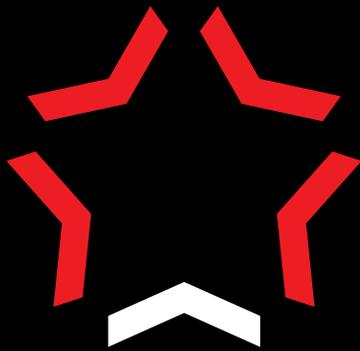


**KONGRES**  
NEW EUROPE MEETINGS INDUSTRY MAGAZINE



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**KONGRESNA ZVEZDA**  
**MEETINGS STAR**

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**THE BEST MEETING  
DESTINATIONS 2021/2022**

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**MEETINGS STAR CERTIFICATE**

MTLG - MEETOLOGUES OF NEW EUROPE  
Hidden surprises of New Europe

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MEETINGS STAR**

**118**

**MEETOLOGUES**

**25**

**DESTINATION VISITS  
EACH YEAR**

**4**

**DESTINATION  
CATEGORIES  
(XL, L, M, S)**

**75**

**EVALUATION CRITERIA  
TO DETERMINE THE  
MEETING EXPERIENCE  
INDEX**

**36**

**XL MEETING  
DESTINATIONS**

Destinations that can host more than 2,000 attendees

**26**

**L MEETING  
DESTINATIONS**

Destinations that can host up to 2,000 congress attendees

**26**

**M MEETING  
DESTINATIONS**

Destinations that can host up to 1,200 congress attendees

**30**

**S MEETING  
DESTINATIONS**

Destinations that can host up to 500 congress attendees

## WHAT IS NEW EUROPE?

### THE BEST OF THE BEST BETWEEN VENICE AND BAKU AND MOSCOW AND ISTANBUL

The answer to this question is something of an unsolved conundrum. A clear definition of New Europe doesn't exist, the most general definition being that these are the countries of Eastern Europe that were once behind the Iron Curtain. Technically, this means 24 countries of Eastern Europe, adding Greece and Turkey to them. In our Editorial, we include the fresh, energetic and lesser-known European destinations in New Europe.

## MEETING EXPERIENCE INDEX

Is the final score given to a destination after going through 75 strict evaluation criteria. It places the destination among 118 other meeting destinations from Europe and the world.



## WHAT IS THE MEETING EXPERIENCE INDEX OR MTLG?

**A decade ago, at Toleranca Marketing agency, we developed a system of evaluating congress destinations with the help of an original matrix dubbed the “MEETING EXPERIENCE INDEX” or simply MTLG - MEETOLOGUE. Since the inception of evaluating destinations, we have been diligently using the reference system to present a realistic offer of congress destinations through time. Up to now, 118 destinations have been evaluated, including every important congress destination of the South East and New Europe region.**

The system is a systematic, structured and analytical process, encompassing numerous factors labelled as important by event organisers. We dare say that our evaluation is the most comprehensive and complex destination grading system. The evaluation is not based solely on the number of congress events taking place at a destination but also delves into analysis holistically.

**In our opinion, the analyses of destinations conducted so far had the following drawbacks:**

- 1. The comparisons were focused on one product; predominantly these were events of international expert associations. A typical example is the ICCA Country and City Ranking.**
- 2. The comparisons did not take into account the maximum capacities of destinations. Apples and oranges were often compared, even though there are buyers for various destinations with varying capacities and more importantly, buyers searching for different products. The corona crisis has furthered this gap.**
- 3. The comparisons did not take into consideration the possibility of a crisis happening, and consequently, analyses could not be conducted during the time of crisis.**

Therefore, our methodology is complex and addresses all segments of the meetings industry and all key MICE products. Furthermore, the methodology is resilient to crises.

Congress travelogues or meetologues that have been evaluated by the Meeting Experience Index, have thus throughout a decade become a cornerstone for event organisers when deciding and choosing a destination.

They have become the bedrock for choosing destinations because of the methodology's logic and the benefits the system brings to all stakeholders. We are also convinced that our evaluations enable destinations to improve in areas where their competitors have the advantage.

### What is the purpose of comparing destinations?

Our grade is primarily a tool to improve the competitiveness of individual destinations. It offers destinations an external view of their offer with the desire to drive constant growth and help destinations achieve excellence. As the process is systematic and continuative, through time, the improvement of an individual evaluation criterion can be observed. Destinations use our methodology predominantly because they wish to become or stay competitive worldwide.

The purpose of the research is also to ensure suitable qualitative and quantitative data that can be used in the field of strategic development or preparing a marketing action plan.

### Research methodology

Each destination is evaluated based on fieldwork combined with extensive research of individual criteria. This approach enables us to get a realistic picture of the situation. Furthermore, we are obliged to actuality, reality, transparency and objectivity. Each year, the marks and congress meetologues are revised and corrected with up-to-date information sent to us directly from the destinations themselves.

A total of 118 destinations from the wider region of New Europe and beyond are included in the categorisation and evaluation. The various categories give event organisers a spectrum of choices to decide on a destination that suits their needs. A category is thus a guideline for what type

of event a particular destination can host from the aspect of logistics and event capacity. Our categorisation includes an array of criteria, whereas the grading system of indices represents the foundation to classify the destinations into four destination tiers.

## **XL MEETING DESTINATIONS**

### **Destinations that can host more than 2,000 congress attendees**

The premier category features destinations that are the biggest European congress destinations, offering superb congress infrastructure and outstanding air travel accessibility. The aforementioned destinations are predominantly major international crossroads for air travel.

## **L MEETING DESTINATIONS**

### **Destinations that can host up to 2,000 congress attendees**

The congress infrastructure and air accessibility of these destinations enable the organisation of congresses for up to 2,000 attendees.

## **M MEETING DESTINATIONS**

### **Destinations that can host up to 1,200 congress attendees**

Perhaps the most heterogeneous category, the M category boasts regional capitals and larger tourist cities.

## **S MEETING DESTINATIONS**

### **Destinations that can host up to 500 congress attendees**

The last category is full of smaller tourist destinations where congress activity is a secondary activity during the low tourist season.



## MAXIMUM HOLDING CAPACITY OF COMPARED DESTINATIONS

Case study of the Adriatic region

Below is a case study of a benchmark for the Adriatic region (the mark includes larger Adriatic cities and tourist hotspots boasting a developed MICE product and belonging to the M-category)

<b>Budva</b>	<b>M-destination</b>	<b>Portorož</b>	<b>M-destination</b>
<b>Tivat</b>	<b>M-destination</b>	<b>Split</b>	<b>M-destination</b>
<b>Dubrovnik</b>	<b>M-destination</b>	<b>Rijeka</b>	<b>M-destination</b>
<b>Opatija</b>	<b>M-destination</b>		

<b>Benchmark 2020-ADRIATIC REGION</b>	<b>BUDVA</b>	<b>TIVAT</b>	<b>DUBROVNIK</b>	<b>OPATIJA</b>	<b>PORTOROŽ</b>	<b>SPLIT</b>	<b>RIJEKA</b>
<b>Destination Category</b>	M	M	M	M	M	M	M
<b>Destination population</b>	36.739	36.739	42.615	11.659	2.849	178.102	97.910
<b>The number of 4* and 5* category hotel rooms</b>	3620	383	4272	1971	4500	1525	450
<b>The number of 4* and 5* category hotels</b>	43	14	29	22	16	28	4
<b>Banquet hall maximum capacity</b>	360	120	700	600	700	450	180
<b>Maximum hall capacity in theatre style</b>	800	200	1200	900	1100	800	677
<b>The largest hall in the city (in m2)</b>	500	215	900	1728	1085	768	250

## Comparison of individual criterion for maximum capacity have shown the following characteristics-

### The number of 4\* and 5\* category hotel rooms

The development of a congress destination is intrinsically connected with the number of hotel rooms, which according to our research exceed the capacity of a destination's largest plenary hall by two times. Among congress guests, so-called single occupancy of hotel rooms is prevalent. A quick overview of this criterion shows that Dubrovnik, Portorož and Budva lead the pack.

### The number of 4\* and 5\* category hotels

The number of hotels in these two categories is an indicator of how well a congress destination has adjusted to business tourism and vice versa. Moreover, the indicator shows the structure of accommodation and is in direct correlation with the number of hotels.

### Banquet hall maximum capacity

Almost every congress or event features social events and gala dinners. It is often the case that the maximum capacity of a destination's largest banquet hall defines the size of a congress a destination can host. In this regard, Dubrovnik, Opatija and Portorož offer the best conditions.

### The largest hall in the city (in m2)

This criterion determines the size of the largest events and accompanying exhibitions that usually go hand in hand with such events. Chiefly, multifunctional halls in congress centres or exhibition centres offer the largest hall of a destination. In regard to multifunctional halls and surface area, Portorož and Dubrovnik take the top spot, as they can both host the most demanding congresses or event productions.

### Maximum hall capacity in theatre style

Sports facilities aside, the capacities in this category are smaller than competitive destinations. For a braver approach to development, newly designated halls should be created, which could accept larger congress groups.

### Destination population

A destination's population is the carrier of a city's development, its transformation and the generator of numerous events. Throughout history, the congress and meetings industry has developed in highly urbanised regions. The meetings industry is irrevocably connected to metropolisation and the main city agglomerations in Europe.

## Comparison of the final marks of destinations

The comparison of final marks of destinations offers a glimpse into the state of the meetings industry and highlights key areas where further development is needed. A more detailed approach towards individual criteria enables destinations to coordinate communication, destination management and other aspects of their development.

<b>Benchmark 2020- ADRIATIC REGION <math>\bar{x}=3.99</math></b>	<b>BUDVA</b>	<b>TIVAT</b>	<b>DUBROVNIK</b>	<b>OPATIJA</b>	<b>PORTOROŽ</b>	<b>SPLIT</b>	<b>RIJEKA</b>
<b>MEETING EXPERIENCE INDEX</b>	3.83	3.96	4.39	4.04	4.03	3.90	3.84
<b>1. Natural and cultural factors</b>	4.62	4.89	4.95	4.79	4.77	4.69	4.61
<b>2. General and transport infrastructure</b>	4.49	4.55	4.62	4.69	4.60	4.64	4.56
<b>3. Tourist infrastructure</b>	4.75	4.88	4.91	4.79	4.60	4.84	4.64
<b>4. Meeting infrastructure</b>	4.70	4.75	4.81	4.87	4.73	4.53	4.25
<b>5. Subjective grade</b>	4.67	4.79	4.84	4.83	4.76	4.73	4.61
<b>6. Marketing Buzz</b>	4.16	4.60	4.45	4.44	4.47	4.08	3.96
<b>7. ICCA Index</b>	1.02	1.02	3.80	1.02	1.25	1.62	1.02
<b>8. Numbeo – Quality of Life Index</b>	3.10	3.27	3.49	3.49	3.66	3.02	3.50
<b>9. Numbeo – Safety Index</b>	3.89	3.89	4.89	4.74	4.65	3.79	4.49
<b>10. ACI – Airport Connectivity Index</b>	2.92	2.92	3.18	2.78	2.78	3.10	2.78

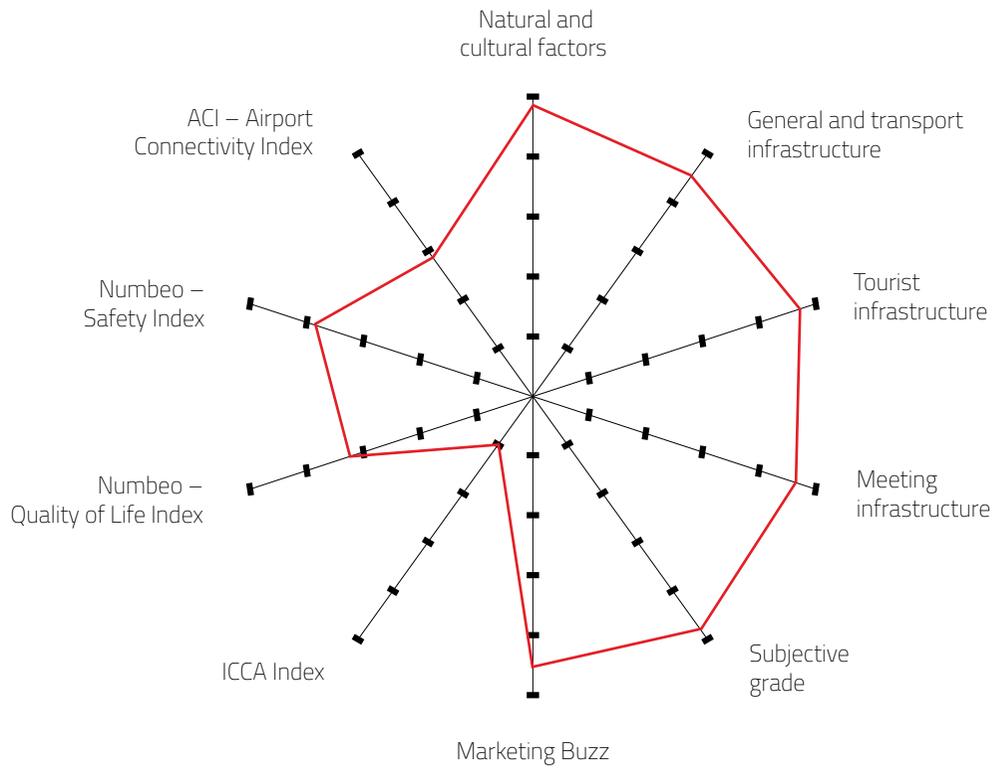
<b>TIVAT, final mark 3.96</b>	
<b>+ Advantages</b>	<b>- Disadvantages</b>
5.00 Natural diversity	4.02 Accessibility – rail
5.00 Climate and Weather	4.05 Effective convention bureau activities
5.00 Natural experience index	4.15 Accessibility – road
4.98 Accessibility to nature	4.39 Direct marketing and communication
4.96 Restaurant scene	4.42 Public transport

4.96 Nightlife	4.45 Convention and exhibition centres
4.95 Social environment	4.48 Accessibility – air
4.95 Variety of bars and coffee shops	4.49 Airport
4.95 Leisure activities	4.51 Mobile marketing and communication
4.95 Quality of meeting hotels	4.52 Congress ambassador programme
4.95 Ratio of 4 and 5***** hotel rooms	4.53 Social network and community

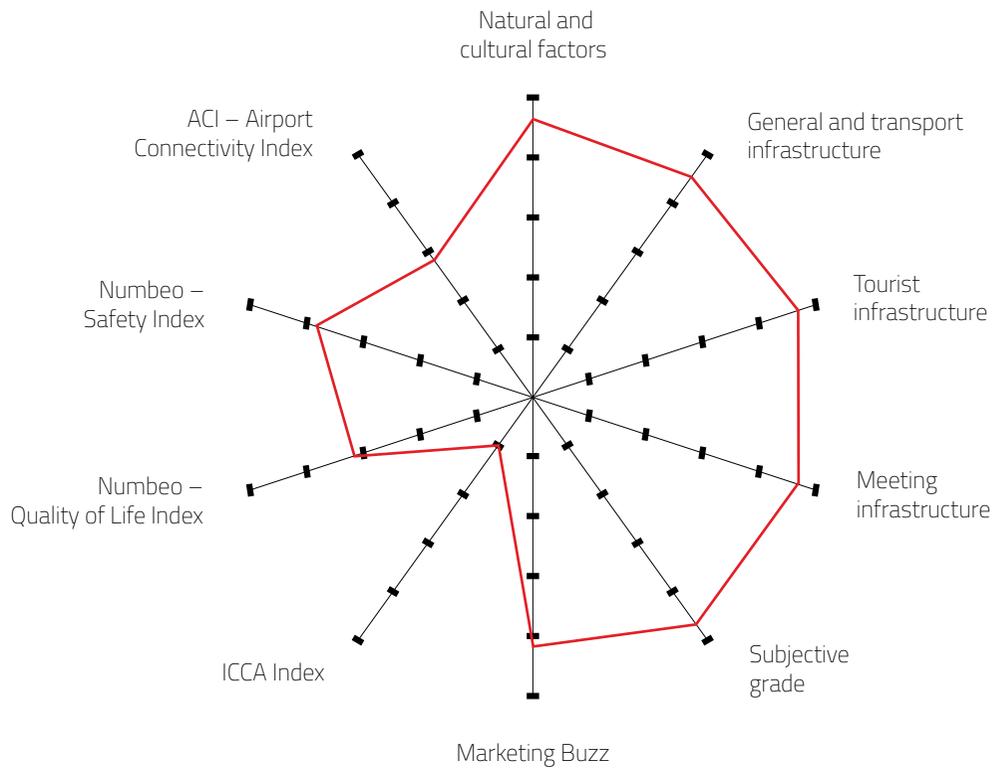
<b>BUDVA, final mark 3.83</b>	
<b>+ Advantages</b>	<b>- Disadvantages</b>
5.00 Climate and Weather	3.09 Architecture
4.99 Nightlife	4.01 Shopping
4.95 Natural experience index	4.02 Direct marketing and communication
4.95 Restaurant scene	4.09 Digital marketing and communication
4.95 Leisure activities	4.12 Sustainable measures
4.92 Natural diversity	4.12 Sustainability satisfaction
4.92 Variety of bars and coffee shops	4.13 Content marketing
4.91 Incentive programmes and offer	4.14 Accessibility – road
4.90 Political stability	4.17 Mobile marketing and communication
4.89 Congress hotels and their quality	4.21 Accessibility – rail
4.89 Security ratings	4.21 Events and experience marketing
4.88 Sports activities	4.21 Congress ambassador programme

The benchmark gives a quick and undisputed answer that is usually written in the form of a polar graph.

**TIVAT** – Polar Graph



**BUDVA** – Polar graph



Even the simplest interpretation of the graph shows that the **strongest part** of the meeting experience index is **tourist infrastructure, natural and cultural factors, and subjective grade**. On the other hand, the most **undeveloped part** of destinations is their **congress infrastructure, general and transport infrastructure and marketing buzz**.

In areas where individual destinations are lacking, our methodology enables us further in-depth research. As an example, we chose the segment of **MEETING INFRASTRUCTURE**:

Our first association with congress and meeting infrastructure is often congress centres, even though it is a much wider aspect of infrastructure comprising congress hotels, congress service providers, special venues, convention bureaus and agencies (DMC, PCO, Incentive Agencies). Congress services and products are also offered by other private and public organisations and institutions (universities, research institutions, chambers of commerce, museums, stadiums, etc.). Therefore, a detailed inventorying of a destination's service providers is a must.

The lack of congress infrastructure is often compensated with hotel investments. This situation is typical for Budva, Portorož and Tivat, which boast the largest hotel centres in the region.

At the bottom of the comparison list are cities that need serious investment into their product. A serious congress centre is a basic prerequisite for developing a congress activity.

**Above average**      **rank 4.81–5.00**

**4.87 Opatija**  
**4.81 Dubrovnik**

**Average**      **rank 4.61–4.80**

**4.75 Tivat**  
**4.73 Portorož**  
**4.70 Budva**

**Moderate**      **rank 4.41–4.60**

**4.53 Split**

**Below average**      **rank 4.21–4.40**

**4.25 Rijeka**

<b>Benchmark 2020- ADRIATIC REGION <math>\bar{x}=4.66</math></b>	<b>BUDVA</b>	<b>TIVAT</b>	<b>DUBROVNIK</b>	<b>OPATIJA</b>	<b>PORTOROŽ</b>	<b>SPLIT</b>	<b>RIJEKA</b>
<b>FINAL DESTINATION MARK</b>	3.83	3.96	4.39	4.04	4.03	3.90	3.84
<b>CONGRESS INFRASTRUCTURE</b>	4.70	4.75	4.81	4.87	4.73	4.53	4.25
<b>1. History and references</b>	4.56	4.75	5.00	4.98	4.85	4.59	4.22
<b>2. Variety of meeting suppliers</b>	4.78	4.82	4.98	4.91	4.49	4.67	4.31
<b>3. Quality of meeting hotels</b>	4.89	4.95	4.97	4.90	4.70	4.83	4.48
<b>4. Convention and exhibition centres</b>	4.45	4.45	3.55	4.75	4.85	3.89	3.85
<b>5. Ratio of 4 and 5***** hotel rooms</b>	4.88	4.95	4.95	4.92	4.88	4.60	4.37
<b>6. Incentive programmes</b>	4.91	4.94	4.98	4.95	4.90	4.78	4.16
<b>7. Professionalism of the meetings industry</b>	4.77	4.90	4.93	4.91	4.76	4.91	4.65
<b>8. Diversity of offer</b>	4.68	4.82	4.90	4.83	4.67	4.43	4.22
<b>9. Effective convention bureau activities</b>	4.46	4.05	4.98	4.85	4.70	4.12	4.01
<b>10. Support services</b>	4.63	4.86	4.85	4.74	4.54	4.49	4.25

<b>TIVAT – final mark comparison</b>		
<b>+ Advantages</b>	<b>- Disadvantages</b>	<b>Competitors' advantages</b>
4.95 Quality of meeting hotels	4.05 Convention bureau	Active local convention bureau
4.95 Meeting hotels	4.45 Convention and exhibition centres	Larger and more equipped congress centres
4.94 Incentive programmes	4.75 History and references	Evaluating the results of activities
4.90 Professionalism of the meetings industry	4.82 Diversity of offer	Inventoried congress products
4.86 Support services	4.82 General offer	An array of service providers
<p><b>Assessor's comment:</b> In terms of congress infrastructure, Tivat is in the golden mean. Nevertheless, a congress centre would be more than welcome, as the hotels' congress centres cannot replace it. Tivat has made a significant step forward in its standard offer of congress service providers with numerous internationally renowned brands. There is room for improvement in future development and offering more diverse congress products. Furthermore, the destination could improve the activities of their city convention bureau, including supporting congress activities.</p>		

<b>BUDVA – final mark comparison</b>		
<b>+ Advantages</b>	<b>- Disadvantages</b>	<b>Competitors' advantages</b>
4.91 Incentive programmes	4.45 Convention and exhibition centres	Better and more developed congress centres
4.89 Meeting hotels	4.46 Convention bureau	Active local convention bureau
4.88 Ratio of 4 and 5***** hotel rooms	4.56 History and references	Systematic measurement of results
4.78 Variety of meeting suppliers	4.63 Support services	Availability of the latest technological products
4.77 Professionalism of the meetings industry	4.68 Diversity of offer	More recognisable congress products
<p><b>Assessor's comment:</b> The hotel heavyweights in Budva offer excellent congress capacities; however, the long-planned congress centre and more direct and planned destination marketing of Budva is still missing. Otherwise, Budva is full of great agencies and several developed incentive products and programmes that are among the best in the Adriatic region. We believe that an active local congress could encourage the further development of the destination.</p>		

**Let's take a look at the other factors and their influence on the final mark of a destination.**

### **Analysis of natural and cultural factors**

For a destination to retain its appeal in the future and thus continue attracting congress organisers, natural and cultural factors play a crucial role. If once only a high experience value mattered, protecting natural and cultural heritage is a priority nowadays. The goal of this is to ensure that today's economic activities increase the prosperity of the population while ensuring that natural and cultural sources remain intact for tomorrow's generations.

### General and transport infrastructure

Among the most important factors of a congress destination's competitiveness are general and transport infrastructure. Both are evaluated by accessibility, simplicity of using transportation at the destination and various criteria regarding communal and social infrastructure. Based on the comparison, we can conclude that the region has the most room for improvement in this segment. Particularly important and often critical is air accessibility. Due to the state of the existing infrastructure, the travel time increases in all destinations throughout the region, consequently affecting their competitiveness. Larger regional cities have an advantage, including Zagreb, which has ambitiously renovated its airport and improved accessibility.

### Tourist infrastructure

Destinations that wish to develop their congress activities need to be well equipped with adequate tourist infrastructure. The latter includes numerous elements that are often in relation to a destination's natural and cultural characteristics. It is crucial for the congress activity that the infrastructure is accessible throughout the year, as it is difficult to organise events in destinations where the majority of tourist facilities close their doors during the winter season. Moreover, it is important to know which category tourist service providers belong to regarding quality and if they will meet the expectations of congress guests and organisers.

Many of the criteria thus influence the final mark regarding tourist influence. Above all, functional organisation and cooperation between the public and private sector, as well destination management, has the most significance.

### Subjective grade

A congress destination is composed of a variety of experiences, products, services and encounters. Hence, our research also measures the segment of the physical, cultural and social attributes of a destination. As it is an extremely complex system of evaluation, we have purposely defined it as a subjective grade. Stepping outside of the box means viewing a situation in a different light and not from one's own perspective. Needless to say, congress organisers and participants often justify their pick of a destination with a subjective grade. Originality and special features play a key role.

### Marketing buzz of a destination

Amidst countless destinations in the field of congress tourism, recognisability gives destinations a competitive edge. Congress organisers do not have any chance to recognise destinations as the right choice if they cannot differentiate them from other destinations.

Almost all congress destinations have been competing fiercely for the attention of congress buyers. World-class service is the norm; however, they will only decide to purchase a service if a destination is different from the rest and has a story behind it. As part of our comparison, we take into account all aspects of communication (digital, direct and via social media). Furthermore, we evaluate how a destination implements content marketing and connect it with social media platforms. Nowadays, social media and content marketing have become the winning duo, as social networks are amplifiers of congress stories.

### Comparison of additional indices for the destination mark

Due to the objectivity of the mark, the comparison also includes other indices that are internationally recognised in the congress industry.

The first index is the **ICCA Index**. It is the only such annual statistical report in the meetings industry with a history of over 50 years in collecting data. However, we are aware of the drawbacks of the research, as it does not include all events taking place at destinations nor corporate or commerce-entrepreneurial and governmental meetings and motivational travels, which represent an integral part of the international meetings industry. Therefore, the ICCA Index is only one of many indices, although it says much about the maturity of individual congress destinations.

The final results for the current year are ranked and, according to the classification, evaluated with a mark from 1 to 5. The first and second destination on the ICCA list gets a mark of 5, while those that are ranked below 320th place, receive a mark of 1.02.

**The ACI Index** measures the accessibility and connectivity of individual destinations by measuring qualitative and quantitative parameters. The index is based on the number and frequency of weekly direct and indirect air flights and the number of destinations connected with the airport. More details can be found at the following link: <https://www.aci-europe.org/air-connectivity.html>.

The Numbeo Index is used because Numbeo is the largest online database that is independent of media and lobbies and is co-created by the website's online visitors. Moreover, we use the index because we have found out that the information reflects the actual state by verifying the situation on-site. The value of this methodology has been recognised by the world's biggest media houses. Additionally, we are also proud that the idea comes from the Balkans. The author of the methodology is the genius former Google engineer Mladen Adamović from Serbia. All of Numbeo's indices are checked on-site and, in case of any major deviation, correctly adjusted.

## Summary of marks we check on site

Every year, individual criteria are assessed by Kongres Magazine’s assessors

Listed below are the main groups of criteria that have been divided into subgroups:

<p><b>A. Natural and cultural factors</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Natural diversity</li> <li>2. Climate and Weather</li> <li>3. Social environment</li> <li>4. Cultural heritage</li> <li>5. Natural experience index</li> <li>6. Historical sites</li> <li>7. Architecture</li> <li>8. Accessibility to nature</li> <li>9. Sustainability satisfaction</li> <li>10. Quality of ecosystem</li> </ol>	<p><b>B. General and transport infrastructure</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Destination safety</li> <li>2. Accessibility – road</li> <li>3. Accessibility – air</li> <li>4. Accessibility – rail</li> <li>5. General public services</li> <li>6. Airport</li> <li>7. Public transport</li> <li>8. Financial institutions</li> <li>9. Internet access</li> <li>10. Pollution index</li> </ol>
<p><b>C. Tourist infrastructure</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Restaurant scene</li> <li>2. Variety of bars and coffee shops</li> <li>3. Nightlife</li> <li>4. Leisure activities</li> <li>5. Adrenaline activities</li> <li>6. Sports activities</li> <li>7. Shopping</li> <li>8. Fun parks, casinos</li> <li>9. Theatres, musical venues, cinemas</li> <li>10. Tourist information system</li> </ol>	<p><b>D. Meetings infrastructure</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. History and references</li> <li>2. Variety of meeting suppliers</li> <li>3. Quality of meeting hotels</li> <li>4. Convention and exhibition centres</li> <li>5. Ratio of 4 and 5***** hotel rooms</li> <li>6. Incentive programmes</li> <li>7. Professionalism of the meetings industry</li> <li>8. Diversity of offer</li> <li>9. Effective convention bureau activities</li> <li>10. Support services</li> </ol>
<p><b>E. Subjective grade</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Political stability</li> <li>2. Security ratings</li> <li>3. General support to meetings industry</li> <li>4. Cost/Value</li> <li>5. Destination competitiveness</li> <li>6. Personal experience</li> <li>7. Local hospitality</li> <li>8. E-services</li> <li>9. Business climate</li> <li>10. Destination image</li> </ol>	<p><b>F. Marketing buzz</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Destination brand perception</li> <li>2. Brand and corporate identity of CVB</li> <li>3. New or innovative</li> <li>4. Destination advertising</li> <li>5. Direct communication</li> <li>6. Digital communication</li> <li>7. Mobile communication</li> <li>8. Content marketing</li> <li>9. Events</li> <li>10. Social network and community</li> </ol>

After evaluation, the destinations are then assigned one of five categories as follows:

- 5 excellent meetings destination
- 4 quality meetings destination
- 3 recommendable meetings destination

- 2 average meetings destination
- 1 so-so



## NOVELTIES FOR 2021

**The corona crisis has largely digitalised the meetings industry sector. Consequently, the habits of event organisers have changed radically. Thus, for 2021, we have prepared an array of novelties that will enable our benchmark to reflect the situation on the market.**

### 1. Nomad List Overall Score

You are probably wondering what digital nomads have in common with the meetings industry. After careful analysis, we have concluded that the criteria assessed by the Nomad List are akin to that of digital events organisers. In our opinion, event organisers will move their events to digital nomad-friendly destinations.

The overall score contains various criteria ranging from internet connection speed, air quality, safety, English speaking and quality of life. The latter is measured through various indicators, as well as living expenses and visa policies. For these reasons, we will add the Nomad List Overall Score into our final mark for 2021.

### 2. A new addition to the maximum capacities of destinations

The maximum capacities of destinations will be complemented with the following information:

- Number of studios for digital and hybrid events
- Average internet speed when organising an event in Mbps

Both of these segments have become pivotal during the corona crisis and are often topics of inquiry by event organisers.

### 3. ICCA Index

ICCA could not prepare their annual report for 2020, as live events did not take place. Hence, for the 2021 index, we will take into account their ten-year average scores between 2009–2019.

### 4. ACI

Similarly, the ACI index is unrealistic due to limitations on air travel. Therefore, for 2021 we will use the average scores from previous years for individual airports.

#### MEETINGS STAR CERTIFICATE

The best destinations are traditionally announced at Conventa, where winners are awarded special accolades, while the remaining destinations receive an official certificate that they can use for their own marketing purposes. Conventa will take place at the end of August this year.

**“Ten years ago, when we started preparing the congress travelogues, we couldn’t possibly have foreseen that our methodology for evaluating destinations would have become such an important reference point for meeting planners. As of today, we have published 118 travelogues of meeting destinations, all based on hard graft and solid fieldwork. Our unflagging enthusiasm for this has demonstrated that we have been setting quality standards that are also being recognised by the wider international industry public through the Meetings Star Awards. The Meeting Experience Index has established itself as a reference standard. Moreover, I am proud that our project reflects the actual state of destinations, which is appreciated by countless professional event organisers.”**

**- Gorazd Čad, Editor in Chief**



## FAQ 2021/2022

**We have collected the answers to some of the most common questions you ask us about the Meetologues and Meeting Experience Index. If you do not find an answer to your question, ask us a new question. We will be happy to answer it.**

### **Q: Why should congress destinations be evaluated in the first place?**

The answer to this question is multi-layered. Our purpose is to discover and promote the best destinations. At the same time, we want those destinations that strive to become the best to see themselves realistically. Our in-depth analysis enables destinations to tackle challenges and start improving swiftly and effectively. Numerous destinations have already done so, and we look forward to seeing their improvement. Our mark is not a critique but rather an encouragement for destinations to become better.

### **Q: How are individual destinations directly involved in the process?**

Our process is completely open and commences with the annual complementation of a destination's maximum capacities. The information is provided and overseen by representatives of destinations to portray a realistic situation. What is more, destinations are informed about their results, which are coordinated before publication if needed. Since the inception of the evaluation ten years ago, we have thus not received a single complaint regarding the final mark.

### **Q: What are the steps of evaluation in the current year?**

In 2021, the evaluation will take place according to the following steps:  
**31.05.2021:** Updating all the information about individual destinations  
**30.06.2021:** Updating the scores from A to F (From Natural Factors to Marketing Buzz)  
**15.07.2021:** Updating the Additional Destination Indicators for 2021 (ICCA Index, ACI, etc.)  
**15.08.2021:** Declaring the results for 2021

### **Q: How do you really evaluate individual destinations?**

The destinations are evaluated based on fieldwork done by one of our

assessors and thorough research of individual criteria to get as close as possible to the real situation. In addition, we are committed to reality, verifiability and objectivity. Every year we review and re-evaluate the destinations according to the new information that the destination representatives provide.

### **Q: How did you get the idea of preparing the Meeting Experience Index?**

We dare to claim that we were the first to develop the new genre of Meetologues, in which we discover new meeting destinations based on extensive field research. In doing so, we try to write without "unnecessary baggage". We want to get closer to objective situations, so our assessors use a special matrix, which we named the Meeting Experience Index. This is a reference system that we have been using from the beginning and allows a real comparison of the destinations over time.

### **Q: Why do we need such an assessment of destinations?**

Meetologues have become a strong reference point over the past decade for decision-makers as well as for the meeting planners when choosing destinations for their events, in particular because of the Meetologues' logic and the benefits they bring to all of the stakeholders. However, we are convinced that our evaluations are objective and helpful to planners while at the same time being a helpful tool for enabling destinations to improve in areas where the current situation falls short of the competition.

### **Q: Why is the evaluation important for the destinations?**

Our evaluation is primarily a tool for improving the competitiveness of individual destinations. It offers an outward look at their destination to continually improve and achieve excellence. As this is a systematic and contingent process, the progress of the individual evaluated criteria can be monitored over time. Destinations use our methodology primarily because they want to become or remain globally competitive.

### **Q: What differentiates MTLG from the other benchmark studies?**

It is a systematic, structured and analytical process that covers several factors defined as important by event organisers. We dare to claim that this is the most complex assessment of destinations, which is not based solely on the number of events and conferences in the destination but is analytically much deeper. We are proud that our methodology triggers positive changes in destinations and has become the standard.

### **Q: Why do you use different destination categories (XL, L, M and S destinations)?**

A total of 118 destinations from the wider region of New Europe are covered in the categorisation and evaluation. With the help of different categories, we enable event organisers to choose a destination that suits their needs. Therefore, the category is more guided by what kind of event the individual destination can host from a logistical point of view and the general capacity that it offers. Our categorisation includes a combination of criteria, the sum of evaluation points of indexes is the basis for classifying destinations into four categories.

### **Q: What does the term New Europe mean?**

The MTLGs were the first to introduce to the international markets the countries of South-Eastern, Central and Eastern Europe through convention programmes, which we often rank in NEW EUROPE. Before, all the countries of Eastern Europe or the former Eastern bloc were described with the term New Europe. Despite numerous stereotypes, the region boasts exceptional conditions for congress tourism: stunning history, rich cultural and historical heritage, excellent accessibility, and affordable acceptance. Many new congress centres and hotels and creative solutions make NEW EUROPE a fresh and desirable meeting destination.

### **Q: What does the ACI index refer to?**

Using the SEO NetScan connectivity model, the report provides indexes for direct, indirect and hub connectivity based on both quantitative and qualitative metrics. The Airport Connectivity Index is made up of both direct and indirect weekly frequencies, weighted by their quality. This means that this is not simply a measure of how many city pairs there are, or how many direct services there are. For this report, connectivity is a composite measure of the number of destinations, the frequency of services and the quality of the connections (in the case of hubbing or indirect services).

You can check for further details at the following link:

<https://www.aci-europe.org/policy/connectivity.html>

### **Q: Why do you use the Numbeo index for several evaluations?**

Because Numbeo is the largest online database that does not depend on the media or the lobbies and is co-created by portal visitors. Above all, we

use it because we checked the Numbeo data in the field and we found out that the data reflected the actual situation as well. Furthermore, because the value of the methodology has been recognised by the world's largest media. We are also proud that the idea originated in the Balkans. The author of the methodology is the genius former Google engineer Mladen Adamović from Serbia.

### **Q: Are you checking the Numbeo indexes in the field?**

To ensure that all data for individual destinations is actually checked in the field, and in case of major deviations, we also adapt accordingly.

### **Q: How do you evaluate the “Perception on sustainability” criteria?**

This grade is connected to the Numbeo Purity and Cleanliness index but equipped with actual measures that destinations need to take in this field.

### **Q: How do you evaluate “Public transport” criteria?**

We also evaluate this criterion based on Numbeo indexes (<https://www.numbeo.com/traffic>). If we take Prague and Vienna, for example, the index for Prague for example in this segment is 110.37, whereas Vienna has an index of 75.17 – the lower the index, the higher the destination positions. A similar difference is seen when comparing CO2 emissions, which is 2206 in Prague and 1412 in Vienna.

### **Q: Why is the ICCA ranking part of the evaluation?**

It is the only such annual statistical report in the association segment that has more than 50 years of history of data collection. We are aware of the shortcomings of the ICCA survey since it does not cover all the events taking place at destinations and does not cover corporate or economic-business and intergovernmental meetings and motivational trips, which represent an important part of the global meeting industry. For this reason, the ICCA index is only one of the criteria, but it does give plenty of indications of the maturity of individual congress destinations.

### **Q: How is the ICCA index calculated?**

The final results for the current year are ranked according to the grade from 1 to 5. Specifically, the first and the second-ranked destinations on the ICCA ranking score 5, destinations that are ranked below 320 places get a score of 1.02.

### **Q: How can we independently check the quality of each rating?**

We already upgraded the entire methodology last year with the benchmarking system, which we perform for individual destinations, and we named it MTLG BENCHMARK. With our methodology, we save you a lot of valuable time, which you would otherwise have spent on comparing it with your main competitors.

**Q: How do you rate the Tourist Information Centres?**

This grade is based on actual visits to your information centres.

**Q: How do you assess the professionalism of the meetings industry?**

This segment grades the responsiveness and professionalism of individual providers and is checked through actual RFPs and offers. I could probably write an entire book about it, so if you have any questions, I will gladly give you some more information. I believe this segment carries the biggest room for improvement.

**Q: What is the carrying capacity of individual categories of MTLGs?**

The new categorisation highlighted that, depending on the supporting capacity, destinations can be divided into four categories that are framed based on the maximum number of participants that can be accommodated without encountering any major logistical turmoil or complications.

**XL MEETING DESTINATIONS**

Destinations that can host more than 2,000 congress attendees

**L MEETING DESTINATIONS**

Destinations that can host up to 2,000 congress attendees

**M MEETING DESTINATIONS**

Destinations that can host up to 1,200 congress attendees

**S MEETING DESTINATIONS**

Destinations that can host up to 500 congress attendees

**Q: How is the Numbeo Quality of Life Index calculated?**

The Numbeo Quality of Life index comprises the following indices:

Purchasing Power Index (Higher is better)

Safety Index (Higher is better)

Health Care Index (Higher is better)

Climate Index (Higher is better)

Cost of Living Index (Lower is better)

Property Price to Income Ratio (Lower is better)

Traffic Commute Time Index

The data has been calculated using the following formula:

f =Current formula (written in Java programming language):

$$\text{index.main} = \text{Math.max}(0, 100 + \text{purchasingPowerInclRentIndex} / 2.5 - (\text{housePriceToIncomeRatio} * 1.0) - \text{costOfLivingIndex} / 10 + \text{safetyIndex} / 2.0 + \text{healthIndex} / 2.5 - \text{trafficTimeIndex} / 2.0 - \text{pollutionIndex} * 2.0 / 3.0 + \text{climateIndex} / 3.0);$$
**Q: What can we do if we disagree with the mark?**

It is best if you invite our assessor to your destination. Considering the

corona crisis, organising an online workshop to oversee the results is also a possibility.

**Q: In what ways does your index differ from the ICCA's Country and City Ranking?**

The indexes are completely incomparable. The ICCA's statistics are based on the number of events by the international association in a destination. Our methodology, on the other hand, revolves around the comparison of various aspects from the viewpoint of an event organiser's needs. Not only does our methodology enable a fair comparison between destinations, it also helps destinations make concrete improvements.

**Q: Who can be a destination assessor?**

Assessors are experienced and carefully selected individuals with a minimum of 15 years of work experience in organising events. All assessors go through an onerous training process. Additionally, we always make sure the assessor is not in a conflict of interest with the evaluated destination.

**Q: Can the evaluation be sponsored?**

Unfortunately, it cannot be sponsored, as that would make us lose our credibility. Since the very start, we have not allowed sponsorship as we strictly followed our methodology. We provide the funds to support the project ourselves. The only permitted type of support is covering the accommodation, travel and daily expenses for the assessor. However, this type of support is strictly regulated beforehand and does not have an influence on the final mark.

**Q: Have you ever received a complaint regarding the final mark?**

In our many years of experience, we have not received any direct complaints regarding the final mark except for one destination. Even in that case, it was a simple misunderstanding that we quickly resolved.

# EVALUATION PROCESS

**The entire methodology of our work has already been upgraded with a system of benchmarking that is carried out for each meeting destination, under the name MTLG BENCHMARK. With our complete methodology, we have saved you a lot of valuable time that you would otherwise have spent comparing yourself with your main competitors.**

**Our process is conducted at two different levels:**

## **1. DESTINATION EVALUATION (following the MTLG methodology)**

At this stage, destinations are evaluated on all the criteria that are covered in our methodology, including 75 competitive criteria. Based on the destination evaluation, a comparative matrix is prepared, which is the basis for the workshop performance of the second stage.

## **2. BENCHMARK WORKSHOP (with key stakeholders at the destination)**

The workshop is designed to evaluate the competitive strengths and weaknesses of a destination and provide the exchange of good case studies in regard to its further development.

We are confident that our objective evaluation will help event organisers and, at the same time, allow destinations to implement the further improvements required to overcome their comparative disadvantages.

For further information regarding the MTLG benchmark, we'd love to hear from you, so don't hesitate to call us on 00386 (0)1 430 51 04, or send an e-mail to [gorazd.cad@toleranca.eu](mailto:gorazd.cad@toleranca.eu).



KONGRESNA ZVEZDA  
MEETINGS STAR

Vienna,  
Austria

4,75

Final Grade for 2021

MTLG INDEX / 2021 EDITION

## VIENNA, AUSTRIA

CITY, COUNTRY

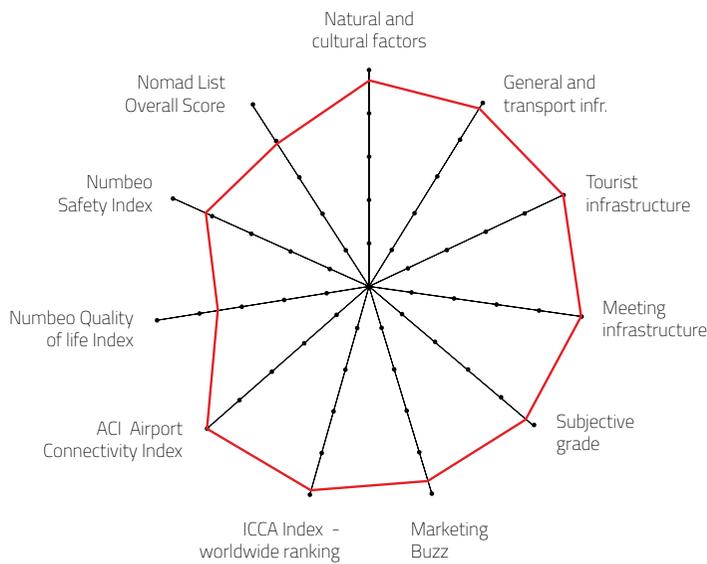
MTLG Category

**XL MEETING DESTINATION**

Destination that can host more than 2,000 congress attendees

### DESTINATION CAPACITY

The number of 4* and 5* category hotel rooms	20.588	Banquet hall maximum capacity	2.320
The number of 4* and 5* category hotels	187	The largest hall in the city (in m2)	15.898 m2
Number of studios for digital and hybrid events	5	Average internet speed when organising event	38 Mbps
Destination population	1.897.491	Maximum hall capacity in theatre style	4.218
Index: Banquet hall maximum capacity / Maximum hall capacity in theatre style		181,81 lower is better	
Index: Hotel Rooms / Maximum hall capacity in theatre style		20,49 lower is better	

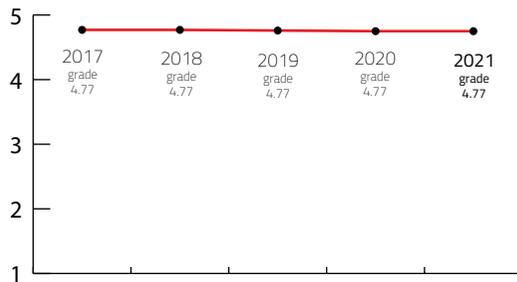


### OVERALL PERFORMANCE 2021

Natural and cultural factors	4.93
General and transport infr.	4.98
Tourist infrastructure	5.00
Meeting infrastructure	5.00
Subjective grade	4.92
Marketing Buzz	4.86
ICCA Index - worldwide ranking	4.95
Numbeo Quality of life Index	3.70
Numbeo Safety Index	4.12
ACI Airport Connectivity Index	5.00
Nomad List Overall Score	3.92
<b>FINAL GRADE</b>	<b>4.75</b>

### FIVE YEARS RESULTS

Year	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
<b>FINAL GRADE</b>	<b>4.77</b>	<b>4.77</b>	<b>4.76</b>	<b>4.75</b>	<b>4.75</b>



## Vienna, Austria

4,76

Destination Final Grade from 2017 to 2021

**Sources:** Kongres Magazine MTLG, ICCA, Numbeo, ACI Europe

**NUMBEO Quality of Life Index (higher is better)** is an estimation of overall quality of life by using empirical formula which takes into account purchasing power index (higher is better), pollution index (lower is better), house price to income ratio (lower is better), cost of living index (lower is better), safety index (higher is better), health care index (higher is better), traffic commute time index (lower is better) and climate index (higher is better). [www.numbeo.com](http://www.numbeo.com)

**NUMBEO Safety Index (higher is better)** is an estimation of overall level of safety in a given city or a country. [www.numbeo.com](http://www.numbeo.com)

**ACI Europe Airport Connectivity (higher is better)** is based on the SEO NetScan connectivity model, which measures airport connectivity in a more comprehensive way. It measures the number and quality of direct/non-stop connections as well as indirect connections via other airports. The NetScan model brings the most relevant connection components of every single market (frequency, travel time, connecting time) together into a single indicator: the Airport Connectivity Index. [www.aci-europe.org](http://www.aci-europe.org)

**Individual grades explanation:**

- 5 excellent meetings destination
- 4 quality meetings destination
- 3 recommendable meetings destination
- 2 average meetings destination
- 1 so-so

FOR MORE ABOUT MEETING EXPERIENCE INDEX VISIT:  
<https://kongres-magazine.eu/mtlg-meetologues-of-new-europe/>

**KONGRES**  
NEW EUROPE MEETINGS INDUSTRY MAGAZINE

  
**TOLERANCA**

TOLERANCA MARKETING d.o.o.  
 Štíhova 4, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia  
 T: +386 (0)1 430 51 03  
 E: gorazd.cad@toleranca.eu  
[www.toleranca.eu](http://www.toleranca.eu)

# PHOTO GALLERY

## Highlights from the Meetings Star Award ceremony

PHOTO CREDIT: TINA RAMUJKIĆ, MARKO DELBELLO OCEPEK



**KONGRESNA ZVEZDA**  
**MEETINGS STAR**











MEETINGS STAR 2021 // AWARD CEREMONY





# MTLG

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## KONGRES MEETOLOGUES

### HIDDEN SURPRISES

#### Overview of the best meetings destinations of 2021

Ever since 2019, the Editorial Board of Kongres Magazine has been presenting fresh and interesting meeting destinations to international meeting planners. Kongres Magazine reviews all destinations on the basis of the field work and thorough research of the individual criteria, in order to get as close to the real situation as possible. Every year the reviews and the Meetologues are reviewed and updated with the latest information that individual destinations receive for assessment and confirmation.

Until this day we have presented 101 Meetologues from 26 destinations. Each destination is evaluated based on 75 different criteria that enable fair comparison of the destinations. Meeting organizers appreciate the expertise, value and practicality of this guide through congress destinations.

#### 4 CATEGORIES

- XL Destinations that can host more than 2,000 attendees
- L Destinations that can host up to 2,000 congress attendees
- M Destinations that can host up to 1,200 congress attendees
- S Destinations that can host up to 600 congress attendees

## WINNERS OF THE BEST MEETING DESTINATIONS CATEGORIES IN 2021

 <p><b>XL MEETING DESTINATIONS WINNER</b> <b>4,75</b></p> <p>Vienna</p>	 <p><b>L MEETING DESTINATIONS WINNER</b> <b>4,52</b></p> <p>Tallinn</p>
 <p><b>M MEETING DESTINATIONS WINNER</b> <b>4,41</b></p> <p>Dubrovnik</p>	 <p><b>S MEETING DESTINATIONS WINNER</b> <b>4,05</b></p> <p>Bohinj</p>

## TOP XL MEETING DESTINATIONS

The first category features the largest European meeting destinations which have exceptionally developed congress infrastructure and excellent aviation links. These destinations are mainly important aviation hubs.

### TOP 10 XL-DESTINATIONS IN 2021

1. VIENNA	4.75	6. AMSTERDAM	4.66
2. COPENHAGEN	4.73	7. EDINBURGH	4.62
2. ZURICH	4.73	8. BERLIN	4.61
3. MUNICH	4.71	8. BARCELONA	4.61
4. PRAGUE	4.68	9. OSLO	4.58
5. STOCKHOLM	4.67	10. ROME	4.57
6. HELSINKI	4.66	10. PARIS	4.57



### 1. VIENNA, AUSTRIA

There are cities in the world which can prove quite stressful for congress participants, and then there is Vienna. From first-hand experience, I can confirm that the city is easy to get around, pleasant and enjoyable and already belongs among the so-called 'smart' cities of today. Vienna's city authorities are convinced that the 'smart' city can grow whilst at the same time reducing the use of natural resources. One of the crucial initiatives is the intensive inclusion of the city's residents since there is a desire that innovations help improve living standards for all. It is all this that places Vienna among the smart cities of the future and makes it an excellent meeting destination.



### 2. COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

The premier capital of Northern Europe is Scandinavia's most fantastic city and the center of the most dynamic region in Europe, the Øresund Region. The city is one of Europe's oldest capitals with an exclusive royal touch – the monarchy in Denmark is the oldest in the world. The town has several large convention centers such as Forum Copenhagen, Bella Center and Øksnehallen which often host international fairs and conferences. The Medical Valley is on the outskirts of the city has large biomedical centers where many conferences are held. It has large venues, as Denmark's national stadium Parken, Brøndby Stadium and the newly built Royal Arena, which is expected to open in autumn in 2016. Overall, Copenhagen is a safe city to live in and a destination filled with special venues.



### 2. ZURICH, SWITZERLAND

According to Numbeo, Zurich is a city with one of the highest "quality of life" indexes in our comparison and a similar result is provided by Mercer. Switzerland's biggest city boasts quite a few superlatives and is known as the commercial, cultural and congress centre of Switzerland. It is the hub for train, road and air traffic, which gives it a big advantage over its competitors. It offers great congress infrastructure in the Kongresshaus Zurich and numerous other spaces, accompanied by some amazing special venues. Congress guests will appreciate the excellent public transport, which, in combination with great public infrastructure, is a must if you want to stay at the top of your game.



### 3. MÜNICH, GERMANY

Unsurprisingly, the city of quality beer, wurst, dirndl skirts and “lederhosen” is also a first-class European congress destination with one of the most developed fair infrastructures in the wider region. There are 31,000 hotel rooms in 395 excellent hotels with conference capacities. Added to the charm and picturesqueness of the Bavarian capital are numerous green open spaces and a high quality of living. Munich airport is also one of the key European air-traffic hubs, cementing the city’s position on the world congress map. Its history has always been distinguished by major events, including the 1972 Summer Olympics. In the world’s beer capital with centuries of tradition, beer doesn’t just flow freely in October, but the whole year round. The city belongs at the very top of our evaluation.



### 4. PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC

Prague has for a long time not been an Eastern European gem, but a true European tourist metropolis with a diverse and comprehensive offer, luxury hotels and sometimes too high prices. The story is reminiscent of Škoda, of which the Czechs are very proud and is one of the oldest automotive in Europe. Reputable, solid and reliable pre-war limousines were after the war changed by cars that were behind the times. Today, Škoda’s shine, again and again, puts the Czech manufacturer where it once was. The same can be said for the meetings industry, where Prague began to seriously falter the locations top of the European league. If we look at the position of Prague regionally, Prague certainly has all the conditions to remain one of the most popular congress destinations for a long time..



### 5. STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

Stockholm has a good reputation as being a leader at the forefront of environmental and sustainability issues. However, good work is not always reflected in international rankings. Sustainable Meet Stockholm, a new collaboration and marketing project, wants to change that by putting Stockholm on the map as the top destination for sustainable meetings.



### 6. HELSINKI, FINLAND

The Nordic countries are recognised worldwide as pioneers in sustainable development. This is a key asset for Finland and Helsinki in the eyes of international meeting and congress organisers. Climate change is one of the biggest drivers of change that is affecting people’s quality of life and the choices they make. Also within the event sector, there is a strong desire to combat climate change. The City of Helsinki is committed to promoting sustainable development in all its activities. The greatest interest in Helsinki is coming from Great Britain, where many agents seeking venues for international meetings are located.



### 6. AMSTERDAM, NETHERLANDS

From its earliest days, Amsterdam has been a bustling hub of commerce that welcomed other cultures with open arms. Amsterdam might be famous for its canals and cobblestone streets, but the city and the surrounding area is also home to some of the most treasured works of art in the world, including best-known pieces by Rembrandt, Mondrian, Van Gogh and more. Amsterdam is the ideal conference destination for every occasion. The destination is easily accessible has more than 500 venues. With world-class museums, quirky festivals, theatre, live music, laid-back bars and delightful restaurants, there's never a shortage of things to do in Amsterdam.



### 7. EDINBURGH, SCOTLAND

Edinburgh is a top convention destination, which is blessed with outstanding cultural and historical heritage. The destination is in its mature phase, with a fully-developed congress infrastructure and excellent destination management. Four universities and numerous centres of excellence in science and art related to the Edinburgh Science Triangle are a guarantee for further successful development of the destination. Congresses and events are a part of a scientific breakthrough and further development of the city, as it stimulates numerous multiplier effects. The key stakeholders in Edinburgh are aware of this and this message should also be transmitted as an example of best practice in new European destinations.



### 8. BERLIN, GERMANY

Berlin is exciting in every sense of the word and one can only speculate on the range of its different options in this congress 'land of plenty'. The Convention Bureau is known for its ingenuity, creativity and the rich offer it brings together. Moreover, Berlin's congress offer is jam-packed into a very reasonably priced package. It's no surprise that the city hosts more than 115,000 events annually and this number is expected to increase once the new Berlin Brandenburg airport finally opens its doors. Fuse Berlin's excellent congress offer with its urban heartbeat and you get a first-class congress destination. The city is also the capital of fun, dance, creativity, socializing and unforgettable nightlife, which sets it apart from its competitors.



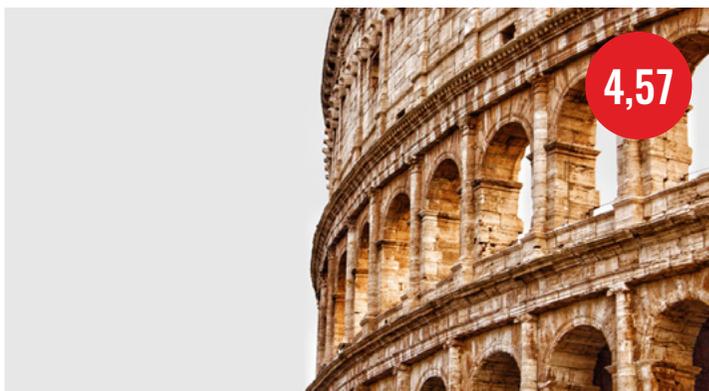
### 8. BARCELONA, SPAIN

Spain's second-largest city has become an annual stop on the congress pilgrimage to IBTM World. Its extroversion and trendy city architecture and design, in combination with a healthy dose of Mediterranean casualness, are all worthy of serious praise and admiration. Barcelona is a city that comes alive in the evening when it becomes a paradise for lovers of cuisine, cool taverns and cultural icons. Barcelona's list-topping luxury and designer hotels and a nearly perfect congress infrastructure have positioned the city at the very peak of Europe's congress industry. Although it is battling its current "OMG, there is so many tourists!" syndrome, we believe it will soon evolve into a city where the congress industry becomes part of the positive transformation of an otherwise overcrowded destination.



### 9. OSLO, NORWAY

The capital of Norway is one of Europe's fastest-growing cities. International media is constantly writing about Oslo's innovative architecture, museums, and neighbourhoods, as well as everything that moves on the food, fashion, art, and music scenes. Over the last few years, several new quarters have been established in the city centre, with exciting new activities and attractions. More importantly, Oslo is a green city and was awarded the prestigious title European Green Capital in 2019.



### 10. ROME, ITALY

Rome is the city of eternal charm. It was the first great metropolis built by humanity and the capital of the Roman Empire. Its historical centre has been included in the list of UNESCO World Heritage Sites. Roma boasts the highest concentration of monuments and archaeological sites in the world. It is also the City of Great Beauty. Every corner, street, church or neighbourhood has stories, secrets and legends to tell that have grown over time. Roma is an immense theatre with sumptuous scenery.



### 10. PARIS, FRANCE

Paris, a legendary city, has inspired artists, photographers and musicians throughout the ages. Each year, around 400 fairs and trade shows are held in Paris, drawing nearly 10 million visitors and 100,000 exhibitors. Paris tops the list of congress destinations; the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA), a point of reference for the sector, recently declared Paris 'the world's leading city for hosting international congresses'. Paris also has a plethora of venues for meetings and events with 17 congress and exhibition centres and a thousand classic, modern and unusual venues.

## FIND ALL EVALUATED DESTINATIONS IN ONE PLACE TAKE A LOOK AT THE FINAL MARKS FOR ALL **36 XL-CATEGORY** DESTINATIONS

In the category of destinations that can host more than 2000 participants, 36 destinations were evaluated in 2021. You can find out further details in our destination finder.

<https://kongres-magazine.eu/search-destinations/>

## TOP L MEETING DESTINATIONS

Congress infrastructure and aviation links in these destinations allow the organisation of congresses for up to 2,000 participants.

### TOP 10 L-DESTINATIONS IN 2021

1. TALLINN	4.52	7. SALZBURG	4.39
2. LJUBLJANA	4.51	8. KRAKOW	4.38
3. ZAGREB	4.50	9. VILNIUS	4.29
4. HAGUE	4.46	10. GRAZ	4.25
5. BRATISLAVA	4.42	10. VENICE	4.25
6. THESSALONIKI	4.40		



### 1. TALLINN, ESTONIA

In terms of congress needs, of the Baltic triplets, Tallinn is probably the most picturesque and diverse. The city has gone through many historical changes, right through from the medieval salesmen and knights of the Teutonic Order, to the protestant reformation, Swedish and Russian imperialism, turbulences of both Wars and then to the Soviet Union, before finally independence and the flourishing of its IT-industry and capitalism. All of these events today create a special culture that is the basis for the development of a congress industry not lagging behind the competitive destinations. Tourism is a branch of the economy that develops fast. According to the "Tallinn 2025" strategic plan, the capital of Estonia could become a centre of festival and event tourism in the Baltic Sea region.



### 2. LJUBLJANA, SLOVENIA

According to its conference and accommodation infrastructure, Ljubljana belongs to the group of capitals suitable for medium-sized and smaller meetings (up to 2.000 participants). It is positioned side by side with the new EU member states and geographically in the region of the Western Balkans. With two top-level convention centres and a very well developed hotel meetings offer, Ljubljana is the region's leading congress destination. The city is extremely safe and one of the region's most sustainably-oriented.



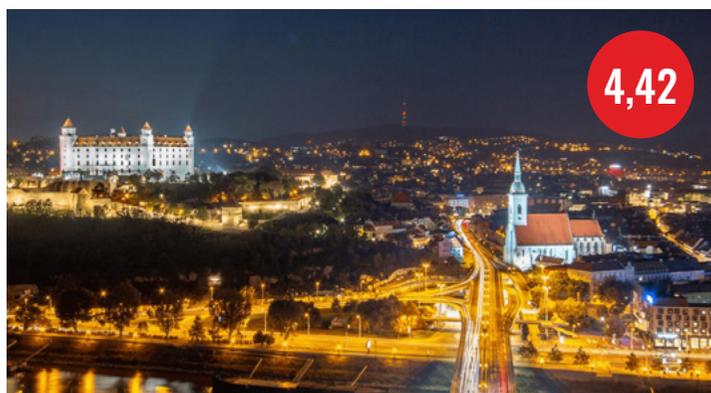
### 3. ZAGREB, CROATIA

A great congress future awaits Zagreb. It is well established in the international congress market and in addition to Ljubljana and Belgrade, it represents the future backbone of the continental meetings industry of the region. All three cities are progressing steadily on the charts of developed meetings destinations; the final breakthrough of the entire region is intertwined and dependent on the marketing of major regional congress cities in the international market.



#### 4. HAGUE, NETHERLANDS

You have certainly heard of The Hague – it is always in the news due to the work of numerous international organizations and companies which headquarter in this city. You probably also know that it is located in The Netherlands, a friendly and vibrant country in the north of Europe. You are likely to be even more surprised that the city has a light and playful side to it – with its beautiful sandy beaches, promenades, bars, restaurants and a vibrant cultural scene, something that all the visitors to our city love to discover. But The Hague is in fact the perfect business event destination.



#### 5. BRATISLAVA, SLOVAKIA

The city of four rivers defines the Danube river with its tributaries and with the mighty Renaissance castle above the intimate and compact old town. Bratislava is undiscovered European congress capital which slowly and steadily penetrates into the congress market. It represents a novelty for international congress market which impresses due to the kind and sympathetic city centre but also because of not excessive commercialization. The city is close to the congress organizers mainly due to a more personal congress experience – the city is very friendly and there are no problems with safety. The city centre is full of pubs, restaurants and shops and the hotel offer includes the best-known hotel chains.



#### 6. THESSALONIKI, GREECE

Thessaloniki is the second-largest Greek city, located in the North of the country on the Thermaic Gulf. Many consider it as the capital of Greek cuisine, which is a guarantee for an enjoyable time at your event. Most of Thessaloniki's big events take place at the Thessaloniki International Exhibition & Congress Centre, at the heart of the congress offer. The city's hotel offer is also diverse and perfect for smaller corporate events. The entire congress offer is connected by the proactive Convention Bureau, which despite a limited budget has been maintaining a stable position on the ICCA scale, with 18 international congresses annually. Last year they hit a record number of 28 congresses, a perfect example of how Thessaloniki is gaining new momentum.



#### 7. SALZBURG, AUSTRIA

Salzburg offers all the characteristics of a congress destination and a cosmopolitan mix of visitors. With its location in the heart of Europe and because of the high quality of life, Salzburg has a great starting point in congress tourism. For current logistics and transport restrictions of the city, medium-sized congresses with up to 2.000 participants are the best suited. Two top-quality, modern and high tech congress centers are together with a top-quality conference hotel infrastructure a foundation for this congress destination. In this area, they will offer you a superior product wrapped in superior packaging. Although you will find Mozart on every step of your way and it seems that the clock stopped in the times of the famous composer, Salzburg is very modern and urban. Otherwise, location, location, location and once again location is considered a crucial reason for choosing Salzburg for your event.



### 8. KRAKOW, POLAND

Of all Polish cities, Krakow is the one with the greatest soul and is the most fraught with history. In Poland, Krakow will be the destination of the new generation, which will soon be recognized as a high quality, compact and most versatile meetings destination in Poland due to the cultural heritage, the hospitality of the locals, new meetings capacities and because of its huge scientific potentials. Krakow has a variety of hotels services and an exceptional number of tourist attractions. Being the main tourist city it has excellent conditions in place for the development of congress tourism. With the construction of the new convention centre ICE, it has also received a real affirmation. Krakow's recipe is successful and a case of good practice for other more traditional central European destinations.



### 9. VILNIUS, LITHUANIA

Over the last few years, Vilnius learned diligently, polished its offer and was preparing for its entry into the international congress scene. In their favour, they have the charm of the city, which is cosmopolitan, urban, very European and full of hidden surprises. It's a city where socialist modernist architecture coexists with the Baroque centre, and unlike some other Eastern European congress destinations, this makes it very attractive. Vilnius is a credible partner of the international meetings industry and an undiscovered convention destination that appeal because of its freshness. For all three Baltic Congress Tigers – Vilnius, Riga and Tallinn – we predict a sunny congress future.



### 10. GRAZ, AUSTRIA

Graz is a mature tourist destination, which is despite the crisis recording a steady growth of tourist arrivals and overnight stays in all tourism segments. Cultural diversity, rich history and the connecting Mura River have formed a high experiential diversity, which is reflected in the many opportunities for congress and incentive organizers and planners. In terms of infrastructure and transport, Graz is still the leading regional convention destination and can be also in this term described as modern, dynamic and internationally competitive. With more than 154 congress event and some 46.000 participants, it achieves excellent results and is stable on the charts ranking international events. A very big focus in Graz is on environmental responsibility and tidiness of the surrounding areas and infrastructure.



### 10. VENICE, ITALY

The magical city par excellence and one of the most extraordinary world destinations. Venice and its province are unquestionably hospitable by vocation, as illustrated by some of the most famous hotels and temples of hospitality. Venice is a city which has long been hosting world events. As a commercial crossroads, it is easy to reach either by land or by sea, the city offering various means of transport. A city with irresistible charm and a wide range of different offers typical to the "Italian way of life".

## FIND ALL EVALUATED DESTINATIONS IN ONE PLACE TAKE A LOOK AT THE FINAL MARKS FOR ALL **27 L-CATEGORY** DESTINATIONS

In the category of destinations that can host up to 2000 participants, 27 destinations were evaluated in 2021. You can find out further details in our destination finder.

<https://kongres-magazine.eu/search-destinations/>

## TOP M MEETING DESTINATIONS

This is probably the most diverse category. The general conclusion is that this category is dominated by regional centres and larger tourist towns.

### TOP 10 M-DESTINATIONS IN 2021

1. DUBROVNIK	4.41	6. SCHLADMING	4.12
2. SPLIT	4.17	7. ROVINJ	4.10
3. PORTOROSE	4.16	8. KLAGENFURT	4.09
4. SAALFELDEN	4.15	8. ŠIBENIK	4.09
5. OPATIJA	4.14	9. VILLACH	4.07
6. BLED	4.12	10. TIVAT	4.04



### 1. DUBROVNIK, CROATIA

Dubrovnik is the flagship of regional tourism and is commonly the first association of meetings organizers we meet daily. It is the closest in the region to renowned Mediterranean convention destinations Cannes and Monte Carlo, and it will be even closer after the completion of the convention center. So far the center is successfully replaced by modern and well-equipped centers at hotels such as Dubrovnik Palace, Excelsior, Bellevue, Grand Villa Argentina, Importanne Resort, Dubrovnik President, Valamar Lacroma and Radisson Blue. Well-developed is the entire conference infrastructure including destination management and creative agency scene. The city is safe and one of the tourist icons of the Adriatic and justifiably the most painted tourist skyline with unprecedented experiential diversity for conference guests.



### 2. SPLIT, CROATIA

Among the Adriatic congress destinations Split has become serious competition to Dubrovnik in the last years. The main disadvantages of the destination are bad cooperation between the service providers, lack of air traffic connections to key markets and not enough destination marketing. If Split gets a real convention centre in the future, it could become one of the leading congress destinations in the Mediterranean. New and excellent hotel capacities, good road connections to Europe and wonderful surroundings, with islands offering numerous incentive programme opportunities, all bolster this proposition. Split is still one of the most unexploited congress destinations in the Mediterranean.



### 3. PORTOROŠE, SLOVENIA

The historic laurels of the leading Adriatic congress destination are slowly starting to gather dust. Portorož is still in hard competition with Dubrovnik, Opatija and new Adriatic congress destinations that are developing all the time. A rich congress history, tradition and the existing infrastructure are a competitive advantage. The meetings industry is by no means a tree to sleep under and simply harvest its fruit of wealthy congress participants. Despite that, Portorož has proven resilient and adaptable many times in the course of history, so some innovativeness and marketing opportunities should ensure it has a bright future.



### 4. SAALFELDEN, AUSTRIA

Often, things that are hidden are much more interesting. The same can be said about the tourist destination of Saalfelden Leogang. The destination swears by sustainability and strong connections between tourism, agriculture, forestry and trade. From what we have seen, they have been doing an excellent job. A lot of hotels have their own water source, the pools are heated with solar energy and smaller hotels have their own heating stations running on wood chips from the surrounding forests. Many destinations have a lot to learn and Saalfelden is a shining example in this field. Everything functions well, the food is local and the well-being of guests is excellently taken care of.



### 5. OPATIJA, CROATIA

Opatija is without a doubt the ultimate meetings destination. Why? Because few destinations provide such a rich assortment of luxury accommodation in such a small area, whilst Opatija provides 33 hotels offering over 2700 rooms and more than 50 meeting and conference halls along the 3 km of the coastline. At the beginning and the end of the Opatija Riviera, there are two boutique hotels that contribute to the exclusivity of Opatija.



### 6. BLEĐ, SLOVENIA

As a recognisable brand Bled stands out among other congress destinations in the region. It most closely resembles Dubrovnik, which caught up with the pre-war congress tempo by taking the right steps. Currently, the biggest disadvantage is the lack of a clear focus on quality rather than mass tourism. This is most clearly seen in the restaurant, nightlife and shopping offer. As a result, the current perception of quality is lower than with the largest competitors. In Bled the saying Less is more is very true. The potential for the meetings industry is immense, it just needs to be harnessed in the right way.



**6. SCHLADMING, AUSTRIA**

Schladming is a big skiing centre, the scene of the best slalom races of the season as well as other internationally known sports competitions. Besides that, it is also an excellent congress venue and a place, which stays in fond memory of every guest. We can say without a doubt that the tourist development in Schladming is a success story and we are certain that will also be the case in the future. Contributing to the success were mostly sporting events, on which they have built extensively. With the event organisation, the destination has gained a lot of experience, which can now be transferred into the congress field.



**7. ROVINJ, CROATIA**

If at the destination you have owners who have clear goals and who look at congress tourism strategically, then in a short time you can do a lot. It is possible to revitalize the old factory premises and build a superior conference hotel. Maistra in Rovinj has undoubtedly left its mark. Taking into consideration the geographical location of Rovinj as one of the closest Mediterranean congress destinations for Central and Western Europe, the future of this industry is guaranteed. Missing is only a convention bureau, which would know how to step out of corporate governance of the destination and would be able to serve as attorney of the meetings industry. Otherwise, forecasts of mayor Sponza that Rovinj will be more exclusive than Dubrovnik, can be realized.



**8. KLAGENFURT, AUSTRIA**

Klagenfurt is a likeable alpine congress destination with a rich cultural heritage and high experiential diversity. The key advantage is definitely fairytale-like well-maintained and pleasant environment, the quality of-fer that is above average in a regional sense, and professionalism of suppliers. Position at the crossroads of important routes is also an important factor in the competitiveness of this destination. The city is an important inter social and European transit region that is easily reachable thanks to modern highways and rail connections. Klagenfurt as the centre of Carinthia with its tidiness, safety and ratio between price and quality is one of the best convention destinations in the wider region. The city builds its meetings offer on sustainable development.



**8. ŠIBENIK, CROATIA**

Šibenik very rarely raises any association with the meeting industry. In the process of transition from an industrial city into a tourist destination, it has not yet asserted its image among competing cities. Despite this, it is a fact that it has excellent conditions and is somehow considered to be a hidden jewel of the Croatian congress offer. For ease of accessibility, it may be a suitable location for small association conferences as well as a variety of incentive programmes.



### 9. VILLACH, AUSTRIA

Villach is the second-largest city of Carinthia and its tourist sights attract an enormous amount of visitors. Villach has also become established as a small Silicon Valley in the Alps, with an international character reflected in the town's infrastructure. The main reason for the meetings industry in this part of Austria is the numerous incentive programmes, all of which you can engage in a very clean environment. The most charming aspects are the Carinthian way of life, cultural diversity and a general sense of casualness. In our opinion, the main advantages are the size and the feeling of familiarity, along with a modern congress infrastructure. Locals also like to emphasise the border location, sat at the crossroads of three nations, which hasn't been totally picked up in a congress sense. Locals also like to emphasise the border location, sat at the crossroads of three nations, which hasn't been totally picked up in a congress sense.



### 10. TIVAT, MONTENEGRO

Once a modest and ordinary town, Tivat went through a major remodelling of its marina and the surroundings and today it is a place where the world's jet-set resides and rests in the summertime. Although a big portion of Tivat is modern and glamorous, you can find traces of history here – Renaissance Summer House Buca in the centre of the city, Ostrvo Cvijeca with sacred monuments, Gornja Lastva, the old nucleus, the magnificent beach at Plavi Horizonti and the island Sv. Nikola. The spirit of old times lives through unique Olympics – the Bocarska Olympiad and Summer Fests.

## FIND ALL EVALUATED DESTINATIONS IN ONE PLACE TAKE A LOOK AT THE FINAL MARKS FOR ALL **26 M-CATEGORY** DESTINATIONS

In the category of destinations that can host up to 1200 participants, 26 destinations were evaluated in 2021. You can find out further details in our destination finder.

<https://kongres-magazine.eu/search-destinations/>

## TOP 5 MEETING DESTINATIONS

In this category smaller tourist towns prevail, where meeting activities are supplementary in the low tourist season.

### TOP 10 5-DESTINATIONS IN 2021

1. BOHINJ	4.05	6. NASSFELD	3.99
2. HVAR	4.03	7. VIPAVA VALLEY	3.98
2. KRANJSKA GORA	4.03	8. PTUJ	3.97
3. MALI LOŠINJ	4.02	8. SOČA VALLEY	3.97
4. GORIŠKA BRDA	4.01	8. ROGAŠKA SLATINA	3.97
5. PODČETRTEK	4.00	9. NOVA GORICA	3.96
6. IZOLA	3.99	10. BAD KLEINKIRCHHEIM	3.95



### 1. BOHINJ, SLOVENIA

The majority of congress guests will be sworn lovers of nature and its aesthetic value. Bohinj is a place that is created for sustainable conference programmes and for active incentive experiences. It is a place where without any hesitation you can drink water from the public water supply and from its clean streams. Even the basic network of thematic paths offers ideas for authentic congress programmes. In Slovenia, the beauty of Bohinj can only be matched by its neighbours across the peaks in the Soča Valley, or in Kranjska Gora.



### 2. HVAR, CROATIA

None of the more than 1,000 Croatian islands has such karma and recognition as Hvar. Definitely, a "must" Croatian destination, right behind Dubrovnik. Distance from the mainland gives it a touch of boutique smallness. On the beauty of the island, reminiscent of the Garden of Eden, there is no point in wasting words, since there is no shortage of various urban legends and superlatives. Among other things, it used to be called Austrian Madeira. In Hvar, the urban has been coexisting with the rural for centuries.



### 3. KRANJSKA GORA, SLOVENIA

The most important winter sports centre in Slovenia has among the Slovenian ski resorts the strongest brand, which is known worldwide mainly due to the Cup Vitranc. Slowly and steadily it has also developed a summer tourist offer, which enables the development of congress tourism. Both seasons are now virtually in balance. With the latest changes in the field of hospitality, it will surely strengthen its position as an important centre for the implementation of incentive programmes and small conferences. Due to the recognition of the ski jumps in Planica and Vitranc Cup it has a high priority over other rivals in the region. It is an important boutique congress destination for quality mid-size corporate events up to 350 participants.



### 3. MALI LOŠINJ, CROATIA

Lošinj and Cres are the only Adriatic islands that successfully deal with sustainable tourism and are amongst the more eco-friendly islands of Kvarner. They differ from the more famous Dalmatian isles, with their nature preservation, systematic sustainable development and cultural heritage. All these activities are well managed and present a huge opportunity for the sustainable meetings industry in harmony with the capabilities of the islands. The key challenge is the invisibility on the meetings industry radar, lacking the recognisable incentive brands to build high-quality boutique and intimate stories. If local suppliers can develop from these points, they will be able to benefit from the current trends in the industry. I am certain their first clients will be the existing loyal guests of Cres and Lošinj.



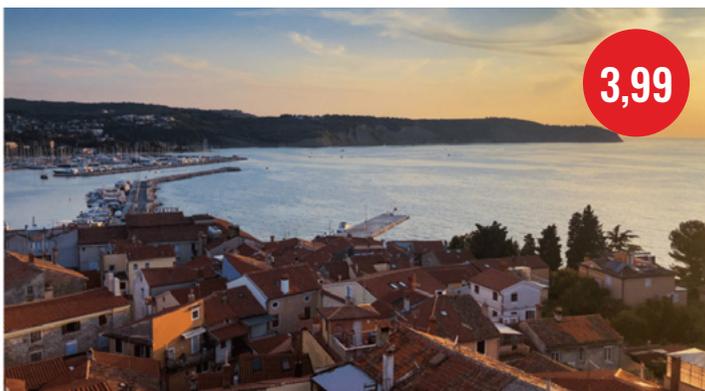
### 4. GORIŠKA BRDA, SLOVENIA

A number of the features of Brda make it special and unique in the wider area. In the first place is its openness to the sea, creating a pleasant Mediterranean climate, followed up by its natural beauty with rich cultural heritage and eco-preserved countryside with exceptional culinary and wine offer, unrivalled in the region. A panorama of hills with a cluster of agglomerations and subdivided farmland and countless terraced vineyards is certainly one of the most beautiful Italian-Slovenian landscape-aesthetic experiences. In the field of tourism-convention offer, Brda is perhaps the future formula of tourism development: "less is more". The convention fate of Brda and Collio is in co-operation and joint promotion.



### 5. PODČETRTEK, SLOVENIA

The smallest place in our analysis is big in its offer and an example to all of us involved with tourism. Once a remote and poor community, in the 60-ties of the last century focused on tourism. Its epicentre is a thermal spring, around which a success story was created. At every step the locals you meet, be it a wine-grower, a caterer or a priest will let it be known that you are welcome. There are few places where the only driving force of the economy is tourism. Because in these places the industry has never developed, today this can be considered as one of their advantages. Podčetrtek has great potential in the field of congress tourism. It is an authentic and in many ways a sustainable congress experience.



### 6. IZOLA, SLOVENIA

Izola promises a wide range of unforgettable experiences throughout the year. The beautiful villages of the Istrian countryside invite you to take a stroll, offering inviting views, numerous hiking and biking trails, and excellent cuisine. Not only does the sea offer fun in the summer, but it is also a paradise for water sports enthusiasts in the autumn and spring. In addition to its natural and marine beauty, Izola also hides cultural treasures, making it a great choice for event organisers of boutique events.



### 6. NASSFELD, AUSTRIA 6. NASSFELD HERMAGOR, AUSTRIA

In the last couple of years, the tourist offer of Nassfeld has seen some big investments. More than 26 million euros have been put into the Nassfeld ski resort (together with Pressegger See) in the last two years. The four valleys on the Austro-Italian border offer 110 kilometres of ski slopes, with 30 modern ski lifts ensuring smooth connections between them. Nassfeld is also famous for its high number of sunshine hours, as the protective effect of the Hohe Tauern mountain range blesses the town with the most sun in the region. This means that there are plenty of options for incentive and team building programmes in nature throughout the year. Natural conditions and high quality of hotel accommodation positions Nassfeld among the most attractive incentive destinations in Central Europe.



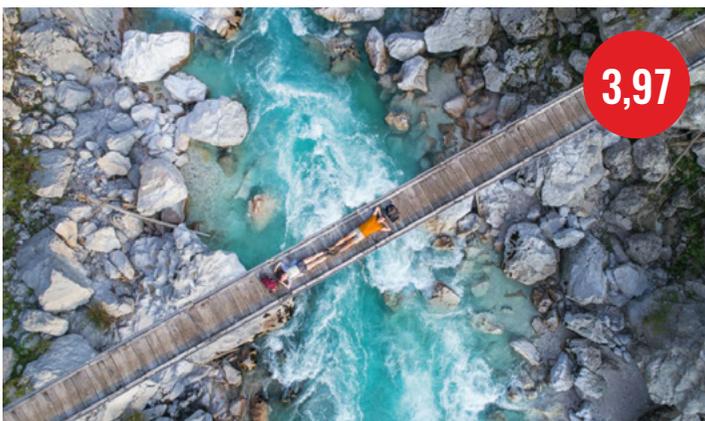
### 7. VIPAVA VALLEY, SLOVENIA

This until recently virtually unknown Slovenian destination is gradually being discovered as a hidden tourism gem, and social media is abuzz with rave reviews. The media too has picked up on the hype about the Vipava Valley. Much has been written about the exquisite local wines and the fine gourmet offering, but nothing beats personal accounts and travel experiences. In the Vipava Valley, these are always stellar. Michelin star-studded restaurants and even down-to-earth agritourism farms will serve much more than just tasty food. One of the most exciting discoveries in the Vipava Valley is the abundance of opportunities for exploring natural and cultural highlights, pursuing outdoor activities and hanging out with the locals.



### 8. PTUJ, SLOVENIA

Ptuj is located in the northeast of Slovenia, 30 km from Maribor and 140 km from Ljubljana. Ptuj is the oldest Slovenian town and with the oldest wine cellar in Slovenia, while on the other hand, Terme Ptuj is one of the youngest Slovenian spas. Despite this, doctors attribute beneficial effects in the treatment of rheumatism to their thermal waters. A well-preserved castle with the old town centre and a wide riverbed of the river Drava give the seal of the city to Ptuj.



### 8. SOČA VALLEY, SLOVENIA

In the narrow micro-region, the Soča Valley is currently not facing increased competition. On the Italian side in Friuli Venezia Giulia, incentive tourism is underdeveloped and the development of the product in Brda and Nova Gorica is also at the beginning stages. More serious competition is in Istria and neighbouring Carinthia, as well as within the wider Slovenian Julian Alps. The main advantage of the destination is a developed incentive product, gastronomy and preserved natural and cultural heritage, which is unequalled.



### 8. ROGAŠKA SLATINA, SLOVENIA

It would be hard to find a more traditional health resort in Slovenia. Most other health resorts, including the neighbouring Podčetrtek, cannot boast such tradition that inspires confidence. In a few years, the place has radically changed its appearance and has excellent congress infrastructure. However, something remains missing – more convention visitors, who were once coming en masse to these places. Rogaška needs congress tourism, as is written into its DNA. It seems that it is currently defying modern times, mainly thanks to the proactive individual hoteliers. To regain a top spot more connectivity will be required, better joint promotion and all of this reflected through the establishment of a Convention Bureau.



### 9. NOVA GORICA, SLOVENIA

The two locations are the heart of the sunny and verdant Goriška plane. Due to their interesting position between the Alps and the Mediterranean, and the junction between the Roman and Slavic, it forms a historically attractive space with high experiential value and preserved nature as much as a cultural landscape. In the transport sense, it is a very easily accessible region with a high quality of living and excellent infrastructure. Both Goricas have many good restaurants and will delight lovers of gastronomy, entertainment and gaming. The hospitality of the locals and the competitiveness of the destination is placing the region on top of young, fresh and undiscovered convention destinations.



### 10. BAD KLEINKIRCHHEIM, AUSTRIA

Bad Kleinkirchheim is known across the world for its skiing heritage, as the town is a long-time host of women world-cup ski races. Some might even recognize it for its thermal resort built in the 17th century. Less known is the fact that Bad Kleinkirchheim is an excellent incentive destination sprouting with a diverse and exciting offer, which spreads across both the winter and summer seasons. There's also no shortage of great accommodations. The incentive programmes range from active sports activities to historical and culinary experiences. A native of the region is also the legendary Franz Klammer with whom you can even go skiing on an exciting winter incentive. What separates the town from the regional competition is a top-notch culinary offer, developed in a different way in every hotel. All of this makes Bad Kleinkirchheim suitable for more demanding incentive groups.

## FIND ALL EVALUATED DESTINATIONS IN ONE PLACE TAKE A LOOK AT THE FINAL MARKS FOR ALL **29 S-CATEGORY** DESTINATIONS

In the category of destinations that can host up to 500 participants, 29 destinations were evaluated in 2021. You can find out further details in our destination finder.

<https://kongres-magazine.eu/search-destinations/>

## TOP BEST IN NEW EUROPE MEETING DESTINATIONS

In this category are fresh, energetic and lesser-known European destinations in New Europe.

### TOP 10 BEST IN NEW EUROPE DESTINATIONS IN 2021

1. PRAGUE	4.68	5. ZAGREB	4.50
2. ATHENS	4.53	6. BRATISLAVA	4.42
3. BUDAPEST	4.52	7. DUBROVNIK	4.41
3. TALLINN	4.52	8. THESSALONIKI	4.40
4. LJUBLJANA	4.51	9. KRAKOW	4.38
5. WARSAW	4.50	10. ST. PETERSBURG	4.36



### 1. PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC

Prague has for a long time not been an Eastern European gem, but a true European tourist metropolis with a diverse and comprehensive offer, luxury hotels and sometimes too high prices. The story is reminiscent of Škoda, of which the Czechs are very proud and is one of the oldest automotive in Europe. Reputable, solid and reliable pre-war limousines were after the war changed by cars that were behind the times. Today, Škoda's shine, again and again, puts the Czech manufacturer where it once was. The same can be said for the meetings industry, where Prague began to seriously falter at the top of the location of the European league. If we look at the position of Prague regionally, Prague certainly has all the conditions to remain one of the most popular congress destinations for a long time.



### 2. ATHENS, GREECE

A historic city with excellent connectivity to the rest of the world and where you will find infrastructure befitting a major European capital, but with better weather and in a more interesting location. Athens allure includes 300 days of sunshine a year, more than 30,000 hotel rooms in 439 hotels, 95,000 sq.m of conference space, 1,000+ restaurants and 200,000 flights per year. All major hotels in the city underwent a refurbishment for the 2004 Olympics. Athens is an attractive destination in its own, very special way. It is a unique combination of the old and the new, set in a spectacular Mediterranean landscape.



### 3. BUDAPEST, HUNGARY

If we put congress destinations of New Europe in a football perspective, then in the premier league Vienna dominates, which is immediately followed by Prague and Budapest. The city has no shortage of picturesque special venues or the most luxurious hotels, not to mention the crazy and diverse incentive locations. All this has been for many years an excellent and well-established MICE destination and a well-oiled congress machine. In addition, Budapest, unlike its rivals, is also a very pocket-friendly congress destination. The calendar of congresses and events clearly illustrates why the city on the Danube has developed into one of the world's leading congress destinations.



### 3. TALLINN, ESTONIA

In terms of congress needs, of the Baltic triplets, Tallinn is probably the most picturesque and diverse. The city has gone through many historical changes, right through from the medieval salesmen and knights of the Teutonic Order, to the protestant reformation, Swedish and Russian imperialism, turbulences of both Wars and then to the Soviet Union, before finally independence and the flourishing of its IT-industry and capitalism. All of these events today create a special culture that is the basis for the development of a congress industry not lagging behind the competitive destinations. Tourism is a branch of the economy that develops fast. According to the "Tallinn 2025" strategic plan, the capital of Estonia could become a centre of festival and event tourism in the Baltic Sea region.



### 4. LJUBLJANA, SLOVENIA

According to its conference and accommodation infrastructure, Ljubljana belongs to the group of capitals suitable for medium-sized and smaller meetings (up to 2.000 participants). It is positioned side by side with the new EU member states and geographically in the region of the Western Balkans. With two top-level convention centres and a very well developed hotel meetings offer, Ljubljana is the region's leading congress destination. The city is extremely safe and one of the region's most sustainably oriented.



### 5. WARSAW, POLAND

Today, Warsaw is one of the fastest-growing capitals in the EU and a city that can pride itself on a mix of new and old architectural styles. Its growth in infrastructure was strongly boosted when Warsaw was the host of the UEFA European Championship in 2012 and many new hotels were opened. The biggest congress hotel, the Hilton Warsaw with a hall for 1,600 participants, is one of the biggest in Europe, but The Palace of Culture with its 40 congress halls is also an interesting option.



### 5. ZAGREB, CROATIA

A great congress future awaits Zagreb. It is well established in the international congress market and in addition to Ljubljana and Belgrade, it represents the future backbone of the continental meetings industry of the region. All three cities are progressing steadily on the charts of developed meetings destinations; the final breakthrough of the entire region is intertwined and dependent on the marketing of major regional congress cities in the international market.



### 6. BRATISLAVA, SLOVAKIA

The city of four rivers defines the Danube river with its tributaries and with the mighty Renaissance castle above the intimate and compact old town. Bratislava is an undiscovered European congress capital that slowly and steadily penetrates into the congress market. It represents a novelty for the international congress market which impresses due to the kind and sympathetic city centre but also because of not excessive commercialization. The city is close to the congress organizers mainly due to a more personal congress experience – the city is very friendly and there are no problems with safety. The city centre is full of pubs, restaurants and shops and the hotel offer includes the best-known hotel chains.



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Dubrovnik is the flagship of regional tourism and is commonly the first association of meetings organizers we meet daily. It is the closest in the region to renowned Mediterranean convention destinations Cannes and Monte Carlo. The modern and well-equipped centres at hotels such as Dubrovnik Palace, Excelsior, Bellevue, Grand Villa Argentina, Importantne Resort, Dubrovnik President, Valamar Lacroma and Radisson Blue are all great for hosting a variety of events. Well-developed is the entire conference infrastructure including destination management and creative agency scene. The city is safe and one of the tourist icons of the Adriatic and justifiably the most painted tourist skyline with unprecedented experiential diversity for conference guests.



### 8. THESSALONIKI, GREECE

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### 9. KRAKOW, POLAND

Of all Polish cities, Krakow is the one with the greatest soul and is the most fraught with history. In Poland, Krakow will be the destination of the new generation, which will soon be recognized as a high quality, compact and most versatile meetings destination in Poland due to the cultural heritage, the hospitality of the locals, new meetings capacities and its huge scientific potentials. Krakow has a variety of hotels services and an exceptional number of tourist attractions. Being the main tourist city it has excellent conditions in place for the development of congress tourism. With the construction of the new convention centre ICE, it has also received a real affirmation. Krakow's recipe is successful and a case of good practice for other more traditional central European destinations.



### 10. ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA

Founded by Tsar Peter the Great in 1703 as Russia's "Window on Europe", St. Petersburg is Russia's second-largest city and bears the unofficial status of the country's cultural capital and the most European city. The city is a hub of cultural, historical and architectural landmarks, famous for its harmonious mix of western European and Russian architecture and its many waterways, which are inseparable from St. Petersburg's panorama. Many of the city's most famed architectural sites stretch along Neva's historic embankments. Moreover, the bridges and natural canals of the river have earned St. Petersburg the nickname "Venice of the North". Architecturally it ranks as one of the most splendid and congenial cities of Europe.

# NOVELTIES IN 2021

The corona crisis has largely digitalised the meetings industry sector. Consequently, the habits of event organisers have changed radically. Thus, for 2021 we have prepared an array of novelties that will enable our benchmark to reflect the situation on the market. Read more about MTLG NOVELTIES.

In order to make the assessment as credible as possible, we can again agree on a assessor visit to the destination. Within the visit, we would get familiar with the novelties and details that may affect the final evaluation of the destination. If you are interested in such cooperation, please let us know.

**For more information please contact:**



**TOLERANCA**

TOLERANCA MARKETING d.o.o.  
Štihova 4, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia  
T: +386 (0)1 430 51 03  
E: [gorazd.cad@toleranca.eu](mailto:gorazd.cad@toleranca.eu)  
[www.toleranca.eu](http://www.toleranca.eu)

[www.secret-congress-guest.eu](http://www.secret-congress-guest.eu)

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**PUBLISHER**  
Kongres Magazine

**EDITOR IN CHIEF**  
Gorazd Čad

**CONTENT**  
Gorazd Čad

**DESIGN**  
Barbara Dimec

**PHOTO CREDIT**  
Tina Ramujkić, Archives of individual destinations, hotels and  
conventions centres

**MARKETING**  
Toleranca Marketing d.o.o.,  
Štihova 4, SI-1000 Ljubljana  
T: +385 (0)1 430 51 03  
E: gorazd.cad@toleranca.eu

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