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Why Maribor

As the second largest city in Slovenia, Maribor oozes the historic charm of a relaxed, medieval town. It is no wonder, then, that in 2012 Maribor was awarded the flattering title “European Capital of Culture”. “A life well lived” could very well be the slogan for the capital of Slovenia’s Styria region, for its greatest asset is its extraordinary access to nature, with an attractive position between the Drava river, the green Pohorje plateau on one side and, on the other, sunny wine-growing hills that stretch all the way to the Austrian border and beyond. With its quality congress/business capacities and opportunities for unique experiences combined with picturesque surroundings and the warm hospitality of the people, Maribor is becoming increasingly renowned as a host destination for conventions, seminars and other meetings. Maribor is also well known for two worldwide attractions - the oldest Vine in the world and the annual Golden Fox FIS Ski World Cup.
Top places where people meet

1. Congress Business Centre Habakuk

Hotel Habakuk, located at the foot of Pohorje plateau, has become a synonym for conference industry tourism. The conference centre is fresh and bright, and the largest hall can accommodate up to 500 participants. A wellness and spa centre is also available.

2. Hotel City Maribor

Located by the Drava River and just a few minutes walking distance from the city centre, this hotel offers conference facilities with various halls and multipurpose rooms for up to 450 guests, and panoramic views from the rooftop terrace.

3. Casino & Hotel Mond

The area for business events covers almost 8,000m² in total, and comprises two event halls featuring natural sunlight which connect to a large summer terrace, and à la carte restaurant and a free-flow restaurant.

4. Draš

In quiet environment under the Pohorje plateau and only a few minutes from the center of Maribor, the top-quality conference facilities of Draš Centre ensure a successful organisation of business events in nature’s embrace.
Top places to stay

1. Hotel Habakuk ****

At the foothills of Pohorje plateau and at a juncture of the city, nature, culture and sports, offering relaxation and a lively pulse, this hotel, with high-quality accommodation, is just 5km outside the city centre.

2. Hotel City Maribor ****

This hotel, open since 2011, is conveniently located in the city centre. It offers modern rooms and gourmet delights at the City Terasa restaurant with beautiful views of the Drava river and Pohorje plateau.

3. Mercure Maribor City Center ****

In addition to a wellness and medical centre, this hotel also offers an anti-stress centre, and some rooms are even equipped with special anti-stress bed linen, while it is also possible to choose from ten different kinds of pillows.

4. Casino & Hotel MOND **** Superior

Located among vineyards and on the border with Austria, the hotel offers rooms with balconies, superior and deluxe suites, a wellness centre, a summer terrace and a connection to the casino.
5. Arena Hotel ****

The Arena Hotel is situated in a picturesque location at the foot of Pohorje and is surrounded by ski slopes and nature. Spacious sun terrace provides beautiful views of the Snow Stadium and Pohorje forests.

6. Hotel Bellevue ****

In an impressive location where alpine air eases the mind, and away from the city bustle yet within easy reach of Maribor city, Hotel Bellevue boasts an excellent wellness centre.

Maribor is not just a place to be for lovers of sports and for all wine lovers, but also for event lovers. Maribor, although still growing on the MICE map, certainly can not disappoint with the locations and activities on hand for any demanding meeting planner. It is slowly growing, but with a huge effect and there is a bright MICE future in front of it.
Maribor MTLG

European Capital of Culture

Maribor, the cultural centre of the country, represents the business, scientific, educational, cultural and political hub of Eastern Slovenia and its region Styria. The capital of Slovenian Styria with a rich history, reflected in its cultural heritage, achieved the pinnacle of its cultural tourism with the title of European Capital of Culture 2012. Maribor is also one of the major players when it comes to festival season. Throughout the summer, the city hosts load of internationally recognised cultural, sports and culinary events, all of which ensure the city’s continuous vivacious heartbeat. The most established among them is the Lent Festival, mostly located in Maribor’s old city centre Lent, that has gained a legendary status as the biggest Slovenian open-air festival. Since 1993, the Lent Festival has been the synonym for a carefully selected, outstanding mixture of art and culture that emphasises cosmopolitanism, local specialities, and the hospitality of the city.

Styrians are always willing to help and have greater cordiality and positivism than residents of other parts of Slovenia. With their great sense of belonging to the hometown, Maribor residents make the city one of the Slovenia’s nicest and friendliest places to stay. An indispensable part of the Maribor tourist offer is also the wealth and variety of its cuisine and quality wines, as well as its attractions in the city centre, like the Gothic style Maribor Castle and the Jewish Quarter with its synagogue. And certainly, the largest urban landmark is the Oldest Vine in the World, growing in Maribor’s old town, Lent.

The city’s unique blend of urbanity and ruralism shows in the contrast between the flat Dravsko fields, set along the beautiful and serene Drava River, and the forested Pohorje Mountain creating a lot of variety, both in terms of landscape and adventure. If we add to this the rich cultural history and the soft vineyard slopes, this is one of the best-known Slovenian tourist destinations, especially given the fact that beautiful nature is already encountered right at the end of the streets of Maribor. In addition, the Styria, together with the city of Maribor, is considered to be one of the sunniest Slovenian regions.

Maribor is graded as QUALITY MEETINGS DESTINATION

Grades: 5 excellent meetings destination, 4 quality meetings destination, 3 recommendable meetings destination, 2 average meetings destination, 1 so so
## Maribor individual grades 2017 and 2018

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### Destination capacity

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<td>Maximum hall capacity in theatre style</td>
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Comparison with the region

As one of the most promising meetings destinations in Slovenia, Maribor is historically, ethnically and culturally extremely interesting. It gives an impression of familiarity and warmth and it has everything that is necessary for development. Although still growing on the MICE map, Maribor certainly cannot disappoint with the locations and activities on hand for any demanding meeting planner. It is slowly growing, but with a huge effect and there is a bright future in front of it.

Just 11km from the Austrian border, Maribor has good traffic infrastructure and can easily be reached by car, train or bus. There are many airports in its vicinity, the nearest one being Graz Airport in Austria (60km), followed by Zagreb Airport in Croatia (130km) and Ljubljana’s Jože Pučnik Airport (150km). Maribor also has its own airport, Edvard Rusjan Airport, with a lesser frequency of international flights.
**What's hot 2019**

**Need to know 2019**

Maribor, due to its incredible landscape, offers extensive sports activities all-year-round. As an example of its good practice in preparations and hosting of various sports events, Maribor was last year the European City of Sport 2018. This year it continues to host numerous sports events. In February 2019 Maribor hosted its well-known worldwide attraction, the annual Golden Fox FIS Ski World Cup, that took place for the celebratory 55th time. In April, the city hosted two mountain bike cups – the oISX European Downhill Cup 2019 and the Mercedes-Benz UCI Mountain Baike World cup, the so-called Formula One of Mountain Bike. In the month of May, the European City of Sport 2018, organised and hosted the 15th Sports Spring Festival, festival of sports and entertainment, that lasted for ten days and took place in 15 different venues.

Other 2019 events include the 4th International Festival of Independent Performing Arts Crossings (Prestopi); the 5th Drava Festival that in two months of events presents the beautiful Drava River through educational, environmental, entertaining and sports programme. As the city is renowned for its superb restaurants and rich wine tradition, it is no wonder that it is a host to Restaurant Week during which nine of the Maribor’s best restaurants can be visited; other culinary festivals are the pilot edition of the Salad Festival, Street Food Market that attracts Slovenian and international street food artists, and the legendary Old Vine Festival, a gastronomic and cultural festival, which opens with the Ceremonial Grape Harvest of the World’s Oldest Vine, to name the few.

And last, but not the least, the famous Lent Festival that runs in late June on 30 different locations and provides a diverse programme from folklore and dance, music, sport, theatre, for children and other kind of events that annually attract more than two hundred thousand visitors to Maribor’s stages, streets, river banks, and to the impressive floating stage set on the river Drava.
What's hot 2019

Athlete of The Year / 29 January 2019
Award Ceremony for the best Maribor’s athlete in 2018
Venue: Hotel Habakuk

RESYNTEX Conference / 27 February 2019
International Conference on recycling from Prospex Institute
Venue: City Hotel Maribor

Menopausal Medicine / 15-16 March 2019
Congress of Slovenian association for reproductive medicine
Venue: City Hotel Maribor

IMRUA 2019 / 25-27 April 2019
10th International fire and EMS Motorcycle Response Unit Association (IMRUA) Conference
Venue: City Hotel Maribor

PODIM 2019 / 21-22 May 2019
Startup & tech conference for the Alps-Adriatic and Western Balkans region
Venue: Hotel Habakuk

SEE MEET Slovenia 2019 / 16-17 October 2019
4th international B2B event of SouthEast Europe
Venue: City Hotel Maribor

ADMA KONGRES / 14-15 November 2019
The central educational conference for employees in management support
Venue: Hotel Habakuk
Just a short distance from Maribor, nestled among rolling green hillsides and exquisite vineyards, the Ramšak estate offers a fairytale country castle. The heart of the property is the wine-growing infrastructure surrounded by a tree house and glamorous tents furnished like luxury hotel rooms with bathrooms, spacious terraces and a garden Jacuzzi. It all adds up to unique comfort mingled with the magic of sleeping under the stars, breathing fresh air, and listening to the sounds of a stream. The estate offers various experiences that give visitors an insight into the wine-making process.

Best incentive idea

**Vineyard Glamping Resort – Chateau Ramšak**

Just a short distance from Maribor, nestled among rolling green hillsides and exquisite vineyards, the Ramšak estate offers a fairytale country castle. The heart of the property is the wine-growing infrastructure surrounded by a tree house and glamorous tents furnished like luxury hotel rooms with bathrooms, spacious terraces and a garden Jacuzzi. It all adds up to unique comfort mingled with the magic of sleeping under the stars, breathing fresh air, and listening to the sounds of a stream. The estate offers various experiences that give visitors an insight into the wine-making process.
The perfect gift

Wine from the Oldest Vine in the World

The wine shop in the Old Vine house offers excellent wines made by local producers (with international success), which are also offered for wine tastings. At the moment, the wine shop boasts of 165 very best wines from the Slovenian Styria region. Unfortunately, the wine made from the Oldest Vine is not possible to taste. It is very precious; the amount is very limited, and it is used as the protocol gift of the city. However, there is a great comfort to that – the wine shop sells the wine of the first descendants of the Old Vine. This unique gift can be combined also with a special jewellery made of the oldest vine’s leaves.
The city of Maribor with its vicinity is a home to two of five best restaurants in Slovenia: Hiša Denk in Zgornja Kungota with chef Gregor Vračko, and Mak restaurant in Maribor’s city centre with chef David Vračko. Both of the chefs, Gregor Vračko and David Vračko, are brothers as already their surnames imply. They don’t belong only among the best chefs in Slovenia, but also among the top-notch culinary magicians in Europe. In addition, they are both renowned for their straight-forward character with a pinch of outspoken rebellion and wild looks. Anyone visiting their restaurants says that this is a dinner you will not experience in any other establishment of the kind.
Off the beaten MICE track

Pohorje Mountain

The Pohorje plateau, the pride and joy of the Styria region and its capital Maribor, is a natural wonderland awash with primeval forests, lakes, waterfalls and an abundance of hiking and biking trails that criss-cross its breath-taking scenery. In winter the area is transformed into a buzzing ski resort, one of the largest and most attractive in Slovenia, an additional speciality of which is the longest night-skiing trail in the country.

Additionally, on the Pohorje plateau range, in the embrace of the intact nature of the Natura 2000 Natural Reserve Park, lies a boutique, fairytale village with eco bungalows made exclusively of natural ecological materials such as Pohorje supre timber and wool. The Rušèvec Estate, consisting of the Green Village with eco lodges, eco villa, and eco wellness, is committed to an ecological experience of nature. This mission is also shown through its Permaculture Circle. The area is ideal for biking, hiking, running, skiing, climbing, swimming, mushroom picking and spending time in the Šumik Primeval Forest Reserve. Special treats come in the form of organised trips to the intact areas of Pohorje—the main attractions being local culture, flora and fauna.
Maribor is home to the oldest vine in the world. The “Modra kavčina” or “Žametovka” or “Žametna črnina” (Blauer Kölner), certified as being more than 400 years old, is the Guinness record holder for the oldest noble vine in the world still bearing grapes. The vine, also a protected natural monument, grows at the front of a long solid two-story old townhouse, named The Old Vine House (Hiša stare trte) situated in Lent, Maribor’s old city centre, and near the serene Drava River. The Old Vine House, built in the 16th Century, is apart from being a hotspot of wine tradition and culture of Maribor, Styria and Slovenia, a special venue offering wine tasting of excellent wines from the Styria region and space for business events and incentives. The uniqueness of the world’s oldest vine, located in the old town core, spiced up by excellent wine and food creations and the notorious hospitality of the locals, definitely results in the uniqueness of the event itself.
Maribor is home to the oldest vine in the world. The Blue Franconia, certified as being more than 400 years old, is the Guinness record holder for the oldest noble vine in the world still bearing grapes. The vine, also a protected natural monument, grows at the front of The Old Vine House. The 16th Century building entices many tourists from the most remote parts of the world; in the past decade it has been visited by more than half-a-million people.
We are aiming to provide an individually created story

Interview with Doris Urbančič Windisch, director of Maribor-Pohorje Tourist Board

With its quality congress/business capacities and opportunities for unique experiences combined with picturesque surroundings and the warm hospitality of the people, Maribor is becoming increasingly renowned as a host destination for conventions, seminars and other meetings. We talked to Doris Urbančič Windisch, director of Maribor – Pohorje Tourist Board, about Maribor – Pohorje destination and its rise inside the meetings industry.

“We have already done a lot of work in the field of sports tourism, and there is still a lot of work ahead of us.”

Q: Which are Maribor’s greatest assets in terms of attracting the meetings industry?

Maribor’s greatest assets are its hospitable residents, natural resources with the world’s oldest vine as a highlight, and diverse, picturesque setting of the city with the mountain area covered in green woods in its vicinity, as well as the countryside scattered with vineyards stretching right into the city centre. On the top of that, there is a high-quality service with competitive prizes.
**Q:** What would the prolonging of the tourist season to the whole year mean for the City of Maribor?

Prolonging of the tourist season is of a key importance for the Maribor - Pohorje tourist destination. In the last few years, the peak of the season in the city of Maribor has already moved from the winter months to the months of June, July, and August. Thus, our goal is to fill up the lower parts of the year, which we could successfully perform by creating incentive adventures for even the most demanding incentive guests. As we all know, incentive guests provide the highest consumption rate per day; consequently, this would contribute not only to the prolonging of the tourist season, but also to the increase of the overall daily expenditure per a guest.

**Q:** What kind of incentives can one get in Maribor?

Our guests can enjoy so much on such a small area! What do you think of a genuine experience of wine-tasting in the company of the World’s Oldest Vine, traditional timber-rafting with a live concert on a raft in the middle of the river, a treasure hunt in the underground world of a wine cellar located in the Maribor old town, and all this upgraded by the outstanding Styrian winemakers and chefs, top-notch cultural as well as numerous recreational opportunities?

**Q:** Recently the famous one hundred years old Hotel Orel has undergone a renovation and changed its name; the name change, or the rebranding, happened also to Hotel Piramida. What does this mean for Maribor’s meetings industry?

Branding is one of the effective strategies to attract clients that are loyal to the certain brand and we are going to use this opportunity in the best possible manner.

**Q:** What is the plan for Maribor’s meetings tourism in the future?

Our short-term plan is for Maribor to be placed to its rightful position within Slovenian field of meeting industry. The long-term plan, on the other hand, is for the SE Europe to recognize Maribor as a perfect place for their meeting or congress on the ground of all of the Maribor’s attractions and providers with genuine and quality service. Best value for money.

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“**The city of Graz is a perfect opportunity for international and regional cooperation; this is one of our strongest wishes for the near future.**”
Q: Maribor has a rich offer of programmes not just from spring to autumn but is also vivid in winter. What kind of events and programmes would you recommend for congress guests in that time of the year?

As Maribor being a key winter destination in Slovenia, one would for sure combine business with pleasures in the snow – let it be either on the top of the Pohorje Mountain on a night skiing or in a snowy Maribor city centre on an extravagant culinary experience with a big party on an outdoor concert on the biggest square in Slovenia. However, as we are following the five-star experience strategy set also by the Slovenian Tourist Board, we are aiming to provide an individually created story of Maribor, and thus fulfilling the interests and wishes of our guests.

Q: How does meetings industry impact the local community?

Meetings industry perfectly integrates with the local community. Feedbacks of our guests are almost 100% positive and they especially emphasize the kindness, the hospitality of the locals, the everlasting smiles on their faces and the locals’ openness. Do you know that Maribor is one of the sunniest places in Slovenia? I believe this fact also impacts both, the residents as well as our visitors for developing such a positive attitude. At the end of the guest’s stay there’s always the wish for coming back – on the guests’ as well as on the hosts’ side.

Q: Graz, the Austrian town just an hour ride from Maribor, has been quite an established meetings destination. How do you see Graz as a competitor to Maribor?

The city of Graz is a perfect opportunity for international and regional cooperation; this is one of our strongest wishes for the near future. There are so many common things we share with the towns and places on the north. For example, the sunny wine roads, where the border doesn't really matter—guests are strolling from one place to the other all the time and thus pass from Austria to Slovenia and back. And there’s the common history, historical figures, for example the Archduke Johann, who is one products, which strongly influence the achievement of good results in consumption and the number of guest arrivals. During sports events or competitions, as a rule, the accommodation capacities in the city and the surrounding area are usually 90-100% occupied. The city and destination Maribor-Pohorje has enormous potential, and the title European City of Sport is an exceptional promotional opportunity for a tourist destination and at the same time a commitment for all of us who work in the development and promotion of such tourism product. Naturally, local public awareness about a healthy lifestyle and the preservation of health through sport is of key importance, which we will achieve through numerous events. One big sports event is just behind us—the Tour of Slovenia, country’s biggest cycling event, which was extremely successful from both organisational as well as promotional perspective.
of the most important persons for the development of Maribor and the surrounding area in such a well-known destination for lovers (and experts) of (for) wine. Plus, Maribor and Graz are true cultural centres, nothing could confirm this more then the title of European City of Culture both cities boast of.

Q: What would you recommend to business guests to get in Maribor as a perfect business gift from Maribor to their partners?

Maribor is the only place on Earth where the World’s Oldest Vine grows. Thus, a perfect gift could undoubtedly be connected to this unique treasure: maybe a wine from the first cutting of the World’s Oldest Vine or a picture with the leaf of the Old Vine, or anything connected to the rich wine tradition and culture of Maribor and Slovenia.

Q: Which has been your favourite event at the Lent Festival so far?

As a fan of rock music and classical performances my personal highlights were definitely the concerts of Ray Chales (1996) and B.B. King (1997), and the last year’s ballet performance Favn – Carmen – Bolero (ballet) and opera La Traviata by the amazing Slovene National Theatre Opera and Ballet.

Q: What do you wish for Maribor and its meetings offer? Is there anything that you particularly hope for? Your dream?

My wish is to join in one place all the great providers of excellent stories, which we will believe in and, thus, will be able to sell them to our dear guests. These stories will carry the image of Maribor and Slovenia all over the world. The image of boutique destination intertwined with top most experiences of food and wine, with “crazy” sports events, and spiced up with cultural flavour – the image of one of the best European congress destinations.
Off the Beaten MICE Track

It’s all about the wine

For all wine lovers Maribor is the place to be. The influence of the wine tradition can be felt throughout the city. Three wine roads lead congress guests to wine shops and cellars scattered from the vine-covered Piramida hill that rises directly above the centre of the town to the Benedictine Dveri-Pax cellar that stores 50,000 litres of wine in oak barrels.

A unique river island

Business guests loving nature can take picturesque paths along the Drava river to reach a natural Maribor Island (Mariborski otok), the only Slovenian river island of a kind. The island, full of geological and geomorphological specialties, presents plenty of recreational possibilities, as well as the Nature Trail that provides insight into exceptionally rich flora and fauna with 263 plant species and 75 different species of birds.

Winery Water Tower

Another of Maribor’s unique sights and infrastructures is the Winery Water Tower (Vinoteka vodni stolp) old historic water tower that stores wine bottles and represents a completely different type of wine store. The ground floor of this distinctive pentagonal-shaped Renaissance fortification, which once defended the walls of the Styrian capital, has been transformed into a modern winery providing only top-notch Slovenian wines.
Incentive ideas

The beauty of timber rafting

Drava River and its Regional Park provides a connection with the rich, bygone tradition of the old-style timber rafting which dates back to the 13th Century. The rafts are built in Robinson Crusoe-style but equipped with seats and benches. During the tour, that gives a different insight into the beauty of Maribor’s major attractions along the river, are guests also treated to culinary specialities from the region.

The oldest hydroelectric power plant

In 1918, the first hydroelectric power plant on the Drava River started operating. Fala Hydroelectric Power Plant is today, after the renovation, not just one of the most modern in the country, but also a home to a Technical Museum. Incentive programme takes to the oldest still working hydroelectric power plant in the Slovenian part of the Drava River; the visit includes experiments with electricity.

A literally hidden characteristic of a bombed city

To have a special historic experience and to be witness to the city’s integral part hidden to the eyes and barely known about, one should take a tour to Maribor’s underground corridors built in 1943 and stretching over 8,512m². The tunnels were built by German owners as an emergency site for enabling a continuous operation of the factory during time of Allies air raids.
Special venues

**Maribor Regional Museum**

One of the most remarkable architectonic monuments of the city of Maribor, Maribor Castle, boasts a rich history. Today, inside its halls, the Maribor Regional Museum is set in the Castle’s rooms and halls characterised by an extraordinary ambience full of grandeur. Knight’s Hall or Rococo Staircase provide for a venue, particularly fitting if requiring a unique atmosphere signed with stories from the past.

**Dveri-Pax Wine Cellar**

Dveri-Pax continues an 800-year tradition of Benedictine winemaking in north-eastern Slovenia. The 73-hectare Estate along vineyards boasts 450-year-old-manor. In Jarenina Manor all lovers of wine and aesthetic will find their heaven. Dveri-Pax Wine Cellar inside the manor, is a true treasure with a rich history. A beautiful interior, a cultivated environment and a professional kitchen makes the Manor an excellent place for meetings.

**Slovene National Theatre – Kazinska dvorana Hall**

The Slovene National Theatre Maribor – SNG Maribor is situated in the old town centre, at the beautiful square Slomškov trg with cathedral and park. SNG Maribor, combining under its roof theatre, opera and ballet, dates back to 1851. Its most beautiful hall, the Kazinska dvorana Hall, is used as a special venue for receptions and concerts.
The directory

Conference facilities

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<th>Banquet</th>
<th>Reception</th>
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Hotels

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Habakuk</td>
<td>4°</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>It is located in the direct vicinity of the city (10 minutes) below the Pohorje mountain range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Piramida</td>
<td>4°</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>In the city centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Bellevue</td>
<td>4°</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>On the Pohorje Mountain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel City Maribor</td>
<td>4°</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>In the city centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Casino &amp; Hotel MOND</td>
<td>4°S</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>In the vineyards, on the border with Austria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Arena</td>
<td>4°</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Below the Pohorje Mountain range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hotel Bolfenk</td>
<td>4°</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>On the Pohorje Mountain</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Top references

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Congress</th>
<th>Venue</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>No. of delegates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World Youth Championship Chess</td>
<td>Hotel Habakuk</td>
<td>2012</td>
<td>3000</td>
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<tr>
<td>European Shooting Championship</td>
<td>Hotel Habakuk</td>
<td>2017</td>
<td>800</td>
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<td>Mediagames</td>
<td>Hotel Habakuk</td>
<td>2016</td>
<td>800</td>
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<td>May 2016</td>
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<td>Eurolawyers</td>
<td>Hotel Habakuk</td>
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<td>700</td>
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<td>Genetika 2012</td>
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<td>Hotel City Maribor</td>
<td>October 2016</td>
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<tr>
<td>Conference Association of tourist farms of Slovenia</td>
<td>Casion &amp; Hotel MOND</td>
<td>March 2017</td>
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