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2017: Vienna Convention Bureau and Austria Center Vienna bring renowned Associations World Congress to the Austrian capital

Around 300 executives and congress organisers from major international associations will gather at the Austria Center Vienna in May 2017. The Associations World Congress is the perfect opportunity to showcase Vienna and the nation's largest conference venue as the ideal location for international congresses and attract even more international delegates to the capital.

“The 2017 Associations Word Congress is a unique opportunity for all of us to present Vienna and the Austria Center Vienna to organisers – whose annual meetings attract anywhere from 500 to 30,000 international delegates – and showcase our combined strengths as a location for large-scale scientific congresses. It is a major honour and, at the same time, an incredible opportunity: everyone who experiences the city and its infrastructure first hand takes away a lasting impression. We will use this congress to convince as many international associations as possible of the benefits that Vienna and the Austria Center Vienna have to offer,” explained Susanne Baumann-Söllner, Managing Director of the Austria Center Vienna. The high-profile Associations World Congress, credited as the largest training, knowledge and networking conference for international associations, is **coming to Vienna in 2017 for the first time**. What makes this congress so special is that it gives the Austria Center Vienna the chance to showcase its talents to around **300 potential customers at once** – all of whom host congresses – for the first time in its history. This represents a major opportunity for Vienna and the Austria Center Vienna to demonstrate their credentials as a conference destination. The Vienna Convention Bureau has been working with the organiser for some time. And thanks to its joint pitch with the Austria Center Vienna, it secured the event at the **first attempt**. “There is no doubt that Vienna's role as one of the world's **most popular congress destinations** had a major part to play. For years now we have been topping the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) rankings as one of the world's favourite destinations alongside Paris and Madrid,” explained Christian Mutschlechner, Director of the Vienna Convention Bureau. Among the factors behind the decision was the fact that in Vienna the **entire destination pulls together in the same direction** – from the Convention Bureau and the individual congress venues to the hospitality sector and other event partners. “As a result we expect around 300 representatives of international associations to attend the 2017 congress,” Mutschlechner confirmed.

International associations congress market growing

International associations congresses are by far the most important customer segment, and the Vienna Convention Bureau and the Austria Center Vienna are reaching out to them with this acquisition. International associations – and medical associations in particular – organise regular congresses, usually on an annual basis, during which they present and discuss the latest findings to emerge in their particular disciplines. Upcoming congress destinations and venues are booked long in advance – in most cases three to five years before the event takes place. “There are around 60,000 international associations worldwide, and with a further 700 or so added each year, the segment is constantly growing – and virtually crisis proof,” Mutschlechner noted. “Vienna continues to be a leading destination – our geographical location in the heart of Europe, excellent quality of life, safety and highly

Page1 of 2

competitive hotels and locations are all key to the capital's appeal. And the Austria Center Vienna as an event location is a highly significant contributing factor.

The induced economic impact attributable to international congress guests is high in Vienna: as the 2015 congress statistics published by the Vienna Convention Bureau a short time ago confirm, congress guests spend around EUR 534 per day – around double the amount of the average tourist.” he explained.

Austria Center Vienna – ideal spaces for associations congresses

Susanne Baumann-Söllner, who has been in charge of Austria's largest congress centre for more than three years now, is delighted with the opportunity the event brings to show off the new look and feel of the Austria Center Vienna. “We completely refurnished the venue last year, built a business lounge and a coffeehouse and installed a cutting-edge lighting concept in Europe's largest conference hall. These developments are striking the right note with customers, and this is borne out by the strong bookings for the years ahead. 2017 will see the introduction of even more new features at the venue – from renovated halls to a completely new 500m² event space in the lobby. But I am particularly pleased that potential customers will be able to witness the dedication of the whole team and our partner companies, who made implementing these improvements possible while business continued as usual,” commented Baumann-Söllner. The Austria Center Vienna Managing Director also expressed her hope that the Associations World Congress would generate additional bookings for years to come.

About the Associations World Congress

The Associations World Congress, credited as the largest training, knowledge and networking conference for associations, attracts around 300 association managers each year. It rotates between different venues worldwide. Delegates at the Associations World Congress present the latest findings and trends in association events, as well as discussing new options for delivering better services and added value for association members. The congress offers a comprehensive overview of the current and future developments affecting associations internationally.

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 42,000 square metres of event space (including 22,000 square metres of exhibition space), and is one of the top players on the international conference circuit. In 2016 alone the venue will welcome around 77,000 delegates at 10 large-scale international congresses. 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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