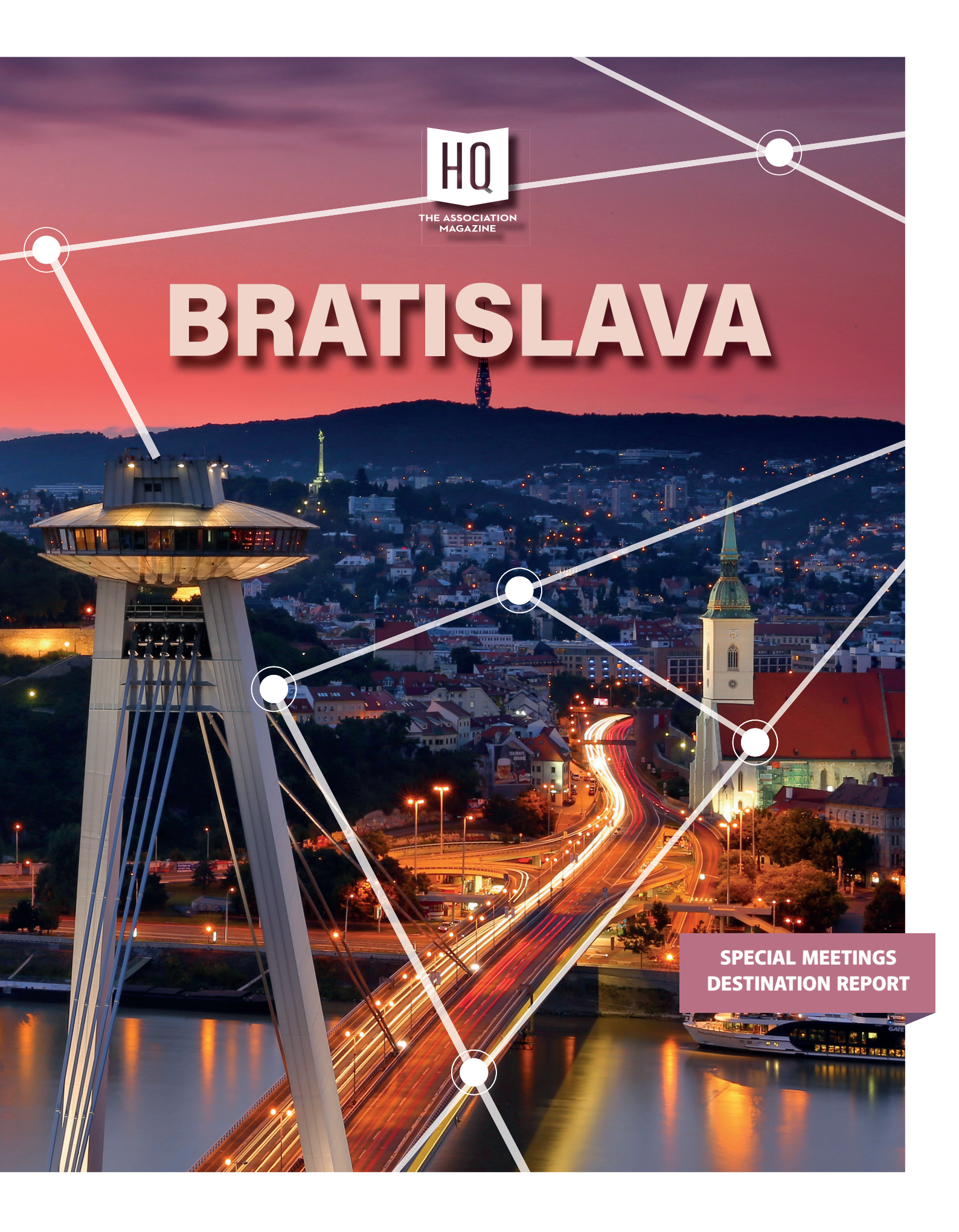




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THE ASSOCIATION
MAGAZINE

BRATISLAVA

**SPECIAL MEETINGS
DESTINATION REPORT**

Bratislava:

Surprisingly Close and Exceptionally Smart

Right in the eye of Central Europe, lies a city that combines old-world charm with a modern touch, from medieval architecture to baroque palaces, from the futuristic UFO tower to its *art nouveau* buildings. Bratislava is becoming the brightest star in Europe's constellation of meetings and events. The capital of the Slovak Republic has come to event organisers and associations with a new and attractive value proposition within the rising second-tier destinations, due to its accessibility, mobility, multiple high-quality venues, innovation and sustainability, among the main factors that we will highlight in this supplement. "Bratislava is positioned as a small-medium capital on the Danube, especially suitable for those looking for accessibility, reliability, friendliness, dependable execution and comfortable atmosphere, while enjoying all the benefits of high-level infrastructure and services," says **František Fabián**, **Managing Partner of Tour4u**, one of leading DMCs in Slovakia.



“ Bratislava is ranked among the top 10 destinations for international meetings in the New Europe region, which can host a maximum of 2,000 congress participants.

The only capital city in the world located on the border of three states – Slovakia, Austria and Hungary – this strategic location defines accessibility and proximity among the main criteria to run an inclusive event.

Throughout history, Slovakia has been part of various kingdoms, empires and principalities, and after the dissolution of Czechoslovakia, it embarked on an independent and auspicious path at the forefront of some industries. Slovakia is currently an advanced high-income economy, and is also a member of the **European Union (Schengen Area)**, **OECD**, **NATO**, the **United Nations** and the **World Trade Organisation**. This has turned Bratislava into a progressive city with an eye on the future, boasting a thriving start-up ecosystem and an unsullied reputation as a centre of innovation – the country has one of the fastest internet connections in Europe, and has become a hotbed for global automotive leaders. The size of its market and the various knowledge and research institutes have also made the capital fertile ground for new ideas and product testing, with the emphasis on execution and development. This is where meeting planners and associations can back up their proposals to specialists in the field and local experts.

The city features very high safety ratings and competitive prices with premium services compared to other European capitals. Served by two international airports, the Slovak capital can be reached in 40 minutes from Vienna Airport or in 20 minutes from Bratislava Airport, while several train stations connect it to its nearest neighbours such as Vienna, Ljubljana, Budapest or Prague. The city reveals itself in all its splendour along the banks of the Danube, in a compact form and through its streets and alleys. Unlike other major capitals, Bratislava is well worth a stroll, with hotels, venues and restaurants just a few minutes away. **Bratislava CARD** offers unlimited use of public transport and free entry and discounts to many attractions. "Bratislava's advantage lies in its rare combination of qualities. Firstly, the attractive and car-free Old Town, secondly, its compact and fluid nature, and thirdly, its excellent value for money. These factors mean that delegates can experience something new, enjoyable and memorable," says **Marek Farkaš**, **Managing Director of Enjoy Slovakia DMC**.

Business Event Venues & Hotels

As you travel around the city, you probably do not realise the wide selection of venues available for events and meetings that combine up-to-date functionality with turn-of-the-century charm. From a gala dinner in the neoclassical Hall of Mirrors of the **Primate's Palace**, a cocktail reception in the stunning **Reduta** Concert Hall, to a 'splashier' experience on the banks of the Danube on the **Harmonia** boat, the Slovak capital has an impressive portfolio of historic buildings, renovated facilities and cultural strongholds that you can request at any time. Here are a few examples below:

The Big Ones...

The **Reduta – Slovak Philharmonic**, is one of the most important cultural sites and an inseparable part of Bratislava's social life. Its renovated neo-baroque spaces are also highly coveted for prestigious events, such as the **17th International Congress of Quantum Chemistry 2023**. "The entire academic bureau assessed the congress as perfectly organised, and the beauty of the venue ensured many positive comments from the scientists," says **Richard Klimeš** from **EMERGE**, the certified DMC for the local management of the congress. While the old building is under renovation, the new **Slovak National Theatre** remains one of the best venues for corporate events and formal galas, with two large concert halls (the main Opera and the Drama Hall), along with a spacious foyer. Meanwhile, the **Old Market Hall**, has been operating since 2012 as a food market, but also as an event venue for business events and conferences. The maximum capacity is around 800 people and can reach 1,500 for exclusive events. For large-scale events and exhibitions, consider the **Incheba Expo Bratislava**, right on the Danube, where their flexible spaces can accommodate up to 5,000 people.

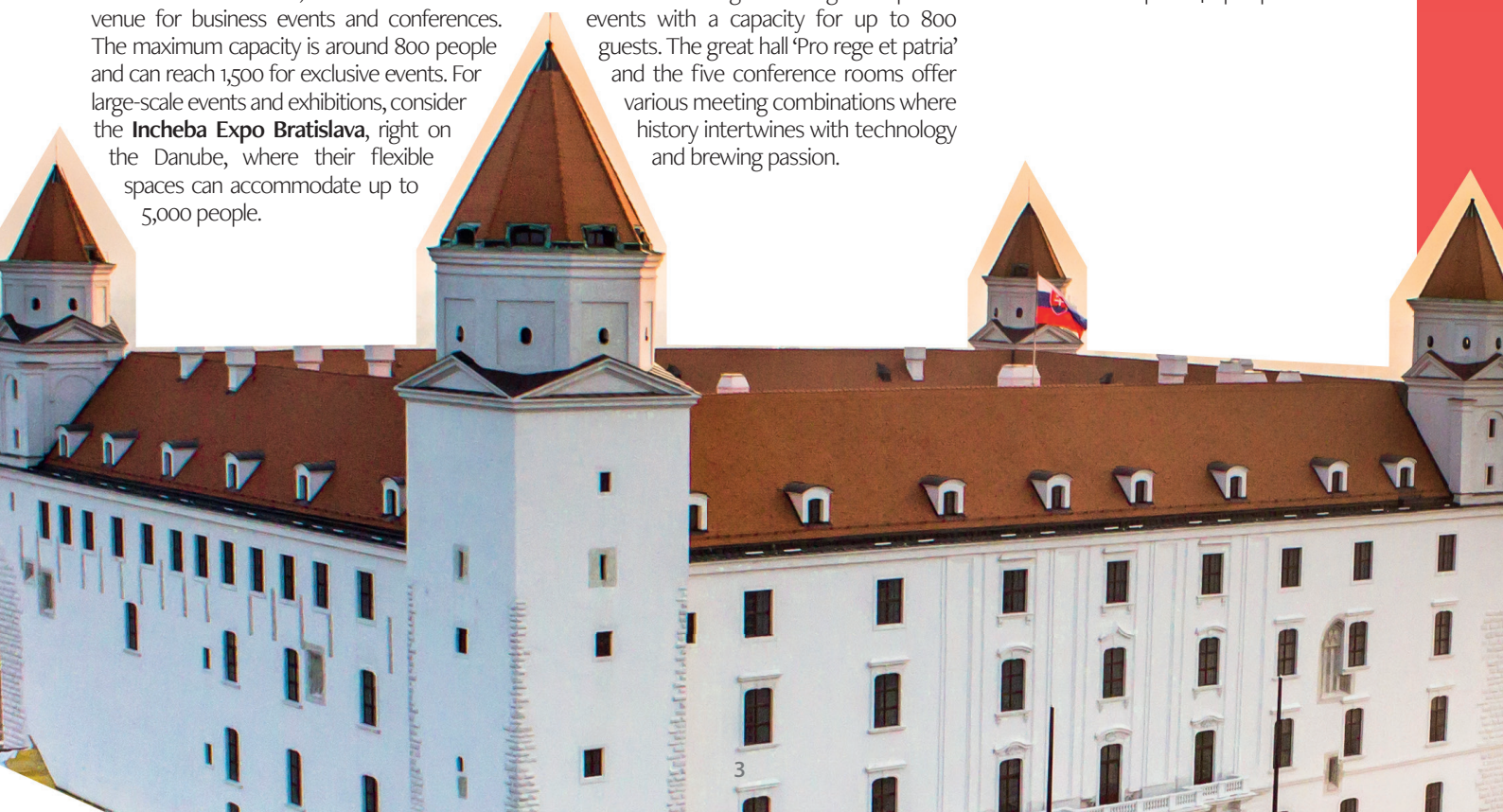
History in the Making...

In the Hall of Mirrors of the **Primate's Palace**, the **Bratislava Peace Treaty** was signed between Napoleon Bonaparte and Emperor Franz I. Today, it is open for conferences and lectures, with four meeting rooms, 117 m² of exhibition space and 150 seats in the main hall. Perched atop the hill above the old town, **Bratislava Castle** is now a vibrant venue for concerts and films and can be hired out for events. The **Klarisky Church** has been converted for social events, banquets, receptions and conferences, with a concert hall for 180 people and two meeting rooms. Just 22 kilometres from the city, the century-old **Šimák Zámok** castle in Pezinok reopened in 2019 as a hotel with 48 rooms and a meeting space with a 500-seat hall and 450 seats for banquets. Neighbouring it, the exquisite **Pálffy Manor House** hosts everything from business meetings to large corporate events with a capacity for up to 800 guests. The great hall 'Pro rege et patria' and the five conference rooms offer various meeting combinations where history intertwines with technology and brewing passion.



By the River...

On the Danube, you can organise an out-of-the-box wave experience for your delegates. **Harmonia**, a meeting boat, offers its two decks with a capacity of up to 400 people and catering services so you will not be short of anything. The **Rivers Club** is a boat moored on the river promenade with a unique view of the Old Town. Inside you can hold events and business meetings in four spacious rooms, the largest of which can seat 220 people. Right next door is one of the city's greatest design feats 'at the best address on the Danube'. The **Ponton** features a main hall suitable for any private party, conference or meeting, and a restaurant for up to 140 people.



'Artsy' Meetings

Located in the historic centre, the **DPOH – Municipal Theatre** is a cultural residence with its own repertoire that also hosts events and conferences for up to 440 participants. With three meeting rooms and capacity for 440 people, this theatre excels in its accessibility and proximity to cafés and restaurants. In the **Slovak National Gallery** you can request various meeting spaces, while the **Nedbalka Gallery** has an impressive collection of Slovak modernism on its four floors. The stunning and soothing **Danubiana Gallery**, meanwhile, will be the perfect place for a team-building activity or simply a coffee at sunset.

From Industrial to Modern

In the industrial blocks, several unusual spaces have blossomed into new-wave MICE juggernauts. The **Refinery Gallery** can be flexibly customised for any corporate event, seminar or forum with a capacity for 2,500 people and 2,500 m² of exhibition space. The borough of Nové Mesto is home to Slovakia's largest and most modern film and TV studio, perfect to set up a virtual hub or a live stream. In the **Studio A4** you can unleash your creativity in a room for 2,300 people, backstage, and audiovisual technical support. Finally, in the deactivated **Jurkovič Heating Plant** lies the **BASE**, a multipurpose concept that functions as a co-working platform, gallery, café/restaurant and event space.

University aulas

Centres of knowledge par excellence, universities and their *aulas* are also hotbeds for MICE activity across the board. The **University of Economics in Bratislava**, one of Slovakia's key research institutions, features a large auditorium for 650 participants and a meeting room for 40 people, suitable for conferences, seminars or lectures. Another of Bratislava's largest *aulas* is the **Comenius University**, which is popular for cultural events, gala dinners and international conferences such as the **36th Annual Conference of the European Health** with 600 delegates. Last but not least, the **Faculty of Mechanical Engineering of the Technical University** has the largest university *aula*, welcoming up to 950 participants. The **Aula Maxima** has flawless acoustics and an optimised design, making it easy to organise large scientific events. At the **Faculty of Informatics** there are two more auditoriums with a total capacity of 540 seats.



Luxury and Comfort Just Like at Home!

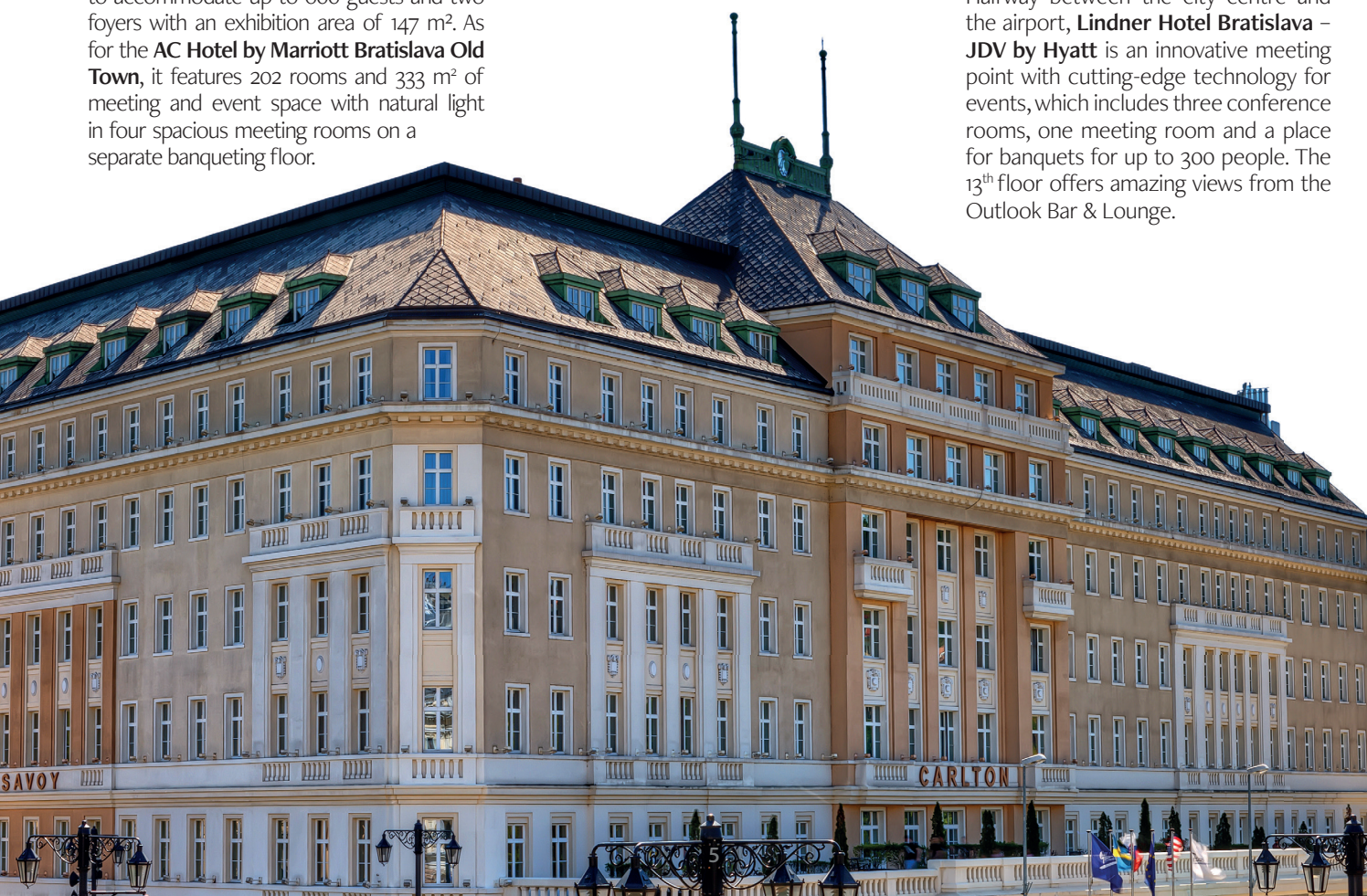
In Bratislava, you will find a wide variety of hotels, from luxury boutiques to renovated classics, in a total of around 3,200 4- and 5-star hotel rooms. Let yourself be carried away by the serene and contemplative atmosphere of the city, where traffic is prohibited and attractions are just around the corner, in one of our many suggestions below:

The **Grand Hotel River Park** with its luxury ZION Spa, was a multiple winner of the **Trend Top** award for 'Best Hotel in Bratislava' and the 'Leading Hotel in Slovakia' from the **World Travel Award**. This distinguished hotel overlooking the Danube offers 231 rooms, including 40 suites (arguably the most luxurious presidential suite in the country) and 11 versatile meeting rooms – with the largest up to 350 participants – together with a Business Centre. Part of the Marriott Group, the **Sheraton Bratislava** is sited on a busy avenue five minutes from downtown and offers 209 rooms and suites, a gym, a brasserie and two bars. Regarding meetings, it has eight event spaces with the flexibility to accommodate up to 600 guests and two foyers with an exhibition area of 147 m². As for the **AC Hotel by Marriott Bratislava Old Town**, it features 202 rooms and 333 m² of meeting and event space with natural light in four spacious meeting rooms on a separate banqueting floor.

Sitting in a historic building, the **Radisson Blu Carlton Bratislava** offers three state-of-the-art meeting rooms, a business centre, and a historic hall that can accommodate up to 1,000 guests at a single event. This modern business hotel also comprises 168 rooms and suites, a restaurant, and one of the world's top 100 bars in 2023 – the Mirror Bar. **Park Inn by Radisson** has 240 rooms, five conference rooms and an Italian restaurant on the banks of the Danube. At a walking distance from the SNP bridge, the **Devin Hotel** is a fabulous piece of art built in 1954, furnished with 90 rooms, four meeting rooms, restaurant and patisserie. A National Cultural Heritage site with a long history of bohemian guests, this is the typical venue for social events, informal meetings or forging partnerships. Another business alternative downtown is the **Falkensteiner Hotel**, with 162 rooms in various categories, natural light in the five meeting rooms, a conference foyer, and a rooftop lounge overseeing Bratislava Castle.

The **Crowne Plaza Bratislava** is the largest conference hotel and winner of the award for **Best MICE Hotel** in Bratislava. This 4-star hotel has 224 rooms, 15 suites, 14 meeting rooms with over 1,200 m² of space and a restaurant that relies on local produce. Meanwhile, the **DoubleTree by Hilton Bratislava** with its fine-dining **Cloud** restaurant, is a good solution for business travellers. With in total 14 meeting rooms, the hotel covers more than 1,200 m² with capacity up to 2000 delegates, and the largest hotel conference room in the city – the 562 m² **Hilton Ballroom**.

Overlooking the Presidential Gardens in the Old Town, the 4-star **Loft Hotel** boasts 'industrial chic' *décor* and retro touches, unfolding in two versions – a modern loft with 111 rooms in the comfort and premium categories, and a boutique hotel comprising ten luxurious rooms – plus four conference rooms with natural light, a Slovak restaurant and a brewery. Halfway between the city centre and the airport, **Lindner Hotel Bratislava – JDV by Hyatt** is an innovative meeting point with cutting-edge technology for events, which includes three conference rooms, one meeting room and a place for banquets for up to 300 people. The 13th floor offers amazing views from the Outlook Bar & Lounge.



A Brief History of Bratislava's Economic Success

With the birth of the Slovak Republic in 1993, the country has undergone a transition from a centrally planned economy to a free and open market one. Since then, Slovakia has seen stable economic development driven by strategic industrial sectors, a skilled workforce, quality infrastructure and a growing business environment. The country offers a competitive investment platform with the introduction of R&D-related tax regime, reduction of bureaucracy and costs, and A-level credit ratings from the major credit agencies. This small, open market economy has GDP growth rates above the European level (Slovak GDP is expected to expand by 2.7% in 2024); one of the lowest debts in the Eurozone; an unemployment rate below 6%; and leads the EU in goods exports with an impressive 90.2% (93.9% in goods and services). Sectors such as automobiles and consumer goods are now recovering at a good pace after the pandemic outburst, offering attractive opportunities for foreign investors. Today, the trade balance returned to positive territory with exports up by 5.4%, while imports fell by 2.9%, both surpassing the 100-billion-euro mark, the highest volume since 2010.

“ Slovakia belongs to the TOP 20 countries with the highest number of installed robots in the production industry per 10,000 employees.

Skilled Workforce and Education

In Slovakia, investors will be able to find a regional leader that remains ultra-competitive in terms of productivity and labour costs at European level, with a highly-qualified workforce of 2.81 million people. Many young people speak two or more foreign languages, which allows companies in Slovakia to think internationally about their business. The secondary sector accounts for 28.5% of GDP and employs 36% of the workforce, while the services sector contributes 58.5% of GDP and employs around 62% of the working population. These figures are underpinned by a cohesive and established system of secondary schools and universities that boast a high share of STEM profiles and will soon adopt a new dual education framework – facilitating theoretical education shared in schools with practical training in companies. This is why tourism could serve as a springboard for the Slovak economy, as the sector showed signs of recovery in 2023, when accommodation reached a turnover of around 563 million euros.



“ Slovakia is the 61st largest economy in the world out of 196 countries in 2023, generating \$141 billion.

“ In Slovakia, 93% of adults have at least a secondary level qualification, compared to the EU average of 79%.

“ Slovakia has 50% share of the automotive industry on total industrial production.

Bratislava for Business Events

Similarly, Bratislava bases its strategy for attracting MICE investments on three key factors: accessibility, innovation and execution. Accessibility is systematically one of the main criteria that organisers stress when choosing the city, among airports, motorways and transport options that connect delegates to a super-compact destination. Bratislava benefits from a privileged geographical location at the crossroads of Central and Eastern Europe, representing a boundless trading platform for various industries and companies. On the other hand, Slovakia has been rising rapidly not only in terms of GDP, but also in the perception of its innovative potential and entrepreneurial spirit. With a pulsating start-up ecosystem and the modernisation of its economic levers, Bratislava has moved closer to the concept of a smart city with a number of professionals revolving around new ideas, findings and product trials. **ESET** is the world leader in antivirus software, while **Pixel Federation** develops and commercialises online games for more than 200 countries around the world. In the Meetings Industry, it saw the birth of the interactive web platform **Sli.do**. Finally,

inspired by its heavy industry and advanced engineering, event professionals in Bratislava know the importance of execution in the MICE sector. Whether it is a last-minute banquet or finding a larger venue, precision, swiftness and attention to detail are non-negotiable.

Slovak Industrial pillars

The second half of the 20th century saw a revival of the Slovak industrial complex. From a heavy industry based on coal mining, machine manufacturing and steel, national production has converged towards sectors such as automotive technologies, electronics, modern machinery, chemistry and information. Slovakia is the global leader in car production per capita – 20th place in total world production – making it the most important source of foreign direct investment in the last 20 years. Five major car plants – **Volkswagen**, **Peugeot/Citroën**, **Kia**, **Jaguar/Land Rover** and **Volvo** – make the nation one of Europe's leading car manufacturing parks, employing more than 261,000 workers. The automotive industry accounts for 48% of the country's total industrial production and its share of the

gross national product is 13%. Slovakia owes its competitiveness to numerous technical schools, qualified personnel, a vast network of suppliers and its distributive centrality, feeding more than 350 sub-industries related to automotive safety equipment, vehicle care products, post-production and R&D centres. The machinery and equipment industry represents another of the main pillars of the Slovak economy due to its historical background and its stable position in the Slovak economic fabric. Its contribution to GDP and the external trade balance is second only to its employment potential, with 39% of all industrial jobs and more than 920 active companies. This strongly export-oriented industry is closely linked to car manufacturing, but also covers other segments such as defence systems, aeroplanes, hydraulic systems and compressors, etc.

Slovakia's aviation industry is also rooted in its classic inventions, such as the parachute or the first model helicopter. This tradition lives on through the prototypes of ultralight aircraft, gyrocopters or the *aeromómo* – the futuristic flying car – and in the area of aircraft maintenance, repair and overhaul services. Moreover, the participation of Slovak researchers in major international space missions, together with a strong supplier base working on high-precision electronics and machinery, has rekindled attention for the space industry. Slovakia currently has €99 million in sales revenue, €32 million in added value and 1,250 employees in the aviation industry. The country also has a history in iron and steel manufacturing with several integrated steel plants, such as **US Steel Košice**, which are essential for the country's exports. The industry is valued at 3.9 billion euros and was ranked 11th among 18 EU countries in 2023 – in total, 902 companies employ 8,316 people. Finally, the construction industry in Slovakia covers a wide range of activities, including residential, commercial, industrial and civil engineering, and is largely responsible for infrastructure development, employment and economic growth.



Sustainable Bratislava:

A round-up of the city's ecological initiatives!

At the gates of the social neighbourhood Petržalka is one of the oldest municipal parks in Europe, full of rare trees, gazebos and classical baroque elements. Together with the Danube, this park is the city's great calling card when it comes to environmental awareness and climate defence. At a time when the criteria and priorities of event planners and association committees are increasingly moving towards sustainable practices, Bratislava also ticks this box. Whether it is the proximity to the Carpathian Mountains with its hiking trails and nature reserves, the vast green spaces, the pristine surrounding Danube and Morava rivers, or a historic centre closed off to traffic, the most environmentally conscious delegates will have an unscathed experience every step of the way. "As far as the carbon footprint is concerned, the **Break the Ice Forum** we organised in March 2024 demonstrated that the city centre is walkable with a high level of public transport, which the participants had the opportunity to experience and pass on to their clients," says František Fabián from Tourqu.

Once you arrive in the city, an efficient public transport network coupled by various green-friendly means of transport offer seamless connectivity. Delegates will be able to use a combination of walking and green transport as their primary mode of getting around, as most of the city's accommodation, conference rooms and venues are all within a 2.5-kilometre radius. The capital's public transport provider, **DPB**, has seen half of its fleet classified as low-emission made up of electric buses that comply with the Euro 6 standard and hydrogen-powered vehicles. These services are backed up by electric scooters and bike-sharing options that can be found everywhere. The Slovak hotel sector is also following suit when it comes to making the most of their resources with corporate sustainability programmes in place and external provider certifications. From a social point of view, **Hotel Bivio**, run by the **Association for people with**

developmental disabilities, has the main objective of ensuring that people with mental disabilities receive training for employment in hospitality, helping them to live a full and independent life. On the other hand, venues such as the **Old Market Hall** are constantly introducing new ecological measures, such as electric composters and green roofs.

Sustainability and Urban Mobility

Bratislava's urban planning and design has been strengthened by **Climate Resilient Bratislava**, a set of pilot projects on decarbonisation, energy efficiency and sustainable rainwater management. As part of **EIT Urban Mobility**, Bratislava is currently taking part in a project by the company **BitaGreen** to identify locations where green and blue infrastructure can reduce air pollution and traffic noise. Along the same lines, the **Green Bratislava** project includes



rainwater management through bioretention, and by increasing vegetation and water permeability in public green areas. For its part, the **Bratislava Metropolitan Institute** has spearheaded the reforestation of several prime areas, the replacement of eco-friendly materials, and the reuse of vacant areas into multigenerational green spaces.

Several projects have been rehabilitated with sustainability at their centre. Petržalka is about to become an energy-positive district focused on reducing CO₂ emissions through smart urban solutions. The Einpark building is fully equipped with green roofs, scalable electric charging stations and a hydronic heating and cooling system. **Nová Cvernovka's** cultural centre, built in a former chemical factory, now

houses a community garden and a public park created from a recycling project. The **Nové Nivy** shopping and transport complex, with a modern bus station, was designed to be energy efficient, with photovoltaic panels, a rainwater retention system and a green roof.

Circular Economy & Green Innovation

The municipal waste management company, **OLO**, has set up a 1,200 m² reuse centre where anyone can throw away or discover unwanted objects. The **KOLO** centre is also home to **HUB**, an educational and creative centre focusing on the circular economy, which cooperates with the non-profit sector and finances environmental projects. **Textile House** sorts 20,000 tonnes of textiles a year, which are donated to homeless people, sold in its 170 European shops or sent for recycling. The company **Ecocapsule** produces an intelligent, self-sustaining micro-unit that allows it to remotely harness solar and wind energy. The startup **InoBat Auto** is involved in the R&D and production of environmentally and economically viable batteries for electric cars. Finally, the **MH2**, developed by the **MATADOR** group, is Slovakia's first hydrogen car, which uses a unique technology to store hydrogen at a much lower pressure.



A win-win situation: How meetings and events can trigger positive impacts

Based in Prague and Bratislava, **GUARANT International** is the leading provider of congress and conference services in Central Europe, offering quality services to international organisations. The company organises 50 to 80 events annually and is a member of the **Bratislava Tourist Board**, **IAPCO**, **ICCA**, and **ESAE**. We asked Mr **Peter Petrovič**, **Executive Director** of **GUARANT**, how the destination relates to the impacts and legacies for associations and vice versa:

What are the major legacy impacts that Bratislava has garnered from business events and association conferences?

An uplift in the quality of services and a revival of tourism in general. The staging of international events in Bratislava has improved the quality of the city's services and reinvigorated its professional sectors. These events have contributed to raising service standards and bolstered Bratislava's reputation as an attractive destination for international visitors.

If we invert the previous logic, what does an association have to gain by holding its conference here?

Associations can reap substantial benefits in networking, real-time collaboration, exposure to cutting-edge technology and innovation.

The city's modern infrastructure and vibrant atmosphere create an ideal environment for intellectual exchange and impactful discussions. On the other hand, Bratislava leaves a lasting legacy for the organising association by enhancing its global reputation, fostering professional connections and showcasing the city's capabilities as an event destination.

What are the main Slovak industries that you see as strategic for the growth of the meetings and events sector?

The main Slovak industries with significant growth potential include medicine and pharmacy, the automotive industry and research and development. These sectors not only drive innovation and economic development, but also offer substantial opportunities for the expansion of the events sector.



What major structural improvements do you think can be achieved for the Bratislava community and Slovak society?

Promote international acquaintances and strengthen co-operation in various sectors, while raising Slovakia's profile on the world stage. These events contribute to economic growth, foster cultural exchange and create opportunities for local businesses, which leads to Slovakia's increased visibility among global decision-makers.



Incentive Ideas & Teambuilding Activities

In addition to the countless options for business events, Slovakia, with its capital Bratislava, also has a huge range of truly diverse incentive offers to enrich your pre- or post-event period. Whether you are in bleisure mode, outworking or simply taking a few days off, the city enjoys an enviable position that will allow you to choose between the wine regions of the Small Carpathians, water sports on the Danube or a stroll through the art galleries and cultural monuments that abound in the city. At the same time, many of these venues can also be requested and used as part of your programme as a backdrop for more informal sessions, adding a touch of charm to your social event and providing a magical setting for inspirational getaways.

Day 1: Heritage, Art & Culture

At the crossroads of several civilisations, Bratislava boasts a heritage of more than 2,000 years characterised by numerous landmarks and monuments. “Bratislava was the coronation capital of Habsburg Hungary for centuries, and this historical legacy is well illustrated in the **Bratislava Coronation Days**, a three-day summer festival that celebrates 400 years of Pressburg tradition up to the present day,” says **Marek Farkaš** of **Enjoy Slovakia DMC**. In addition, communist architecture and design also left a visible mark on the post-World War II period. The tour operator **Authentic Slovakia** offers group excursions to the sites of the communist belt, as well as cycling tours of the Iron Curtain or the Carpathian Castle ruins. The old town retains many Baroque signs, present in the mansions and villas of musicians such as Mozart, Franz Liszt, Beethoven and Haydn. This rich musical tradition lives on today within the walls of the **Slovak National Theatre** and the **Reduta – Slovak Philharmonic**, bastions of opera and classical music.

Local DMCs can organise a Kaiser Quartet or, if you prefer a more medieval feel, a falconry show at **Červený Kameň** (Red Stone) **Castle**. Another tradition rooted in Slovak folklore is handmade pottery. Learn how to use a potter’s wheel and work with paints and glazes in one of the workshops at **Majolika R** or **Majolika Modra**.

Contemporary art is gaining more and more fans and exhibition spaces, the best known of all is the **Danubiana Meulensteen Art Museum**, a spectacular glass building on a peninsula surrounded by the Danube. This modern art gallery is decorated by an impressive private collection, some temporary exhibitions, and various sculptures in its idyllic outdoor park perfectly in tune with the surrounding landscape. 20 kilometres from the city, you can use public transport or shared bicycles to get here. Another must-see is the **Nedbalka Gallery** and its four circular floors leaving a tubular clearing where you can see a permanent exhibition dedicated to the development of



modernism in Slovakia, in a venue suitable for any cocktail reception or networking event. Incentive groups can also enjoy an interactive digital **Bratislava Treasure Hunt** game within the city or a ride on the **small city trains** moving around the city.

Day 2: Wine

Slovakia’s wine tradition dates back to Roman times and this heritage is particularly visible in the Small Carpathian region, where small family-run wineries coexist with cellars and large estates in the Pezinok and Modra countryside. One of these large producers is the **ELESKO** wine park, where you can sample its splendid wines in the restaurant and bar, or visit its inner contemporary art





gallery **Zoya Museum**. Just 12 kilometres away is **Karpatská Perla**, a Slovak family winery with 50 hectares of organic vineyards and five meeting rooms on its premises. “Wine is an excellent incentive product, allowing visitors to explore a new range of flavours and local varieties through pairings as well as visiting some of our charming wine towns and local vineyards,” says Farkaš.

Back in Bratislava, we recommend an out-of-the-box experience to remember later. Have you ever done a wine tasting... in pitch black? **Wine Tasting in the Dark** invites you to taste the most interesting grape varieties from local wineries in a dark cellar to sharpen your senses and test your knowledge. Do not miss the **Slovak National Wine Collection** either, which delivers an excellent sample of the country’s six wine regions with tasting rounds organised for groups or individuals. Hungry yet? Inside Bratislava Castle, the **Hradná restaurant** offers an exceptional and intimate gastronomic experience with the most breathtaking view over the capital. As for local operators, **Taste Bratislava** proposes food, beer and wine tours with a local guide for your corporate group.

Day 3: Water

The River Danube played a crucial role in Bratislava’s history and continues to mould its character. Europe’s second largest river splits the city in two, but bonds it with its neighbours Vienna and Budapest, recounting centuries of history and trade. Within walking distance of the Danubiana peninsula, you will come across the **Čunovo Water Sports Centre**, a sports and leisure centre serving a wide variety of water activities such as rafting, canoeing, hydrospeed, jet skiing, or kayaking. The resort consists of a 3-star hotel, restaurant and bungalows, with two conference rooms for 20 and 60 people and a wellness area – ideal for company events with outdoor areas for up to 5,000 people. If you are looking for speed boats or water scooters, the companies **Hot Chilli** and **SpeedBoats.sk** have a wide portfolio of equipment, cruises and transfers to hotspots, such as the Devín Castle along the picturesque bays of the Danube.

On your way back to the city, why not stop off at the modern **Eurovea promenade**, a freshly-new place to shop and enjoy the cultural life of this new urban centre right next to the river. To round off the evening, why not head up to the **UFO Tower** restaurant, a luxurious event space with a minimalist design that offers panoramic views of the city from a 360-degree

walkway. Looking for a bit of an adrenaline rush? Try the **Ufo Sky Walk** 85 metres above the Danube. If you want to top off your stay in style, visit the monumental **Flagship**, one of the largest restaurants in Europe, where you can travel back in time while savouring local Slovak specialities.

Special tip: Plunge into the world of automobile production at the **Volkswagen Slovakia Visitor Centre** where you can witness how cars are made using modern robots, tour the **Slovakia Ring** racing circuit or take a trip to Vienna with a fast catamaran **Twin City Liner**.



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