

PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Prague Remains Among World's Most Sought-After Meeting Destinations

- Prague remains in the top five, but only in Europe, competition from Asia is back
- Czech capital sees 25% increase in the number of meetings and conferences compared to 2022
- Record-breaking number of meeting delegates from 2019 was almost matched last year
- Number of events with over 500 participants is significantly increasing

13th May 2024, Prague – According to the latest data, the Czech capital has improved year-on-year not only in terms of the number of meetings and conferences held here, but also in terms of the number of delegates who arrived for these events. In 2023, almost five thousand professional events were held in Prague, attended by almost 700,000 people. In an international comparison, Prague also landed in the sixth place in the ranking of the most sought-after meeting destinations in the world. It surpassed cities such as Madrid, Seoul, London, Berlin, or Tokyo.

Prague's meetings industry is on the rise, but has not yet reached the level of the record-breaking year 2019

The meetings industry in the capital is maintaining its upward trend after an enforced pandemic hiatus. In 2023, according to aggregated data from the Prague Convention Bureau and the Czech Statistical Office, a total of 4,889 meetings and conferences were held in Prague, with 691,103 delegates attending, representing a year-on-year increase of 25% and 12% respectively. However, still not enough to surpass the record year of 2019. *"In terms of the number of delegates, we are at almost 97% of 2019's performance, but in terms of the number of events, we are only at 82%,"* says Roman Muška, Managing Director of the Prague Convention Bureau, the organisation that officially represents Prague's meeting industry, adding: *"These data only confirms the trend of recent years, when fewer meetings and conferences are held, but with a much higher turnout of delegates. In our statistics we see that the number of events attended by 500 or more delegates has increased year on year. At the same time, we see an increase in the average length of an event, mainly due to a sharp increase in the number of meetings that last four or more days and a decrease in the segment of shorter, mostly two-day, events."*

Return of international events and acquisition of creditworthy visitors

In its tourism strategy documents, Prague has set out to target a high net-worth clientele, especially the meetings delegates. Not only do they not burden the destination in the main tourist season, as congresses are most often held in spring and autumn months,

but they also have on average up to three times higher spending compared to the average tourists. Attracting a sophisticated clientele is also successful thanks to the return of international expert events to Prague. According to the Prague Convention Bureau data, the number of international meetings and conferences in Prague has increased by 54% year-on-year, thus balancing the proportion of international (49.3%) and local events (50.7%). „In the long term, most events have been coming from the European continent (88%). However, if we focus on individual countries, in 2023, the United States of America returned to the top spot of source countries after four years, followed by the United Kingdom, Germany, France and Belgium,” Roman Muška explains. Medical sciences, economics, finance and business, and IT and technology have long been among the most frequent topics delegates come to Prague to discuss.

Locally, Prague has confirmed its position as a premier city, overtaken by Singapore on the international scene

Prague has long been the first choice of international event organisers in the Czech Republic. In 2023, 35.5% of all events held in the Czech Republic headed to the Czech capital, according to data from the Czech Statistical Office. This was followed by the South Moravian Region (18.9%), the Olomouc Region (8.3%) and the Central Bohemian Region (7.4%).

In international competition, Prague still holds its position among the most sought-after meeting destinations in the world. In the ranking, compiled annually by the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) on the basis of the number of meetings with international rotation and participation of more than 50 delegates, Prague ranked sixth globally this year, and within Europe it defended its fifth place. Although year-on-year, the Czech capital hosted 4% more association events that met the ICCA criteria, Prague was dethroned from the global top five by the Asian meetings champion Singapore, which climbed from 13th to second place in 2022. The tourism industry, as well as the meeting industry, started to take off later in Asia, when compared to the rest of the world, due to longer-lasting pandemic restrictions. We are now seeing the return of Asian destinations in full strength, with Seoul (10th), Tokyo (13th) and Bangkok (15th) completing the top 15 convention destinations. *“The increase in the number of association conventions occurs mainly due to the joint efforts of all stakeholders over the past years. In most cases, it takes several years from launching the candidacy process itself to the subsequent implementation of major association meetings. However, to remain at the top of the meetings destinations in the future, we need to continue to develop and invest in the meetings industry. In addition to association congresses, which we have been focusing on for a long time and which are systematically supported by the City of Prague in the form of various incentives, we must not neglect the segment of corporate conferences and incentive events, which have high spending rates in destinations and thus fit in with the City's targeting of creditworthy clients,”* comments Roman Muška.

What will the year 2024 be like?

From 2022 onwards, we can observe a revival of the meetings industry not only in Prague, but also in other global destinations. What's more, according to the International Congress Association's recent "[ICCA 60 Years Report](#)", the number of congresses has more than doubled in the last 60 years, so the competition Prague faces is immense. The report also predicts that globally in 2023 the number of events

will return to 90% of 2019 and the number of delegates to 95%, which the Czech capital has only partially achieved. In 2024, according to expert estimates, the congress industry should surpass 2019 figures by 37% in terms of delegate numbers and 1% in terms of events.

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.

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