

# Let's Meet!

Where moments *matter* ■



- European Lung Cancer Congress 2024
- Interview with Petr Dukát, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the PCC

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Dear readers,

The Prague Congress Centre has had an extraordinary year. Not only have we surpassed the pre-covid numbers, but we have even achieved the best economic results in the last 15 years. The PCC is hosting truly extraordinary events and the number of events is steadily increasing. The significance of the PCC is underlined by the Ambassador Awards,

which are given to the best congresses of the year. We are proud that we were able to welcome four of the five award-winning events to Vyšehrad, including the Road Congress, which won two awards, for Congress of the Year and Innovation of the Year 2023. The event was a great success both in terms of the number of delegates (3,500 people - the most in the history of this congress held in Europe) and the scale of its exhibition with 35 national pavilions from around the world. I hope that this year's events will also impress the jury in the next edition. Such as the European Lung Cancer Congress, which you can read more about in this issue.

Apart from congresses and conferences, many other interesting events, especially cultural and social, are and will be held at the PCC. I am thrilled that we have been able to bring top international performances to the PCC, such as The Little Prince, which was played on Broadway.

Our building will also be associated with the biggest sporting event of the year, the Olympic Games in Paris. The Czech national team will be picking up their Olympic clothing collection at the PCC during June. I wish all the athletes the best of luck and success in their sporting events!

We have had an extraordinary year and I am optimistic about the future. I am confident that this year we will start the construction of the new exhibition hall, which will open the PCC to further opportunities and bring new great events to us. We spoke about this and much more with Petr Dukát, the Chairman of the Board of Directors. I believe you will find a lot of interesting information in this issue of our magazine.

I wish you a pleasant reading!

Lenka Žlebková  
CEO

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## Let's Meet!

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## PHOTOSHOOT OF ANETA LANGEROVÁ

**PHOTOGRAPHERS LOVE THE PRAGUE CONGRESS CENTRE** and recently used it for a photo shoot of Aneta Langerová for the magazine Ona Dnes, where the singer gave an interview on the 20th anniversary of her victory in the first Czech SuperStar competition. She used the congress foyer for the photo shoot.



## New AV Technology

**OUR BROAD PORTFOLIO OF AV TECHNOLOGY HAS EXPANDED.** The first novelty for use at congresses is a 19.5 x 8.1 metre frame projection screen. This screen is designed for the Congress Hall and is the largest projection screen in the Czech Republic. The screen covers the entire stage area and ensures legibility even for balconies. The projection is made with two 4K laser projectors with a total luminous intensity of 64,000 ANSI lumens.

We also now offer a 2.6 mm resolution LED wall suitable for smaller spaces such as South Halls. On this 16 x 2.5 meter wall, we can display a spectacular background behind speakers, project presentations or accompanying spots.



## We Won The Superbrands Award

**PRAGUE CONGRESS CENTRE HAS WON THE PRESTIGIOUS CZECH BUSINESS SUPERBRANDS AWARD** in the category Exhibition grounds & Congress venues. The Superbrands title is being awarded in the Czech Republic for 12 years already. It can only be awarded to brands that support their nomination with positive economic results. The PCC closed the year 2022 with revenues of almost CZK 600 million, which surpassed even the most successful year to date, the year before the award in 2019. The PCC has won this prestigious award of the independent global agency Superbrands for the fourth time already.

The highest professional body of the Superbrands programme is the Brand Council. An expert panel of business, communications, marketing, media and marketing research professionals evaluates brands according to pre-determined criteria such as recognition, brand building, innovation and prestige, and then determines the winners in each category based on these criteria.



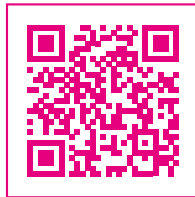
## Reconstruction of The Kitchenette

**THE PCC IS NOT ONLY A VENUE FOR CONGRESSES, CULTURAL AND OTHER EVENTS,** but the building also houses several companies. In order to improve services for long-term tenants, shared kitchens were built for tenants on the ground floor and on the 4th floor. The kitchens are equipped with a dishwasher, microwave and fridge. The equipment also includes a small seating area. At the same time the restrooms have been renovated. The PCC plans to build three more kitchens: on the 1st floor and on the 3rd and 4th floors. The design of the kitchens was designed by Capexus.



## New Website

One of the main goals of the development was to separate the area intended for business partners (B2B) from the part intended for the general public. This allows better orientation and focus on the needs of each type of users. And what new things can you expect at PRAGUECC.CZ? Newly available are extended 360° panoramic tours of the PCC premises and surroundings. Thanks to them, you can take a virtual tour of the PCC building and get an idea of how exceptional the PCC interiors are. Another interesting new feature is the ability to search for spaces with the option to filter by size and layout. You can easily find the right space that fits your needs and ideas. We are also newly launching a blog section where we will keep you informed about what is happening around us.



## ➤➤ Olympic PCC

**37 YEARS AGO THE CZECHOSLOVAK OLYMPIC ACADEMY WAS FOUNDED HERE.** In the past, Olympians received their badges and met here. This year they will visit the Prague Congress Centre again. It is here that they will receive the

ALPINE PRO Olympic collection and the clothing for the opening ceremony of the Olympic Games in Paris, designed by the young designer Jan Černý. The Paris 2024 Games will take place from 26 July to 11 August. "With the presentation of the collection, the Olympic Games are really close. That's why we try to tune the athletes into the friendly atmosphere in the team and want to provide them with maximum care and service," says Martin Doktor, two-time Olympic champion and head of the team.

## ➤➤ European Customer Appreciation Week



**DURING THE WEEK OF 18-24 MARCH 2024, HOLIDAY INN PRAGUE HOSTED THE TRADITIONAL EUROPEAN CUSTOMER APPRECIATION WEEK,** during which we expressed our gratitude and appreciation to our business partners and guests who have chosen our hotel for their stay and corporate events. Throughout the week, our sales team visited our business partners and brought them sweet treats from our pastry shop as a small gift - small chocolate cakes or the novelty of moss cakes. On Wednesday, we prepared a small snack made from local ingredients by Chef Jan Wiesner and his team and a welcome drink for our guests and business partners to celebrate the beginning of spring.







# ESMO Strives To Achieve The Best Oncology Care

The European Society for Medical Oncology (ESMO) organises several congresses throughout the year with different focus. One of them was the European Lung Cancer Congress (ELCC) which took place at the PCC in March.

Founded in 1975, the Society represents more than 35,000 oncology professionals in 172 countries. Its aim is to offer the best care to people with cancer. To improve the quality of prevention, diagnosis, treatment, supportive and palliative care as well as follow-up for patients with malignant diseases. To further educate and train people involved in clinical care and cancer research, as well as to ensure a high standard of qualification for medical oncologists within the multidisciplinary team. An integral part of the Society's work is to promote equitable access to optimal cancer care for all cancer patients worldwide.

ESMO organises an average of 14 congresses per year, four of which are organised in collaboration with other scientific societies. ELCC is one of them. However, ESMO also organises many courses and workshops throughout Europe and beyond. These events take place in different locations. "Some congresses are always held in the same country/city for certain reasons - for example, the size of the congress centre, the capacity of the accommodation, the ease of access to the venue, but also the presence of the scientific community or tradition. However, many are organised in different cities/countries on



a rotating basis or even on an 'opportunistic' basis: wherever there is a space that can welcome us," explains Vanessa Pavinato from ESMO.

Oncology is a rapidly evolving field in which professionals need to stay up-to-date to offer the best treatment options to their patients. That's why attending congresses is important for them. "Attending a congress such as ELCC, which combines state-of-the-art educational content with the latest research advances put into context by some of the best international experts, is an effective combination for professionals, also in terms of networking, as meeting and sharing with colleagues is an added bonus that only face-to-face congresses bring," adds Vanessa Pavinato.

Individual congresses are focused on a specific type of disease, in Prague it was lung cancer. This disease remains the most commonly diagnosed cancer and the leading cause of cancer deaths worldwide. It is also the most commonly diagnosed

form of cancer in most Eastern European countries. "While tobacco continues to be identified as a critical risk, other environmental factors such as air pollution are also being investigated in light of the discovery of a mechanism by which exposure to particulate matter of 2.5  $\mu\text{m}$  (PM2.5) increases the risk of lung cancer in non-smokers who exhibit specific genetic characteristics, as revealed at the ESMO Congress in 2022. This opens up various new avenues for research and policy action, which ESMO has indeed adopted," says Vanessa Pavinato.

Lung cancer is probably one of the most researched cancers, with many studies being carried out in different areas of treatment: from radiotherapy to immunotherapy to the most recent ones. Gradually increasing knowledge of the characteristics of individual tumours at the genetic level has allowed the development of more targeted approaches that deliver better outcomes for patients. "Nevertheless, prevention and early diagnosis remain essential to catch the disease early enough to treat and eventually cure it," adds Vanessa Pavinato.

# Prague Hosted The ELCC Congress With The Highest Attendance In History

For the first time ever, the European Lung Cancer Congress (ELCC) was held at the PCC. It brought together a record number of participants. "The organisation of the congress went very smoothly," says Alessia Mora, Head of Meetings Operations ESMO.

## **Why did you choose Prague for ELCC?**

As the name says, it is a tradition for the European Lung Cancer Congress to move across Europe. Prague offers the right combination between going to a beautiful destination while reaching out to a part of Europe with a lot of members that are interested in the valuable education that a professional society like ESMO can bring.

## **Have you had any previous experience with the PCC or is this your first time?**

It was indeed our first time at the PCC, even though ESMO had already organised a course at the University in Prague in 2022.

## **How satisfied are you with the congress - in terms of facilities, organisation?**

The organisation of the ELCC Congress in Prague ran very smoothly: the PCC staff is competent and friendly, and open to new ideas. Also the recommended local suppliers were very professional.

## **Was there anything specific about this congress in terms of technology? What kind of technology did you use?**

Since the days of the virtual meetings mandated by the pandemic, ESMO has implemented a Congress Virtual Platform that streams the congress live, making the participation in the event more accessible, at global level. While the functioning is totally transparent for the users, the platform indeed requires investment in on-site hardware as well as stable, proper Internet connections.

## **What was the most complicated organizationally?**

We can happily say that there wasn't anything particularly complicated. The one main challenge was to design the exhibition area

in the PCC foyers, and think of a meaningful flow of attendees during the breaks. In the end the choices we made proved to be the best solution, which translated in happy delegates and happy exhibitors, able to network in a beautiful, well-lit area.

## **What did you appreciate most about the PCC?**

The location of the PCC on top of one of the hills of Prague offers an amazing view on the city, which is probably unique for a congress centre. And once you are in the building, the two main auditoria facing the big foyers full of light are amazing.

## **How satisfied were the participants? Have you had any feedback yet?**

The overall feedback was very positive, from the participants, from the invited faculty as well as from the sponsors.

## **How many participants did you have?**

Prague can be proud as it is the city that hosted a record-breaking edition of ELCC, with more than 2,400 participants in town.

## **What were the main topics addressed at the congress?**

ELCC is about thoracic malignancies, a group of different diseases that are more commonly known as lung cancer. There are many different types of thoracic tumours and each of them requires tailored treatment approaches, from surgery through to the most modern immune therapy. The latest research advances in this field as well as the importance of implementing effective preventative measures against lung cancer were the main focus of the talks and the debates at ELCC.





## ELCC in numbers

➤ **2400**

participants

➤ **16**

halls and lounges

➤ **4** days

➤ **120**

speakers

➤ **+80**

nations

➤ **246**

papers presented



# Czech Republic Participates In Lung Cancer Screening

A preventive screening programme aimed at early detection of lung cancer started in the Czech Republic in 2022. Catching the disease at an early stage is crucial for successful treatment. Approximately 6,500 patients in the Czech Republic are diagnosed each year. However, only 10 to 15 per cent of cases are caught at an early stage of the disease.

In the Czech Republic, screening for lung cancer is still in its infancy. In 2011, a study was conducted in the USA, which focused on active and former smokers aged 55 to 74 years who underwent regular specialised examinations, mainly CT scans and chest X-rays, for two years. This study resulted in an 8 per cent reduction in overall mortality, and even a 20 per cent reduction in lung cancer deaths. Based on the results of this study, universal screening was introduced in the US in 2014. In 2018, a European study was published in Toronto, which not only confirmed the results of the original US study, but also applied it to the European setting. Since then, there have been growing calls for the introduction of screening in the Czech Republic as well.

The programme was launched at the beginning of 2022. Its expert guarantor is Prof. Martina Koziar Vašáková, M.D., Ph.D., President of the Czech Society of Pneumology and Phthisiology ČLS JEP. Many other professional societies and institutions are involved in the project. The programme is guaranteed by the relevant committee of the Ministry of Health. The National Screening Centre (NSC) of the Institute of Health Information and Statistics of the Czech Republic has been cooperating in the preparation of the programme since the beginning.

Current or former smokers aged 55 to 74 years who have smoked approximately one pack a day for 20 years are approached

consecutively. If the patient is willing to enter the programme, the patient is referred by the GP to a lung clinic.

The pilot programme is planned to run for five years. It aims to catch early-stage lung cancer in up to 70% of cases. The project will be evaluated after five years. It is estimated that there are about 500 000 suitable persons in the Czech Republic who meet the conditions for entry into the programme.

## AI involvement

Artificial intelligence, which is gaining ground in more and more fields, is making its way into medicine. And this is no different when it comes to lung tumour diagnosis. A foreign study published in the peer-reviewed journal *Radiology* shows that AI has increased the success rate of identifying lung cancer on chest X-rays to 94%.

The General University Hospital in Prague, for example, uses AI support. The new method is being tested by doctors at the First Clinic of Tuberculosis and Respiratory Diseases. Artificial intelligence can prepare a virtual surgery plan for the collection and examination of tissue from compromised lungs. It uses data from an X-ray provided directly by a mechanical arm in the operating room to find a path through the bronchial tubes to the pathological lesion. The success rate of the pathologist assessing the specimen more accurately is increased to 80% with the new device.



➤ **2022** launch of a screening programme for early detection of lung cancer

➤ **5** year pilot project

➤ **70%** of cases caught at an early stage is the project's target



## Congressional Ambassadors for 2023 Have Been Awarded

In mid-April, the best Congress Ambassadors were honoured at the 13th annual Ambassador Awards Evening in Prague. Representatives of the Prague Convention Bureau, the organization representing the Prague congress industry, the capital city of Prague and the Ministry of Regional Development once again presented awards to prominent Czech scientists, professors, doctors and other top professionals for their contribution to the congress industry in the Czech capital. Three of the four awarded congresses have a connection with the PCC.

The winners of the individual categories were traditionally decided by an independent 16-member committee consisting of representatives of the tourism industry, the congress industry, academics and other representatives of the private and public sphere. Of the four awarded events, three of them were held at the PCC,

the only exception being the Corporate Event of the Year 2023, which was the E.ON Energy Show and for which Martina Slavíková won the award. The rest of the awarded events have a connection with the PCC - they have either already been held there or will be held there.



### 27TH WORLD ROAD CONGRESS

**Ambassadors:** Ing. Petr Mondschein, Ph.D., and Ing. Václav Neuvirt, CSc.

**Category:** Congress of the Year 2023 & Inspiration of the Year 2023

The congress welcomed **more than 6,000 delegates from 121 countries** to Prague to discuss a full range of topics related to transport infrastructure and road management. The Czech Republic is only the fourth country to host the congress for the second time. At the same time, for the first time in history, it was possible to involve science, research and innovation in a congress whose partners included, for instance, the United Nations.

For the first time, the recycling of materials and the elimination of paper were consistently applied in the implementation of the event. Through the congress, a network of more than 1 200 secondary schools was created and 10 universities also took part in the event, thus reaching out to the young generation and investing in their future development. Participation was free of charge for the students, of whom more than 2 000 attended the congress.

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### SECOND PARLIAMENTARY SUMMIT OF THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMEAN PLATFORM

**Ambassador:** Ing. Markéta Pekarová Adamová

**Category:** Congress with up to 500 participants in 2023

The Summit was attended by **more than 40 national delegations** not only from the European Union countries, but also from Great Britain and Canada. The main topic was anti-Russian sanctions and de-occupation of Ukraine. Thanks to this event, the position of the Czech Republic as one of the main supporters of Ukraine in the fight for national freedom was confirmed.



Prague Convention Bureau / Tomáš Princ

## CANDIDACY FOR THE 52ND WORLD CHEMICAL CONGRESS OF THE INTERNATIONAL UNION OF PURE AND APPLIED CHEMISTRY

**Ambassador:** Prof. RNDr. Jiří Vohlídal, CSc.

**Category:** Candidacy of the year 2023

For the first time in the history of the event, two national chemical societies - Czech and Slovak - have submitted their candidacy for the world's most important congress in the field of chemical sciences. This is not only the reason why Prague won the competition against cities such as Chengdu, Taipei and Düsseldorf and will welcome over 4,000 chemical industry professionals in 2029. The congress should also include a special symposium on electrochemistry, which will symbolically celebrate the 70th anniversary of the Nobel Prize awarded to Prof. Jaroslav Heyrovský.



Autor: C-IN

## LONG-TERM CONTRIBUTION TO THE CONVENTION INDUSTRY

The sixth category to be announced at the Ambassador Awards Evening is Long-Term Contribution to the Convention Industry. This year this award was given to Prof. Petra Tesařová, M.D., CSc., Head of the Oncology Clinic at the 1st Faculty of Medicine Charles University and General University Hospital. Prof. Tesařová lectures at national and international congresses and advocates the organization of international conferences in Prague. Thanks to her, for example, the Gastric Cancer Congress (IGCC) was held here in 2019 at the PCC. "All my professional life I have been trying to push Czech oncology into the world and this includes the organisation of international conferences. Anyone who has organised a large professional congress knows how much work it is. The advantage is that not a small part of it is done in Prague itself, where European and overseas colleagues come willingly and gladly. The purpose of my efforts is to establish professional relationships, to raise the profile of Czech oncology and to show how we are fighting cancer bravely and successfully in our country. I never expected a thank you, but I was nevertheless very pleased to receive this award," says Professor Tesařová, adding that "receiving this award is not the end. I definitely have other congress plans for Prague."

# I Support Of The New Exhibition Hall, Says The Chairman Of The PCC Board Of Directors

Petr Dukát, chairman of the board of directors of the PCC talked not only about the importance of congress tourism for Prague, but also about construction of the new exhibition hall and further development of the Prague Congress Centre.

## **Do you remember the first time you saw or visited the PCC?**

I was born in Prague and have lived in Prague 4 since 1969. I remember that when the metro line C opened, my class went along the route and got off at every station. Even here in Vyšehrad. Back then it was just a field. That was probably my first contact with this place ever. I first visited the building as such during a school cultural event and then repeatedly as a pupil and student. Then, as an adult, my wife and I joined dance classes here, and we also attended balls here. So, I have been around the building all my life.

## **Do you have a favourite place in the PCC today?**

I have seen and walked through the building, although not all of it. There are a lot of interesting places, but maybe I'll answer a little surprisingly, I like the boardroom, which is where we are now, because it's where I meet great people. I also very much enjoy sitting in the summer garden of the Holiday Inn Prague Hotel. I highly recommend it.

## **How important do you think the PCC is for Prague?**

The PCC is the largest cultural and social congress building in Prague, it is Prague's leader in the field of congress tourism. Prague needs such a building because it would have no place to host not only important congresses, but also other events, including political meetings. In the last two years alone, the PCC has hosted, for example, events related to the Czech Republic's second EU Presidency or the 27th Road Congress with more than 4,000 delegates from 117 countries. Thanks to events of global

importance, many world leaders and experts in their fields visit Prague. Prague is gaining in fame, prestige and, of course raises money for public budgets and the city treasury. It also plays an important role in the city's crisis infrastructure. At the time of the pandemic, the Metropolitan Vaccination Centre was built here, serving 100,000 Prague residents.

At the beginning of the war conflict, we built the Regional Assistance Centre for Ukraine in our premises in less than a day, which became a shelter for 70,000 refugees. But I would not forget the societal benefits. The PCC hosts unique cultural events and performances that often cannot be seen even by the residents of other European capitals. A good example is the performance of The Little Prince, which, apart from Prague, has delighted audiences in sold-out halls solely in Dubai, Paris and Sydney. Thanks to the new exhibition hall we would like to build, the range of cultural and social events will be even greater. At present, there is simply not enough space for some of them.

## **Since you mentioned the new hall, what is the current situation?**

This project has been planned for several years, so I have not been there from the beginning. But I like the idea - to connect the congress part with the, let's say, commercial, exhibition part, as is common in the world. I support this idea. It is not easy, however, because it is an investment of more than a billion Czech crowns. The owners of the PCC are currently the City of Prague and the Ministry of Finance, which wants to exchange its share for other assets. This means that negotiations





are currently underway, at the end of which, if an agreement is reached, the City of Prague will be the sole owner of the PCC. The building permit is ready and valid, the funds are also allocated, which means that once this situation is resolved, construction can begin.

**Another project that has been in the planning for some time is the revitalization of the northern route.**

This project is also ready for implementation, but it too has some legislative steps to be resolved. Part of the project is the connection of the North Terrace to the metro station, and this is where several landowners are in conflict. Whether it is the PCC, the City of Prague, the Public Transit Company, or the work of the architect Hubička, who designed the Nuselský Bridge, and the staircase leading from the metro to the PCC is part of his project. At the moment there are concrete negotiations going on and I believe that in the autumn or early next year we could start the construction procedure and start building sometime in 2026.

**What is the importance of congress tourism for Prague?**

Tremendous. Congress tourism employs thousands of Prague residents who profit from the spending of congress delegates in hotels, restaurants and other industries. Congress tourism is very important for inbound tourism. In case the congress participants are satisfied, they like to return to the place as tourists. However, unlike ordinary travellers, they do not go to AirBnB accommodation for beer parties, but are interested in our sights, culture and are willing to invest in their holiday. They spend three times more here than the average backpacker, and the profits and a certain sophistication that our

public space filled with tourists needs are not inconsiderable benefits derived from convention tourism. And last but not least, there is the prestige - Prague is not only the fifth most desirable convention destination in the world, but also the eighth best urban tourist destination in the world according to Lonely Planet. I believe that the impact of congress tourism also plays a part in this.

### **What are PCC's main goals and visions for the coming years?**

Let me start chronologically, with this year. Last year, PCC achieved its best economic result ever. The goal for 2024 is to at least repeat this result. In the long term, we want to remain in the premium segment of high-end congress service providers. And long-term economic stability is also important so that the PCC is self-sustaining and the public does not have to pay extra for it. Which we have been able to do, and I believe we will continue to do so. We also want to generate funds that we can use elsewhere in various socially responsible issues.

### **Have you managed to cope with the impact of the covid pandemic?**

I am proud to say that the PCC has coped with the pandemic honourably. Already in 2022 we had achieved figures that announced record results in terms of revenue. Many partners were forced to close down their operations during the pandemic restrictions and limitations. Thanks to the excellent leadership of Lenka Žlebková, who jumped from the fresh role of CEO of the Prague Congress Centre to the position of crisis manager, we managed to keep not only the company stable but also retain every employee during the pandemic. We switched from F2F events to virtual ones, built a virtual studio, focused on digitalization, but also on helping the city. By building a vaccination centre on our premises, we proved our importance as a strategic partner of the capital in times of crisis. The pandemic has strengthened us, brought us together, and made our strengths, which include flexibility and humanity, clearer. On such strong pillars, we coped with the impact of the pandemic and the subsequent war in Ukraine without consequences. But a big thank you to our employees, because without them we could not have done it. When the covid measures receded, they did not expect clients to come back on their own, but picked up the phones and proactively contacted them. They have been a huge part of bringing the events back to us.

### **What investments in the PCC infrastructure and technology are you planning in the near future?**

Aside from the projects already mentioned, i.e., the new hall and the revitalization of the north terrace, we have more invest-



ments to come. It may not look like it from the outside, but the PCC is literally riddled with technology. There are kilometres of cables and pipes. The fact that the building was completed over 40 years ago means that they are, of course, already out of date. Renovation and refurbishment is practically constant, with renewal taking place gradually. For example, we recently replaced the sliding auditorium in the Forum Hall. Whereas it used to take several hours to slide out, it is now ready in 15 minutes. We are now due for a fairly major refurbishment of the escalators, which after so many years are now in a sub-standard condition and are often out of order. The electrical switchboards are also gradually being replaced, and the garages also need to be renovated.

### **How is the PCC trying to stay competitive in the global congress centre market?**

Top service, quality services and facilities, sufficient capacity, destination security, international and local accessibility, but

also sustainability - all of these are key factors in the decision of congress organisers when choosing a destination. We can improve our services ourselves, we can and will continue to push our eco-friendly approach, we will want to increase our capacity with a new exhibition hall, etc. However, these steps alone are not enough to maintain global competitiveness. It is essential to engage with the city, which sets a quality link between Prague and the world, guarantees visitors safety and a high standard of service. Prague's leadership directly influences Prague's attractiveness in international rankings. And this level of attractiveness is crucial for many industries, not only for competitiveness in the congress industry. In order to be strongly competitive internationally, we must be able to deliver quality service to visitors in a wide range of activities, from seamless air connections to safe walks through the romantic corners of the Old Town.

**The perception of Prague by congress tourists is also related to this question. In your opinion, how necessary is the collaboration between the PCC and Prague?**

As the answer above shows, the support of the city is absolutely essential in the field of congress tourism. If we stay only with congresses, then collaboration with the Prague Convention Bureau, which attracts international event organisers to Prague, is crucial. Our common goal is to create and present to the organisers an offer that will make them choose Prague as a destination for their congress. As I have already indicated, thanks to congresses we are able to bring the greatest capacities in science, medicine, business and culture to Prague. Prague benefits from the influx of world-class capacities, both in terms of growing its economic strength and in terms of prestige and boosting inbound tourism with creditworthy clients.

**What steps is the PCC taking in the area of sustainability and environmental protection?**

Sustainability is a natural part of everything we do. It is embedded in almost all of our activities and it may actually seem a bit of a paradox to say that it has become obsolete. In a positive sense. An ecological approach in everything we do is simply normal for us. We recycle, we avoid disposable materials and plastics when packaging is necessary, we choose recyclables, we eliminate prints, we drink water from soda machines, we heat with hot air from the kitchen, we get our energy from a photovoltaic system on the roof, we cook, with thanks to Zátíší Catering, using local ingredients and herbs grown on our terrace, we even flush our toilets in an eco-friendly way. I'm really proud of us and our efforts to reduce our carbon footprint and eliminate the environmental impact of our operations. I would so much like our next steps to be to standardize an eco-friendly

attitude among everyone who belongs to the PCC family - from employees to visitors to our contractors.

**The PCC did not have a very good public reputation in the past. Is this unflattering image of the PCC a thing of the past?**

I dare to say that the Palace of Culture (former name of the PCC) in its original form, though it served the previous regime for only 9 years, is now passé. For 35 years it has served the congress industry, culture and social events and, thankfully, new generations. The neo-functional building, full of unique Czech and appreciated interior design of the 1970s, is inspiring and inviting to visit. The wave of popularity of the architecture and art of the 2nd half of the 20th century often brings admirers of Brutalism to our spaces. We've been successful in engaging with influencers, opening our doors for them to photograph our unique interior design. We are part of festivals such as Open House Prague. We organize tours as part of the Experience Prague program. We've also become a popular location for fashion shoots, film shoots, commercials, even by international production teams. We welcome young artists, most recently from the College of Creative Communication, who develop visuals for us on social media. I would say that a lot has changed since the days of the Palace of Culture, and probably the most important role is played by our open doors through which the young generation can walk and interact with us.

**Do you have open doors and attractions for those who are not enchanted by brutalist and neofunctionalist art?**

Yes, for both indoor and outdoor fans. For those who like to be inside but are not exactly twice as excited about visiting spaces with artworks, we can offer a varied cultural programme. You will find concerts by well-known Czech celebrities, such as Leoš Mareš, as well as world icons such as the singer Sandra. Just make your choice on our website. But we also try to bring culture outdoors, which is why we join the Sculpture Line festival every year and we regularly turn our adjacent space into an open-air gallery.

**What do you enjoy most about working at the PCC?**

The people. When I came here last summer, I didn't know any of the employees. In less than a year, I've had the opportunity to get to know them and there are great people working here at an excellent professional level. And because of that I enjoy the work itself, it's rewarding to work with competent and smart people. I've been in the business environment since 1992 and have found that proven principles work everywhere, I jumped in pretty quickly.



# Bespoke Catering To Your Office

Many companies hold smaller events in their own premises. Whether it is various training sessions, meetings and other similar events. In such cases, bespoke catering is the solution – prepared refreshments will arrive at your company. Exactly these types of events, among others, are catered by the team of the Holiday Inn Prague hotel under the leadership of chef Jan Wiesner.

Catering directly to companies is a common part of the hotel kitchen operation. Most of the clients are companies in the nearby area. Many of them are catered for several times a week. The hotel can cater events for up to 200 people. These include events such as coffee breaks, business lunches, banquets, cocktail parties and similar events. Although hot food can also be prepared, cold food is the most popular. "Not every company has sufficient space to serve hot food," explains chef Jan Wiesner. "So the cold plate option is the ideal catering solution for many companies," he adds.

The advantage is also that cold dishes can be better tailored to the client's needs. For example, they can be prepared in company colours. "Cold cuisine is more variable in this respect. You can play around with it more and it is better tailored to the clients," confirms Jan Wiesner. For all these reasons cold catering clearly prevails.

Catering doesn't really follow trends. Therefore, it is impossible to say what would be the current trend. With one exception, and that is healthy food. A healthy option is always part of the catering, of course vegetarians or vegans are also considered. "Healthy lifestyle is very popular today and

companies are paying attention to this," says Jan Wiesner.

The open-faced sandwich (chlebiček) remains an ageless classic, in both classic and mini versions. The most popular is still the one with lettuce, ham and egg, but it is also ordered with various spreads, chickpeas, vegetables and beetroot. Sweets are also ordered a lot, such as pastries or mini cakes. These are also provided by the team from the Holiday Inn hotel, the local pastry shop is renowned.

Sustainability and the concept of zero waste food is also an important topic in catering. No disposable tableware is used. Waste from used raw materials is also minimised. Ways and means are being sought to make the most of individual raw materials.

Transport is an important part of catering. Kamil Zlomek, director of the Holiday Inn Prague Hotel, mentioned that he is considering the purchase of electric vans in connection with catering. "We provide catering to companies mainly in Prague, we wouldn't drive 200 kilometres one way with it. That's why I think it would make sense to get electric vehicles," he says, looking into the future.







# Conference On Technology For People With Special Needs Returns To The PCC Regularly

In 2001, the PCC hosted the first annual INSPO - Internet for Information Systems for People with Special Needs conference. Since then, the organiser and the name have changed, but the venue choice has remained the same.

The INSPO conference was originally organised by the BMI Association. Since 2021, the Teiresias Centre of Masaryk University has taken over its organisation. As the original focus of the conference is now broader, the subtitle has changed to its current form - Conference on Technology for People with Special Needs. Since the first year, the event has been held at the PCC. "We chose the venue because of its good accessibility and barrier-free access. And because the PCC staff proved to be extremely accommodating and willing to accommodate our non-traditional requests with regard to the specific audience, we never thought of moving the conference elsewhere. This is especially true of the producer Irena Votrubová, but also of the technicians," explains Jaroslav Winter, chairman of the BMI association, who also appreciates how the PCC is well prepared for visitors with specific needs. In order for the conference to run smoothly, technical requirements such as interpreting equipment and headphones or the installation of more screens for transcription and interpretation have to be provided. "Indeed, the best proof of our satisfaction is the fact that the conference is repeatedly held at the PCC and is attended by hundreds of participants, the vast majority of whom are people with various disabilities for whom accessibility of the physical and digital environment is a priority. We should also mention the excellent cooperation with Zátiší Group, which provides catering and is able to meet the specific requirements of INSPO conference participants' diets."

The first year of the conference was attended by 140 people, and each year the number of participants increased until the record year of 2019, when 521 conference attendees gathered at the PCC. The next year the number of registrants exceeded 700, but by then covid had hit. Thus, the conference was organized in an abbreviated online-only format. "The benefits of the conference for the participants are severalfold. The presentations give them

an overview of the current state of technological developments in their areas of interest as well as new trends and visions. In the exhibition area, they have the opportunity to learn about a wide range of compensation aids and services, to consult with experts on what solutions are available for their specific need, or to try them out directly on site. The social aspect of the event is also of considerable importance to them. For many, the conference is a traditional place where they repeatedly meet and exchange experiences with people with similar problems. But it is also useful for them to find out what problems and needs people with other disabilities have. The feedback that exhibitors and speakers get from participants is also important. The suggestions from the conference have resulted in many new projects or improvements to aids in the past," explains Radek Pavlíček from Masaryk University.

## WHAT THE CONFERENCE IS TRYING TO IMPROVE:

- »»» The lack of awareness among end-users of the possibilities that ICTs offer to users with disabilities today,
- »»» the resulting lack of digital literacy,
- »»» and a lack of knowledge of how to create accessible digital environments.

## WHAT ARE THE SPECIFIC NEEDS:

- »»» People with hearing impairment: inaccessible information in audio form. They need to have it transcribed into text or subtitled if they are proficient in Czech, while deaf people whose mother tongue is Czech sign language need sign language interpretation.
- »»» Blind users: inaccessible information presented only graphically. Therefore, such information must have a textual alternative,





which they can then interact with using voice or tactile output. As they do not use a mouse to work with the web, it is necessary to ensure that the interface is fully accessible and controllable from the keyboard.

➤➤➤ Low-vision users: appreciate sufficiently contrasting colours, legible fonts or a consistent layout of the web interface or application.

➤➤➤ People with mobility limitations who cannot control computers using a conventional keyboard or mouse: they need some alternative means of control (e.g. by voice, adapted mice, keyboards or joysticks).

➤➤➤ People with cognitive disabilities: it is advisable to present information in a logical and predictable order and in Czech.

**PCC EQUIPMENT FOR PEOPLE WITH SPECIFIC NEEDS:**

- Low ATM for wheelchair users
- Parking space for the handicapped
- Elevators
- Restrooms



# Tennis Paintings by Martina Navrátilová

The Prague Congress Centre contains not only works of art created during the construction of the building, but also more recent works. These include paintings created by former tennis player Martina Navrátilová in collaboration with Slovak artist Juraj Králik.



The whole project was conceived at the beginning of the millennium and lasted six years. It is called the Art Grand Slam and it was created on the Grand Slam courts in New York, Melbourne, Paris and London. Other works were created in Řevnice near Prague, where Martina Navrátilová grew up. Together they created approximately one hundred different formats in various materials. In addition to the classic canvas or paper, these include clay or artificial turf. Each painting was created by the famous sportswoman hitting tennis balls against these "canvases", sometimes even dipped in paint. In this way, she created unique colour patterns.

An exhibition of these paintings was held in 2006 at the Prague Congress Centre. The works then went all over the world. Two of the paintings are still in the PCC. The orange (clay) painting can be seen in the Holiday Inn Prague hotel, while the green painting imitating Wimbledon grass is in the office of Lenka Žlebková, PCC's CEO.

The project was conceived by Slovak artist Juraj Králik, a graduate of the Academy of Fine Arts in Prague. The idea to create "tennis" paintings came to him by a coincidence, but he knew from the beginning that he wanted to realize the project with Martina Navrátilová because of the international impact that her name still has.

At first, only clay paintings were created. Juraj Králik invented a way to fix clay on canvas, which was not connected on the surface with any binder. This modified canvas was then walked and played on, and also used to line the out lines. The marks in the clay were then fixed with glue. Later, they began to create images together using the technique of playing the ball against the canvas. The traces of the tennis ball can be seen in both the orange and green paintings. The series also included paintings created by playing a stained tennis ball against a white canvas.





# The Little Prince Went From Broadway To Prague

The award-winning performance *The Little Prince* has thrilled audiences in Dubai, Paris, Sydney and on Broadway. At the end of March, audiences in Prague also had the opportunity to see this show on the stage of the Prague Congress Centre.

The *Little Prince* is produced by Broadway Entertainment Group. It is a truly world-class show, as evidenced by the fact that it ran for one entire season on Broadway. As part of the European tour, this year the show will be performed in only four cities, in addition to Prague also in Budapest, Berlin and Tallinn. In Prague, there was a unique show full of dance, acrobatics and pioneering technology such as video mapping. It was the technical arrangements that were the most complicated part of the event. "The *Little Prince* uses video mapping and a lot of projectors, which cannot be placed everywhere, and in some theatres this production is unfortunately impossible. In the end, we found a technical solution for the PCC and we were able to bring the show," explains Pavel Pešek from the Vanity Club promotion company, adding, "the PCC was the obvious choice. Because of its ideal location, accessibility, capacity, and above all its spacious stage, which, although not equipped like a typical theatre, allows for various technical solutions."

*The Little Prince*, written by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, has been translated into 250 languages and sold 200 million copies, making it the second best-selling book in modern history. This year marks 80 years since the book was first published.





# Sustainable And Local Hotel

Sustainability is a growing topic. Holiday Inn Prague has also committed itself to environmental care. Hand in hand with this trend is the new concept of the hotel restaurant, which has been operating successfully for almost a year now. What measures have been prepared in the hotel? And how can the hotel kitchen be run sustainably? We talked about this with the hotel's director Kamil Zlomek and chef Jan Wiesner.



## Is sustainability a big topic in relation to running a hotel?

**Kamil Zlomek:** Definitely yes, and not only for us, but for all hotels in general. I recently came back from a conference where we had a separate lecture block on this topic. The big hotel chains, of which IHG is one, have started by removing small cosmetic packs from their rooms and putting in large dispensers that are regularly refilled from containers that are themselves made from recycled plastic. This has reduced plastic consumption by about 30 percent. It's really not just about not using straws or disposable utensils, but it's a combination of many measures to help reducing the carbon footprint.

## What other measures have you introduced in the hotel?

**Kamil Zlomek:** It is also important not to waste water. We have installed water-saving shower heads in the bathrooms and faucet aerators in the sinks. Water saving is also linked to room cleaning. IHG has introduced a programme for our clients that if guests stay with us for a minimum of two nights, during which they hang a sign on the door saying they are not interested in having their room cleaned, it saves a huge amount of cleaning costs, towel washing and so on. Because when you're at a conference and you spend a minimum amount of time in the hotel, there's no need to clean the room every day. As a reward, customers who participate in this will receive points for the customer program that they can use on their next visit. It is important to us that our guests keep coming back.

## The hotel also offers water in glass bottles...

**Kamil Zlomek:** That's another part of our sustainability efforts. We offer water that we turn into high-quality mineral water thanks to filtration equipment from our supplier. And it's just regular drinking tap water piped to the hotel. With this equipment, we don't have to deal with bottles or barrels and we also save emissions by not transporting the water. Guests can also refill their glass containers with our water by themselves.

## The kitchen is a separate chapter. How do you manage to implement changes there?

**Kamil Zlomek:** We bought induction systems, replaced the convection ovens with more economical versions. It takes less time to prepare food and thanks to that we save electricity. And then, of course, there are the ingredients themselves and their use.

**Jan Wiesner:** When we decided to change the concept of the restaurant, we focused on not shipping ingredients halfway across Europe. When we make Czech cuisine, we want it to be made from Czech ingredients.

**Kamil Zlomek:** Of course there are raw materials that are not available in the Czech Republic, for example coffee. But we use at least the one that is roasted here. We also import seafood or international cheese, but these staples are only a minority.

## So most of your suppliers are Czech?

**Jan Wiesner:** As has already been said, except for a few specific ingredient materials, we use only items produced in the Czech Republic, when we can. For example, we work with the University of Agriculture in Prague, which has its own pavilion for the production of various staples. We get milk and dairy products from them, but they also have a bakery, they can produce meat and also excellent marmalade. And everything is of absolutely top quality.

## When we talk about raw materials in the context of sustainability, it's not just about their origin, but also about their processing. The trend is towards zero waste food...

**Jan Wiesner:** We try to process everything we can. And so we minimize waste. To give you a concrete example: in the past, carrots were peeled and the peels were thrown away. Today, the carrots are washed, then peeled and not only the carrots are processed, but also the peelings. And we try to do the same with most raw ingredients. There are, of course,



some that cannot be processed further, but we still manage to generate almost no waste. Today, we fill about a third of the bio-waste container. If I were to take the waste generated years ago as a unit of one hundred per cent, we are now at about 20 per cent.

**You said you don't want to import raw ingredients, does that mean you stick to seasonality?**

**Jan Wiesner:** Exactly. We have a permanent menu of ingredients that are readily available throughout the year. And we have a flexible menu, monthly and weekly, which we rotate according to seasonality. And this is also linked to our popular brunches, which we repeat regularly and where we also use seasonal ingredients.

**Do you have any other plans? What else can be changed?**

**Kamil Zlomek:** In the near future, we want to put bins for sorted waste in the rooms. We have 90,000 guests a year, and if only half of them sort, that's still a lot of waste that can be further processed. It is then more financially demanding to invest in different technologies. For example, on the first to third floor we have already completely replaced the air conditioning with more efficient ones, and the entire hotel has had its lights replaced. There is also technology that allows the air conditioning to be controlled from the reception, and the room will start cooling or heating up to two hours before the arrival of a particular guest. There are many more possibilities, but they are more financially and technologically demanding, and they will not happen right away, but we see them and we are preparing for them.

**As part of the PCC, we share technology and through innovation we have been able to achieve these results together:**

**Water savings:** volume in m<sup>3</sup>  
 >>> almost 3 Olympic swimming pools

**Energy savings:** 15,049,000 kWh  
 >>> annual consumption for a households e.g. in the english town Wells

**Cleaner air:** 10,325 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>  
 >>> 1,740 hot air balloons full of CO<sub>2</sub>

# Calendar of Selected Events At The Prague Congress Centre

➤ 30. 5. – 2. 6.

## Grand finale of CZECH DANCE MASTERS

**Number of visitors: 2000**

The biggest dance tour in the Czech Republic will culminate in a grand finale in several categories at the turn of May and June.

➤ 10. 6. – 6. 7.

## Dance World Cup

**Number of visitors: 25000**

The Dance World Cup is a unique global dance competition that attracts over 12,000 children from all over the world every year. It is for dancers aged 4 to 25 years old who compete in a variety of dance genres. The winners of national qualifiers from 55 countries compete in the finals.

## Congresses and other conferences

➤ 28. – 31. 5.

### 46th EHS Annual Conference

**Number of visitors: 1000**

The European Hernia Society will hold its 46th Annual Conference in Prague. The event is not only about discovering the latest technologies and medical advances, but also an opportunity to network with a global community of surgeons, patients and industry partners.

➤ 5. – 7. 6.

### 21st EIHA Annual Conference

**Number of visitors: 500**

It's not just the future of industrial hemp that will be discussed at the 21st Annual Conference of the European Industrial Hemp Association, held in partnership with WAFBA (We Are For Better Alternatives) and Experience Hemp International.

➤ 17. – 18. 6.

### Events Club Forum 2024

**Number of visitors: 500**

Specialized MICE workshop offering a unique combination of B2B meetings, networking opportunities and a professional program.

➤ 8. – 12. 7.

### Europython 2024

**Number of visitors: 900**

The largest Python programming language conference in Europe regularly attracts attendees from all over the world. The 23rd edition will take place in Prague.

➤ 17. – 24. 7.

### ICHEP 2024

**Number of visitors: 1500**

Prague will become the centre of particle physics thanks to the biennial international conference ICHEP. The event will be attended by leading experts in the field of particle physics.

➤ 2. – 8. 9.

### ESRA 2024

**Number of visitors: 1800**

The 41st Annual Congress of the European Society for Regional Anaesthesia and Pain Therapy will bring together international experts such as healthcare professionals or scientists and other researchers.

➤ 8. – 12. 9.

### EUROMEMBRANE 2024

**Number of visitors: 1000**

The aim of this academic conference is to bring together researchers and experts from different disciplines and industries interested in membrane processes.

➤ 22. – 26. 9.

### 11th International Conference on Multilevel Modelling of Materials

**Number of visitors: 800**

Multi-scale materials modelling is an important branch of computational mechanics, computational biomechanics and computational materials science. The conference will focus on classical and new breakthroughs in the field.

➤ 6. – 12. 10.

### 29th Annual Congress of the World Muscle Society (WMS 2024)

**Number of visitors: 1500**

This meeting of experts in neuromuscular physiology and disease will focus on the topic of myopathies, which are neuromuscular diseases primarily affecting skeletal muscle.

➤ 21. – 27. 10.

### 64th Annual Meeting of the Society for Psychophysiological Research

**Number of visitors: 800**

Scientists, researchers and industry professionals from around the world attend the annual meeting. The meeting includes presentations of new theory, methods and research.

➤ 31. 10 – 2. 11.

### World Congress of Internal Medicine

**Number of visitors: 1500**

The prestigious meeting of leading experts from all branches of internal medicine will take place for the 37th time. In addition to various lectures and meetings, there will also be thematic workshops for young doctors.

**Current list of events can be found here**





# DB Schenker as **preferred logistic partner** of Prague Congress Centre offers:

- Complete transportation of goods to fairs, exhibitions and conferences
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Our contacts:

## Prague

Martin Uličný  
tel. +420 739 343 560  
martin.ulicny@dbschenker.com

Robin Veselý  
tel. +420 733 144 905  
robin.vesely@dbschenker.com

Andrea Földes  
tel. +36 30 6310013  
andrea.foldes@dbschenker.com

cz.dl.prg.fairs.prg@dbschenker.com

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