

# 30 MOST INFLUENTIAL PERSONS IN THE SEE MEETINGS INDUSTRY 2013

The editorial board of Kongres magazine has throughout the year been collecting data on persons who have marked and had a major impact on the region's meetings industry. By highlighting examples of good practice and the activities of individuals we wish to contribute to the enhancement of the meetings industry in the region. On the scale individuals are ranked according to their business, financial, management, innovation and other strategic developments that have had a positive impact on the development of a destination or company and also on the broader meetings industry.

## Candidates were assessed on the following key criteria:

- Achievement of the best financial and other multiplier effects of the meetings industry in 2013, which significantly deviate from the average;
- Implementation of the most demanding improvements and innovations in their field, which also includes successfully implemented projects that have marked the year 2013;
- Help in enhancing the reputation and visibility of the meetings industry in 2013;
- Innovations that facilitate the work of meetings organisers or have shown the way to the future.

## TOP MEETING ARCHITECTS (DMO, CVB,...)



**Miha KOVAČIČ**  
*Slovenian Convention Bureau*

Has for a decade been active as the director of the Slovenian Convention Bureau, which enjoys an outstanding reputation abroad. In 2013 he was invited to the "Advisory Board" of a new international trade show, the "UK Meetings Show." Through a number of innovative marketing and CSR projects he continually takes care of the growth of the Slovenian meetings industry. The editorial board put a particular emphasis on the Conventa project that, as a brand, has become synonymous with the SE Europe congress product and has significantly affected the placement of the region on meetings planners' list of destinations.



**Miloš MILOVANOVIĆ**  
*Serbia Convention Bureau*

In record time he managed to place the devastated meetings industry of Serbia on the international conventions map and has set up the entire congress infrastructure. According to the ICCA statistics Serbia is one of the fastest growing destinations that has everything that larger and more developed destinations have. Miloš is on the scale also because of many innovative marketing campaigns conducted in 2013, among which the first destination apps and a game on social network Facebook stand out most strongly.



**Zlatan MUFTIĆ**  
*Zagreb Convention Bureau*

With a wide range of activities he is faced with placing Zagreb on the congress market. It is to his credit that Zagreb is today a modern and distinctive convention destination. Through active participation in all regional and international initiatives Zagreb is today a stable, growing congress destination, which in the last few years has been steadily in-

creasing its market share in the associations and corporate markets.



**Gordana PLAMENAC**  
*Serbia Tourism*

The recipient of the prestigious IMEX Academy Award as the director of the Tourist Organisation of Serbia has generated an appropriate supportive environment that has enabled the re-growth of the Serbian meetings industry. With this she has facilitated the work of Miloš Milovanović and the Serbian convention Bureau. Serbia is an example of excellent co-operation between tourism policies and the convention industry. Gordana Plamenac is on the scale because of an excellent international network of connections and the visionary management of tourism policy.



**Nik RAČIĆ**  
*Croatia Convention Bureau*

In addition to Gordana Plamenac, Nik Račić is the second winner of the IMEX Academy Award for lifetime achievement. As a former president of the Skala association he has done so much for the development of the meetings industry of Croatia. Despite the turbulence in the Croatian National Tourist Board Nik Račić is a man who can, through his connections, do a lot for the meetings industry. He is also placed on the scale with a call to find him a right place in the Croatian meetings industry.



**Tatjana RADOVIĆ**  
*Ljubljana Convention Bureau*

Tatjana Radović has candidacies that she has been preparing with passion and dedication in her blood. In carrying out her role she has for a number of years been linking key Ljubljana meeting suppliers, which this year came together in the Ljubljana Strategic Bidding Team. This gave an addition-

al boost to the work of connecting with the Slovenian Convention Bureau and to a number of important projects of associations obtained for the coming years. The latest success is a successful acquisition of the ABTA Conference, which will take place in 2014 in Ljubljana.



**Slaven RELJIĆ**  
*Croatia Tourist Board*

A fresh wind and a man of the meetings industry on key marketing function of Croatian tourism is an important event and a great responsibility to set the meetings industry on the list of key products that will contribute to de-seasonalisation of Croatian tourism. This is also an important event as an opportunity to strengthen the presence in professional and business environment. Slaven has many years of experience in the economy and undoubtedly has all the credentials for success.



**Romana VLAŠIĆ**  
*TZ Dubrovnik*

Is in the position of director of TZ Dubrovnik with concrete years of experience in business and has given acceleration to the promotion of Dubrovnik. This is now the most recognisable congress brand of the region and a player in the first congress European league. You could say that the year 2013 was the year of Dubrovnik on the conference scene, since almost all the important events of this year were held in this very beautiful city. Among other things, in Dubrovnik the meetings of NATO, FIS International Ski Federation, FIA - International Automotive Association and FIFA all took place.



**Mitja ROTOVNIK**  
*Cankarjev Dom*

Without the vision of Cankarjev Dom's legendary director, there wouldn't be a Slovenian meetings industry today. He still promotes congress activity with incredible enthusiasm. He earned this ranking with his team because of the

total renovation of Cankarjev dom in the midst of the worst recession in memory. This renovation has placed it among the best European convention centres.



**Barbara VAJDA**  
*Ljubljana Tourism*

She made sure that the meetings industry is embedded in the tourism policy and practice of Ljubljana and as one of the key products and as

part of the repositioning. Her work is characterised by an understanding of the meetings industry and the international tourism market place. She also deserves her place on this list for actively co-designing the Conventa project. Conventa invitation with Coffee would not be possible without Barbara Vajda.

## TOP MEETING LOGISTICS (DMC, PCO,...)



**Danijel MARUŠIĆ**  
*Dubrovnik Travel DMC*

Dubrovnik Travel is recognised in the market as an extremely marketing-oriented company, which dictates the trends of regional DMCs. A clear marketing strategy and a systematic operation are visible at both the service level of co-operation with the most demanding clients as well as in the credible results, which were confirmed through the Gazelle Award in 2011. Danijel is heavily involved in the meetings space, also as a member of the peer associations and the voice of the convention industry of Croatia.



**Peter FUCHS**  
*Valamar*

He is a part of the leadership of the Valamar company, which has installed world class convention centres and its renovated hotel capacities. The most recognisable, the Laguna Valamar Dubrovnik, is an example of good practice and has excellent business results. He is included on the scale because of the innovative socially responsible campaign 'meetIN' that for any event greater than 100 persons contributes a grant from the Valamar company for the adoption of Adriatic dolphins.



**Tomaž KRUŠIČ and Miro HRIBAR**  
*Intours DMC*

Intours reached its star moment 2013, when the company has been recording impressive business results, increase of brand awareness and rapid growth. For the company 2013 has been moving in a broad regional presence, where it has been continuously increasing its market share. Tomaž is also active as president of the council of the Slovenian Convention Bureau, in which he is responsible for improving the visibility of the industry in Slovenia.



**Martin JEZERŠIČ**  
*Jezeršek Catering*

He has international experience with the Jezeršek Catering company through Sora Catering company and has passed this on with flying colours taking up the family business management. This year's European Basketball Championship Eurobasket 2013. Catering for VIPs, international delegates, business guests, media and athletes was this year's most demanding logistical and culinary catering venture in the region. About 70,000 meals for 150 people were involved and the task was performed with excellent results.



**Bogdan LIPOVŠEK**  
*Grand Hotel Union*

The fount of congress tourism in Ljubljana, who has been leading the Grand Hotel Union for 23 years. Under his leadership, the hotel became synonymous with the convention hotel, which was copied by many followers, while at the same time remaining a Ljubljana institution, because it always maintains involvement in the city's social and cultural life. Bogdan Lipovšek is also personally the greatest Slovenian advocate of the meetings industry, which has consistently stressed and pointed fingers at the errors of the incapable Slovenian tourism policy, which in relation to congress tourism behaves inappropriately.



**Tomislav POPOVIČ**  
*Maistra*

In recent years, Maistra has with bold investments set-up a different meetings product, the peak being a new convention centre at the Lone hotel. With this Maistra has placed Rovinj on the market as a high-quality business venue, which in terms of design and experiential value does have an equal in the region. With the support of events such as the Weekend Media Festival it has become the focal point of a new creative meetings industry of the future.



**Andrej PREBIL**  
*Sava turizem*

When assuming office, he took a brave decision and put congress tourism into the heart of the new strategy of the largest Slovenian tourism company, which has led to Bled experiencing a revival. This aside, he is characterised by a broad understanding of hospitality, consistency of management and solid work towards achieving objectives. All this is reflected in the good business results in the field of congress tourism. Even in his wider environment, he is through various roles working to promote the meetings industry and its credibility.



**Kristian ŠUŠTAR**  
*HUP Zagreb*

Under the leadership of Kristian Šuštar the leading Zagreb hotelier, managing 70% of capacity, has become a generator of new business practices and models. With a clear marketing strategy, the right combination of marketing mix, integration and effective tactical execution the HUP Hotels Sheraton, Westin and Four Points by Sheraton, are still at the top of congress offer of Zagreb, despite growing competition. At the same time, with technological innovations and apps they are predicting trends in the hospitality industry and its relation towards conference guests.



**Živorad VASIĆ**  
*Crowne Plaza*

Under the leadership of Živorad Vasić Belgrade is only a step away from the opening of the Crowne Plaza hotel, which will be one of the most important congress acquisitions for the city and will largely change the face of the congress centre of Belgrade in the vicinity of Sava Centar. Živorad is characterised by persistence, pervasiveness, professionalism and a personal contribution to the successful implementation of congress tourism in Serbia.



**Snežana VEJNOVIĆ**  
*Talas - M agency*

For more than a decade she has been developing real DMC services in Montenegro within the Talas- M agency. With world-class clients she has helped to put Montenegro in the incentive map of the region via its own network of representatives throughout Europe, indirectly contributing to the country's promotion. Due to a number of fresh ideas, which they have identified in the Ovation agency and within the partnership of the Dubrovnik Talas-M, they have become one of the strongest regional DMC agencies.



**Sanja VUKOV COLIĆ**  
*Spektar putovanja*

The most recognised Croatian PCO achieves excellent results on the market. They have been achieving quality management and setting high business standards since 1989. They have received the certificate ISO 9001 – 2008, have reputable international partners and have organised over 20 conferences annually.



**Iris KOCIPER HAAS**  
*Brdo estate*

From many years of working in the field of tourism, her work speaks of concrete results. She is on this list due to the successful implementation of the congress philosophy, opening government buildings to the public and congresses reborn in what were often previously closed facilities.

## TOP MEETING INNOVATORS (MARKETING, TECHNOLOGY,...)



**Davor BRUKETA**  
*Bruketa & Žinić*

Agency Bruketa & Žinić, which was founded in 1995 by Davor Bruketa and Nikola Žinić, is considered to be the best small marketing agency in the world (AdAge 2013) and the second most effective independent agency in the world (Effie and Cannes 2012). A ranking on the scale was earned by understanding the future of the meetings industry through the integration of creative industries with congress ones, which was beautifully packaged into a complete picture in the Hotel Lone.



**Anže ČOKL**  
*Bohinj Park Eko Hotel*

He thinks seriously, when he is talking about green meetings. At the same time he is among the youngest in the rankings. He has earned attention through the expense of so-called green eco-friendly measures. Eco and green are terms that all too often suffer from marketing abuse, behind which there is often no correct content. In the case of the eco Hotel Park, behind the word eco there is not only a well raised green philosophy and technical perfection, but also a young and dedicated team that has internalised a green mindset and follows it at every level of the business.



**Jovan JELOVAC**  
*Belgrade Design Week*

A perfectionist, obsessed with the idea of establishing a regional creative hub. Belgrade Design Week is in global terms an event without precedent. His work is characterised by an understanding of the creative industries and their importance to the revitalisation of society. This results in a changed perception of Belgrade, which Jovan has achieved over a number of years. At the same time the annual event is a surprise in terms of innovation in its organisation.



**Tomo RICOV**  
*Pepermint*

Weekend Media Festival has completely changed the face of marketing festivals of the region. By the number of participants as well as by the quality of content it became an institution in a very short time. Each year it gathers some 4,000 participants, among which are all the key players in the field of communications industries.



**Milan CULIĆ and dr. Bojan ZEČEVIĆ**  
*EIAT*

The sixth Anniversary of the EIAT conference showed how important and pioneering was the work of Milan Culić and Bojan Zečević. In the professional field they managed to establish a platform for knowledge sharing in the region, which today brings together more than 400 participants. Their work is concentrated on the effective and efficient integration between academic knowledge and practice of tourism. Also in this area they successfully navigate between the demands of the global market and the characteristics and specifics of the South-East European market and have made a major contribution to the visibility of the whole region.



**Jerneja KAMNIKAR**  
*Vivo Catering*

At the 20th anniversary she earned her ranking through the socially responsible project of co-operation in the placement of the Month of Design in the abandoned factory premises of Mladinska knjiga. The revival of this place

has created a completely new event in Ljubljana with unimagined development potential. Visitors of the event were excited by the look of the premises; this is a completely new dimension of socially responsible conference tourism.



**Marko KRIŽNIČ**  
*Promo*

Tacit innovator in the field of event organisation, which has earned him his place in the ranking with the region's most successful corporate event. He has turned Elan's saucer into a ski slope in the middle of Promina during one of the hottest days of October. Characterised by a persistent love of events, he is an inexhaustible source of new ideas. Being formed through practice, his main strength is his number of references.



**Kosta PETROVIĆ**  
*PWorld*

Entirely new form of organisation of events throughout the region. Everything they do is their business vision. Events do not just happen, but experiences'. His work is characterised by integrity and innovation through new approaches in communication that break restrictive traditions. From Skopje he demonstrates that the organisation of events can be successfully operating in difficult economic conditions and in a non-conference travel Events Marketing kingdom, HR Experiences have become bestsellers and brands that are carried out throughout Eastern Europe.



AND WHAT DO YOU THINK?  
WRITE TO US AT  
[INFO@KONGRES.EU](mailto:INFO@KONGRES.EU)