

## Eastern Europe vibrant

Eastern Europe offers modern convention centres, period flair and impresses planners with its compact cities, spirit of innovation and attractive pricing

■ **Go east.** The cities of eastern Europe have been improving their infrastructure and transport links. There are exciting discoveries to be made, and the prices are lower as well. Convention bureaus put you in touch with professional partners to help you run successful meetings and events.

The AGM of the International Meetings Association (ICCA) from 12 to 15 November 2017 in Prague is drawing the industry's attention not just to the Czech capital but the entire region. The Prague Convention Bureau recorded a total of 4,426 conferences in 2016, 5.7 per cent more than in the previous year. Delegates are also spending more time there. The "European Cities Benchmarking Report" ranks Prague fifth among European cities in terms of overnight stays, with 14.9 million. The ICCA is holding its Central European Chapter Meeting from 17 to 19 August 2017 in the Ukrainian city of Lviv (population: 730,000), the centre of which is a Unesco world heritage site. The city has had a convention bureau since 2013. Meetings are generated by the "Ivan Franko National University of Lviv", which was founded in 1661, and 40 research institutes. The largest conference facilities outside the university are the Arena Lviv stadium, which has a capacity of 1,200 for conferences, and the 700-seat Kinohall. "Our appearance at the 'Convvene' trade fair in Vilnius was so successful that we'll be organising a fam trip soon", reports Oksana Spolyak, who manages the Lviv Convention Bureau.

Krakow, an eastern European architectural gem, is Poland's most important convention destination. The "ICE Krakow Congress Centre", a building with glazed facades and organic lines which opened in 2014, offers 32 conference rooms, a 1,950-seat auditorium and 2,600 square metres of foyer space. In 2016 it hosted 177 events for 250,000 delegates. The 41st session of the Unesco World Heritage Committee will be held there from 2 to 17 July 2017. In addition to the ICE and the Krakow Convention Bureau, the "Krakow Network" also plays an important role in the city's international success, bringing together a range of public- and private-sector stakeholders. New hotel projects are also clear evidence of the city's popularity. The Rezidor Group is planning to open its second "Radisson Red hotel" there, and the 230-room Radisson Red Krakow will be opening in 2019.

**The Baltic region.** Lithuania's capital, Vilnius, is also getting a Radisson Red, on the right bank of the Neris, where Daniel Libeskind's multi-purpose "Modern Art Center" complex is currently being built. It will also be opening in 2019. A Hilton Garden Inn and a Double Tree by Hilton will be opening before then, in 2018. There is also a new "Courtyard by Marriott". Vilnius has significant strengths in gaming and laser technology. It is also developing as a centre of financial technology, a process being driven forward by "Marius Jurgilas of Lietuvos Bankas". The premier conference venue is Litexpo, which has its own PCO department. A 2,600-seat convention centre is planned.

Estonia's capital city, Tallinn, boasts impressive intellectual capital, particularly in the IT sector. The instant messaging and video chat service "Skype" was founded there in 2003, and the peer-to-peer money transfer service "TransferWise" was launched in 2011. Estonia boasts the world's second highest density of technology startups and is ranked 12th in the World Bank's ease of doing business index. The conference industry benefits from that too. The largest venue is the 1,830-seat Nordea Concert Hall in Tallinn, which opened in 2009. The "Creative Hub" can handle events for up to 320 guests. In ad- >>



Photo: Tallinn Tourist Office and Convention Bureau

Tagungsort Tallink Fährschiff  
Venue Tallink Group ferry



Photo: Lviv Convention Bureau

Lviv hat seit 2013 ein  
Convention Bureau  
Lviv has a convention  
bureau since 2013

Neris, wo der Multifunktionskomplex "Modern Art Center" derzeit von Daniel Libeskind erbaut wird. Eröffnung ist 2019. Bereits 2018 eröffnen ein "Hilton Garden Inn" und ein "Double Tree by Hilton". Am Start ist zudem ein "Courtyard by Marriott". Vilnius positioniert sich am Markt mit den Sektorstärken Gaming und Laser-Technologie. Neu ist der Ausbau des Fintech-Standortes, den Marius Jurgilas von der Lietuvos Bankas federführend vorantreibt. Bevorzugter Tagungsort ist die Messe Litexpo mit eigener PCO-Abteilung. Geplant ist ein Convention Centre.

Mit starkem "intellectual capital", vor allem im IT-Sektor, punktet die estnische Hauptstadt Tallinn. Hier wurde 2003 der Instant-Messenger "Skype" entwickelt, 2011 folgte die Erfindung des Finanzdienstleisters "Transferwise". Technologie-Startups erreichen in Estland die zweithöchste Dichte weltweit. >>