

PRESS RELEASE

Prague Welcomed a Record Number of Experts from the Meeting Industry

Prague, 23 November, 2017: A total of 1,264 meeting industry experts from 79 countries met in Prague at the 56th Congress of the International Congress and Convention Association – ICCA, from 12 to 15 November. The event was organized by the Prague Convention Bureau with the support of more than 40 local partners. The aim of the congress was the exchange of the latest knowledge and trends in the industry. Prague thus had a unique opportunity to present its meeting infrastructure to the professional meeting organizers, representatives of international associations and other professional organizations from around the world. In the years to come, revenues from events organized as a result of the delegates' direct experience could reach up to several billion Czech crowns.

ICCA, the international association, unites professionals active in the industry of association congresses and conferences organization worldwide. It is a platform for sharing the latest developments, trends and experience not only for the members of ICCA, but also for international scientific associations. ICCA represents more than a thousand of member entities from the sectors of congress organizing, transport and accommodation in more than 90 countries.

This year, the 56th Congress recorded a remarkable attendance. A total of 1,264 delegates arrived in Prague to break the record of 1,023 participants held by the 50th Congress in Leipzig in 2011. One of the organizers' goals was also to introduce Prague as an ideal congress destination, and increase the interest in organizing international events in the Czech capital in coming years. *"According to the results of the impact study prepared for us by KPMG, multiplied revenues from the Prague congress industry were between 22 and 26 billion Czech Crowns in 2016. We expect that 15-25 association congresses or conferences could take place in Prague in the span of the next ten years as a result of the 56th ICCA Congress, generating a revenue of 2.1 billion Crowns in multiplication. Of course, this number may be far from final,"* said Roman Muška, Director of the Prague Convention Bureau.

Prague Congress Centre, the central venue of the Congress, welcomed participants in its newly renovated and modernized building. The renovations the PCC underwent in the last year made it a highly modern and well-equipped place with top quality services. The redesigned cloakrooms on the ground floor, the newly built information kiosk, the renovated bathrooms, but especially the digital navigation system provided a top comfort to the Congress participants. The new PCC corporate identity added it a positive energy, pointing to its rich tradition, professionalism, and its endeavour for sustainable development. *"Reconstruction of the building and the ICCA Congress preparatory works cost us a lot of energy. However, satisfaction of the Congress visitors was a great reward for us. I am sure that they were leaving with positive impressions of Prague and a feeling that they all received a warm welcome and kind approach. I think we managed the ICCA Congress on a high*

professional level and it will bring us many interesting business opportunities and a high prestige in future," adds Lenka Žlebková, Sales and Marketing Director at PCC.

The University of Economics in Prague was engaged in the Congress organization too. Last year, an independent Event Management course was launched at its Travel and Tourism Department, with the contribution of Prague Convention Bureau. Students of the Travel and Tourism Department were given the opportunity to participate in the Congress preparations and execution. *"We were, above all, responsible for the smooth transfer of delegates and their navigation to the Congress venues. We created our own projects to share and present the Czech culture and tradition to the delegates. The Prague Convention Bureau offered a plenty of room for us to see into its activities and learn from the professionals. Being engaged in the Congress brought us a lot of experience in the field of event and time management and a general overview of event marketing. Thanks to this collaboration, we became familiar with the ICCA's environment and teamed up with inspiring people,"* said Matěj Budárek, BA, leader of the student group.

The Congress also offered an opportunity to support Czech charitable organizations. The design and logo of the Congress were created by the Maturus graphic studio, founded by the Jedlička Institute Foundation, which also organized an exhibition of photographs of Prague taken by the Institute's clients, at the Prague Congress Centre. The delegates were welcomed at the Congress opening ceremony, among others, by The Tap Tap band consisting of students and graduates of the Jedlička Institute. Some of the delegates were able to get acquainted with their work in the recording studio specially adapted for handicapped musicians. On Monday, 13 November, a charity run was held at Vyšehrad, from which the registration fees and voluntary contributions were dedicated to support of the disadvantaged children from SOS Children's Villages. As a part of the "Gift of Love" project, delegates of the Congress also brought toys typical of their motherland for the children. A total of 16,510 Euros (approximately 445,770 Crowns) were auctioned during the congress to support charities.

"With a final official figure of 1,264 attendees from 79 countries, this year's ICCA Congress was 25% larger than ever before with our widest-ever geographical coverage. In my presentations during the Congress, I spoke a great deal about our industry's role in building bridges, the theme of our Congress promotion over the last year: bridges between cultures, across business sectors, between people holding different opinions. These bridges also helped set up new business partnerships, kick-started new dialogues on important issues, and drew the attention of politicians and policy-makers to the vital role of our industry and the impact of international meetings that extends far beyond the obvious expenditure by delegates. I believe that not only did our delegates thoroughly enjoy their time in Prague, but that we have left an important legacy for the Czech meetings industry in terms of transferred knowledge, improved skills, and greater political awareness," concludes Nina Freysen-Pretorius, ICCA President.

Local partners of the 56th ICCA Congress:

INSTITUTIONAL LOCAL PARTNERS:



MINISTRY
OF REGIONAL
DEVELOPMENT CZ



CHARITY PROJECTS:



Nadace
Jedličkova
ústavu



SOS CHILDREN'S
VILLAGES
CZECH REPUBLIC



COMMERCIAL LOCAL PARTNERS:





About Prague Convention Bureau

Prague Convention Bureau (PCB) is a non-profit organization established in 2008. The company acts as an official representative of the Prague congress tourism and promotes the city as a one of the European leading congress destinations. Together with Czech tourism bodies, partners and members the PCB offers effective assistance in organizing conferences, meetings, seminars, exhibitions and incentive events in Prague.

About ICCA

ICCA -the International Congress and Convention Association- is the global community and knowledge hub for the international association meetings industry. ICCA represents the main specialists in organising, transporting, and accommodating international meetings and events, and comprises over 1,000 member companies and organisations in over 90 countries worldwide. ICCA specialises in the international association meetings sector, offering unrivalled data, communication channels, and business development opportunities.

For more information please contact:

Hana Krejbichová,

Marketing & PR Manager,

Tel: +420 224 284 268, GSM: +420 727 961 476

E-mail: hana.krejbichova@pragueconvention.cz

www.pragueconvention.cz