

KONGRES
NEW EUROPE MEETINGS INDUSTRY MAGAZINE



KONGRESNA ZVEZDA
MEETINGS STAR

**THE BEST MEETING
DESTINATIONS 2022/2023**

MEETINGS STAR CERTIFICATE

MTLG - MEETOLOGUES OF NEW EUROPE
Hidden surprises of New Europe

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125

MEETOLOGUES

25

**DESTINATION VISITS
EACH YEAR**

4

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

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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

The Meeting Experience Index is the final score given to a destination after reviewing 75 strict evaluation criteria. It compares a destination with 124 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 start of our evaluation, we have been diligently using the reference system to present a realistic offer of meeting destinations through time. To this day, 125 meeting destinations have been evaluated, including every key meeting hub of the South East and New Europe region.

The system is a systematic, structured and analytical process comprising numerous factors, which event organisers consider very important. 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 congresses or 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 focused on one product only. Predominantly, these were events of international expert associations. A typical example is the ICCA Country and City Ranking.**
- 2. The comparisons did not consider 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 furthered this gap.**
- 3. The comparisons did not consider the possibility of a crisis happening. 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 core MICE products. Most importantly, our methodology is resilient to crises.

Over the course of a decade, congress travelogues or meetologues have 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 firmly believe 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, above all, a tool to improve the competitiveness of individual destinations. It offers destinations an external view of their offer with the aim to drive constant growth and help destinations achieve excellence. As the process is systematic and continuous, the improvement of an individual evaluation criterion can be observed over time.

Destinations use our methodology predominantly because they wish to become or stay competitive worldwide. The research also strives to ensure valuable qualitative and quantitative data that can be used for 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 acquire a realistic picture of a destination and its offer. Furthermore, we are obliged to actuality, reality, transparency and objectivity. Each year, the final marks and congress meetologues are revised and corrected with up-to-date information sent by the destinations.

Altogether, 125 destinations from 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 meeting destination that suits their needs. Our categories thus represent a roadmap regarding the type of event a particular destination can host from the aspect of logistics and event capacity. Our categorisation includes an array of crite-

ria, 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)

| | | | |
|------------------|----------------------|-----------------|----------------------|
| Budva | M-destination | Portorož | M-destination |
| Tivat | M-destination | Split | M-destination |
| Dubrovnik | M-destination | Rijeka | M-destination |
| Opatija | M-destination | | |

| Benchmark 2022: ADRIATIC REGION | BUDVA | TIVAT | DUBROVNIK | OPATIJA | PORTOROŽ | SPLIT | RIJEKA |
|---|--------------|--------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|
| Destination Category | M | M | M | M | M | M | M |
| Destination population | 36.739 | 36.739 | 42.615 | 11.659 | 2.849 | 178.102 | 97.910 |
| The number of 4* and 5* category hotel rooms | 3620 | 383 | 4272 | 1971 | 4500 | 1525 | 450 |
| The number of 4* and 5* category hotels | 43 | 14 | 29 | 22 | 16 | 28 | 4 |
| Banquet hall maximum capacity | 360 | 120 | 700 | 600 | 700 | 450 | 180 |
| Maximum hall capacity in theatre style | 800 | 200 | 1200 | 900 | 1100 | 800 | 677 |
| The largest hall in the city (in m2) | 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.

| Benchmark 2022: ADRIATIC REGION $\bar{x}=3.99$ | BUDVA | TIVAT | DUBROVNIK | OPATIJA | PORTOROŽ | SPLIT | RIJEKA |
|--|--------------|--------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|
| MEETING EXPERIENCE INDEX | 3.83 | 3.96 | 4.39 | 4.04 | 4.03 | 3.90 | 3.84 |
| 1. Natural and cultural factors | 4.62 | 4.89 | 4.95 | 4.79 | 4.77 | 4.69 | 4.61 |
| 2. General and transport infrastructure | 4.49 | 4.55 | 4.62 | 4.69 | 4.60 | 4.64 | 4.56 |
| 3. Tourist infrastructure | 4.75 | 4.88 | 4.91 | 4.79 | 4.60 | 4.84 | 4.64 |
| 4. Meeting infrastructure | 4.70 | 4.75 | 4.81 | 4.87 | 4.73 | 4.53 | 4.25 |
| 5. Subjective grade | 4.67 | 4.79 | 4.84 | 4.83 | 4.76 | 4.73 | 4.61 |
| 6. Marketing Buzz | 4.16 | 4.60 | 4.45 | 4.44 | 4.47 | 4.08 | 3.96 |
| 7. ICCA Index | 1.02 | 1.02 | 3.80 | 1.02 | 1.25 | 1.62 | 1.02 |
| 8. Numbeo – Quality of Life Index | 3.10 | 3.27 | 3.49 | 3.49 | 3.66 | 3.02 | 3.50 |
| 9. Numbeo – Safety Index | 3.89 | 3.89 | 4.89 | 4.74 | 4.65 | 3.79 | 4.49 |
| 10. ACI – Airport Connectivity Index | 2.92 | 2.92 | 3.18 | 2.78 | 2.78 | 3.10 | 2.78 |

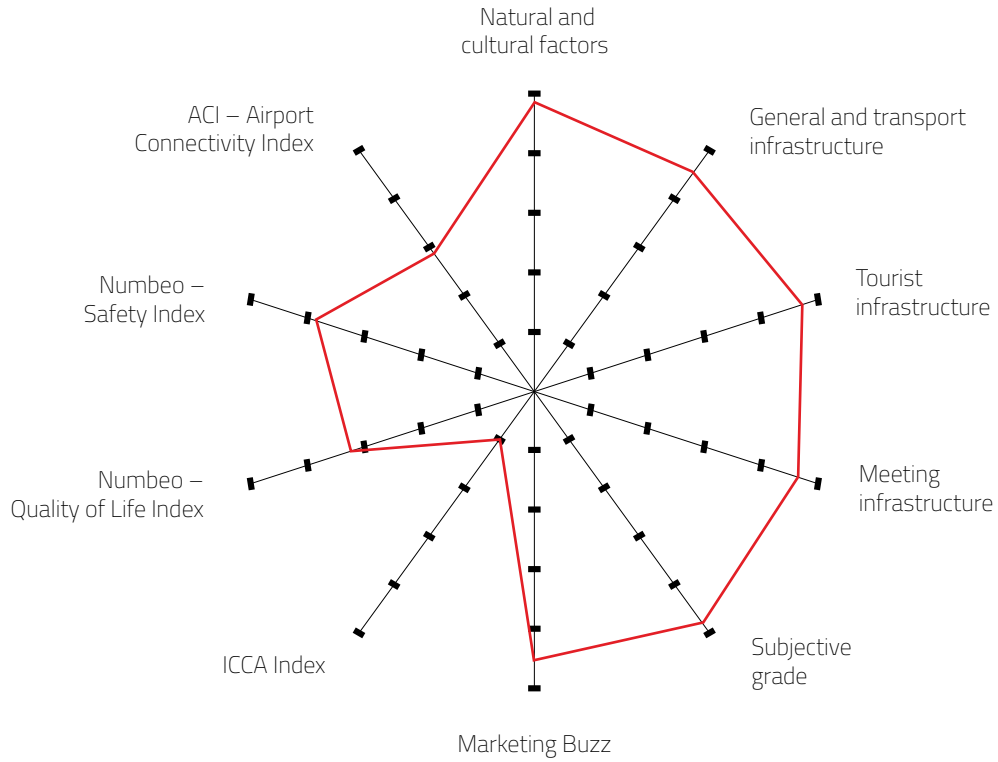
| TIVAT, final mark 3.96 | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| + Advantages | - Disadvantages |
| 5.00 Natural diversity | 4.02 Accessibility – rail |
| 5.00 Climate and Weather | 4.05 Effective convention bureau activities |
| 5.00 Natural experience index | 4.15 Accessibility – road |
| 4.98 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 |

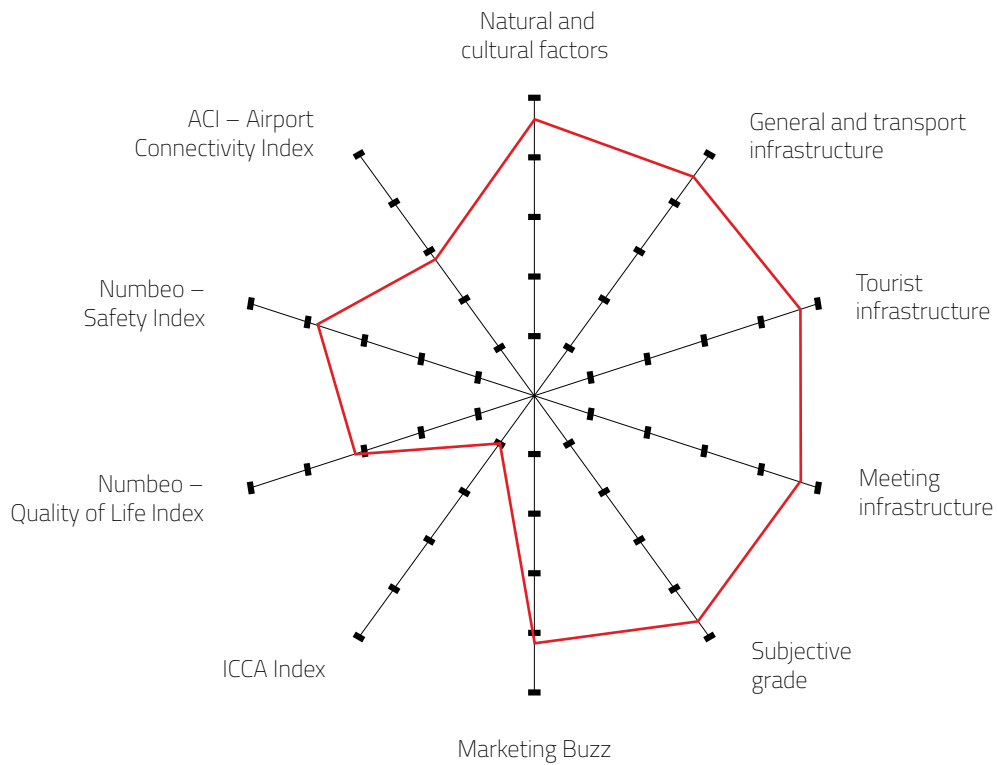
| BUDVA, final mark 3.83 | |
|--|--|
| + Advantages | - Disadvantages |
| 5.00 Climate and Weather | 3.09 Architecture |
| 4.99 Nightlife | 4.01 Shopping |
| 4.95 Natural experience index | 4.02 Direct marketing and communication |
| 4.95 Restaurant scene | 4.09 Digital marketing and communication |
| 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

| Benchmark 2022: ADRIATIC REGION $\bar{x}=4.66$ | BUDVA | TIVAT | DUBROVNIK | OPATIJA | PORTOROŽ | SPLIT | RIJEKA |
|--|--------------|--------------|------------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|
| FINAL DESTINATION MARK | 3.83 | 3.96 | 4.39 | 4.04 | 4.03 | 3.90 | 3.84 |
| CONGRESS INFRASTRUCTURE | 4.70 | 4.75 | 4.81 | 4.87 | 4.73 | 4.53 | 4.25 |
| 1. History and references | 4.56 | 4.75 | 5.00 | 4.98 | 4.85 | 4.59 | 4.22 |
| 2. Variety of meeting suppliers | 4.78 | 4.82 | 4.98 | 4.91 | 4.49 | 4.67 | 4.31 |
| 3. Quality of meeting hotels | 4.89 | 4.95 | 4.97 | 4.90 | 4.70 | 4.83 | 4.48 |
| 4. Convention and exhibition centres | 4.45 | 4.45 | 3.55 | 4.75 | 4.85 | 3.89 | 3.85 |
| 5. Ratio of 4 and 5***** hotel rooms | 4.88 | 4.95 | 4.95 | 4.92 | 4.88 | 4.60 | 4.37 |
| 6. Incentive programmes | 4.91 | 4.94 | 4.98 | 4.95 | 4.90 | 4.78 | 4.16 |
| 7. Professionalism of the meetings industry | 4.77 | 4.90 | 4.93 | 4.91 | 4.76 | 4.91 | 4.65 |
| 8. Diversity of offer | 4.68 | 4.82 | 4.90 | 4.83 | 4.67 | 4.43 | 4.22 |
| 9. Effective convention bureau activities | 4.46 | 4.05 | 4.98 | 4.85 | 4.70 | 4.12 | 4.01 |
| 10. Support services | 4.63 | 4.86 | 4.85 | 4.74 | 4.54 | 4.49 | 4.25 |

| TIVAT – final mark comparison | | |
|---|--|---|
| + Advantages | - Disadvantages | Competitors' advantages |
| 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>Assessor's comment: 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> | | |

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

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 2022/2023

The corona crisis largely digitalised the meetings industry sector. Consequently, the habits of event organisers changed radically. For 2023, we have prepared a slew of novelties that will enable our benchmark to reflect the post-corona situation on the market.

1. Nomad List Overall Score

You may be wondering what digital nomads have in common with the meetings industry. After careful analysis, we concluded that the criteria assessed by the Nomad List correlate with the needs of digital event organisers. Numerous event organisers have already moved their events to digital nomad-friendly destinations.

The overall score contains various criteria ranging from internet connection speed, air quality, safety, quality of English and quality of life. The latter is measured through several indicators, including living expenses and visa policies. For these reasons, we added the Nomad List Overall Score to our final mark for 2022/2023.

2. A new addition to the maximum capacities of destinations

The maximum capacities of destinations are complemented with the following information:

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

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

3. ICCA Index

After a hiatus during the covid crisis, ICCA again published its ICCA Index. The study sheds more light on how the pandemic impacted the meetings industry in the past years.

4. ACI Index

In 2022, ACI EUROPE once more published the Airport Industry Connectivity Report, which documents the ongoing effects of the recovery after the COVID-19 crisis on air connectivity. However, as economies have only re-opened, air connectivity is taking time to come back. Recovery is far from uniform, with significant differences between destinations.

5. GDS Index

The 2022 Global Destination Sustainability Index (GDS-Index) represents a sustainably-oriented addition to this year's evaluation. The index has shown that we must work together to regenerate destinations.

MEETINGS STAR CERTIFICATE

The best destinations will be awarded at a gala award ceremony during Conventa, taking place between 1 and 2 February 2022. Only the best destinations will receive the coveted awards.

“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. Up to now, we have published 125 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. I am proud that our project reflects an accurate image of destinations. Countless professional event organisers appreciate the objectivity of the evaluation.”

- Gorazd Čad, Editor in Chief



FAQ 2022/2023

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: 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 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 a 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 and meeting planners when choosing destinations for their events. That is predominantly because of the Meetologues' logic and the benefits they bring to all stakeholders. However, we are convinced that our evaluations are objective and helpful to meeting planners while, at the same time, serving as a helpful tool that enables destinations to improve in areas where they trail behind 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 external evaluation of their destination and helps them continuously improve and achieve excellence. As this is a systematic and contingent process, the progress of the individual evaluated criteria can be observed over time. Destinations use our methodology primarily because they wish to become or remain competitive internationally.

Q: What differentiates MTLG from the other benchmark studies?

It is a systematic, structured and analytical process encompassing 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 within the meetings industry.

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

A total of 125 destinations from the region of New Europe are included in the categorisation and evaluation. With the help of different categories, we enable event organisers to choose a destination that suits their needs. Therefore, a category is more guided by what kind of event an individual destination can host from a logistical point of view and the general capacity that it offers. Our categorisation includes a combination of criteria, and the sum of evaluation points is the basis for classifying destinations into four categories.

Q: What does the term New Europe mean?

The MTLGs were the first to introduce the countries of South-Eastern, Central and Eastern Europe through convention programmes, which we often name 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. Numerous new congress centres, 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 quantitative and qualitative metrics. The Airport Connectivity Index comprises direct and indirect weekly frequencies, weighted by their quality. Thus, this is not simply a measurement of direct services. For this report, connectivity is a composite measure of the number of destinations, the frequency of services and the quality of connections.

You can find 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 learned that the data reflected the real situation. Furthermore, 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 a former Google engineer, a genius by the name of Mladen Adamović from Serbia.

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

Indeed, to ensure that all data for individual destinations are correct, we check them on-site. In case of major deviations, we adapt accordingly.

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

This grade is connected to the Numbeo Purity and Cleanliness index but is equipped with actual measures that destinations must 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 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 evident when comparing CO2 emissions, which are 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 with 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 integral 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, and destinations ranked below the 320th place 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 bench-

marking system, which we perform for individual destinations, and we named it MTLG BENCHMARK. Our methodology saves 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 information centres of all destinations.

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. The book Power to the Meetings delves into this multifaceted issue.

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

Our categorisation highlighted that destinations can be divided into four categories. They are segmented into categories based on the maximum number of participants that can be hosted without encountering any logistical 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. They will conduct recertification of your destination and thus help you obtain an up-to-date and objective overview of your destination.

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

The indexes are 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, but it also helps destinations make concrete improvements.

Q: Who can be a destination assessor?

Assessors are experienced and handpicked individuals with a minimum of 15 years of work experience in event organising. All assessors go through an extensive 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 because 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 expenses of accommodation and travel 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 evaluating destinations, we have not received any direct complaints regarding the final mark except for one destination. Even in that case, it was a simple misunderstanding 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 further improvements required to overcome their comparative disadvantages.

For further information regarding the MTLG benchmark or recertification, do not hesitate to contact us at 00386 (0)1 430 51 04 or send an e-mail to gorazd.cad@toleranca.eu.



KONGRESNA ZVEZDA
MEETINGS STAR

VIENNA,
AUSTRIA

4,78

Final Grade 2022

MTLG INDEX 2022/2023 EDITION

VIENNA, AUSTRIA

CITY, COUNTRY

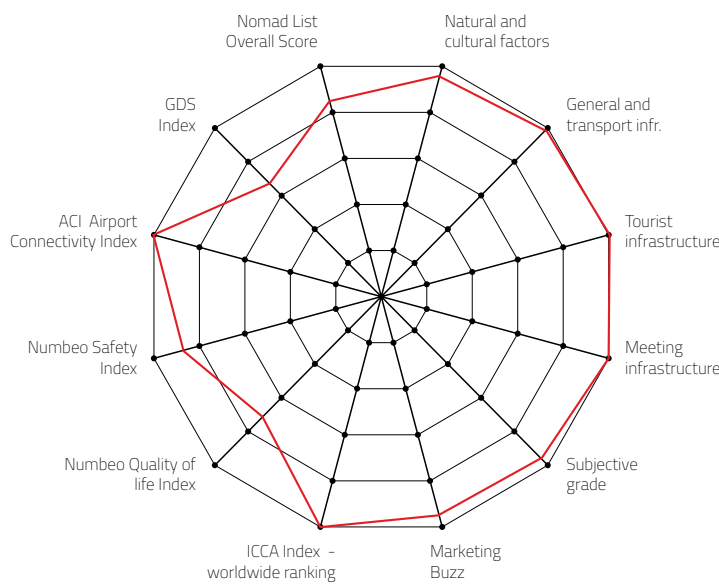
MTLG Category

XL MEETING DESTINATION

Destination that can host more than 2,000 congress attendees

DESTINATION CAPACITY

| | | | |
|---|-----------|--|-----------|
| The number of 4* and 5* category hotel rooms | 19,200 | Banquet hall maximum capacity | 5,500 |
| The number of 4* and 5* category hotels | 165 | The largest hall in the city (in m2) | 20,000 m2 |
| Number of studios for digital and hybrid events | 20 | Average internet speed when organising event | 38 Mbps |
| Destination population | 1,935,000 | Maximum hall capacity in theatre style | 6,480 |
| Index: Banquet hall maximum capacity / Maximum hall capacity in theatre style | | 117,82 lower is better | |
| Index: Hotel Rooms / Maximum hall capacity in theatre style | | 33,75 lower is better | |

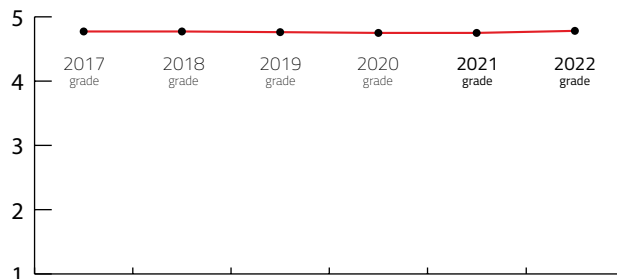


OVERALL PERFORMANCE IN 2022

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|
| Natural and cultural factors | 4.93 |
| General and transport infrastructure | 4.98 |
| Tourist infrastructure | 5.00 |
| Meeting infrastructure | 5.00 |
| Subjective grade | 4.92 |
| Marketing Buzz | 4.87 |
| ICCA Index - worldwide ranking | 5.00 |
| Numbeo Quality of life Index | 3.72 |
| Numbeo Safety Index | 4.36 |
| ACI Airport Connectivity Index | 5.00 |
| GDS Index | 3.40 |
| Nomad List Overall Score | 4.20 |
| FINAL GRADE | 4.78 |

SIX YEARS RESULTS FROM 2017 TO 2022

| Year | 2017 | 2018 | 2019 | 2020 | 2021 | 2022 |
|--------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| FINAL GRADE | 4.77 | 4.77 | 4.76 | 4.75 | 4.75 | 4.78 |



**VIENNA,
AUSTRIA**

4,76

Destination Final Grade from 2017 to 2022

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

NUMBEO Safety Index (higher is better) is an estimation of overall level of safety in a given city or a country. 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

- 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.
Štihova 4, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenija
T: +386 (0)1 430 51 03
E: gorazd.cad@toleranca.eu
www.toleranca.eu



KONGRESNA ZVEZDA
MEETINGS STAR

PHOTO GALLERY

Highlights from the Meetings Star Award ceremony

PHOTO CREDIT: TINA RAMUJKIĆ, MARKO DELBELLO OCEPEK



MEETINGS STAR AWARD CEREMONY





MEETINGS STAR AWARD CEREMONY





MEETINGS STAR AWARD CEREMONY





MTLG

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

KONGRES MEETOLOGUES

HIDDEN SURPRISES

Overview of the best meetings destinations of 2022

The Editorial Board of Kongres Magazine evaluates undiscovered and appealing meeting destinations and presents them to international meeting planners. Kongres Magazine reviews all destinations on the basis of fieldwork and thorough research of the individual criteria to get as close to the real situation as possible. Every year the evaluation and the Meetologues are reviewed and updated with the latest information. Till now, we have presented 125 Meetologues. Each destination is evaluated based on 75 different criteria that enable fair comparison of a destination. Meeting organisers appreciate our system's expertise, value and practicality.

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 2022

| | |
|--|---|
|  <p>XL MEETING DESTINATIONS WINNER 4,78</p> <p>Vienna</p> |  <p>L MEETING DESTINATIONS WINNER 4,52</p> <p>Tallinn</p> |
|  <p>M MEETING DESTINATIONS WINNER 4,35</p> <p>Dubrovnik</p> |  <p>S MEETING DESTINATIONS WINNER 4,06</p> <p>Bohinj</p> |

TOP XL MEETING DESTINATIONS

The first category features the largest European meeting destinations with exceptionally developed congress infrastructure and superb air accessibility. These destinations are mainly aviation hubs.

TOP 10 XL-DESTINATIONS IN 2022

| | | | |
|---------------|------|--------------|------|
| 1. VIENNA | 4.78 | 6. LISBON | 4.68 |
| 2. ZURICH | 4.76 | 7. BARCELONA | 4.65 |
| 3. COPENHAGEN | 4.73 | 7. STOCKHOLM | 4.65 |
| 3. MUNICH | 4.73 | 8. HELSINKI | 4.64 |
| 4. MADRID | 4.71 | 9. ATHENS | 4.62 |
| 5. AMSTERDAM | 4.70 | 10. PRAGUE | 4.61 |
| 6. BERLIN | 4.68 | | |



1. VIENNA, AUSTRIA

Vienna is a city that is constantly reinventing itself and evolving – with smart city concepts, new districts and also new meeting locations. Meeting planners can already choose from over 200 impressive and varied venues in the city. One of the crucial initiatives is the intensive inclusion of the city's residents since there is a desire that innovations to 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.



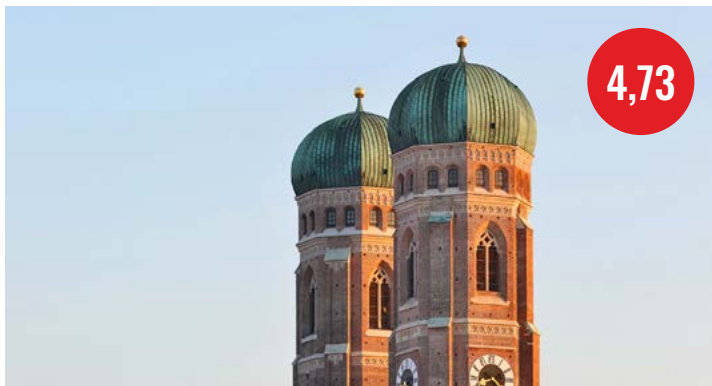
2. ZURICH, SWITZERLAND

Zurich's public transportation network is one of the most efficient and reliable in the world. It, therefore, comes as no surprise that streetcars and buses are the preferred means of transportation for the city's population. 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.



3. COPENHAGEN, DENMARK

The premier capital of Northern Europe is Scandinavia's most fantastic city and the centre 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 centres 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 and has large bio-medical centres where many conferences are held. It has large venues, such as Denmark's national stadium Parken, Brøndby Stadium and the Royal Arena. Overall, Copenhagen is a safe city to live in and a destination filled with special venues.



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 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. MADRID, SPAIN

Madrid is a lively, welcoming and cosmopolitan city where congress guests feel at home. Madrid offers a comfortable and safe setting, where indulging in a spot of leisure is just as enjoyable as doing business. Its abundant artistic and natural heritage, State-of-the-art transport network, the quality of its accommodation, excellent gastronomy and the passion with which the people of Madrid enjoy both day and night make the capital of Spain one of the most attractive cities in Europe.



5. 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 are 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 and 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.



6. 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.



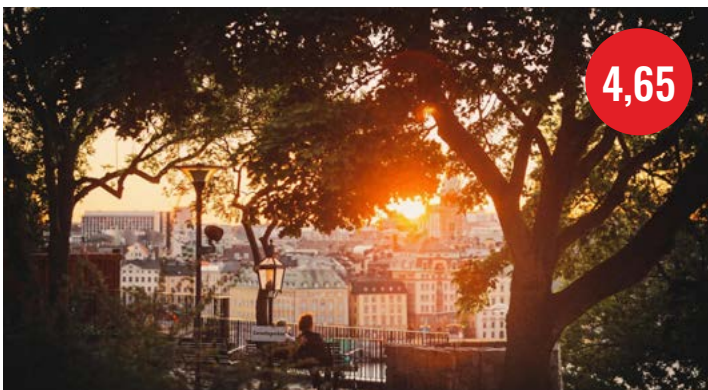
6. LISBON, PORTUGAL

Lisbon is a historical city full of stories to tell. A city where the sun shines 290 days a year and where you feel safe wandering around day or night. Lisbon is an authentic city where old customs and ancient history intermix with cultural entertainment and hi-tech innovation. The city's rich cultural heritage continues to grow every day. Lisbon is a dream destination for foodies, wine lovers, critics and the curious. The famous bacalhau (salted cod), in its various forms, is not to be missed.



7. 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 the "OMG, there is so many tourists!" syndrome, we believe it will soon evolve into a city where the meetings industry becomes part of the positive transformation of an otherwise overcrowded destination.



7. STOCKHOLM, SWEDEN

Stockholm has a good reputation as 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.



8. HELSINKI, FINLAND

Nordic countries are recognised worldwide as pioneers in sustainable development. This is a key asset for Finland and Helsinki in the eyes of international meetings 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.



9. 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. The 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 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.



10. PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC

Prague is the most attractive tourist and meeting destination in the Czech Republic. The capital city is known for its architectural monuments and living history, and it ranks among the most admired and greenest cities in Europe. Getting around Prague is simple: either walking and enjoying the city's sights or using the public transportation system, ranked fifth-best in the world. Visitors can enjoy a meal with a pint of beer in a traditional brewery, or in a fine dining restaurant. With its infrastructure, Prague can accommodate the most demanding events. The meeting options combine the historical and modern, cutting-edge technology features of Prague.

FIND ALL EVALUATED DESTINATIONS IN ONE PLACE TAKE A LOOK AT THE FINAL MARKS FOR ALL **39 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 2022

| | | | |
|--------------|------|-----------------|------|
| 1. TALLINN | 4.52 | 7. BRATISLAVA | 4.42 |
| 2. PORTO | 4.51 | 7. THESSALONIKI | 4.42 |
| 3. LJUBLJANA | 4.50 | 7. KRAKOW | 4.42 |
| 4. ZAGREB | 4.49 | 8. GRAZ | 4.33 |
| 4. HAGUE | 4.49 | 9. RIGA | 4.19 |
| 5. SALZBURG | 4.44 | 10. GDANSK | 4.16 |
| 6. VILNIUS | 4.43 | | |



1. TALLINN, ESTONIA

Tallinn remains one of the most compact cities in Europe. There are not many cities where you can see such a variety of different eras side by side. In recent years, Tallinn has finally opened up and become the accessible seaside capital that it is. Tourism is a branch of the economy that develops fast in Tallinn. According to the Tallinn strategic plan for 2025, the capital of Estonia will become a centre of festival and event tourism in the Baltic Sea region. The sprawling development of the city includes The Tallinn Cruise Terminal building, a welcomed addition, which has become one of the most popular event spaces in the city.



2. PORTO, PORTUGAL

Porto is one of the oldest cities in the country, a city of culture and leisure, and a cosmopolitan and contemporary place. Because of the excellent facilities available in the region, Porto is the perfect destination for organising congresses, conferences and events. Porto is a destination where tradition meets modernity. It stands out from the crowd because of the perfect symbiosis between the past and the future. One of the core advantages is the international airport with 60 direct routes, just minutes from the city centre.



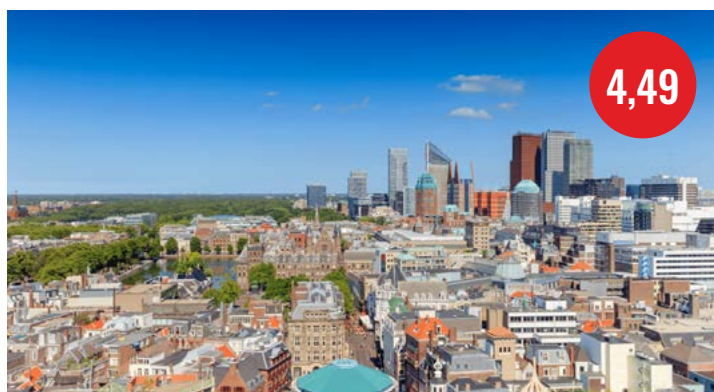
3. LJUBLJANA, SLOVENIA

According to its conference and accommodation infrastructure, Ljubljana belongs to the group of capital cities 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.



4. 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 meeting 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 organisations and companies whose headquarters are 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. SALZBURG, AUSTRIA

Salzburg offers all the characteristics of a meeting 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 centres 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 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.



6. 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 appeals to because of its freshness. For all three Baltic Congress Tigers – Vilnius, Riga and Tallinn – we predict a sunny congress future.



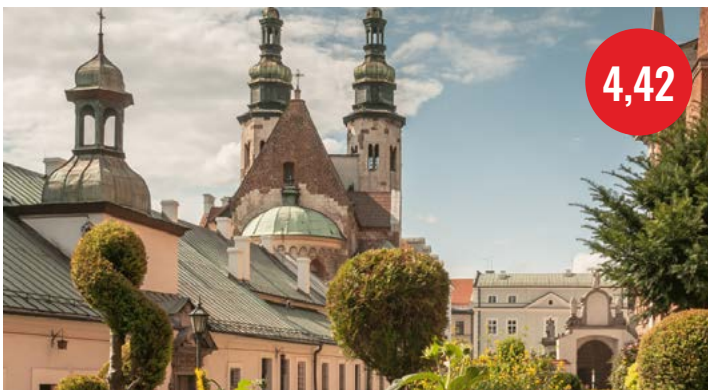
7. BRATISLAVA, SLOVAKIA

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.



7. THESSALONIKI, GREECE

A diverse and holistic meetings offer is well-connected through Thessaloniki Convention Bureau. The organisation has been placing the destination on the map with a fresh and innovative approach. Above all, the city impresses event organisers with its unmistakable energy and eclectic Mediterranean spirit. In this light, the destination seems like the rockish alter-ego of the larger meeting capital Barcelona. Thessaloniki is also the capital of Greek gastronomy which will surely impress event attendees. In addition, the city has excellent value for money.



7. KRAKOW, POLAND

The most illustrious success of the Krakow Network Protocol is by far the successful bid to host the ICCA Congress 2022. The 61st ICCA Congress will take place in the autumn of 2022 in ICE Krakow. Their successful candidature is a testament to the saying: "In unity, there is strength". Krakow was selected miles ahead of Athens and Bangkok. The congress will be an unparalleled opportunity for the entire region, and according to the destination, we can expect record attendance at next year's event in Krakow.



8. 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 events 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 the tidiness of the surrounding areas and infrastructure.



9. RIGA, LATVIA

Riga offers vivid and contrasting tourism infrastructure. Its small boutique concept hotels are located next to modern and contemporary larger hotels. Riga is home to the largest hotel in the Baltics – Radisson Blu Latvia with 571 guest rooms. Riga's city restaurants offer modern Latvian cuisine to surprise and satisfy the most demanding gourmet eaters. Riga for meetings and event planners is like a chocolate shop – there is a variety of flavours for everyone. Various museums and exhibition halls, alongside a great meeting offer, render the city a must-visit for classical music and opera lovers. There are numerous parks and gardens in the city centre, and visitors can even meet beavers in the canal in the city.



10. GDANSK, POLAND

Gdansk differs markedly from other Polish cities because of the special atmosphere in the old town and its many historical sites suitable for congress tourism. There is an attractive mix of west and east, of northern culture and of the old and the new, all adding to the city's unique identity. Gdansk is known as a place of freedom, which is written into its genetic code and is reflected in its rich cultural heritage and current cultural and artistic production. As a result of the hyperactive Convention Bureau, Gdansk as a destination is in an extremely high position in comparison with other Polish international destinations.

FIND ALL EVALUATED DESTINATIONS IN ONE PLACE TAKE A LOOK AT THE FINAL MARKS FOR ALL **29 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 2022

| | | | |
|---------------|------|---------------|------|
| 1. DUBROVNIK | 4.35 | 6. BLED | 4.11 |
| 2. SPLIT | 4.22 | 7. ROVINJ | 4.07 |
| 3. PORTOROSE | 4.17 | 8. KLAGENFURT | 4.06 |
| 4. SAALFELDEN | 4.16 | 9. ŠIBENIK | 4.05 |
| 5. OPATIJA | 4.13 | 10. MARIBOR | 4.04 |
| 5. SCHLADMING | 4.13 | 10. VILLACH | 4.04 |



1. DUBROVNIK, CROATIA

Dubrovnik is the flagship of regional tourism and is commonly the first association of meeting organisers 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, Importanne 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 the 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. PORTOROSE, 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 existing infrastructure are a competitive advantage. The meetings industry is by no means a tree to sleep under. 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 meeting destination. Why? Because few destinations provide such a rich assortment of luxury accommodations 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 which contribute to the exclusivity of Opatija.



5. 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 the 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.



6. BLEED, 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 offers. 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.



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 critical advantage is definitely a fairytale-like well-maintained and pleasant environment, the quality offer that is above average in a regional sense, and the professionalism of suppliers. The position at the crossroads of important routes is also an essential 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, 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.



9. ŠIBENIK, CROATIA

Šibenik very rarely raises any association with the meeting industry. In the process of transitioning 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.



10. MARIBOR, SLOVENIA

Maribor's modus vivendi is embodied in the oldest vine tree in the world that seems incredibly resilient and vigorous. The same can be said for Maribor's meetings industry, which successfully defied the corona crisis and now awaits event organisers with a new, refreshed look. Maribor attracts events because of its status as a student city, representing the business, scientific, educational, cultural and political centre of Eastern Slovenia. The sharp contrast between the Drava plains and green forests of Pohorje results in the immense diversity of landscape and experiences. In addition, its rich cultural history and rolling wine hills make it one of Slovenia's most recognisable destinations. While strolling the streets of the city centre, you can stumble upon pristine nature, as urban and rural go hand in hand in Maribor.



10. VILLACH, AUSTRIA

Villach is the second-largest city in 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 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.

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

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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 2022

| | | | |
|--------------------|------|-----------------------|------|
| 1. BOHINJ | 4.06 | 6. VIPAVA VALLEY | 3.98 |
| 2. KRANJ | 4.03 | 7. NASSFELD | 3.96 |
| 2. KRANJSKA GORA | 4.03 | 7. NOVA GORICA | 3.96 |
| 3. HVAR | 4.02 | 7. VARAŽDIN | 3.96 |
| 3. MALI LOŠINJ | 4.02 | 8. KARLOVAC | 3.95 |
| 4. GORIŠKA BRDA | 4.01 | 8. BAD KLEINKIRCHHEIM | 3.95 |
| 4. ROGAŠKA SLATINA | 4.01 | 9. BREŽICE/ČATEŽ | 3.94 |
| 5. PODČETRTEK | 4.00 | 10. LAŠKO | 3.92 |
| 5. SOČA VALLEY | 4.00 | 10. PTUJ | 3.92 |
| 6. IZOLA | 3.98 | | |



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 active incentive experiences. It is a place where without any hesitation you can drink water from the public water supply and 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. KRANJ, SLOVENIA

For thousands of years, the town of Kranj has enjoyed its strategic position. Located between two rivers on a conglomerate rock beneath the Alps, it has always been a lively centre where diverse ethnic groups meet. That is why Kranj is today still the capital of the Gorenjska region and the starting point for discovering all of it. With its alpine scenery that includes two-thousand-metre mountains, Kranj is the capital of the Slovenian Alps.



2. 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. Kranjska Gora is an important boutique congress destination for quality mid-size corporate events with up to 350 participants.



3. 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. 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 cooperation and joint promotion.



4. 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 a 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, and better joint promotion and all of this reflected through the establishment of a Convention Bureau.



5. PODČETRTEK, 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.



5. 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.



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. 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.



7. 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 position Nassfeld among the most attractive incentive destinations in Central Europe.



7. NOVA GORICA, SLOVENIA

The two locations are the heart of the sunny and verdant Goriška plane. Due to its 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. Gorica has 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.



7. VARAŽDIN, CROATIA

The city lies 81 km north of Zagreb, Croatia, and only 40 km from Ptuj, Slovenia. Varaždin is well connected as it lies right next to an important traffic route on the way from the port of Rijeka to Budapest. A city of approximately 47,000 inhabitants is friendly from a traffic point of view. You can easily reach all the city's attractions on foot, and this makes it especially pleasant. Namely, between 1767 and 1776, the city was the capital of Croatia, and many palaces and buildings were built at that time, which still makes an impression on us today. The many stories told by the buildings contribute to the interest and the symbols of angels, which can be found on many buildings, add charm to the city.



8. KARLOVAC, CROATIA

Karlovac is a city built and thought out taking full advantage of its surroundings: In green valleys of four rivers, beneath the Dubovac old town, filled with hundred-year-old parks and promenades, bicycling routes, deeply rooted in traditions of culture, sports, trades and commerce. Inevitably, with such parameters, Karlovac is a European formula for pleasant living and business investments. Karlovac is unique in its business and development possibilities. Situated at the crossroads of the most important Croatian and European highways and in extreme vicinity to the two bordering countries – Slovenia and Bosnia & Herzegovina, Karlovac holds great potential. Business zones have been developed on the outskirts of the city, leaving the city centre conserved for a whole array of tourism and service industries, housing, sports and recreational development possibilities.



8. BAD KLEINKIRCHHEIM, AUSTRIA

Bad Kleinkirchheim is known across the world for its skiing heritage, as the town is a long-time host of women's 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 differently in every hotel. All of this makes Bad Kleinkirchheim suitable for more demanding incentive groups.



9. BREŽICE/ČATEŽ, SLOVENIA

Another convention destination of Slovenia, which according to the capacity, the integrity of the offer and convenience is often overlooked. Lower Sava valley is mainly thanks to the proactive Terme Čatež a very competitive convention destination. Improvement is needed, however, especially in its image, as at first one does not think of it in terms of congress tourism.



10. LAŠKO, SLOVENIA

Laško is first and foremost a spa destination because the main motive for going there is the two spa and thermal centres. In the future, it will remain so. In the past five years, however, much has been done in developing congress tourism and enriching the offer and it is today surprising how much Laško can offer to congress guests beyond its traditional tasty beer. Everything from one of the best Slovenian cuisines to an exceptional cultural and historical heritage together with the possibility of organising green meetings. In making this breakthrough Laško has very quickly become much more competitive with the more established meeting industry destinations.



10. 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 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.

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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 2022

| | | | |
|--------------|------|-----------------|------|
| 1. ATHENS | 4.62 | 7. WARSAW | 4.45 |
| 2. PRAGUE | 4.61 | 8. VILNIUS | 4.43 |
| 3. BUDAPEST | 4.55 | 9. BRATISLAVA | 4.42 |
| 4. TALLINN | 4.52 | 9. THESSALONIKI | 4.42 |
| 5. LJUBLJANA | 4.50 | 9. KRAKOW | 4.42 |
| 6. ZAGREB | 4.49 | 10. ISTANBUL | 4.36 |



1. 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. The 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 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.



2. PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC

Prague is the most attractive tourist and meeting destination in the Czech Republic. The capital city is known for its architectural monuments and living history, and it ranks among the most admired and greenest cities in Europe. Getting around Prague is simple: either walking and enjoying the city's sights or using the public transportation system, ranked fifth-best in the world. Visitors can enjoy a meal with a pint of beer in a traditional brewery, on a fine dining restaurant. With its infrastructure, Prague can accommodate the most demanding events. The meeting options combine the historical and modern, cutting-edge technology features of Prague.



3. BUDAPEST, HUNGARY

Budapest is one of those love-at-first-sight regional meeting capitals that impresses with its history, architecture and iconic veduta alongside the mighty Danube. Budapest is an outright stunning city with a strong character. Today, it is recognised among the most holistic and advanced regional meeting destinations, offering an array of world-class meeting hotels, a modern conference centre and a well-connected local industry. Above all, Budapest's value for money is among the best in this part of Europe.



4. TALLINN, ESTONIA

Tallinn remains one of the most compact cities in Europe. There are not many cities where you can see such a variety of different eras side by side. In recent years, Tallinn has finally opened up and become the accessible seaside capital that it is. Tourism is a branch of the economy that develops fast in Tallinn. According to the Tallinn strategic plan for 2025, the capital of Estonia will become a centre of festival and event tourism in the Baltic Sea region. The sprawling development of the city includes The Tallinn Cruise Terminal building, a welcomed addition, which has become one of the most popular event spaces in the city.



5. LJUBLJANA, SLOVENIA

According to its conference and accommodation infrastructure, Ljubljana belongs to the group of capital cities 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.



7. 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.



8. 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 appeals to because of its freshness. For all three Baltic Congress Tigers – Vilnius, Riga and Tallinn – we predict a sunny congress future.



9. 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.



9. THESSALONIKI, GREECE

A diverse and holistic meetings offer is well-connected through Thessaloniki Convention Bureau. The organisation has been placing the destination on the map with a fresh and innovative approach. Above all, the city impresses event organisers with its unmistakable energy and eclectic Mediterranean spirit. In this light, the destination seems like the rockish alter-ego of the larger meeting capital Barcelona. Thessaloniki is also the capital of Greek gastronomy which will surely impress event attendees. In addition, the city has excellent value for money.



9. KRAKOW, POLAND

The most illustrious success of the Krakow Network Protocol is by far the successful bid to host the ICCA Congress 2022. The 61st ICCA Congress will take place in the autumn of 2022 in ICE Krakow. Their successful candidature is a testament to the saying: "In unity, there is strength". Krakow was selected miles ahead of Athens and Bangkok. The congress will be an unparalleled opportunity for the entire region, and according to the destination, we can expect record attendance at next year's event in Krakow.



10. ISTANBUL, TURKEY

The Turkish congress tiger is relentlessly growling and overcoming everything set in front of it. Professionalism and entrepreneurship when they are competing in international events are not lacking and they could be setting an example to other convention bureaus. Congress Bazaar of Istanbul offers everything that a meetings organizer needs, in addition to 7 convention centres, 3 fairgrounds and almost 100.000 hotel rooms, and the excellently organized Convention Bureau of Istanbul. The quality of life in Istanbul is improving as well as the general infrastructure; Turkish airlines has become the fourth-largest airline in the world.

NOVELTIES IN 2022

Following the corona crisis, it is evident that the meetings industry sector has changed forever. Unsurprisingly, the habits of event organisers have changed radically. Our evaluation thus adapted to the needs of meeting planners and introduced several novelties that enable our benchmark to reflect the situation on the market.

In order to make the assessment as credible as possible, destinations can request a recertification. During the visit, the assessor discovers the novelties and highlights that may affect the final evaluation. If you are interested in furthering cooperation, 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
www.toleranca.eu

www.secret-congress-guest.eu

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Why should your venue, special venue or incentive idea be in our search engine?

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According to official data (Alexa and Google), Kongres is positioned among the top 5 MICE portals with the highest reach in Europe. Every day, 250 to 300 different meeting planners visit the site looking at 800 to 900 articles.

The easiest way to get discovered

Our platform combines original content with invite only venue profiles. Kongres Magazine connects meeting planners with your property to send RFP.

Content driven engine

It's the first true content-driven search engine, with destinations and venues for every demand, which will expose you to the right qualified buyers.

Quality guarantee

Our collection features the best destinations, venues and incentive ideas checked by using the Meetings Star Methodology and Hidden Congress Guest.

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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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