

# Sweet 16



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Press Release

For Immediate Release

Ljubljana, 21 February 2024

## WHAT ARE THE TRENDS, OPPORTUNITIES AND RISKS IN THE MEETINGS INDUSTRY?

**Conventa will uncover where the regional meetings industry is headed in 2024**

This year, the organisers described Conventa as a bold sixteen-year-old celebrating her birthday in February. Conventa is also an industry rebel - bold, creative and curious. As the event celebrates its sixteenth anniversary, the organisers stressed the event positions among global events (IMEX and IBTM) and smaller business forums (m&i Forums and MCE Forums) while firmly remaining among the industry's leading events (The Meetings Show, AIME, ITCM China). Since 2009, Conventa has welcomed 3,639 hosted buyers and 1,975 exhibitors who have conducted 49,263 business meetings. This year, the number of conducted meetings will increase by over 3,500. Face-to-face meetings are the essence of Conventa, a trade show that renders Ljubljana the heart of the regional meetings industry every February.

Between 20 and 22 February 2024, 112 exhibitors from 16 countries will meet with 162 hosted buyers from 31 countries. Over 350 participants will convene at the trade show, joined by an additional 160 guests at accompanying events. Thus, five hundred attendees - event professionals from the region between Helsinki and Istanbul and Milano and Baku - will transform Ljubljana into the regional hub for the meetings industry.

Speaking on the 16th edition, **Gorazd Čad**, the co-founder of Conventa, said: *“Conventa is like a marathon, where you have to be persistent, know how to stand out and be different and aspire to improve each year. The path to achieving results matters, too. The daily team effort and passion count the most. Our team also has a bit of teenage boldness and creativity, embodied by the song “Grow Old” by Aka Neomi, which participants will hear throughout Conventa.”*

The organisers have several novelties lined up so Conventa doesn't grow up too fast and remains creatively youthful. This year, the organisers will roll out the following projects:

### **Conventa will be the first event organised and evaluated in accordance with the ESRS Standards**

The event will be the first ever to be evaluated with the help of Planet Positive Event, a tool developed by a group of leading Slovenian experts in sustainable event transformation. The organisers will go beyond measuring the carbon footprint by checking if Conventa meets ESRS Standards.

**Maja Pak Olaj**, the Director of the Slovenian Tourist Board, emphasised: *“Since the outset of Conventa, the Slovenian Tourist Board has been a close partner of the renowned event that has been connecting regional providers in the meetings industry with buyers from across the world for sixteen years. Conventa stands out because of its sustainability pledge and sincere aspiration to achieve carbon neutrality by 2040. Conventa's initiatives, including encouraging and advocating sustainable mobility, reducing waste, measuring carbon footprint and sourcing local products align with our own mission to develop quality sustainable tourism with added value. Conventa thus leads by example and sets Slovenia on the map as a best-case example of integrating sustainability principles into organising world-class international events.”*

## Networking with the help of artificial intelligence

Among Conventa's most important partners is the Austrian company B2match, a pioneering company that implements AI to enhance business matchmaking. In the past year, the company unveiled a slew of new functions based on AI that Conventa's attendees can take advantage of.

## New destinations and exhibitors at Conventa

Several new destinations and exhibitors will present their services at Conventa. Three Polish destinations will join Conventa: Mazovia Convention Bureau, Poznan Convention Bureau and Silesia Convention Bureau. A host of new hotels will debut at Conventa, too, including one of the region's most luxury stays, the St. Regis in Belgrade, alongside Hotel Nomad Bjelašnica and Hotel Imperial Plovdiv. Conventa will also host Air Montenegro, Slovakia Travel, Intercontinental Sofia, Bespoke DMC and the City of Novi Sad. Bringing innovative IT services to the show floor will be Slovenian company Acenta.

## Decision-makers forum CONVENTA Crossroads

**Tuesday, 20 February 2024, between 16:30 and 19:30, Center Rog**

Organised by the Slovenian Convention Bureau in cooperation with the Slovenian Ministry of Economy, Tourism and Sports, this exclusive event will convene 37 decision-makers, including ten representatives of leading regional destinations. Concurrently with the event, a bilateral meeting will take place between the Montenegrin Minister of Economy and Tourism, Vladimir Martinović, and the Slovenian Minister of Economy, Tourism and Sports, Matjaž Han.

The organiser of Conventa Crossroads, **Fredi Fontanot**, emphasised that there has, unfortunately, not been a platform that would connect representatives in the meetings industry with policymakers in politics and other decision-makers. *“At the event, we wish to connect and empower stakeholders about economic, societal and regenerative effects within our industry. Moreover, we wish to present best-case examples from our industry and why the best meeting destinations are successful globally.”* In conclusion, Fredi added: *“We wish to prompt meaningful dialogue about the future.”*

## Meeting of Slovenian event organisers CONVENTA Sreča-nja

**Tuesday, 20 February 2024, between 17:00 and 19:30, Center Rog**

The premier educational event for Slovenian event organisers was sold out almost immediately. The speakers at the event will share how to create happiness at events and how to craft events responsible to the environment, society and attendees.

## Meetings Star 2024 - The “Michelin” Stars of the meetings industry

**Wednesday, 21 February 2024, at 18:30, Cankarjev dom**

The award competition for the best destinations, meeting venues and individuals has become a reference point and sort of “Michelin” guide of the meetings industry. Winners will be announced in fifteen categories for 2023/2024.

## Meeting of Slovenian Congress Ambassadors

**Wednesday, 21 February 2024, between 15:00 and 17:00, GR – Ljubljana Exhibition and Convention Centre**

The Slovenian Congress Ambassador programme holds significant importance for the success of Slovenia in the internationalisation of science, culture, sports and economy. The first meeting of the Slovenian Congress Ambassador in 2024 will take place during Conventa on 21 February 2024. The Slovenian Convention Bureau will organise the meeting.

## Conventa Trend Bar and Ljubljana Talks at Conventa 2024

Ljubljana Talks, the legendary talk show, will return for a new edition at Conventa. Attendees will have the chance to listen to old podcasts or tune into the happenings in the hybrid studio.

## Conventa After Party

Conventa's iconic after-party will return to the CD Club, where attendees will enjoy a music show by the popular Cover Lover group.

Elaborating on the novelties this year, **Miha Kovačič**, the co-founder of Conventa, explained: *“Conventa has had the vision and boldness to connect the regional meetings industry for sixteen years. We always asked ourselves why we organise it and always found an answer. Sometimes, we walk on a razor's edge and take risks. Yet that has played*

*in our favour as we continue to grow respectful relationships with our exhibitors and hosted buyers - the heart of Conventa. We aim to help them shine and strengthen their presence in the international events landscape.”*

### Conventa's guarantee of quality

This year, a record-breaking 632 hosted buyers from 36 countries registered for the event. Conventa can only accept a third of applicants - a testament to the event's quality. This year, the organisers accepted 25.6% of all registered hosted buyers. Conventa's philosophy is clear: **“Quality over quantity.”**

**The organisers have already announced the dates for Conventa 2025, which will take place between 18 and 20 February 2025 at various venues across Ljubljana.**

## SUMMARY OF KEY STATISTIC DATA OF CONVENTA 2024

CONVENTA'S HOSTED BUYERS	
Number of all confirmed hosted buyers	<b>162</b>
Number of confirmed hosted buyers from the Alpe-Adria region	<b>38</b>
Number of confirmed hosted buyers from Europe, the US, and the Middle East	<b>124</b>
Number of countries hosted buyers come from	<b>31</b>

CONVENTA'S EXHIBITORS	
Number of exhibitors at Conventa – Main floor	<b>100</b>
Number of exhibitors - Experience Zone & Special Venue Corner	<b>12</b>
Number of exhibitors' countries	<b>15</b>
Index: Hosted buyers/exhibitors (who have meetings)	<b>162</b>

CONVENTA'S GUESTS	
Number of attendees at Conventa Crossroads – Decision Makers Forum	<b>37</b>
Number of attendees at Conventa Sreča-nja (Slovenian event organisers)	<b>68</b>
Number of attendees at the meeting of Slovenian Congress Ambassadors	<b>24</b>
Number of additional guests at the Meetings Star Awards ceremony	<b>21</b>
Number of trade visitors	<b>20</b>

### INVITATION TO JOIN THE PRESS CONFERENCE IN THE FORMAT OF LJUBLJANA TALKS

We invite you to join us for the official press conference on WEDNESDAY, 21 February 2024, at 11:00 in Marmorina Hall of GR – Ljubljana Exhibition and Convention Centre.

Press accreditation for the event is available at the following link:

[https://form.123formbuilder.com/6225288/novinarska-konferenca-conventa-2024.](https://form.123formbuilder.com/6225288/novinarska-konferenca-conventa-2024)

### Press material:

- **Final event programme of Conventa 2024**

<https://conventa.si/programme/>

- **Conventa's photo gallery**

<https://conventa.si/photo-library/>

- **Photos of Conventa's co-founders**

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1GLEEcRZqpFE9yYeR5QGEP2LimT-M977i>

- **About Conventa**

Conventa is not just an event; it's a dynamic and transformative experience that has been at the forefront of the B2B MICE industry for over a decade. Over the years, Conventa has evolved beyond the boundaries of a traditional business tradeshow, emerging as the key meeting point for event organizers, looking for destinations and venues in New Europe.

- **Video Conventa 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023**

<https://www.youtube.com/@kongresmagazine4042/playlists>

## **Media information:**

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## **Links to social media:**

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Conventa>

Instagram: [https://www.instagram.com/conventa\\_experience/](https://www.instagram.com/conventa_experience/)

LinkedIn: <https://si.linkedin.com/company/conventa-2024>