



Vienna, June 2024

polySTAGE in the entrance hall © acv.at / Walter Luttenberger

Congresses back to record levels: Austria Center Vienna reports a highly successful year for congresses in 2023

Austria's largest congress centre looks back on a particularly successful financial year in 2023: with revenue from events reaching around EUR 18.4m and almost 88,000 international participants, the venue achieved the kinds of results last seen before the pandemic during its previous record year in 2018. The unveiling of the innovative polySTAGE represented another genuine milestone.

"Last year definitely exceeded our expectations. Besides welcoming back key returning medical and scientific congresses, we were also able to attract numerous international corporate clients. Enthusiasm for live, in-person events is greater than ever before, as we can see by the numerous short-notice bookings," explained Susanne Baumann-Söllner, Managing Director of the Austria Center Vienna.

Enormous year-on-year increase

While 2022 had already delivered a noticeable upturn following the pandemic, the year-on-year increases were even higher in 2023. The total number of international participants rose by 42% to 88,000 (2022: 62,000), while revenue from events advanced some 41% to EUR 18.4m within one year (2022: EUR 13m). A total of 20 international events with more than 1,000 visitors took place at the Austria Center Vienna in 2023; in keeping with tradition, the European Congress of Radiology (ECR) and the General Assembly of the European Geosciences Union (EGU) were once again the largest by far, each attracting over 15,000 participants.

Major economic impact for Vienna and Austria

A recent study conducted by independent economic research institute Eco Austria looked at the economic significance of the congress industry. At around EUR 550 per day, the average spend attributable to congress participants is around twice as high as for the average visitor to Vienna, and the impact of this on the accommodation, F&B and retail sectors is correspondingly high. As the nation's largest congress centre, the Austria Center Vienna hosts almost 16% of all event participants in Vienna, a figure that rises to 25% when it comes to international congresses. Once the direct, indirect and induced effects were added together, it was calculated that the events held at the Austria Center Vienna generated gross value added of around EUR 319m in 2023. In employment terms, the combined effects also correspond to around 3,390 full-time equivalent jobs nationwide. Gross value added was up by

25% on the figure recorded in a 2018 study, and three percentage points higher than the value added generated by comparable commercial services.

World first: polySTAGE receives multiple awards

The international congress market is particularly competitive, in light of its huge economic significance. Thanks to its imperial history, geographical location and outstanding reputation, Vienna has always ranked among the world's top destinations. With the support of the Vienna Convention Bureau, numerous major international congresses have been – and will continue to be – brought to the Austria Center Vienna and Vienna. And to ensure that this remains the case, modernisation work has continued apace at the venue since 2019, with a genuine milestone coming in September 2023 with the unveiling of a world first: the polySTAGE. The name polySTAGE, which is a portmanteau of the ancient Greek word poly (many) and stage, expresses the multitude of staging possibilities opened up by the new system. Comprising a total surface area of 360m² – including 174m² of movable LED modules – it is located in the Austria Center Vienna entrance hall. The individual LED panels can be rotated, raised and lowered independently from one another. With each programmed to display custom content, the entire setting can change completely in an instant, which ushers in a virtually unlimited range of possible applications. Susanne Baumann-Söllner revealed: "Our customers are blown away by the spectacular application possibilities. The polySTAGE's secret is that it appeals to our emotions – through movement, visual effects and even direct interaction with participants. We are delighted that the innovation has already won three platinum awards at the Eventex Awards, as well as gold and silver at the German Stevie Awards."

Refurb and modernisation work continues

Level -2 – one of the most popular of all the spaces at the Austria Center Vienna – is currently undergoing a full refurb and modernisation project, with normal operations continuing in the background. Once completed, it will feature seven halls as well as rooms, foyers and two large terraces. Work got under way a short time ago and will continue until spring 2025. The modern room design seen in the other levels will feature here too, with ceiling heights also being increased. New LED displays in all foyer and corridor areas help participants find their way around, while also adding custom branding opportunities. In future, it will be possible to subdivide Hall D – which was used as a plenary hall for the 2018 EU Council Presidency – into three sections using practical mobile partition walls.

About IAKW-AG

Internationales Amtssitz- und Konferenzzentrum Wien, Aktiengesellschaft (IAKW-AG) is responsible for maintaining the Vienna International Centre (VIC) and operating the Austria Center Vienna (ACV). The Austria Center Vienna is Austria's largest conference centre. With 21 halls, 134 meeting rooms and some 26,000m² of exhibition space, it is one of the top players on the international conference circuit.

www.acv.at

Contact

IAKW-AG – Austria Center Vienna, David Scheurich, Press Officer

Tel: + 43 (0)676 4392579, E-mail: david.scheurich@acv.at

Press download: <https://www.acv.at/en/press/corporate-news/>