. ICC Wales will provide total floor space for meetings, conferences, exhibitions and events of 26,000sqm.

[WWW.ICCWALES.COM](http://WWW.ICCWALES.COM)

3

## IBTM ARABIA GEARS UP FOR ITS 2018 SHOW

ibtm arabia is the most established event of its kind in the Middle East MICE industry, and provides Hosted Buyers with a personalised timetable of one-to-one meetings with a hand-picked selection of Exhibitors. With over 2,100 pre-planned meetings taking place during the three-day event in 2017, the event was hailed a great success.

Meetings for the 250+ industry professionals are scheduled by mutually matching exhibitors and Hosted Buyers using ibtm events' bespoke 'matchmaking' software, ensuring the best possible return on investment.

Shinu Pillai, Exhibition Manager, ibtm arabia, comments: "We're really excited to launch this year's event. We've worked hard since the last edition to understand how we can further enhance the programme to ensure it's as productive as possible for our attendees. Including the chance for exhibitors to hold destination presentations in our central hub area, as well as panel sessions where they can discuss and debate some of the industry's most pressing issues."

[WWW.IBTMARABIA.COM](http://WWW.IBTMARABIA.COM)

6

## SÃO PAULO HOSTS THE INTERNATIONAL DESALINATION ASSOCIATION WORLD CONGRESS FOR WATER REUSE AND DESALINATION

The São Paulo Convention & Visitors Bureau, in a strategic partnership with ESA Latin America, brings to São Paulo the leading global event for water reuse and desalination. Held for the first time in Latin America, the event featured an industry-leading exhibition, a wide-ranging four-day technical program, visits to plants, and networking events during the week of October 15-20. Approximately 1,200 public and private sector participants from across the globe attended the congress; leaders in all industry sectors, from end users to technology developers and solution providers, academics and researchers, funders, vendors, and consultants.

Important Brazilian organisations and institutions are strategic partners of the Congress, including several national and international associations.

[WWW.VISITESAOPAULO.COM](http://WWW.VISITESAOPAULO.COM)



# ENCATC - THE EUROPEAN NETWORK ON CULTURAL MANAGEMENT AND POLICY STRIVING FOR A **STRONGER AND MORE SUSTAINABLE CULTURAL SECTOR IN EUROPE**

**Established in 1992, ENCATC is an international network of more than 100 member institutions (including the Louvre Museum and the BOZAR Centre for Fine Arts) and professionals from over 40 countries in Europe and beyond. ENCATC Secretary General GiannaLia Cogliandro Beyens tells us how her association makes a difference in promoting education on cultural management and policy worldwide.**

***How does ENCATC matter beyond the domain of cultural management and policy?***

ENCATC plays a key role behind the scenes that is often invisible to the public eye. Our members are responsible for the education and training of current and future professionals working in cultural institutions across Europe and beyond. The sustainability of such cultural institutions depends on having the best education on management practices and a vision on cultural policy.



**GIANNALIA  
COGLIANDRO**

When it comes to cultural networks, ENCATC distinguishes itself as the only cross-sectorial network on education in Europe. This means that rather having a specific focus on one cultural sector, our members are active in multiple cultural sectors: performing arts, heritage, museums, creative industries, sustainable development, arts and health, cultural diplomacy... just to name a few. What's more, being part of this network, means we are getting academics, trainers, cultural professionals, policy makers and artists to foster collaborations across all cultural sectors. For example, those interested in heritage may find new inspiration and partnerships for how they can contribute to performing arts and vice-versa. It's all about knowledge transfer, research, capacity building, and education exchange propelling the cultural management and cultural policy discipline to make Europe's cultural sector strong and sustainable.

What's more, since 2001 our unique role and activities have been recognised by the European Commission as a network of excellence. Most recently, we were selected again for the next 4 years for co-funding from the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union.

***Your association is based in Brussels. Are your members mostly from Europe?***

Today we are in international network, however we do have a strong European representation with 78% of members in the EU. Among our international membership, the public would recognise world-class higher education institutions such as the University of Barcelona, New York University, and Helsinki Metropolia University of Applied Sciences. For cultural institution examples, the Louvre Museum and the BOZAR Centre for Fine Arts are members. We also have several Ministries of Culture representing Georgia, Malta, and Taiwan that shows how these national representatives are interested in their cultural policy and for their cultural institutions to have the best management practices for their sustainability.

***As most of your events are held in Brussels this year, what is behind the decision of staying in and beyond Brussels for your events?***

The year 2017 marks our 25th anniversary since the network was founded in 1992. The ENCATC network has been based in Brussels since 2003, a symbolic move for our office to be here in the heart of Europe. Brussels is also a well-connected location for our members based in 41 countries around the world.

Just this past September, we held our 25th Congress and anniversary celebration in Brussels!

The decisions for other cities and locations is strongly influenced by our membership and their proposals for activities they wish to implement with ENCATC. For example, this year the 6th ENCATC International Study Tour in the United Arab Emirates was done in partnership with the Louvre Museum as they anticipate the opening of the new Louvre Abu Dhabi. In 2017, we've also done a leadership seminar in Taiwan, a capacity building event in Italy, and an evaluation workshop in France. For 2018, we can already announce our 26th Congress will be held in Bucharest, Romania from 26-28 September.



**What are your most important events?**

The cornerstone of our annual programming is the ENCATC Congress on Cultural Management and Policy. It attracts around 200 participants from around the globe who wish to advance the state of art and promote new ideas on cultural management and policy. We also organise international study tours, trainings for professionals, academies, policy debates, research sessions, and award ceremonies.



**What do you look for in venues and destinations for your events?**

We strive for our host venues to have a cultural aspect to them. This is important because our members work closely with cultural institutions and value culture. Places change every year to allow members to learn from different cultural practices and policy and establish connections with new cultural actors.

**Any growing concerns for your association?**

Research and sharing among the scientific community in world regions have become increasingly important. Therefore in recent years, we have been developing new publishing opportunities such as the *ENCATC Journal of Cultural Management and Policy*, the *ENCATC Book Series on Cultural Management and Cultural Policy Education*, and the *encatcSCHOLAR*. It is crucial we provide members and the sector with an international platform to share research, methodology, and curricula so it can make an even greater impact on cultural management and cultural policy in Europe.



MORE INFORMATION:  
[WWW.ENCATC.ORG](http://WWW.ENCATC.ORG)

# HOW **DIGITALISATION** IS A GAME CHANGER **FOR PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**

We live in a world where digital communications are owned and can be seen by everyone, and the benefits of membership are no longer 'just in the hands of associations' in a digitally networked society, writes Chloe Menhinick, network engagement manager of International Water Association and board member of ESAE.



CHLOE  
MENHINICK



In our digital, networked society, the personal and the professional have become less distinct; people share content more freely and are pushing increasingly for open access; the Freemium model has created opportunities for quality content to be accessed at no cost, forcing business to move away from the traditional content-for-cash approach to optimise alternative revenue streams. Content has become available through a myriad of channels, virtual platforms and social media. The growth of these virtual communities and digital media allows people to network in unprecedented ways and at unprecedented speed.

As the landscape of associations continues to change, we are experiencing a transformation in the way we do business and the way we engage with our stakeholders. The evolution of the digital world has challenged the traditional value propositions of membership. The digitalisation of membership services and communities must become an inherent part of the membership engagement experience.

### ENGAGEMENT IS THE KEY

An association with a clear purpose needs to be able to communicate with and engage its current and future stakeholders, the members of today and supporters of the future. It needs to not only be an authoritative voice within its existing networks, but to be able to influence people from outside its traditional audiences on issues central to achieving its vision.

Also, in our networked world it has become a necessity just to remain relevant. Digitalisation offers associations a wealth of new opportunities to enhance our engagement tactics, and in doing so, to redefine and enhance our value propositions for membership.

Considering the fact that many associations struggle to find support (and resources) to begin the journey at all, even for those who are already embracing digital communication, the questions of "How much?", "How far?" and "How fast?" they need to travel to remain relevant are fraught with challenges.

Some of the most widely used online professional and social networks, including LinkedIn, Facebook, and Wechat, present themselves as cheap, quick and effective options for associations. One way to determine how deep your digital offering should go is to consider the breadth of content covered, the number of members and the variety of internal member groupings. Guiding questions to frame your discussion include: What is your vision in offering a digital proposition? Which offering is best placed to meet that vision? Do existing online networks provide enough opportunities to engage, network and collaborate? Is this sufficient to accelerate and maximise your impact? Will it enhance the sense of belonging so fundamental to the concept of membership?

For some associations, the answer will be "yes". For others, whose structure and breadth of internal communities are far-reaching and complex, a dedicated online community platform may be the solution to strengthen their value proposition and help propel their association into the future.

## ○ THE OPPORTUNITIES OF DIGITALISATION:

### **INCREASE YOUR SPHERE OF INFLUENCE**

Having members, non-members, stakeholders, cross-cutting disciplines and even interested public follow, engage or just be exposed to your position and messaging, is vital to modern lobbying. A digital proposition will enable you to broaden the audience with which you actively engage, and facilitates engagement and collaboration beyond your traditional networks, ensuring that the influence and relevance of your association is amplified.

### **INCLUSIVITY**

Online communities can empower your members to have a voice in the running of the association, not just those in leadership positions. Introducing new members to the community through a dynamic and active onboarding strategy can be effective and empowering. If some member groupings are stagnating, encourage more diversity by inviting new members to post comments, questions and content that prompts wider engagement.

This is not to replace the thriving offline communities that are typically the lifeline of associations, but leverage that energy online to reach a wider audience. For example, events can be used to engage non-attendees through online activities. The live streaming of sessions, live reporting and soliciting questions from the online community, can reduce the negative influence distance and cost of events can have on a member's ability to engage.

### **MEMBER RECOGNITION**

Enabling members to become ambassadors, with meaningful reward for their efforts, is central to a thriving association. For members to thrive and succeed though, we need to provide the tools that are right for them. Embracing change hard, but focusing our energies on empowering, rewarding and recognising early adopters can help us move forward. Written or video interviews with a cross section of your active community offer a relatively low cost, highly effective benefit for your early adopters. We can easily identify and nurture early adopters, ensuring that the value proposition of any change is clear and tangible. Dissemination of new ideas and content is accelerated through tactics of reposting, sharing comments and liking.

### **CREATE A HUB FOR INSPIRATION**

Sharing information, developing new content, and creating a place where members can work outside traditional structures, can help break out of ingrained silos; and can encourage cross-fertilisation between areas of interest that enrich learning and accelerate impact. Creating additional opportunities to network and collaborate can add value to membership.

### **DRIVE CONVERSION**

Digitalisation allows associations to embrace different types of Freemium models, providing some benefits of membership to non-members. In the connected world where content and networking are often free, this gives you an opportunity to engage with individuals differently, allowing them to try and test whether the association would be valuable to them. Freemium models can enhance the reputation of associations and support conversions to membership.

### **CONCLUSION**

While going digital is not a panacea for associations, no organisation will function effectively without it in the world today. Digitalisation is not about technology, but about member-centricity. Ensuring that your association continues to climb up the innovation curve may necessitate walking a fine line between long-term, loyal and influential members who are happy with business-as-usual, and young professionals with an appetite for active engagement and participation whose long-term loyalty has not yet been secured. In resource-constrained, risk-averse environments, many associations are walking this fine line trying not to tip of the scales too far in one direction at the expense of the other.

Overcoming this requires all functions within an association to be working towards the same goal of maximising engagement of current and future stakeholders. It requires the senior leadership to ensure its focus remains on working towards meeting the collective needs of membership. Listening to influential and vocal voices is important, but so is engaging the youngest professionals in dialogues concerning the future of their association. *What would they do if they were to create your association today? How would it look, how would it function? What would their vision be?*

As association leaders, we need to identify ways to reward innovation and creativity, and commit to the long-term gain over short-term needs. Innovation is not just about technology but about constantly reviewing the ways in which we engage with our members and other stakeholders. We must ensure we are not doing something just because that's the way it's always been done. Instead, we must identify the best way to work towards achieving our vision and mission.

Our ability to adapt and respond quickly to the ever-changing tides and currents of the digital world will be a determining factor in our success. If we aren't providing the platforms for our members to connect virtually, the likelihood that someone else will is almost inevitable.

MORE ON THE WEBSITE  
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### 3 CAREER BUILDING:

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### 4 DEVELOPMENT:

The things that you will learn while participating in an committee will directly translate into professional and personal development.

### 5 SERVICE:

Joining a committee gives you the opportunity to contribute to the growth and future success of your sector.

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# MEMBERSHIP FRAMEWORKS FOR TODAY'S ASSOCIATIONS

**Members are the mainstay of associations, yet the concept of membership is subject to a constant evolution that mirrors the world we live in and the ever-changing nature of society. This article reviews some significant factors that organisational leaders must take into consideration to allow for organic and sustained growth within their member base.**



**FRANK M  
WAECHTER**

## RETHINKING MEMBERSHIP FRAMEWORKS

When faced with stagnant or declining member numbers, some associations struggle to come up with innovative policies. An effective way of going about this is to focus on the elements that are limiting growth, which requires analytical and systematical thinking. To do that, it's useful to bring in the concept of the membership lifecycle, which views it a continuum consisting of five stages:

- **Awareness:** A stage aimed at attracting potential affiliates or supporters, where awareness has to be needs-based.
- **Recruitment:** Once individuals have joined, all efforts must be directed to reinforce the idea that being a supporter is worthy and valuable beyond the joining date.
- **Engagement & Retention:** Feelings of belonging do not come automatically. The first year is critical, and plans must be in place to ensure on-boarding and that every interaction creates a strong positive impression.
- **Renewal:** Average first-time renewal rates are between 67 and 75 percent, but they are higher in organisations that take proactive steps to reinforce engagement months before renewal is due.
- **Reinstatement:** Affiliates who did not renew membership should not be seen as lost opportunities, as they may decide to join again if they realise they are valued nonetheless.

To strengthen the viability of such framework, it is necessary to weigh it against the most prominent issues affecting the industry, as detailed in the following sections.

## QUALITY, VALUE AND RELEVANCE

Offering quality content with a clear educational value is one of the cornerstones of lasting engagement. This is why many organisations are creating a Chief Learning Officer role to co-ordinate the internal educational mission and offerings and to meet informational needs, training, and credentialing. All affiliates highly value this offering irrespective of their age. To do that, it's useful to bring in new technologies like e-learning, MOOC platforms, and participative digital events where the flow of information goes back and forth. Delivering on-demand education, official certifications, and a bespoke selection of quality curated content can help associations profile themselves as forward-looking organisations.

Relevance and value also apply to membership categories. Traditional models are based on clear-cut demographic factors such as age or job title, but the multifaceted composition of social and professional identities requires a different and more tailored approach based on needs and interests. You can define categories (and pricing strategies) by balancing exclusivity, inclusivity, and a sense of ownership over what can be learned and done.

## FLEXIBLE MODELS AND FORESIGHT

Although the goals and mission of organisations remain pretty much unchanged over the years, the ways of generating loyalty change - and will keep changing. To be successful, associations must anticipate change (and especially generational change) and not merely react to it.

For instance, younger generations are mostly keen on accessibility and affordability in addition to traditional benefits like professional development and networking opportunities, so participation models should be flexible enough to account for this. Industry changes should also be foreseen, as they offer insights into how to broaden the range of specialisms, interests, and information offered to affiliates. Leaders have a crucial role here and must endeavour to avoid the traps of traditional thinking and to develop flexible learning habits, since being future-forward instead of solely focusing on what happens within their organisation sets a precedent.

Applying foresight and flexibility to participation and membership schemes will bolster the organisation's long-term vision and encourage affiliates to remain enthusiastic through the different stages of their lives.

## CONNECTIVITY AND INTEGRATION

Our last issue to consider involves the ability to see the big picture without losing local focus, to understand the relevance of both local and global perspectives, as well as the need for interconnection and increased co-operation between national and regional chapters. A local-first approach does not exclude global vision, and vice versa: what is clear is that one-size-fits-all content and programmes fail to engage members.

You can build connectivity also through networks where affiliates can connect between themselves as well as to the organisation. Online or virtual communities are the ideal tool for that purpose. The specific policies to foster connectivity and integration between local and global may vary, but below are some questions to consider:

- 1 **What does it mean to be global in our particular ecosystem?**
- 2 **What are current barriers to local, regional, and global engagement?**
- 3 **Could we partner with other organisations to amplify our geographical reach?**

- 4 **Would joint affiliation schemes benefit our main audience and help carry our message further?**

- 5 **What can we contribute as a group to local, regional, and global concerns?**

Bridging local needs with regional and global concerns is an essential step towards creating stronger relationships across the board.

## CONCLUSION

To build a solid membership model and to engage future generations of members, organisations have to anticipate change, not just respond to it. Many organisations fail to prove to young generations the advantages of being an association member.

Establishing a framework that accounts for all stages; offering quality, value, and relevance; adapting membership models with flexibility and foresight, and fostering technology, connectivity and integration are crucial for organisations that want to stay relevant in a competitive and ever-changing environment and to offer lasting value to all their members and supporters.

This article was provided by the International Association of Professional Congress Organisers, author FRANK M. WAECHTER, on behalf of IAPCO Council member Alain Pittet, Congrex Switzerland. Congrex Switzerland is a leading global provider of customised solutions in the field of meeting management and strategic consultancy for associations, corporations and governmental institutions. IAPCO represents today 120 companies comprised of professional congress organisers, meeting planners and managers of international and national congresses, conventions and special events from 41 countries

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# USING TECHNOLOGY FOR MEMBER GROWTH AND ENGAGEMENT

**Technology is not often quoted as a pathway to member retention, growth and engagement. The Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia (IPWEA) is achieving important successes from integrating its technology and communications strategies.**



**CHRIS  
CHAMPION**

The new website adopted was the front end of a (Higher Logic) private networking community platform. This placed a strong focus on user generated content and community forums. The IPWEA's five online communities of practice launched a few months after the website and included our Ask Your Mates Open Forum, This has become a key driver to growth in our database. IPWEA has been able to position our forum as the premier place to discuss public works issues globally – ahead of any LinkedIn community or forum.

## **SYSTEMS FIRST APPROACH**

The strategy commenced some time back with implementing a solid (IMIS) membership and contact database and integrating it with our financial systems and event registration processes. This provided the early foundations to launch a website fully integrated in the backend to our database.

Even though IPWEA membership stagnated at around 2,000 for a decade or more, through a series of technology and other measures, membership has now doubled to 4,000. The contact database including non-members has now grown to 25,000+ individuals and organisations – six times our membership. We now market our products and services to 25,000 contacts in our sector way beyond our initial membership "market".

Free web accounts. A decision was taken to subscribe our total database to our new communities of practice discussion forums (based on past interest areas) and to our Ask Your Mates Open Forum. Importantly we also allowed the creation of free IPWEA web accounts for non-members to access our communities of practice. These communities are strongly supported and Ask Your Mates has been a key initiative in engaging both members and non-members.

All IPWEA Divisions opted into the central membership database instead of the previous fragmented state-by-state approach. This was an essential element that also led to a single sign on policy for the integration of all third-party systems.

Website hits at the launch of the new website in 2011 were around 4,000 hits per month. The launch of our communities of practice and open forum in early 2012 saw this quickly grow to 7,000 hits per month.

## **INTEGRATING TECHNOLOGY AND COMMUNICATIONS.**

The next element was the refresh and re-launch of IPWEA's Public Works Professional magazine. IPWEA took a multi-channel approach to our communications and launched new e-newsletters. With declining advertising revenue, due to the trend to digital and the economic climate, IPWEA has now brought the magazine in-house and moved to a digital only format.

All magazine and e-newsletter articles are posted as blogs on the IPWEA website. These are tweeted to IPWEA's social media audience and posted on LinkedIn and Facebook using Zapier which connects applications and automates workflows. Linking these back to IPWEA's website for the full article increases web traffic.

The e-newsletters and magazine generate significant spikes in traffic to the IPWEA website. Visits to the website more than trebled to 12,000+ hits per month in two years and we are now achieving 26,000 hits per month in 2017.

## **SIMPLIFYING MEMBER JOIN.**

A common membership fee structure was agreed across all divisions to allow a simplified online membership join process to be implemented. Instead of downloading one of the many membership forms from one of the division sites, then finding a fax machine to send it back, potential members can now quickly join online. They only need to provide the simplest of contact information and their credit card details and their application is accepted.

People often don't join because the process is too hard or they have never been asked to join. Implementing a simple online join process allowed us to then invite our non-member contacts to join the Institute with some immediate success.

Our integrated systems and communication strategies attracted the attention of our sister association in New Zealand. They did not have the capacity to implement their own systems and within 12 months they decided to merge to form a new division of IPWEA. This added around 800 members to the Institute.

International Online Learning. Time constraints in daily life is creating a shift to online learning. IPWEA has converted its key 3-day face-to-face workshops to a quality, interactive and engaging online format of 8 modules delivered over 10 weeks. This leads to the award of an IPWEA Professional Certificate in an area that is meeting the needs of an international audience. Registrations have more than doubled to 180 participants per course resulting in a strong return on investment. We are using LinkedIn, Twitter and collaborations with overseas associations to expand our international market.

IPWEA has a forward pipeline of new publications and industry practice notes. Our business model is to research and publish much needed professional resources for our members and the wider sector generally. These are marketed to our member and non-member database. The publications also form the basis for training workshops and can lead to subscription service offerings. Product and service subscriptions now form about 25% of total income diversifying revenue streams away from membership.

IPWEA's integrated systems, open communities of practice, online blogs, automated workflows, simplified member join process, and international eLearning program are having a dramatic impact on growth, branding, positioning and marketing. IPWEA has been ranked #1 for member engagement and membership value in benchmarking surveys greatly assisted by its integrated technologies and communications.

The article was provided by

CHRIS CHAMPION,

Director International, Institute of Public Works Engineering Australasia (IPWEA)  
Secretary General, International Federation of Municipal Engineering (IFME)

Chris Champion was CEO of IPWEA for 15 years. He has now taken on an international role to grow their global networks and business. He was appointed Secretary General of IFME in 2015

## EARS RECRUITING FOR ASSOCIATIONS

Imagine you are to choose between two candidates to make a hire for your association. One of the two candidates knows your industry inside-out but would need to learn the "Brussels job". The other is an accomplished association professional who would discover your sector pretty much from scratch.

### WHOM WOULD YOU RATHER HIRE?

Hands-on technical and practical experience is, undoubtedly, extremely precious. It is also, often, the basis for finding the right fit. Without digging deeper into understanding the soft skills-set of the candidates, however, betting simply on the one that knows the industry better may be a very risky gamble.

### WHAT SKILLS TO LOOK FOR, THEN?

Think of what makes your association's top employees exceptional. It may be their ability to build consensus amongst - sometimes contrasting - members' interests and positions or their initiative coupled with patience and persistence. A skilled diplomatic networker will open doors to your key stakeholders.

**Anna Koj** is a Consultant with EARS. She specialises in strategic communications, institutional relations and organisational leadership.

EARS is the first recruitment agency in Brussels dedicated to EU Affairs and International Relations. To best respond to its clients' diverse needs, EARS offers a portfolio of tailor-made services within recruitment and talent management. In the upcoming editions, it will discuss specificities of recruiting for associations.

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# MEMBERSHIP ENGAGEMENT

## CREATE A CONNECTED TRIBE

Jeffer London is an engagement-maker at the **Center for Creative Leadership**.

Find his insights into dialogue at [jeffer-london.com](http://jeffer-london.com) and services at [ccl.org](http://ccl.org).



Members join an association to make a difference. We need to help people to make that difference, together. Empowering collaboration is part of our job in leading an association – we need to put mechanisms in place where our members can work on shared causes. To make this work, we need to set the intention, invite conversation and stay out of the way. While social platforms do have some chaos, they also let us share our challenge and invite creative solutions.

Offering platforms such as slack or hipchat, where our members can work on delivering the mission together is exciting and empowering. Kristin Kullen-Lester & Charles Palus, researchers at the Center for Creative Leadership, point out in their white paper "Social Networks and their Role in Leadership" that our productivity depends less on our chain of command and more on a wide web of contributors. This is especially true in volunteer-driven communities, where digital collaboration is transforming engagement.

When thousands of people decided to take to the streets in the Women's March, the community was formed in a matter of weeks – Tanja Gohlert, who was one of the passionate voices uniting that tribe in Brussels, points out how important it was to make alliances, offer a message of hope and use social platforms. It is clear that people are moved more by many mini conversations among friends on Facebook, than by getting a memo from the Association Director.





# HEADQUARTERS MAGAZINE LAUNCHES BRAND NEW DIGITAL MAGAZINE

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# OVERALL COSTS FOR MEETINGS AND EVENTS WILL CONTINUE TO RISE, STUDY FINDS

**The overall cost per attendee per day for meetings and events (M&E) around the globe has increased in 2017 and is expected to continue rising next year, according to the 2018 Meetings and Events Future Trends report.**

Released in early September by CWT Meetings & Events (CWT M&E), a division of global travel management company Carlson Wagonlit Travel, the report shows the regional differences and cost projections as well as the latest industry trends and top destinations.

"Costs are rising in key M&E markets, globally," said Cindy Fisher, senior vice president and global head, CWT M&E. "With a 3.7% increase in hotels and 3.5% rise in air fares projected for the coming year, that trend is likely to continue."

This will have a significant impact on some of the top global destinations including London, São Paulo, and Rio de Janeiro. Also, certain popular venues in these cities may see drop-offs next year.

The global airline industry's capacity is expected to grow around 7% in 2017 and 6% in 2018. The segmenting of air fares is broadening the appeal to travellers as they are able to purchase from options including a basic economy restricted fare or various upgraded fares, with specific service options.

## Top 10 meeting destinations in EMEA in 2017 according to Cvent data

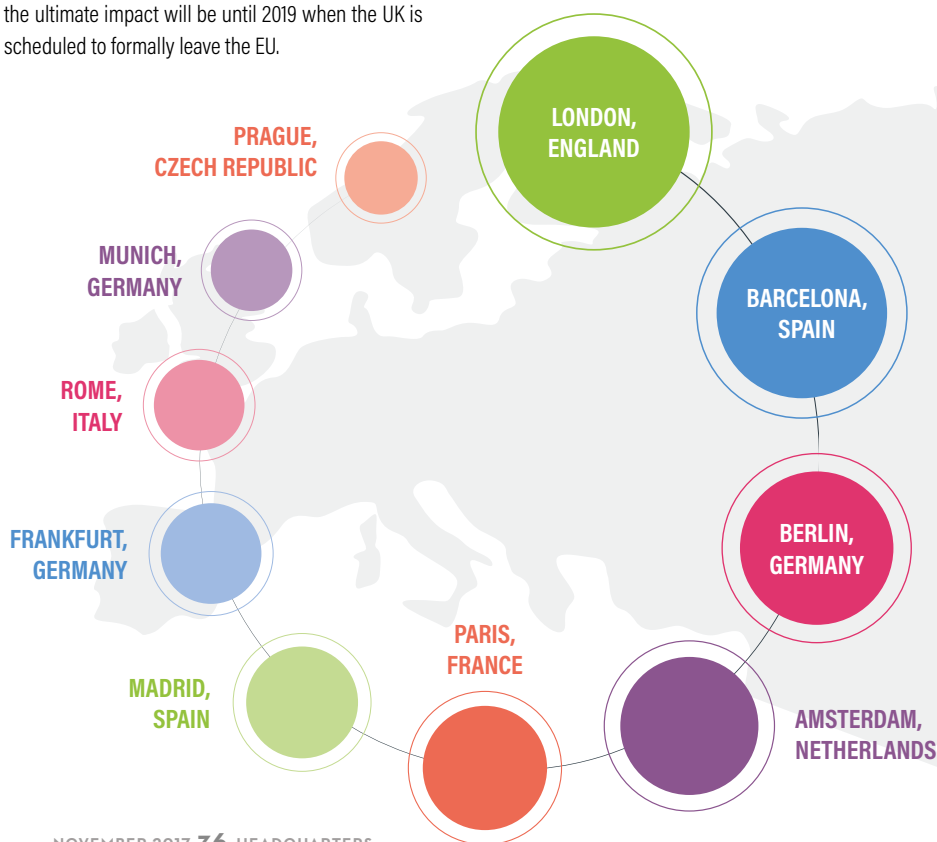
### EUROPE, MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA

The cost per attendee per day for meetings and events in Europe, Middle East and Africa (EMEA) has increased by 4% this year. Costs are increasing slightly while the economy across the region is flat, once inflation and currency fluctuations are taken into account. In real terms, M&E costs are going up incrementally, and this is expected to continue into 2018.

That said, Brexit could mark a major change for most of Europe. To date, the main impact has been to attract people to the UK due to the reduction in value of pound sterling. But it is too early to define what the ultimate impact will be until 2019 when the UK is scheduled to formally leave the EU.

It is impossible to ignore the impact of safety and security when it comes to venue selection in Europe, Middle East and Africa, with many countries being unavailable. Terrorist attacks in Barcelona, Berlin, Brussels, London, Manchester and Paris all have an impact as well, even if in the short-term.

Italy and Portugal are becoming more popular with its reasonable pricing. Germany and the UK remain as popular as ever. Specific cities such as Berlin, Dusseldorf, Cologne and Vienna are attracting more interest.



## LATIN AMERICA

The cost per attendee per day for meetings and events in Latin America has increased by 1% in 2017. In 2018 both hotel and air fare costs are predicted to undergo nominal growth across the region, with some notable local variations.

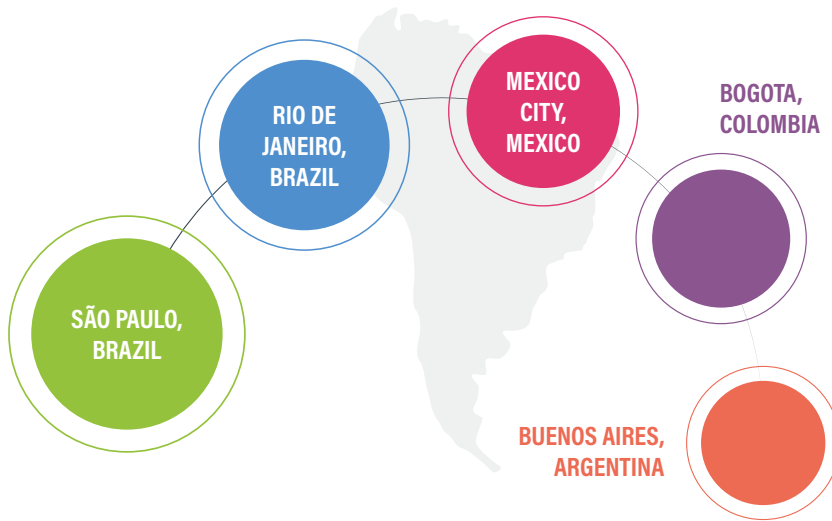
There is an emerging trend in the region – particularly Argentina – that sees event organisers forfeiting luxury accommodation in exchange for better food and beverage options, enhanced Wi-Fi and more flexible services. This is driving demand in midscale hotels across the whole region. Venue costs are expected to increase by 3-5% in popular markets like Colombia and Mexico, while the overall figure for the region is for venue costs to increase by 2%.

In 2018, we an estimated 20% reduction is expected in group sizes in Brazil due to the weakened economy as clients with less budget are looking to do more domestic events. Rio de Janeiro is set to host many events, buoyed by the new hotels and venues following last summer's Olympic Games. However, there are major security considerations which will slow the city's growth as an event destination.

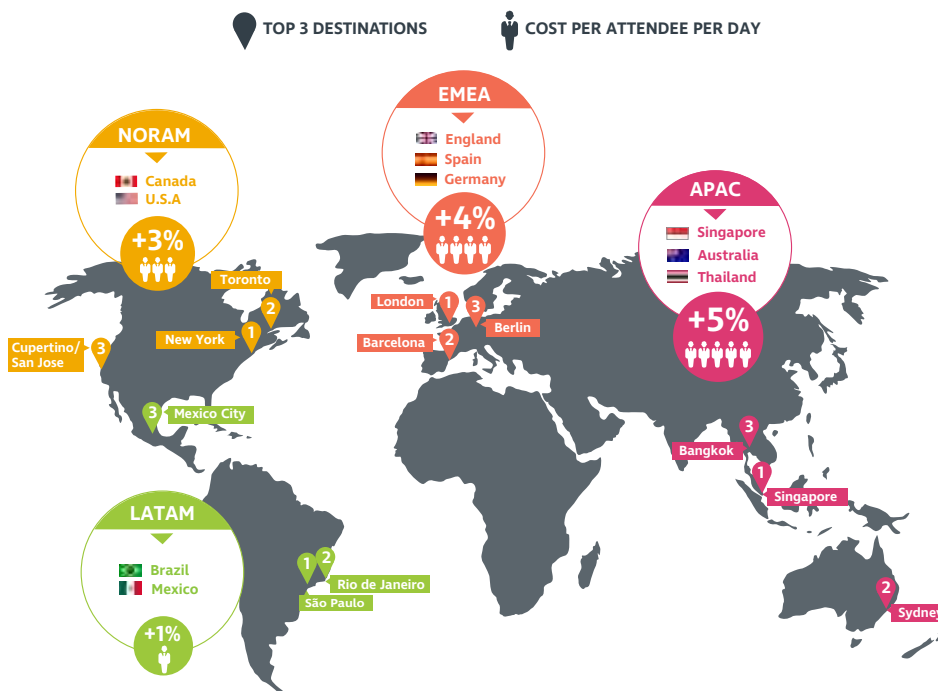
Large-scale hotel developments and refurbishments in Colombia are making it a desirable destination for the US M&E market. For instance, Medellin's hotel accommodation is improving considerably, as are its convention centres. The coffee region is increasingly attractive because it is different and the costs are low.

Other lesser known destinations are beginning to make their mark in the region including the exotic – but still accessible – Atacama Desert in Chile, as well as Iguazu Falls on the border between Argentina and Brazil.

## Top 5 meetings destinations in Latin America in 2017 according to CWT booking data



## 2018 meetings and events future trends



CWT Meetings&Events

© CWT 2017

Based on CWT booking data, Event data and Smith Travel Research.

## Trends and Tips

### [ FOCUS ON 'WHY' ]

Set clear objectives from the start and use them to define your budget. Put a major emphasis on attendee engagement and then measure.

### [ BUDGET ]

Always start with the value the meeting or event can generate. A clear ROI for all to see is key to continued investment and successful meetings.

### [ ATTENDEE EXPERIENCE ]

Make the whole process as simple as possible.

### [ TECHNOLOGY ]

Use technology to make conversations easier, and create user-friendly personalized experiences.

### [ SAFETY AND SECURITY ]

Plan for the amount of risk for each situation including physical and cybersecurity, and do not inconvenience attendees.

# LEARNING HOW TO STAY RELEVANT TO YOUR MEMBERS

**When I looked at the topic for this issue of Headquarters Magazine the first thing I thought to myself was that I was going to need more than just the one column that I always get. When the topic is “membership” I honestly don’t know where to start because membership is, and always has been, the cornerstone of every association. Not only is membership the driver of our organizations financially, but it’s the reason our organizations even exist in the first place. The only way to approach this topic is to focus on what’s happening right now in the Association world regarding membership recruitment, engagement, and retention.**

One of the most frightening statistics that I’ve seen in recent years are two surveys, one from the United States, and one from Europe, showing that most associations (slightly more than half) are either losing members or just barely holding on to the ones they already have. There are a couple of key reasons for this trend. One is the changes that have occurred in the worldwide economy since the last great recession. That was a period when many people and companies left their membership organizations to save money during difficult times. When the economies began to recover, these members did not reinstate their memberships because, quite frankly, they had learned to do without.

The other reason that is most obvious regarding for this downturn in membership is the fact that technologies – specifically Google and social media – have allowed people and organizations to gather information they used to have to join associations to get, and to make direct contact with people and other publics via social media that they use to contact through their membership in associations and similar organizations.

So, where does that leave associations in the modern world? There are three things every membership-based organization needs to be concentrating on, not only now but in the foreseeable future if they’re going to attract, engage, and retain their members.



## ASSOCIATION INSIGHTS from Mark Levin

**1** Learn how to move from assumption to anticipation when communicating with members and prospective members. This means we can no longer wait for members to tell us what they want, what they need, what meetings they want to go to, and what information they desire. We have to use the data and technology that's available to us (as Association executives) to actually anticipate what the next step is in the membership life of each of our members or at least categories of membership. Our competition from the private sector has become so fierce that members don't just compare their experience in our organization to their experience in other organizations, they compare their experience in our organization to the experience they have dealing with every other type of service provider in their personal and business lives. Yes, that means we are all competing with Google, with Amazon, and with the other leaders in every part of the service economy in our respective spheres.

**2** Start dealing more effectively with the need to personalize and customize everything we do in relation to our communications with, and service to, our members and prospective members. This DOES mean we do have to do some levels of generational marketing. We need to understand that different generations look for different things in their membership organization, and it's not stereotyping to say that some of the differences among generations are identifiable to the point where we can be responsive to what those differences are. One of the things we must do to be effective in generational marketing is to realize that the "millennial" generation that so many of us have been happy to stereotype and ridicule for several years now represents the largest segment of the working population in most countries. We have to stop to think that based on most demographic studies, millennials are identified as people who were born in around 1980 to 1982. That puts these people in their mid-30s, where we can no longer group them into young people or new professionals because many of them are now moving into middle and upper management in their companies, or into the second or even third stages of their careers. We have to change how we deal with this group that is fast becoming the biggest generation of members, and is also starting to move into leadership roles in our organizations

**3** Understand the new meaning of engagement. We are long past the day when we can measure the interest of a member or member company by how often they participate in association activities such as meetings, conferences, leadership positions, or educational activities. We have to measure their "engagement" in our organizations by their responsiveness to virtually everything we do. Some members, and some companies, may never come to one of our traditional activities but that doesn't mean they can't be engaged in our organizations. It's our job to find out what each of our members' seeks from membership in our organization and to deliver to them in whatever manner is most comfortable to them (given the resources of our group).

I realize these three statements about what we need to do to increase membership in today's marketplace don't give a lot of specific activities that your organization can undertake. Maybe in a future article we can delve into each of these areas more in detail. What's important right now is to remember that membership recruitment, engagement, and retention will always be a critical part of what we do to be successful. Let's remember that as technology and other circumstances change the lives of our members, that we need to change along with those times. Continuing down the path of slowly losing members, or barely staying even, is just not acceptable.



**Mark Levin**, CAE, CSP has more than 20 years of experience as an association executive, and is also an internationally-known speaker and consultant to the nonprofit and association community. He currently serves as Executive Vice President of the Chain Link Fence Manufacturers Institute, an international trade association, and as President of B.A.I., Inc., his speaking and consulting firm.

He can be reached at [mark@baileadership.com](mailto:mark@baileadership.com) or via his website at [www.baileadership.com](http://www.baileadership.com)

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### Why should you attend EAS 2018?

For the sixth consecutive year, visit.brussels is organising the European Association Summit (EAS) in Brussels on 8 and 9 March. The event has become an unmissable opportunity to share information and knowledge, and network with other international associations. This annual peer-to-peer education and networking forum is being organised in collaboration with the leading partners in the sector: ESAE (European Society of Association Executives), FAIB (Federation of European & International Associations Based in Belgium), UIA (Union of International Associations), ICCA (International Congress and Convention Association) and PCMA (Professional Convention Management Association).

### EAS covers the issues you face

The EAS programme is designed by associations for associations. Ranging from big societal issues, European Union matters, strategy, governance, member relations, event management, communications and new technologies, the summit has the right mix of issues for all associations.

### Diversity of case studies

One moderator and multiple speakers provide debates, lectures on practical issues, interactive sessions with the audience. Join us and learn directly from peers from the association community.

### Give your input

Peer-to-peer is changing the world. At the EAS event you'll have the opportunity to highlight your local issues with peers at different sessions and receive new ideas for your daily activities.

### Brussels, THE hub for associations

Hosting more than 2000 associations, Brussels is THE key hub for international associations. By joining the summit you also plug into a bigger network and expand your professional contacts.



**More information:**  
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# MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXHIBITORS ATTENDING AIME IN 2018

**The 2017 Asia-Pacific Incentives and Meetings Expo (AIME) has seen exhibitors engage with 275 Hosted Buyers with a combined buying power of \$1.2 billion dollars.**

**For two days in February, AIME 2018 will see the high quality of buyers return to Melbourne seeking new business opportunities and outcomes.**

According to Tourism Research Australia, over the last financial year domestic overnight business trips grew 8 per cent to 19.9 million, due to increased short trips of 1 to 3 nights by business travellers, (up 13% to 14.4 million) and decreased longer trips of 4 or more nights (down 4% to 5.5 million).

Recognising this trend in the domestic landscape, for the very first time **AIME 2018** will open the doors to allow domestic Day Buyers to be a part of the official Buyer program. This flexible program enables domestic buyers to participate in **AIME** on their day of choice, with no mandatory events as part of their schedule. They will have unlimited access to exhibitor appointment diaries, the show floor and the Welcome Event.

This will provide exhibitors with more opportunities for business outcomes, with a larger variety of buyers to meet and network with.

Angela Sciacca, Project Manager of **AIME**, commented on the value **AIME** offers destinations, venues, suppliers, team building and activity companies, who showcase their latest offerings for buyers in the Asia-Pacific.

*"Like many industry shows, **AIME** isn't necessarily about instant ROI, it's about playing a long game and building relationships that will result in business for years to come. At **AIME**, the value is in being present, participating and giving yourself a competitive advantage. Ultimately, it's about exposure to thousands of event professionals who flock to Melbourne for this pinnacle annual exhibition."*

*"We know from previous years domestic buyers often attend **AIME** as visitors, because they can come and go as they please. The new Day Buyer program, allows the ultimate flexibility, with no mandatory sessions, but makes the most of the exhibitor diaries and invitations to attend networking events. Earlier this year **AIME** welcomed over 2,000 trade attendees; the changes to the appointment diaries means that exhibitors will have even more opportunities to connect and meet with buyers from around Australia and the Asia-Pacific," said Ms Sciacca.*

In 2017 approximately 76 per cent of Hosted Buyers were of a senior management level.

A cross section of industry was represented, with 45 per cent from agency, 39 per cent from corporate and 16 per cent from associations; in 2018 these numbers are expected to increase with an acquisition scheme that utilises the global ibtm events portfolio.

*"There has never been a better time to exhibit at **AIME** 2018 will see great destinations, brands and bureaux returning, including Business Events Australia, New Zealand, Perth Convention Bureau, ICC Sydney, Hyatt Hotels, TFE Hotels, Centium Software and Harry the Hirer," concluded Ms Sciacca.*

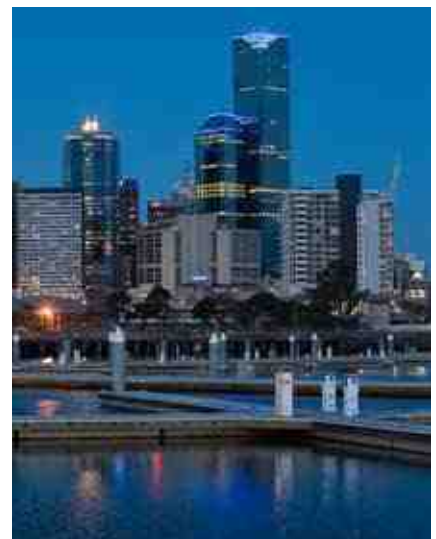
**AIME** have again partnered with Info Salons, who will bring their innovative technology Konduko to the show floor, offering exhibitors and attendees the efficiencies of digital 'handshakes' using NFC technology. While long-time partner and award-winning exhibition and event specialist, ExpoNet will be on hand to provide exhibitors with all their stand-related needs.



**WHEN:**  
20-21 February 2018

**WHERE:**  
Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre  
(MCEC), Melbourne, Australia

Meet the Headquarters Magazine team at  
AIME 2018, Vivian Xu and Jesús Guerrero  
Chacón





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MAGAZINE

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# THE FIVE DESTINATION MARKETING TRENDS THAT WILL IMPACT THE MEETINGS INDUSTRY IN 2018

Destination marketing has been, is and will continue changing in coming years. Where the Meetings Industry is concerned, new attendees are a constant, urging Industry members to **adapt** their events in terms of **attractiveness** and choice. Thus, many Destinations Marketing Organisations (DMOs) have changed the way in which they operate to acclimate to a changing environment. Marketing itself is not enough anymore, now it is all about business, management, development and attracting citizens and students.

## BUSINESS EVENTS AS EXPERIENTIAL CITY MARKETING PLATFORMS

Purposeful meetings are on the rise. Organizations gravitate towards **perfecting content** with greater innovation and insight. Understanding a meetings purpose is key as it allows to join in elements that help accomplish said purpose.

Pier Paolo Mariotti said it best when he explained: *"Destinations are focusing their attention on the **knowledge economy** and the Industry is looking to enhance talent pools in the city and present congresses that they are able to bring in. These events acquired by the talents working and operating in the destination are the best platforms for showcasing the excellences in the branch of knowledge, but also what each destination can offer in terms of location, venue and the destination tout-court."*

These events, whether they are conferences or congresses, bring knowledge of a specific field along with the promise of networks into the city, not only improving the standing of that particular field, but also raising awareness among the public & other stakeholders. Beyond the urge of showing the economic impact that equates to a certain destination, it is also important to look at the **bigger picture** so as to view the extent of what has been created within the destination and its reach as it spreads out throughout Europe (or the World).

Visitors create an **economic value** that translates into new job opportunities, a better quality of life and a greater awareness of the location's residents. The latter is becoming increasingly important seeing as how visitors are progressively interested in exploring the city in which their event is taking place and having

a more authentic travel experience by frequenting local restaurants and attractions. The new trend is for a full **destination experience**. It's almost as if the city itself is becoming the venue.

This means that many organizations would have to adapt event schedules to leave room for sightseeing, city touring and more, creating a fulfilling experience for attendees, that is based not only on a solid content, but also on the destination in which it will take place. The latter is what will create return visitation and generate engagement. Cities receive all of the benefits of a positive economic impact while bypassing any of the negative effects of tourism.

However, a greater want for knowledge means an increase in content density, conversely reducing organized downtime. European Cities Marketing



31<sup>st</sup> European Cities Marketing Summer School, Dresden, 26-30 August, 2017

President Dieter Hardt-Stremayr stated earlier this year: *"Gone are the days when classic sightseeing tours could be offered to show the participants where their meeting is taking place. It's more and more important to show them how the respective destinations benefit from the findings of the conference that is taking place, what the event means for the reputation of the local universities and research institutions. That means exploring the cities in a total different way, many times totally off the touristic track. Nevertheless there still will be the desire for a return visitation in a more touristic way with friends and family."*

### ECM SUMMER SCHOOL AS A MEANS TO HIGHLIGHT AND SHARE THIS KNOWLEDGE

The ECM Summer School allows for the best of both content and destination. It is the perfect opportunity to learn about new trends that are and will be developing. The aim is to equip professionals with the latest marketing tools and to help them to develop the knowledge and skills required for a successful career in conference, meetings and event management.

The school takes place over the course of 4 days, and is held in a different location every year. It gathers both young professionals just entering the Meetings Industry and some of the biggest names in our business, allowing for a physical manifestation of students creating their network. They are brought together in a workshop style where they have to determine what it takes to bring an international meeting to a city. The program includes presentations from faculty members, concentration, engagement and teamwork to produce the best outcome. ECM Summer School has travelled across Europe to unite eager students with knowledge-filled faculty.

The major asset of the ECM's Summer School in all these years has been the Faculty. It is not made up of academics but of seasoned practitioners who have had years of hands-on experiences in their career. They are experienced meeting professionals working for relevant institutions and related professionals that give added value to the course. The Faculty members occupy senior management or relevant positions within the company and volunteer to act as teaching staff during the course of the Summer School.

### NEXT ECM SUMMER SCHOOL

**Next year's ECM Summer School will be held in Thessaloniki, Greece, from 25-29 August, 2018.**

The city of Thessaloniki is a vibrant modern metropolis. Built on the waters of the North Aegen sea, the city and its 1 million inhabitants are renowned for their hospitality and easy going lifestyle. Thessaloniki is a business centre of enormous European and international interest.

The city is buzzing with energy and fresh business ventures and hosts a great number of conferences, seminars and important business events all year round. Thessaloniki is a well-known host of international conventions due to its strategic location and its great range of conference spaces, accommodating small or large meetings perfectly.

For more information, visit our website  
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## WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT ECM'S SUMMER SCHOOL

*«It was an unforgettable experience with very interesting topics about the Meetings Industry! Everything was well organised and structured. The ECM Summer School is one of the best oportunities to meet people with the same aims, challenges and difficulties in the Meetings Industry.»*

**Nadine Roth, Assistant Manager Conventions, visitBerlin Berlin Convention Office**

*«The summer school is an incredible opportunity to network with peers within the meetings trade. It is an opportunity to learn, grow and share experience with the experts who shape the industry - it is an invaluable network to be part of and a chance to discuss challenges and produce creative solutions.»*

**Graeme Mackay, Ambassador Programme Executive, visitAberdeenshire**

*«For me the ECM Summer School was a brilliant start into this industry. Next to brilliant classes I also made new contacts from all different kind of countries and learnt lots about their way of working. A real great experience, which I could recommend to everybody.»*

**Martina Fuhrer, Business Development Manager, Montreux-Vevey Tourism CVB**

### ABOUT ECM

In Europe, the leading association for cities is European Cities Marketing. The power of its 100 members represented in 36 countries enables the association to constantly strive for excellence. The association provides crucial platforms for convention, leisure and city marketing professionals to exchange know-how, market intelligence, best practices and benchmark within a member peer group.

With the incorporation of national convention bureaus, ECM becomes the only platform to deliver such an opportunity for dialogue between cities, regions and nations, whether it refers to the leisure or the meetings industry.

**Are you a CVB, a CTO, a City Marketing organisation? Join us now!**

Contact Flavie Baudot

[FLAVIE@EUROPEANCITIESMARKETING.COM](mailto:FLAVIE@EUROPEANCITIESMARKETING.COM)

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# RIGA CONVENING IN THE JUGENDSTIL CAPITAL OF THE WORLD

**Visiting the ICCA Congress a few years ago, I had my first lesson in Northern geography from Aigars Smiltans, MEET RIGA. On the one hand you have the Scandinavian countries and on the other the Baltic states, forming all together the Nordic region of Europe. They are all very different. So, don't call Latvia a Scandinavian country. Nor should you think that Latvia is similar to Lithuania or Estonia. With Riga as its capital city, Latvia is the second largest biggest Baltic state, with Riga being the biggest city in the region. What do they all have in common? Northern exoticism perhaps? And what makes Riga amongst the Baltic options a desirable destination for meeting planners?**

## **NOT SO FAR AWAY BUT PERHAPS A BIT UNKNOWN**

When a country is being described as 'a bit unknown' there is this sudden urge to go and visit it. That's exactly what happened to me when a couple of Latvian friends invited me to spend a long weekend in Riga. You cannot imagine how much I enjoyed that and how instructive that was. Edgars and Aigars (they do have cute names around there) guided me during two days and helped me discover Riga. I shall have to limit myself to a few tips or else there will be a whole chapter as there are endless things to see and to experience.

The first thing they recommended was to buy a Riga Card. The card gives you access to many advantages like free rides on the trams and trolley buses, free access to most of the city's museums, a free downtown walking tour ... and much much more. You can buy the card at the airport, the harbour, or get one at the Tourist Information Office in Blackheads House or again at most of the city's hotels.

There are 700.000 inhabitants in Riga which makes it by and large the biggest city in the Baltic States. I have splendid recollections of walking through the downtown area discovering that one third of the buildings there (close to 700) were built in Jugendstil. Many of the buildings have been designed by Mikhail

Eisenstein, whose father was Sergei Eisenstein, the director of the silent movie Battleship Potemkin.

What I particularly enjoyed though was a story about Christmas decorations. In 1510 – at least that is how the story starts – a group of men with black hats were decorating a Christmas tree in the very centre of Riga. After Christmas they burned the tree together with its decorations. Apparently, this is where the tradition of decorating Christmas trees originated from. Even more remarkable is that Christmas is celebrated twice in Riga. Catholics and Lutherans celebrate Christmas on December 24, but for the Russian Orthodox community Christmas is on January 7. And to remain in the religious context here's yet another extraordinary story. Most church towers in Riga are topped with a gilded cock. This is not related to the biblical story in which Jesus tells Apostle Peter he would disown him before the cock crowed three times. In Latvian folklore the cock has a positive significance: when he crows three times the devil has to return to hell. In other words, the cock is a protection against evil.

## **THE GOOD LIFE IS OMNIPRESENT**

As someone who likes to drink coffee I was more than pampered in Riga. There are baristas in all the nice places, often in historic buildings. Among the better places for a quick pit stop is Coffee Inn. There's also top-notch cuisine in Riga and if I can believe my

friends the up and coming chef is Ivans Šmigarevs of M'archers Restaurant. Though Riga is also very much in to health trends it has nevertheless become a well-known fact that the city's nightlife is worth exploring too. Luckily the cock is there to protect us from evil. And this is where I have to force myself to stop ... you absolutely need to go over there and discover it all for yourself!



**Dear Association meeting planner, what are you looking for in a destination? For example, Riga?**

1. If this city can offer an enriching historical cultural heritage with vivid evening and social program possibilities, that's already a good start.
2. In terms of meeting and event venues, a good blend of historical meeting halls and modern conference venues are an extra plus!
3. Also cost-benefit and safety are of high value these days.

So dear reader, do you have any idea who can provide the best answers to all these questions?

There should be little doubt that it has to be Aigars, the jolly and plain-spoken 'MEET RIGA' Director. He personifies the cheerfulness and positivity that are Riga's landmark characteristics.

Aigars Smiltans: 'With over 80 hotels and a total of 13,000 beds available, Riga is fully capable of hosting large congresses, conferences and official delegations. Over the next two years more than 750 hotel rooms will be added, including dozens of

conference rooms and professional multi-purpose meeting venues. To name only a few: Grand Hotel Kempinski Riga, Pulman Riga Old Town Hotel, Mercure Riga Center Hotel, SemaraH Metropole Riga Hotel, Wellton Centrum Hotel and many others. Many hotels have Green Key certificates, perfectly suiting the needs of associations, conferences and planners. These include the modern Radisson Blu Hotel Latvia and Radisson Blu Daugava Hotel. And let me add one more crucial characteristic: Riga provides very high value-for-money, good customer service and well-trained personnel.'

**One last question: What about the meeting venues?**

Riga boasts a number of great meeting venues. Among them we note the Great Guild House dating back to the 14th century, or the one-of-a-kind Riga Latvian Society House. Or shall it be the brand new National Library of Latvia, which is made of steel and glass and has a distinctly contemporary feel. As for pre- or post-conference activities, you will be almost dizzy with choice. Riga has a rich, 800-year historical heritage that combines influences from Germany, Sweden and Russia. And while you're at it, don't forget to try some modern Latvian cuisine, offering a great variety of flavours to tickle your taste buds and using fresh ingredients, grown locally.



**How to make contact with Riga?**

MEET RIGA is the city's official conventions bureau. Our partners include all major hotels, conference and event venues, destination management companies, professional congress organizers, meeting and incentive agencies, the commercial airline air Baltic, chartered bus and car rental companies and many others. At MEET RIGA, we believe we provide excellent services for international travel planners, meeting planners and media representatives.

MEET RIGA offers you a full range of services to help plan your next event. We'll give you inspiring ideas and advice for your meeting itself and for your post-meeting activities.



MORE INFORMATION

Aigars Smiltans  
MEET RIGA Director

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[WWW.MEETRIGA.COM/EN](http://WWW.MEETRIGA.COM/EN)

# BEYOND THE CAPITAL THERE'S A LOT MORE TO LATVIA THAN JUST RIGA

**Scenic castles, seaside resorts, stunning countryside - Latvia has got them all. If you think Riga is the best Latvia can offer, think again. It's about time to be adventurous and explore Latvia's many cultural attractions, natural wonders and culinary delights.**

With half of Latvia covered in forests, together with some 500 kilometres of beaches and four national parks, Latvia is among the world's greenest countries where pristine nature can be freely accessed by everyone and serve as an impressive setting for events and leisure activities, from easy walks and bird-watching in the woods to adrenaline-pumping water sports in the river and lakes.

While Riga remains Latvia's most sought-after destination, a diverse list of destinations and attractions are waiting to be discovered by those who don't mind going further afield - mostly just one hour or two from the capital by car or plane. From the beautiful Art Nouveau buildings in Liepāja to the pine-fringed beaches in Jūrmala to the picturesque river views in Sigulda, Latvia has something for everyone.

## BEAUTIFUL REGIONAL VENUES

Located within the Gauja National Park, Cēsis is one of Latvia's most beautiful cities just a 90-minute drive from Riga. **Cēsis Concert Hall**, which opened in 2014, is a unique multi-functional cultural centre featuring contemporary architectural designs, featuring an acoustic concert auditorium that seats 800; a chamber auditorium; an organ auditorium; a cinema auditorium and an exhibition hall.

This year, the city also sees the opening of more hotels such as **Villa Santa**, just a few minutes' walk from the Gauja River. Despite its location in the city, the hotel is in the proximity of the ancient valley of Gauja River in the Gauja National Park, which makes the hotel a good base to explore the countryside.

Liepāja, Latvia's third largest city, is only 40 minutes from Riga by plane thanks to a direct flight recently launched by airBaltic. A coastal city known for its Art Nouveau architecture, military heritage and beaches, Liepāja is home to the **Great Amber Concert Hall**, named after the gemstone that is the symbol of Liepāja and the Baltic Sea. The venue serves as a regional centre of culture and events featuring three concert halls - the Great Hall with 1,000 seats, the Chamber Hall with 200 seats and the Experimental Stage with 120 seats, complemented by the Art Space Civita Nova on the 1st floor and the Hall of Mirrors on the 6th floor.



→ <http://www.greatamber.lv/en>

Located in Latgale region of eastern Latvia, Rēzekne is a small town built on seven hills with a higher education

sector specialising in technologies. Located in the heart of the city, **GORS, The Embassy of Latgale** is a venue of choice for Baltic or wide regional events featuring two concert halls (1,000 seats and 220 seats respectively) equipped with high-quality acoustics, fit for concerts and big events. There are also three rooms that can accommodate up to 60 persons ideal for seminars, conferences, workshops and corporate events.



→ <http://www.latgalesgors.lv/en/story>

Just 30 minutes from central Riga and 20 minutes by car from the airport is Jūrmala, the largest seaside resort in the Baltic States. In recent years, the resort town has become a popular location for international conferences and meetings, including the Baltic Environmental Forum and the Golden Hammer International Advertising Festival. Jūrmala



INVESTING IN YOUR FUTURE



offers a wide range of venues from nice wooden architectural monuments to quaint summer cottages and the **Dzintari Concert Hall**, an elegant venue with outdoor and indoor spaces suitable for groups up to 600. Ideally located, modern five-star hotels with high standards can also be found all over the city, such as the five-star **Baltic Beach Hotel** and a selection of four-star properties such as **Hotel Jurmala Spa** and **Semarah Hotel Lielupe**, both with modern conference facilities.

### GORGEOUS NATURE AND DELICIOUS CUISINE

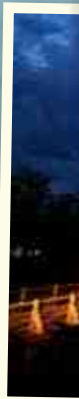
Located within Gauja National Park, Sigulda is Latvia's outdoor capital well known for its stunning scenery and ancient castles. Just less than an hour's drive from Riga, Sigulda has a lot to offer for those with a lust for adventures: hiking, rafting, ziplining, bobsledding, horse riding, skiing, bungee jumping, and cycling, to name just a few. Sigulda is perfect to visit on a day trip, ideal for small events whose delegates are based in Riga. Sigulda is also part of the Riga-Gauja region that represents the 2017 European Region of Gastronomy.

Speaking of fine dining, Latvian cuisine is taking on new heights in terms of sophistication in sourcing the ingredients. Inspired by their Nordic neighbours across the Baltic Sea, Latvia has reinvented their traditional cuisine to focus more on seasonal, local produce and humble ingredients sourced from the forests such as wild mushrooms, berries and game meats. Ingredients like chanterelles and porcini, sturgeon and pike perch, venison and duck, rhubarb and quince are typically used in contemporary Latvian cuisine.



→ <http://www.meetriga.com/en/7555-meet-jurmala>

→ <https://www.visitjurmala.lv/en/plan/meetings-and-events/>



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# KUALA LUMPUR CONVENTION CENTRE THE PERFECT BUSINESS EVENTS PARTNER



**The Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre (the Centre) is Malaysia's premier award-winning facility and Asia's only AIPC (International Association of Congress Centres) Gold Standard venue.**

Strategically located in the heart of the Kuala Lumpur City Centre (KLCC) integrated precinct, the Centre offers delegates an exciting range of recreational, entertainment, food & beverage and accommodation options. Combined with its flexible mind-set, innovative value-add solutions and customised offerings, the Centre is the perfect business events partner.

## CUSTOMISED CLIENT CENTRIC SOLUTIONS

According to the Centre's General Manager, Alan Pryor, "We are a purpose-built facility which provides the flexibility to accommodate events of all shapes and sizes. Whether it's an intimate gathering for 10 or a large-scale event for thousands, we are affordable and available and our dedicated sales and coordination teams work closely with clients on customising solutions to suit their specific needs."

Alan elaborated, "Under our partnership approach, we sit down with each client to discuss and analyse their event. Then, based on our extensive experience and venue

capabilities, we provide in-depth, strategic feedback on the event logistics, operational support and programme content. This also frees organisers from various hassles, especially logistics and services-related issues. From event safety and security, to liaising with main contractors/suppliers and handling additional requests for audio visual, Internet services, etc., we always go the extra mile to make sure everything runs seamlessly."

## DRIVING THE BUSINESS EVENTS AGENDA

To enhance the destination proposition in order to attract more international events and build a competitive advantage for Kuala Lumpur and Malaysia, the Centre has been focusing its efforts on strengthening local and international collaboration with industry players.

On the international front, the Centre has been collaborating with the International Association of Professional Congress Organisers (IAPCO). "This partnership aims to create greater awareness of Malaysia's multi-cultural diversity and compelling business events proposition amongst their 114 members across 40 countries. In September, we hosted the IAPCO Council Meeting, which brought top professional conference organisers to Malaysia, exposing them to the facility and showcasing what Kuala Lumpur has to offer," Alan shared.

On the local front, the Centre recently established the Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre Business Events Alliance (KLCC BEA) in partnership with key business events players and stakeholders in the Kuala Lumpur City Centre (KLCC) precinct. The KLCC BEA is a powerful collective consisting of the Centre, leading hotels, professional event planners, shopping, dining, entertainment and transportation partners strategically located in the heart of the city.

Alan continued, "A private sector initiative, the KLCC BEA provides a seamless and single point of first contact for Meeting Planners and Event Organisers. This allows us to market the fully-integrated city centre offering and create an all-inclusive proposition for meetings and events from a venue, planner, accommodation and entertainment perspective."

## LIVELY AND EXCITING TIMES AHEAD

The Centre's expansion also continues to progress and is due to be completed in mid-2019. The extension will provide an additional 10,000 sqm of flexible and multi-purpose space, enhancing the Centre's existing world-class infrastructure, grow Kuala Lumpur's reputation as a premier business events destination and help attract more international events to Malaysia. This means more room to comfortably accommodate larger exhibitions and international association meetings, as well as concurrent events, and the opportunity for many current clients to grow their activities and/or events significantly.



Alan Pryor, General Manager of Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre



Cultural showcase during IAPCO Council Meeting

### CONTACT

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# HANGZHOU: A CONVENTION PARADISE ON EARTH

**Dja Djaja or thank you. When you can hear that sound, it means you're at one of the tea plantations near China's most beautiful city and surroundings, Hangzhou. Tea villages are the city's pride, as are its thousands of decorative plane trees. Anyone reading this has surely already heard of the G20 Summit that took place here early in September of 2016. Hangzhou is still benefiting from the aftermath of this major event. Hangzhou has won itself a secure spot on the global map, certainly for convention organisers. *Marcel A.M. Vissers reports***

## **A DREAM WORLD FOR WORLD LEADERS**

Early this September, I spent four days feeling like a real world leader. I was visiting Hangzhou and got a taste of how the G20 world leaders were received here. It must have been a major feat of organisation. Long before the opening of the Summit, the city was being cleaned up and revamped. In anticipation of their arrival, China's leaders had ordered a multi-

billion pound makeover of this sweltering eastern metropolis, planting trees, shuttering factories and building new motorways and homes to ensure visitors go home with a good impression... After all, it was the first time that China hosted the G20.

I was literally and figuratively overwhelmed by our visit to the spectacular, 850,000 sq. metre convention centre - reputedly one of the country's largest standalone buildings - erected on the

eastern bank of the Qiantang river, an entirely new business area. This is where all the G20 meetings took place. The building still attracts around 3,000 visitors a day. Who on earth goes to visit a convention centre? They come here, to Hangzhou, because this building has become a permanent monument, titled 'The Hangzhou Olympic and International Expo Centre'. I'm not just saying it; I'm truly convinced this is one of the most beautiful convention centres worldwide.



I might be getting repetitive, but all the people I talked to in China consider Hangzhou with its romantic West Lake one of the loveliest cities in China. The lake is bordered by hundreds of plane trees, magnificently illuminated at night. You absolutely must take a boat trip; it's an experience that shouldn't be missed. During my last visit four years ago, some colleagues and I made a brilliant discovery: meetings on the lake. On four separate boats, we discussed the best slogans to help promote Hangzhou in the future. It was fun, just ask Dennis Speet, Director Marketing and Sales of ICCA, who enjoyed it most of all of us.

Hangzhou's famous West Lake is mentioned in all the guidebooks; it's undoubtedly one of the absolute highlights of any trip to the great country of China. In China, this enchanting lake, surrounded by green hills, has been described for over a thousand years in countless poems as one of the most beautiful places on earth. And because we were following in the steps of the G20 leaders, we also got to see the new water feature by the well-known Chinese director Zhang Yimou:

## 'Hangzhou, A Living Poem'

### FOOD IS GOOD

Hangzhou is also known as the Chinese City of Noodles. However, a few other famous restaurants may be found as well, offering exceptionally delicious local food. Hangzhou's local cuisine is often considered representative of Zhejiang provincial cuisine, claimed to be one of China's eight fundamental cuisines. The accepted consensus among Hangzhou's natives defines dishes prepared in this style as 'fresh, tender, soft, and smooth, with a mellow fragrance'. Dishes include Pian Er Chuan Noodles, West Lake Vinegar, Dongpo Pork, Longjing Shrimp, Beggar's Chicken, Steamed Rice and Pork Wrapped in Lotus Leaves, Braised Bamboo Shoots, Lotus Root Pudding and Sister Song's Fish Soup. We tasted these superior examples of local cuisine at the restaurant at the Four Seasons (one of the best chefs in China works here), and the garden restaurant Longjing Manor.

### TEA IS SPECIAL

Tea is an important part of Hangzhou's economy and culture. Hangzhou is best known for originating Longjing, a notable variety of green tea, the most renowned type being Xi Hu Long Jing. Known as the very best Long Jing tea, Xi Hu Long Jing is grown in Longjing village near Xi Hu in Hangzhou, hence the name. A local DMC to contact for a perfectly organised tea tasting is Jackson Wang, who also has a foot in the door at the Silk Museum. Teatime is an institution at the larger hotels such as the new InterContinental Hotel, the famous golden sphere, and the Park Hyatt Park hotel (architecture inspired by the former residence of a very rich man, Mr. Hu Xue Yan) built, called in Jiangnan style. A design, which appealed to me greatly.



MORE INFORMATION:

Business Events Hangzhou

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# TRAVEL TRADE ATHENS 2017

## ATTRACTS TOP INTERNATIONAL AND GREEK TRAVEL PROFESSIONALS

**With 3,000 meetings held over two days, Travel Trade Athens 2017 has once more managed to attract top international and Greek travel selected professionals, interested in Athens as a year-round destination.**

Travel Trade Athens, organized by the Athens Convention and Visitors Bureau (ACVB) in cooperation with the European Tour Operators Association (ETOA), was held on Monday 2 and Tuesday 3 October 2017, at the "Grande Bretagne" Hotel.

For the 100 hosted buyers, representing travel organizations and tourism agencies, conference and event organizers, as well as journalists from known trade publications and electronic media, and 140 Greek tourism professionals, the 5th

consecutive Travel Trade Athens was a great opportunity to come together through 3,000 networking meetings to discuss Athens as a MICE and leisure destination.

Each working day was followed by fam trips designed exclusively to showcase Athens' new points of interest. Particular emphasis was given this year to building strong ties to the conferences, corporate meetings and incentive travel (MICE) industry. To this end, the Athens Convention and Visitors Bureau worked with leading media groups

for the MICE industry such as Headquarters, The Association Magazine, and other leading media around the world. In addition, the ACVB was actively supported by FED HATTA, Athens Culture Net (ACN) and the IGLTA (International Gay and Lesbian Association) to further enhance participation according to their perspective thematic markets.

During the press conference, which attracted top stakeholders of the Greek tourism industry, including the Mayor of Athens, Georgios Kaminis, vice president of AEGEAN, Mr. Eftychios Vasilakis, Athens



International Airport's director of communications and marketing, Ms Ioanna Papadopoulou, GNTO's Secretary General Mr. Konstantinos Tsegas, Mr. Nikos Kampanopoulos, General Manager for VISA Europe in Greece, Bulgaria and Cyprus, ASTA Vice President Mr. Robert Duglin, and the President of FedHatta, Mr. Lyssandros Tsilidis.

The Mayor of Athens, Georgios Kaminis, spoke of the Leading Cultural Destination 2017 award the City of Athens recently received in London. Dubbed the "Museum Oscars", the awards celebrate the best culture destinations worldwide.

Travel Trade Athens 2017 was organized on the back of an amazing year for the City of Athens, which expects to break the record number of 5 million visitors in 2017, a 100% rise in the number of visitors over the last five years.

Interest in the contemporary and vibrant Athens experience was sealed through an MoU signed by the Mayor of Athens, Mr Georgios Kaminis, the Vice President of the American Association of Travel Agents (ASTA), Mr Robert Duglin and the President of FedHatta, Lysandros Tsilidis, to further support Travel Trade Athens as the signature travel event for the Greek capital.

The Mayor of Athens, Mr. Georgios Kaminis spoke of Athens taking off in the last few years as a top

destination and recognized the role of tourism in the development of the local economy. "Every 40 visitors in Athens support a job" said Mayor Kaminis referring to the Athens Tourism partnership, a common effort by the City of Athens, AEGEAN and the Athens International Airport joining forces, for the first time, to promote Athens as a contemporary year-round destination, for which the contribution of the City of Athens was secured through an exclusive donation by The Hellenic Initiative.

The 5th Travel Trade Athens was organized under the auspices of the Ministry of Tourism, with the support of the Association of Greek Tourist Enterprises (SETE), the General Greek Federation of Tourism Enterprises (GEOET) and the Athens-Attica & Argosaronic Hotels Association.

- Diamond Sponsors: AEGEAN, GNTO and VISA
- Platinum Sponsors: Athens International Airport and Attica Region

This year's event was supported by: YOLENI'S Greek products, METAXA, VIP PARTIES, Vassiliou Estate winery.

Fam trip sponsors: Athens Culture Net, Stavros Niarchos Cultural Center, The Margi Farm, Discover Greek Culture, Hard Rock Café, Clio Muse, Guided Tours Association, Amphitriton Group, Key Tours.



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HEARNINGS

# TAIWAN WORK HARD AND PLAY EVEN HARDER

**As one of Lonely Planet's Top Asia Spots for 2016 and National Geographic's 10 Best Winter Trips in the World for the same year, Taiwan has clearly catapulted itself onto the world stage, making it a popular destination that foreign corporations choose for their MICE business.**

## ON THE ROAD TO INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS

Diligently working towards this goal is the MEET TAIWAN Networking Event which is a roadshow sponsored by Taiwan's Bureau of Foreign Trade (BOFT) and organized by the Taiwan External Trade Development Council (TAITRA). Following on the footsteps of past successful overseas roadshows, 2017 saw the format taken to the Philippines, Singapore, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, and France. Aimed at conveying Taiwan's appeal as a MICE destination and extending and facilitating global partnerships for MICE companies, the roadshows featured a delegation of Taiwanese MICE companies that included representatives from travel agencies, MICE consulting firms, and airlines, as well as hundreds of overseas buyers. The events highlighted the diversity of options available to planners for creating alternative event packages according to client needs—such as Work and Life Balance, wherein attendees can have a quick getaway with convenient access to mountains and seashores, socially relevant CSR activities, and innovative team building options.

## GAME ON

MEET TAIWAN leveraged these roadshows to promote the fourth edition of its Asia Super Team competition—an annual multi-national incentive campaign aimed at positioning Taiwan as a prime destination for incentive travel in Asia through the concept of “play”. This one-of-a-kind, hybrid corporate meeting and travel incentive activity saw top companies from Singapore, Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam, Philippines, Thailand and Japan sending teams to embark on a cultural and natural wonders journey of Taiwan interspersed with obstacles, tasks, and a chance to demonstrate their skills. This year, the BUN Corporation from Japan won an incentive travel package worth US\$50,000!

## SENSE-ATIONAL TAIWAN

2017 also saw 20 major decision makers from the association meetings and incentive travel industry attend a custom familiarization tour themed SENSE Taiwan. They had the opportunity to explore and “sense” Taiwan's creative group activities through an innovative itinerary that included activities such

as a DIY cooking class for traditional Taiwanese cuisine and a CSR journey learning about Taiwan's aboriginal cultures and helping disadvantage groups. Participants not only gained a full understanding of Taiwan's MICE environment that includes venues, transportation options, and related services, they also enjoyed opportunities for networking, matchmaking, and establishing friendships.

## HIGH FIVE WORLD!

MEET TAIWAN continued to shake things up in the MICE industry with its passion and excitement by launching a fresh HIGH FIVE Taiwan program. Building on the previous year's popular initiative showcasing Taiwan's warm hospitality through the universal high five greeting, this year got bigger and bolder with the launch of a fun new digital marketing application designed around three important qualities—efficiency, variety, and professionalism. HIGH FIVE was promoted at a variety of events. Not surprisingly, the latest statistics show the app has reached at least 414,769 people worldwide, resulting in a 237% increase when compared with the previous year's effort, and booth traffic saw a massive increase of 154% over that of 2016.

How's that for game!



**Taiwan's MICE Promotion Program (MEET TAIWAN)**

Sponsored by Bureau of Foreign Trade, MOEA  
Organized by Taiwan External Trade Development Council  
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# FUTURE OF EVENT AND HOSPITALITY TECHNOLOGY ON DISPLAY AT CVENT CONNECT EUROPE

**Conference brought together hundreds of meetings and events professionals to see and discuss the latest industry trends and best practices**

More than 400 meetings, events, and hospitality professionals from across Europe and the UK gathered at the inaugural Cvent CONNECT Europe at the Pullman London St. Pancras. The conference, hosted by Cvent, the market leader in meeting, events, and hospitality technology, showcased the latest trends in event and hospitality tech, as well highlighted the customer best practices and case studies from Cvent customers on how to implement the right technology to eliminate manual tasks and drive return-on-investment (ROI).

## INNOVATIONS SHOWCASED

Attendees had the opportunity to experience the latest event and hospitality technology in the Innovation Pavilion. Featured in the Innovation Pavillion were the new Cvent Flex user experience, and Cvent Passkey and Business Transient – recent additions to the Cvent platform. The addition of these new

capabilities enables planners to manage the entire event lifecycle, no matter the size, and gives hoteliers greater opportunity to grow their businesses.

"It was a breath of fresh air to hear from a tech company like Cvent that their key message and mission is to power the human connection," said Amanda Ford of the Tenet Group. "The content of Cvent CONNECT Europe was very well put together, nicely structured and delivered, and I was honoured to be invited to take part. Everyone I met from Cvent was helpful, engaging and represented the company very well. I've made some great new connections both at Cvent and with other planners!"

## INDUSTRY EXPERT-LED SESSIONS

More than 30 educational sessions were featured at the event across topics that included forecasting the future of event technology, strategic venue sourcing, mobile event apps and more. Attendees also heard

from industry experts, including David Rowan from Wired UK, Chris Hughes from Brand Events, and Nicole Yershon of Lab for Hire on how technology is disrupting every industry and market, and how organisations must adapt to foster a culture of innovation.

## KEY SESSIONS FROM THE CONFERENCE INCLUDED:

- **Talking the Language of the C-Suite**

Chuck Ghoorah, Cvent Co-Founder and President of Worldwide Sales and Marketing, inspired a room of event planners to be more strategic in their approach to their meetings and events, and urged planners to utilise event technology in order to demonstrate ROI and business case to senior management, in order to prove the value of the marketing funds spent on events.



• **Next Generation Registration Experience**

Attendees were given a hands-on demonstration and inside look into Cvent's largest technology investment to date: the Cvent Flex user experience, which features an updated user-friendly interface for planners to build highly customised event websites, all with drag and drop technology. The solution builds on extensive user research to provide both the planner and the event attendee with an easier way to create an event site on the back-end or navigate the attendee-facing website.

• **Important Hospitality Trends**

Hospitality professionals heard the key trends affecting the industry, including the significance of brand differentiation, the importance of customer loyalty and technology innovation, and the impact of the buying dynamics of millennials. Kathleen Garcia, the presenter, urged hospitality professionals to focus on creating authentic experiences for their guests, and making these easily shareable through social media in order to further brand awareness and trust.

• **New Approaches to Event Marketing**

With the upcoming implementation of GDPR, attendees were given insights into the new regulation, and how alternative channels and techniques can reach audiences for their events, with real world examples on how to implement these. They learned how to use social media channels to help drive registration and to how to get the audience to be their greatest advocate for promoting an event.



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AND TO VIEW PHOTOS

[www.twitter.com/cventconnect](http://www.twitter.com/cventconnect)

# THE MEETINGS SHOW ANNOUNCES NEW FORMAT FOR 2018

**The leading event for the inbound and outbound meetings industry in the UK, The Meetings Show, has announced a new two-day format for 2018, in what will be the show's sixth edition.**



The show will return to Olympia London on Wednesday 27 and Thursday 28 June 2018, providing focused networking, education and meeting opportunities for buyers and suppliers.

The new two-day format for the show follows extensive research carried out with exhibitors, visitors and hosted buyers. The evidence showed overwhelming support for condensing the show to achieve the best value from attending. Organisers will be using this feedback to continue to develop the key elements of the show: the hosted buyer programme, education programme and networking opportunities.

David Chapple, group event director for The Meetings Show, said: "Over the past five years The Meetings Show has grown to be an unmissable event for anyone

*working in the UK inbound or outbound meetings industry. After listening to feedback from exhibitors it was evident that while many achieved excellent results from the 2017 edition – our largest show to date – they would be able to achieve even greater ROI from a focused two-day show with more opportunities for networking in addition to appointments with hosted buyers."*

*"One of the meetings industry's strengths is its supportive and well-connected community, and The Meetings Show provides the perfect chance to catch up with friends, meet peers and network. For hosted and visitor buyers, the research indicated that we should be creating a dynamic programme with even more opportunities for learning, supplier appointments and excellent networking opportunities."*

He added: "We are currently working with our advisory board, focus groups, partners and exhibitors to refine plans for 2018. Our aim is to build on all the achievements of the last five years and create a productive and rewarding experience for visitors, hosted buyers and exhibitors. We'll be putting more emphasis on networking with value, with some new events you won't want to miss."

The announcement has been welcomed by some of The Meetings Show's key partners and exhibitors. Sally Lopez, regional director of sales (Europe) for Hard Rock Hotels, said: "After exhibiting in 2017 and having a fantastic time at the show, we fully support the move to a two-day format as we believe a higher footfall and more appointments condensed into two days will generate a better return for exhibitors. The Meetings Show is a fantastic opportunity for Hard Rock Hotels to meet and network with relevant event buyers, and we are looking forward to returning in 2018."

Further information on the hosted buyer programme, education programme and networking opportunities will be announced over the coming months.



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