

## Simex – MICE Exchange

The Slovenian Convention Bureau is organizing the 1st Simex Business Tourism exchange market, which will be held in conjunction with the annual Tourism and Leisure Time Fair. The organisers hope the 2-day 'supply and demand' event, which will run from 29th to 30th March 2007 in Gospodarsko razstavišče in Ljubljana, will become an important and permanent, high-quality fixture in the MICE segment and Slovenian tourism market as a whole. They also expect that Simex will go beyond Slovenia's borders and fill a gap in the SE European tourism market. Further details can be found at: [www.simex.si](http://www.simex.si).

## Kranjska Gora Season Expected to Peak in Early March

Even though it is the middle of February, winter has yet to truly arrive in Kranjska Gora. Nonetheless, the tempo of the town is remarkably lively. Two new facilities opened this year as though tailor-made for the relatively snowless winter: Hit Alpina's renovated Legende Pub, which can host more than one hundred guests, and its renovated and expanded VITA Centre in the Aqua Larix Water Park. These, in combination with the numerous events that have been running since the beginning of the Christmas holidays and will continue until 24th March, have kept guests busy and thoroughly entertained while waiting for the main attraction – snow.

## Budget Flights

Wizzair has announced that it will stop flying the Ljubljana-London route as of 1st March 2007, although it will still fly the Ljubljana-Brussels route.

Its main competitor on the former route, easyJet, now enjoys 50% of the market and is expecting to fly more than 100,000 passengers between London and Ljubljana in 2007; 12% of them corporate customers.

Cheap flights between Ljubljana Airport and Berlin will recommence within a few months following Air Berlin's announcement that it intends to schedule one flight a day between the two cities.

## Bled Golf Course Gets Facelift

The EUR 160,000 upgrade of the Bled Golf Course, designed by Great Britain prominent golf course architect Howard Swan, is expected to be completed by the start of next season. According to course manager, Gerry Jekl, the upgrades will ensure that the Bled Golf Academy remains the premier training centre in the region and continues to attract golfers – individuals, groups and teams – from both Slovenia and abroad.

## Calendar of Events

- 23. 2. – 25. 2., Rogaška Slatina  
2<sup>nd</sup> Salsa Congress, Plesna šola Rolly
- 4. 3. – 6. 3., Ljubljana,  
Conference GastroBizz, Grand Hotel Union
- 16. 3. – 17. 3., Ljubljana  
10<sup>th</sup> Meeting of Slovenian Family Medicine Society, Cankarjev Dom
- 18. 3. – 23. 3. in 25. 3. – 30. 3., Ljubljana  
Conference Forum Train Europe, Grand hotel Union
- 28. 3. – 1. 4., Bled  
International Meeting of Writers PEN 2007, Albatros Bled
- 29. 3. – 30. 3., Ljubljana  
Simex-MICE Exchange, Gospodarsko razstavišče
- 29. 3. – 1. 4., Ljubljana  
Fair Tourism and Leisure, Gospodarsko razstavišče
- 16. 4. – 19. 4., Ljubljana  
Conference SID - Berne Union Committee Meetings, Grand hotel Union
- 18. 4. – 20. 4., Ljubljana  
Conference Hagleitner Hygiene, Grand hotel Union
- 25. 4. – 26. 4., Ljubljana  
Conference L'Oreal, Grand hotel Union



The Slovenia Times MICE partner

## Slovenian Convention Bureau

# Good Value for the Money

*The Albatros Bled convention and tourist agency and Cankarjev dom are two of the Slovenian Convention Bureau's members.*

By IGOR DRAKULIČ

Albatros Bled is a professional congress/convention/promotion/event organizer (P.C.O.) with 20 years of experience in International Congress organization, creating and carrying out special tourist programmes.

"In general, we are not so satisfied with the 2006 Season. We had approximately the same number of events as in 2005 and as we will have in this year but income was lower. One of the reasons was that we had election the previous year. Since most of the international events are planned at least one or two years in advance, many events were postponed or cancelled. In 2007 we will continue with our standard approach and our goal will be to offer customized solutions to our clients. Due to its diversity, accessibility and the preservation of its traditions, we also have excellent hotel infrastructure and, most importantly, professionals who are working in that field. We are sure that our rates are also competitive and the participants are getting good value for their money," stated Boris Ljubič from Albatros Bled.

## Renovation of Cankarjev dom in progress

The completely renovated Second Foyer (1,200 sq. m) with

updated technical equipment and space solutions will ensure convenience and comfort, facilitating all kinds of events: from exhibitions, business and expert meetings, to social events. Based on the number of participants and specifics of an individual event, partitions can divide the hall into two or four smaller halls (140 and 70 seats each, respectively). Modern accompanying facilities, such as storage, catering service, and rest rooms are also provided. The new stairs

and elevator makes the Second Foyer easily accessible to all visitors, including the disabled. Connected to the Linhart and Kosovel Halls, the Second Foyer can also become an independent in-house convention centre for congress, educational, business, social, cultural, exhibition and artistic events for up to 700 participants. The renovation of Cankarjev dom will continue in the autumn

of 2007, when the CD Club will be perfected into one of the most compelling halls in Slovenia, offering a wonderful view of the old city centre. The terrace on the sixth floor will be renovated and transformed into three new comfortable conference halls with natural sunlight and conditions for focused work in complete tranquillity. ■

**A decision to have an international event in Slovenia is, without doubt, a wise one.**



## Slovenian Tourism Board

# Tourism Board Pleased with Its Activities in 2006

*Slovenia attracted 2.5 million tourists last year, a 4% increase year-on-year, which means that the Tourism Board (STO) can be pleased with its activities, according to STO chairman Dimitrij Piciga.*

STO will get just under EUR 8.3m from the budget in 2007 and add some EUR 900,000 of its own money to the pot. The organisation plans to spend nearly EUR 6.5m for the central tourist information website and for research and development. Marjan Hribar, the head of the Tourism Directorate at the Economy Ministry, meanwhile said that the country would get very close to the planned foreign currency influx of EUR 1.6bn in 2006. All was not rosy, however, as the planned increase in accommodation in major tourist centres was not achieved, while the number of overnight stays remained "far below the

plan" – it increased by 2% in 2006, compared to 2005. The number of overnights stood at 7.5m in 2005, while the projection was 9 million.

Tourism companies were successful in drawing European funds, as they managed to get 99.5% of all available money for investment, Hribar said. This also gave the companies EUR 160m in grants in the 2007-2013 EU budgets. This, Hribar believes, will result in investments totalling EUR 500m. The industry is expected to employ 20% more people and record 2 million overnight stays more by the end of the EU financial period, Hribar said. (STA)



STO chairman Dimitrij Piciga

## Meeting Professionals International

# FutureWatch 2007

*For the fifth consecutive year, the annual FutureWatch survey conducted by Meeting Professionals International (MPI), in partnership with American Express, takes the pulse of the meetings industry and reports on industry trends expected for the coming year.*

Based on survey responses from 1,443 meeting professionals, FutureWatch 2007 provides a portrait of an industry that is strong, thriving and moving quickly to meet a variety of internal and external challenges. In 2006, planners and suppliers identified the economy as the external factor expected to have the greatest potential impact on meetings and events, followed by travel costs and the cost of oil and gas. For 2007, the impact of terrorism and war on business travel has surged ahead of all other concerns, receiving a first-, second- or third-place ranking from 38% of respondents. Behind terrorism and war (the top concern), increasing costs are expected to have the greatest impact on the industry. The cost of oil and gas is expected to have the second-greatest impact, followed by general inflation. The fourth- and fifth-ranked trends were both related to the economic outlook, with some predicting that an economic downturn would impact them in 2007 and another group expecting economic improvement.

Increasing globalization and increased access to information are expected to impact the meetings industry as well. European respondents expect terrorism and war, increasing globalization and a positive economic environment to have the greatest impact on the industry in 2007. Pharmaceutical planners expect government regulation to have the greatest impact during the coming year. (MPI)

## Top External or Global Trends Expected to Impact the Industry in 2007

1. Impact of terrorism and war on business and travel
2. Cost of oil and gas, including the impact on travel costs
3. General inflation of costs
4. Current or impending economic downturn or recession
5. Current or impending economic upturn or improvement
6. Changes or advances in technology
7. Increasing globalization (more vendors and customers across the globe)