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Austria Center Vienna booming: event revenue up 19% year-on-year, increase in number of guests from abroad provides economic stimulus for Vienna (gross value added in 2015: EUR 377.8m)

With a focus on large international congresses, the Austria Center Vienna's new strategy is paying dividends:

- **Event revenue was 19% higher in 2015 than in 2014, and is advancing again in 2016**
- **Growth benefiting workers and the economy – 63,000 visitors from abroad took part in events at the Austria Center Vienna in 2015, generating:**
 - **EUR 377.8m in gross value added (congress delegates spend EUR 534 a day on average – three times more than a normal tourist), of which EUR 139m was added in Vienna**
 - **461,000 overnight stays**
 - **EUR 94m in taxes and duties**
 - **Jobs for 2,000 people in Vienna alone**

This shows that the strategy has made a significant contribution to boosting Vienna's economy.

- **Fierce competition in the European events market: many destinations are investing heavily in conference centres. The Austria Center Vienna is also renewing and improving its facilities.**

New strategy paying dividends

“Our new strategy, which puts the focus firmly on large international congresses and international corporate events, is not only generating success for us. Austria as a whole is benefiting from the increase in delegates from abroad coming to the ACV: in 2015 alone the total reached approximately 63,000,” said Susanne Baumann-Söllner, Managing Director of the Austria Center Vienna. Over the past three and a half years, Baumann-Söllner and her team have concentrated on offering customers exceptional quality across the board, with a **wide selection of excellently equipped event spaces, the installation of IT infrastructure that was recently recognised as providing the best WLAN in the conference sector worldwide,** as well as strong partner enterprises and extensive modernisation initiatives.

“Our customers value our new approach and the dedication of the entire team – satisfaction levels are very high,” Baumann-Söllner commented.

The commitment from the **Vienna Tourist Board** headed by Norbert Kettner and its **Vienna Convention Bureau** under the management of Christian Mutschlechner has also played a major part in the success enjoyed by Austria’s biggest conference centre. The Vienna Convention Bureau coordinates the key service providers in Vienna so that all of them – from hotels and public transport to Vienna International Airport – are pulling in the same direction. This has made Vienna a role model worldwide for destinations hosting large international congresses.

Revenue up 19% in 2015

The figures reflect the impact of the new strategy: **revenue** from events and bookings has **risen consistently since 2013**. “In total, events generated over **EUR 10.2m in sales revenue in 2015** – this represents **growth of 19%** or EUR 1.63m on 2014,” Baumann-Söllner reported.

63,000 visitors from abroad: benefits for Austria as a whole

The increased number of participants travelling to events from foreign countries is paying dividends for Vienna and the whole of Austria. **63,000** delegates in **2015** notched up a total of around **461,000** overnight stays in the Austrian capital. And on average, each **congress visitor** spent **EUR 534 a day** – more than **three times as much** as a **normal tourist**.

EUR 377.8m in gross value added, 2,000 jobs secured, EUR 94m in public revenue

The Austrian economy benefited from the strong visitor numbers, with **gross value added** amounting to **EUR 377.8m** (50% higher than in 2012), and so did workers: the Austria Center Vienna’s activities secured **2,000 jobs** in Vienna in 2015.

And the public coffers were swelled by **EUR 94.3m in taxes and duties** – a **45% increase** on 2012. “These public receipts are equivalent to half of all student tuition fees,” Baumann-Söllner pointed out.

Congress visitors provide economic boost

“Our success enables us to make a significant contribution to the country’s economic base – the **indirect economic impact** has played a major part in supporting **economic growth** in Vienna. We will continue to follow this strategy systematically. It already looks like we will welcome a total of around **91,000 visitors from abroad in 2016** – another year-on-year increase and a **jump of 42% compared to 2015**,” Baumann-Söllner stated.

Fiercely contested European market

Other destinations have also identified international congresses as an economic driver and are investing heavily, both directly and indirectly, in their conference venues. Barcelona, Berlin, Milan, Frankfurt and Istanbul all opened new congress centres recently, with major new event venues being built in Paris and Budapest. Many other cities are expanding the amount of event space on offer.

Austria Center Vienna keeping up with the times

The **Federal Ministry of Finance** and the **City of Vienna** have also recognised the **importance of congress tourism** and are **backing** Baumann-Söllner’s team **in all of their investment projects**.

“Our venue is one of the oldest in Europe. So I am very pleased and grateful that we have received such extensive support for our strategy from finance minister Hans-Jörg Schelling and his team at the ministry. We have a **new Business Lounge** with an adjoining coffeehouse, and an **innovative lighting system** in the largest hall. We also have **new furniture throughout the venue**. The **new look and feel** significantly enhances participants’ wellbeing and encourages networking. Plus the catering areas used by our new catering partners Motto Catering and M*Eventcatering have been completely refurbished,” Baumann-Söllner added.

About IAKW-AG

Internationales Amtssitz- und Konferenzzentrum Wien, Aktiengesellschaft (IAKW-AG) is responsible for maintaining the Vienna International Centre (VIC) and operating the Austria Center Vienna. The Austria Center Vienna is Austria’s largest conference centre, with 24 halls, 180 offices and meeting rooms, and some 22,000 square metres of exhibition space, and is one of the top players on the international conference circuit. IAKW-AG and the Austria Center Vienna are headed by Chief Executive Officer Susanne Baumann-Söllner. Visit www.acv.at for additional information.

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