# M/CE Day Košice 2026

## Driving the Future of Business Events Sector in Košice

**May 28, 2026**
Boutique Hotel Slávia, Košice

VISIT KOŠICE MEET/NGS
MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND SPORTS OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC
TRAVEL TO SLOVAKIA GOOD IDEA www.slovakia.travel

Implemented with the financial support of the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of the Slovak Republic.

The professional conference MICE Day Košice will present a Business Events development strategy and open a discussion on the future of a segment that ranks among the most significant and dynamic areas of tourism. The event provides a space for meetings between professionals, partners, and stakeholders involved in the development of business events in Košice and the region.

MICE Day Košice will offer expert discussions, presentations, examples of good practice from abroad, and interactive formats focused on destination development and strengthening Košice's position in the Business Events market.

The event connects the public and private sectors, academic communities, cultural and creative institutions, the hotel sector, event agencies, and other partners who contribute to building an attractive and competitive destination.

The program will also include networking and space for the creation of new partnerships, collaborations, and projects.

## What is Business Events?

The Business Events industry is a specialised segment of tourism that encompasses the organisation of and participation in various corporate and professional events, commonly referred to by the collective acronym MICE.

**MICE stands for:**
**Meetings** – Working meetings, business negotiations, and corporate meetups.
**Incentives** – Motivational and reward stays or experiential programs for employees and business partners.
**Conferences** – Conferences, congresses, professional seminars, and educational events.
**Exhibitions / Events** – Exhibitions, trade fairs, networking, and social events.

## What to expect from the conference?

- Expert discussions and panel debates
- Presentations of good practice examples
- Networking with professionals from the MICE sector
- Interactive round table discussions
- Connecting the public and private sectors
- New partnerships and opportunities for collaboration

## PROGRAM

**08:30 – 09:00** REGISTRATION

**09:00 – 09:15** **OPENING REMARKS AND OFFICIAL WELCOME**
Michaela Spišáková Podoláková (Visit Košice)

**09:15 – 09:30** **FOSTERING THE BUSINESS EVENTS (MICE) INDUSTRY: GOVERNMENT, MUNICIPALITY AND ACADEMIA**

**09:30 – 10:30** **WHY: SHOWCASES**
Proven strategies and expert insights as a foundation of successful destination development
Ivo J. Franschitz (ENITED Business Events)
Dieter Hardt-Stremayr (Graz Tourist Office)
Gorazd Čad (CONVENTA Ljubljana)

**10:30 – 10:50** COFFEE BREAK

**10:50 – 11:15** **HOW: FOCUS ON DESTINATION DEVELOPMENT**
Key market research findings and data-driven growth strategies
Stanislava Pučková (2muse)
Branislav Kršák (TUKE BERG)
Peter Džupka (TUKE EKF)

**11:15 – 11:30** **HOW: FOCUS ON DESTINATION MARKETING AND COMMUNICATION**
Brand positioning and communication framework in practice
Martin Jenča (Büro Milk)

**11:30 – 11:55** **Q&A: TALKING ABOUT WHY AND HOW**
**Discussion panel I.**
Nina Erneker (Bratislava Tourist Board)
Ivo J. Franschitz (ENITED Business Events)
Dieter Hardt-Stremayr (Graz Tourist Office)
Gorazd Čad (CONVENTA Ljubljana)

**11:55 – 12:30** **HOW: THINK BEYOND TOURISM**
**Discussion panel II.**
Industry leaders on the cross-sectoral impact of the Business Events industry

**12:30 – 12:45** **Q&A: THINK BEYOND TOURISM**

**12:45 – 13:45** LUNCH BREAK & NETWORKING

**13:45 – 14:00** **SUCCESSFUL STORIES ARE ALWAYS WRITTEN BY COLLABORATION**
Showcasing successful local and regional partnerships within the Business Events sector
Michaela Spišáková Podoláková (Visit Košice)

**14:00 – 14:30** **COOPERATION WITHIN & BEYOND KOŠICE: DRIVING BUSINESS EVENTS GROWTH AT VISIT KOŠICE**
Collaborative destination development from local incentives to national impact
Ivana Kavulič (Visit Košice)

**Discussion panel III.: Stakeholders**

**14:30 – 15:30** **BE PART OF SHAPING THE BUSINESS EVENT EXPERIENCE IN KOŠICE I.**
Roundtable Discussion
Gorazd Čad (CONVENTA Ljubljana)
Ivo J. Franschitz (ENITED Business Events)

**15:30 – 15:50** COFFEE BREAK

**15:50 – 16:50** **BE PART OF SHAPING THE BUSINESS EVENT EXPERIENCE IN KOŠICE II.**
Roundtable Discussion
Dieter Hardt-Stremayr (Graz Tourist Office)
Ivo J. Franschitz (ENITED Business Events)

**16:50 – 17:00** **WHAT'S NEXT FOR KOŠICE**

**17:00 – 17:10** **WRAP-UP AND FINAL TAKEAWAYS**

**17:10** NETWORKING & DRINKS

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Program subject to change.

## SPEAKERS

### Ivo J. Franschitz
ENITED Business Events

Ivo J. Franschitz holds a master's degree in international marketing from the Vienna University of Economics, and his career milestones include Senior Marketing & Leadership positions in the Tourism and Business events industry. His ongoing engagement in several international Business Events organizations (e.g., 27NAMES, EMBA, ICCA and the LiveCom Alliance) speaks for his passion for this industry, and his qualifications include an ISO certification (Certified Event Expert).

Since 1999 he has been involved with a number of national and international educational institutions and sharing his experience and knowledge through a variety of speaking engagements.

Currently he holds a Board member position with 27NAMES (European Network of Leading LiveCom Agencies), as well as being an active member of ICCA (International Congress & Convention Association). He also held a Board member position with EMBA (Event Marketing Board Austria) and with the LiveCom Alliance (Pan-European Platform of National LiveCom Associations) and served as a committee member of PCMA (Professional Convention Management Association).

His qualifications include an ISO certification (Certified Event Expert | TÜV Austria), as well as a CICE certification (Certified International Convention Executive | ICCASkills).

## Gorazd Čad

### CONVENTA Ljubljana

Gorazd Čad has been co-creating the events industry in New Europe for over three decades. He is a geographer and historian by education and an advocate of sustainability and responsible event organising by profession. In 2009, he co-created Conventa, one of the most distinguished events on a European scale. Gorazd is also the founding father of Planet Positive Event, a revolutionary sustainability tool and a European Climate Pact Ambassador, who aspires to create a sustainable transformation within the meetings industry and create events with future generations in mind – events that make the world a better place long after they have ended.

His expertise, knowledge, and global connections have made him a household name in the global events industry and a mentor to many young talents entering the field. Many industry experts know him as the founder of Kongres Magazine, one of the most esteemed media outlets in the European events industry.

## Dieter Hardt-Stremayr

### Graz Tourist Office / Graz Convention Bureau

Born in 1963 in Carinthia, Austria, Dieter Hardt-Stremayr studied Business Management and Business Education at the University of Graz after graduating from business high school.
He began his career in tourism as a tour guide for a U.S.-based student travel operator specializing in European destinations. After completing his studies in 1989, he joined the company's management team and served for two years as Sales Director.

In 1991, he entered the Austrian tourism industry at the Styrian Tourist Board, initially working in information and incoming tourism before moving into destination marketing.

Since September 1995, Dieter Hardt-Stremayr has been Managing Director and CEO of the Graz Tourist Office. Under his leadership, Graz strengthened its international profile as a cultural and congress destination. In 2003, he established the Graz Convention Bureau as part of the Tourist Office, further developing Graz's position in the international MICE market.

On the European level, he has been actively involved in European Cities Marketing (ECM), today known as City Destinations Alliance (CityDNA). He served on the association's Board and was President for six years.

### Nina Erneker
Bratislava Tourist Board

Nina has been dedicated to destination marketing, Business Events, place branding, and strategic communication for over 20 years. For Bratislava, she leads the strategic development and communication efforts, overseeing the Business Events (MICE) and fostering cooperation between the public and private sectors.

Nina also shares her expertise as a consultant specializing in destination positioning and city brands.

### Branislav Kršák
TUKE, Faculty BERG | DimensionLab

doc. Ing. Branislav Kršák, PhD., works at the Department of Geo and Mining Tourism within the Faculty of BERG at the Technical University of Košice, where he focuses on sustainable tourism and destination development. For a long time, he has been dedicated to bridging academia, local governments, businesses, and destination management organizations to create tangible tourism products.

### Stanislava Púčková
2muse

Stanislava Púčková is the co-founder of the research agency 2muse – the largest independent market research agency in Slovakia. She graduated in Psychology from the Faculty of Arts at Comenius University in Bratislava, with a specialized internship in management, work, and organizational psychology. She has been active in market research since 2006 (previously at TNS AISA Slovakia). Her main passion lies in researching the potential of new products. Additionally, she focuses on education, leading workshops, and translating research findings into practice.

### Peter Džupka
TUKE EKF

Peter Džupka works at Technical University of Košice, where he currently serves as Vice-Dean for Science, Research, and Doctoral Studies at the Faculty of Economics. His work connects academic research with practical innovation-oriented projects related to mobility, urban development, and university–industry cooperation. He has long focused on evaluating the efficiency of public expenditures and public policies across various fields.

MEANWHILE CITY

### Martin Jenča
Büro Milk

Martin Jenča is a multidisciplinary designer, communication strategist, and editor specializing in the communication of cities, destinations, and cultural projects. He is the co-founder of Büro Milk, a multidisciplinary studio that connects design, strategy, communication, and storytelling. Together with his team, he collaborates with cities, institutions, developers, and changemakers on projects that shape public spaces, local identities, and popularize what matters.

## Ivana Kavulič
Visit Košice

Ivana Kavulič has been working in the tourism industry and as a manager at Visit Košice since 2012, focusing on international marketing and destination promotion. For the past two years, she has been intensively involved in the development of congress tourism, which is the main topic of her doctoral studies at the Technical University of Košice. Ivana is also a member of a specialized working group focused on congress tourism within the City Destination Alliance professional platform.

This presentation explores how Visit Košice supports the development of business events through multi-level cooperation—ranging from regional and supra-regional tourism partnerships and collaborative projects with the Ministry of Tourism and Sports of the Slovak Republic to close collaboration with the business sector. By aligning local support activities with initiatives at the national level, Visit Košice demonstrates how destination management organizations can multiply their impact and establish the city as a competitive destination for business events on both the national and international stages.

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## Michaela Spišáková Podoláková
Visit Košice

Michaela Spišáková Podoláková has served as the Executive Director of Visit Košice since 2019, strategically shaping the development of tourism and the Business Events (MICE) segment within the city. Her core expertise lies in destination management and successfully bridging the public, private, and creative sectors. She applies her extensive professional background on an international scale—having served as the Chairwoman of the Association of Tourism Organizations in Slovakia (AOCR) from 2023 to 2025, and since 2024, representing Košice directly on the Board of Directors of the European network, City Destinations Alliance (CityDNA). Under her leadership, Visit Košice implements key projects focused on innovative marketing, digitalization, and forging strong partnerships that position Košice on the map of modern and competitive European destinations.

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organized by Visit Košice
events@visitkosice.org

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