

Press Release

For Immediate Release

Ljubljana, 5 January 2026

MEETINGS STAR 2026 POISED TO BE THE EVENT OF THE YEAR IN THE EVENTS INDUSTRY

The finalists will be unveiled on January 30, 2026, followed by the gala award ceremony, which will take place on February 11, 2026

The Meetings Star, an independent and transparent evaluation of the quality of event destinations, hotels, and special venues, has been setting quality standards in the events industry for 16 years. It is one of the handful of accolades founded on rigorous and objective criteria and standards. That is one of the reasons the award and certificate of quality have been enjoying an enviable reputation among event planners. The assessors evaluate the quality of destinations based on the Meeting Experience Index, comprising 75 macro evaluation criteria. The evaluation of hotels is based on unannounced visits by hidden guests, who assess hotels and conference centres according to 654 criteria. Special venues are evaluated by hidden guests based on 451 criteria.

The Meetings Star competition will award the accolades in three central categories in 2025/2026:

A. The best meeting destinations in 2025/2026

The selection includes 149 destinations. The awards will be awarded in four categories (XL, L, M, and S) and a special category dedicated to the New Europe region.

This unique, in-depth, independent evaluation system is based on the Meeting Experience Index of destinations, which comprises an analysis of over 75 quality criteria. The methodology goes beyond classic comparisons that focus solely on the number of events hosted at destinations, also evaluating and contrasting the maximum capacities of destinations, their resilience, and needs of event planners.

B. Best meeting hotels and convention centres in 2025/2026

Among 335 certified hotels and venues from 24 countries across New Europe, the winners will be announced in five categories: city, resort, spa, boutique hotels, and conference centres. Moreover, the competition will give out two special awards for the most sustainable and creative venues.

At the forefront of the Meetings Star competition is a clear vision: to put event organisers and attendees into the limelight of quality assessments. To ensure transparency, hotels and meeting venues are evaluated anonymously by hidden congress guests. Assessors are seasoned experts with decades of experience in event organising and a profound understanding of the hospitality industry and gastronomy. They evaluate them according to 654 criteria in a structured and systematic way. These criteria not only reflect the actual state of properties but also unveil their untapped potential and opportunities for development.

Based on the acquired score, hotels and venues are segmented into three quality rankings:

3 MEETING STARS - final score from 4.81 to 5.00 - Extraordinary venue

2 MEETING STARS - final score from 4.61 to 4.80 - Excellent venue

1 MEETING STAR - final score from 4.41 to 4.60 - High-quality venue

The founding father of the methodology, Gorazd Čad, explained: *“The Meetings Star is not a competition, but a tool for fostering progress. Our methodology enables destinations and venues to have an external view and provides them with guidelines for improvement. The assessments are based on reliable criteria and on-site visits, rendering the Meetings Star a reference point in the events industry.”*

C. NOVELTY: THE LEADING UNIQUE EVENT VENUES IN 2025/2026

In 2026, the competition will include a new category for special venues, thereby expanding the Meetings Star to unconventional and experiential event locations. Hidden congress guests evaluate them based on 451 precise criteria. Thus far, 31 unique venues have been assessed. The winners will be announced in two categories: built and natural venues.

Unique event venues represent a competitive advantage for destinations. On the initiative of our readers, we included them in our evaluation system and divided them into two main categories:

- Architectural and historical venues (built)
- Outdoor and experience-driven venues (natural)

ONLINE CATALOGUE OF MEETING STARS

By the end of April 2026, the organisers will publish an exclusive online catalogue, where event planners can meet all recipients of the Meetings Stars, peruse interviews, and find trustworthy event venues. For more information, visit www.meetings-star.eu.

MEETINGS STAR - KEY STATISTICS IN 2025/2026

75	Evaluation criteria for destinations (Meeting Experience Index)
654	Evaluation criteria for hotels and event venues (Hidden Congress Guest)
149	Evaluated destinations from 34 countries
48	Evaluated destinations in the XL category (destinations that can host over 2,000 attendees)
33	Evaluated destinations in the L category (destinations that can host up to 2,000 attendees)
33	Evaluated destinations in the M category (destinations that can host up to 1,200 attendees)
35	Evaluated destinations in the S category (destinations that can host up to 600 attendees)
335	Certified hotels and conference centres from 24 countries
99	Certified hotels in category A - City Meeting Hotels
67	Certified hotels in category B - Resort Meeting Hotels
42	Certified hotels in category C - Spa Meeting Hotels
57	Certified hotels in category D - Boutique Meeting Hotels
68	Certified hotels in category E - Conference centres
31	Certified special venues from 6 countries
19	Certified special venues in category A - built special venues
12	Certified special venues in category B - natural special venues

Press material:

- [Meetings Star website](#)
- [Photo gallery of the winning destinations](#)
- [Photo gallery of the winning hotels](#)
- [Destination finder](#)
- [Venue finder](#)

www.conventa.si