

## **Collaboration Before Competition – Meet the EU CVB Network**

*The EU CVB Network introduces itself to the top players of the international meetings industry with a series of virtual events. An opportunity to present the benefits of the collaborative convention bureau network to associations and PCOs.*

On 4<sup>th</sup> February 2021, the EU CVB Network hosted a Virtual Happy Hour for a group of Professional Congress Organisers. It was one in a series of virtual networking sessions that the Network has hosted in the last couple of months. It was attended by some of the most influential people in the industry from AIM Group International, Kenes Group, K.I.T. Group and MCI Group.

*“I could feel the strong combination of collaboration and knowledge sharing of this new dynamic network. A group of valuable CVBs committed to exploring and enhancing innovation facing the new challenges of PCOs and associations,”* says Patrizia Semprebene Buongiorno, Vice President AIM Group International.

The EU CVB Network consists of seven convention bureaux representing the cities of Florence, Gothenburg, Ljubljana, Lyon, Rotterdam, Salzburg and València.

Discussions about forming a collaborative convention bureau network started a couple of years ago, between a group of destinations sharing common characteristics. While the destinations sometimes compete for the same meetings, they recognised the benefits of working in collaboration with each other. It was with a community spirit they got together last year, and with a strong belief that by working together and generously sharing knowledge, experiences and best practice, they would all benefit, and so would their clients.

*“The EU CVB Network is a great new initiative. Destinations are cooperating rather than competing which can create new opportunities for event planners. The small group allows for personalised interaction and can only add value when looking for future destinations. It already triggered a couple of opportunities,”* says Valerie Thiollet, Team Manager, Specialty Congresses Department, at the European Society of Cardiology.

The Network offers organisers of international meetings the opportunity to get in touch with seven cities at once. The destinations share many common characteristics, not only when it comes to compact city centres and centrally located meeting facilities. They all have a strong collaboration with the local community, a focus on sustainability and innovation and they offer a personal approach and a commitment to engage with associations and PCOs in the process of redesigning meeting solutions in a post-Covid era. Their geographical spread means they can suit a European association’s rotation pattern and be suitable for multi-hub events, as all destinations have invested in the technological infrastructure required to meet the needs of tomorrow.

*“I was very excited to hear about the new EU CVB Network. It is really fantastic to have such a collaboration between great meetings destinations that can support PCOs in the new norm of our meeting industry,”* says Ori Lahav, Vice President Client & Operations Kenes Group and President IAPCO - International Association of Professional Congress Organisers.

The Network's first joint event took place in Brussels in March 2020. It attracted great interest amongst Brussels-based association representatives. With the corona crisis, the collaboration moved online. The destinations share experiences on a regular basis and the Network has been an important support system in a difficult time. Apart from hosting virtual networking events,

the Network has held several virtual business leads exchange sessions, with successful outcomes.

*“The EU CVB Network has provided great opportunities for me to exchange ideas and share experiences with other associations. The Network also opens new ways for me to get to know other locations better, to have a direct contact and built-in trust. It saves me a lot of time and communication in the research to find a suitable destination and venue for our events. The Network builds on experience and the destinations support each other without competing. The CVBs and convention centres are already informed about our association from past events in an EU CVB Network destination and can build their offer on it and, at the same time know what our focus is. For me as an event organiser, that is a big plus,”* says Melanie Decker, Director Events & Exhibitions at Parenteral Drug Association Europe.

Like many others, the EU CVB Network has had to postpone some of its face-to-face activities in 2021, but it is planning to host another joint physical event for associations and join the main MICE events throughout the year. In the meantime, the Network is actively working on future association meetings and to create new business opportunities for international congresses.

To get in touch with the EU CVB Network, please contact one of the convention bureau representatives:

- **Firenze Convention Bureau** Ilenia Pasi: [i.pasi@conventionbureau.it](mailto:i.pasi@conventionbureau.it)
- **Göteborg Convention Bureau**, Ulrika Scoliege: [ulrika.scoliege@goteborg.com](mailto:ulrika.scoliege@goteborg.com)
- **Ljubljana Convention Bureau**, Tatjana Radovic: [tatjana.radovic@visitljubljana.com](mailto:tatjana.radovic@visitljubljana.com)
- **Lyon Convention & Exhibition Bureau**, Faustine Maugat: [fmaugat@lyon-france.com](mailto:fmaugat@lyon-france.com)
- **Rotterdam Partners Convention Bureau**, Maaïke Hamann: [M.Hamann@rotterdampartners.nl](mailto:M.Hamann@rotterdampartners.nl)
- **Salzburg Convention Bureau**, Elisabeth Kassanits-Pfoess: [e.pfoess@salzburgcb.com](mailto:e.pfoess@salzburgcb.com)
- **Valencia Convention Bureau**, Manuel Ferris: [manuel.ferris@visitvalencia.com](mailto:manuel.ferris@visitvalencia.com)

LinkedIn: EU CVB Network

Date: 10.02.2021