



## LISBON IN 2016: NEW INCENTIVE OPTIONS COMPLEMENT THE CITY'S POPULARITY FOR CONFERENCES AND EVENTS

*Annual survey reinforces the city's strengths for international congresses*



**22<sup>nd</sup> December 2015** – With a number of major conferences already booked up to 2018 and a range of new ideas for incentive groups that complement the Portuguese capital's unique features, the meetings and events sector in Lisbon looks ahead to 2016 as another buoyant year.

### **Survey to Congress Participants 2015**

The annual 'Survey to Congress Participants 2015' published by Observatório do Turismo de Lisboa has reinforced Lisbon's strengths as a congress destination. Based on interviews with international congress participants at three major congresses that took place in Lisbon between May and October this year, among the top criteria that made Lisbon stand out were the quality of its social programmes and the prices for hotels, restaurants and transport. In total, 98.7 per cent of the participants stated they would recommend Lisbon as a city for congresses, with an impressive 99.3 per cent also recommending the city as a tourism destination. Full survey details and results are available at [http://www.visitlisboa.com/getdoc/9e09b381-1604-485c-a3aa-52f9fee3c95a/Survey-to-Congress-Participants\\_2015.aspx](http://www.visitlisboa.com/getdoc/9e09b381-1604-485c-a3aa-52f9fee3c95a/Survey-to-Congress-Participants_2015.aspx).

### **New ideas and initiatives for incentive groups**

A range of new city-based activities for incentive groups is now available in Lisbon.

Organisers can arrange for their group to:

- Work as team to discover clues and learn about the city's history on a 'labyrinth tour'
- Build a unique replica of Vasco da Gama's caravel
- Have a lesson of hand painting tiles at the National Tiles Museum
- Ask for a customised tram – on-board options include animation shows, live fado, wine tasting and Saint Anthony telling the history of the city
- Have a GPS-guided tour, using a 'talking car' as a local on wheels

- Complete tasks related to the Age of the Discoveries, from painting a team flag to preparing a group song
- Form a film crew, distributing the various roles, on and off screen
- Take a ghost tour that tells the shocking, macabre and bizarre secret history of Portugal
- See street art (Lisbon is one of the best cities in the world for this!) led by an expert who has witnessed the genesis of graffiti in Portugal

Adventurous groups can also take advantage of the region's diversity by venturing further afield into the surrounding National Parks, mountains, countryside and beaches.

### **Unique venues as an event destination**

Venue options in Lisbon range from the iconic that reflect its long history – such as the imposing Castelo de São Jorge ([www.castelodesaojorge.pt](http://www.castelodesaojorge.pt)), built in 1147, and Palácio de Xabregas, the largest palace open for events in the capital and one of the few buildings that survived the 1755 earthquake ([www.penhalonga.com](http://www.penhalonga.com)) – to the quirky, for example the former Convent of Beato António ([www.conventodobeato.com](http://www.conventodobeato.com)), Campo Pequeno, previously Lisbon's bullring ([www.campo Pequeno.com](http://www.campo Pequeno.com)), and Estufa Fria de Lisboa (<http://estufafria.cm-lisboa.pt>), literally meaning “the cold greenhouse”, a true plant museum with ‘exhibits’ from all over the world.

A short distance from the Portuguese capital, the Lisbon region naturally lends itself to combining business events with varied leisure and incentive programmes, as it offers a range of easily accessible, stunning venues. These include: Palácio Nacional de Sintra ([www.parquesdesintra.pt](http://www.parquesdesintra.pt)), which was inhabited for nearly eight centuries by the Portuguese monarchy; the impressive, 40,000m<sup>2</sup> Palácio Nacional de Mafra ([www.palaciomafra.pt](http://www.palaciomafra.pt)), one of Europe's largest monuments; Pousada Palmela, which remains one of the best examples of architectural fortresses in Portugal ([www.pousadas.pt/historicalhotels](http://www.pousadas.pt/historicalhotels)); and Palácio Nacional da Ajuda, the royal family's last permanent residence, that nowadays hosts official receptions for the President of the Republic ([www.palacioajuda.pt](http://www.palacioajuda.pt)).

### **High profile events booked until 2018**

Lisbon's leading status is reflected the number of global companies and organisations that have selected the city for their upcoming conventions and conferences (the full list can be found at <http://www.visitlisboa.com/Conteudos/Menu-Principal/Convention-Bureau/CALENDAR.aspx>).

Key events scheduled for 2016 include: the 4<sup>th</sup> Systemic Sclerosis World Congress in February; the 10<sup>th</sup> World Congress on Controversies in Neurology in March; the Best of Belron 2016 global event in May; the 13<sup>th</sup> Congress of the European Society of Pediatric Otorhinolaryngology and the World Congress on Vascular Access 2016, both in June; and the Annual Scientific Meeting of the European College of Veterinary Surgeons in July.

October 2016 is set to be a particularly packed month, with large-scale events (over 1,000 delegates) including: the 12<sup>th</sup> Congress of the European Union Geriatric Medicine Society, the

16<sup>th</sup> Biennial Meeting of the International Gynecologic Cancer Society, the Coaltrans World Coal Conference 2016 and L'Oréal Professionnel Business Forum 2016.

The largest event booked for 2016 will take place in November: *Web Summit 2016*, often promoted as 'Where the Tech World', is anticipated to bring together 20,000 delegates from all over the globe.

Further ahead, high-profile events and meetings confirmed already include the *European Congress of Endocrinology* and the *Annual Meeting of European Association for the Study of Diabetes* in 2017, with the *Annual Meeting of the European Group for Blood and Marrow Transplantation* and the *XXV International Carbohydrate Symposium* booked to take place in Lisbon in 2018.

Alexandra Baltazar, Manager, Lisbon Convention Bureau says, "Meetings and events are one of Lisbon's core products and we are delighted that so many global organisations choose our city as the location of their upcoming events. Moving forward, we are looking to maintain our impressive record of customer satisfaction as demonstrated in our latest 'Survey to Congress Participants' and further consolidate our presence in the top 20 of the annual ICCA rankings. In line with Turismo de Lisboa's 'Strategic Plan 2015-2019', Lisbon Convention Bureau will add to the overall objective of increasing tourism's contribution to the region by 5 per cent per annum".

**For more information on Lisbon's meetings and conventions industry please visit [www.visitlisboa.com](http://www.visitlisboa.com) and follow the links to Convention Bureau**

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**For media information and images, please contact:**

Tom Panagos: 0845 498 9980 or [tom@humewhitehead.co.uk](mailto:tom@humewhitehead.co.uk)

Enrique Martin: 0845 498 9984 or [enrique@humewhitehead.co.uk](mailto:enrique@humewhitehead.co.uk)

### **About Lisbon**

Portugal's national capital, Lisbon, boasts one of the longest histories, warmest climates and bustling nightlife of any major European city alongside its dramatic location sprawled along seven hills overlooking the river Tagus and the country's west coast. Famed for its year-round sunshine and beauty, Lisbon's grand architecture dazzles and its old-world charm mingles with chic streets, galleries, lively nightlife and a centre which gives way to sandy beaches just minutes away. It is also one of the most affordable capitals in Europe, perfect for a captivating city break or short haul escape.

### **About Lisboa Convention Bureau**

A department of Turismo de Lisboa, a non profit association of private and public bodies, the Lisboa Convention Bureau was founded in 1987. It promotes the Lisbon Region as a prime destination for congresses, meetings, incentives and business travel and offers impartial advice and assistance to event organisers. Today it has more than 200 associates including hotels, venues, meeting facilities and incoming agencies. Services include bid preparation,

coordination of site inspections, ideas for social programmes and suggestions of suitable venues, with an extensive range of promotional materials available on request.