airBaltic Carries 500 000 Passengers on Bombardier CS300



Riga. The Latvian airline *airBaltic* has carried over 500 000 passengers on the brand new *CS300* aircraft and now every fourth passenger of *airBaltic* is flying *CS300*. In total *airBaltic* has flown to 40 destinations in the Baltics, Europe, Scandinavia, CIS and the Middle East with the *Bombardier CS300* aircraft.

Martin Sedlacky, Chief Operations Officer of *airBaltic*: "*CS300* is the most advanced jet aircraft in its class and is showing good operational results. Like all new aircraft, the implementation requires additional attention in terms of linking parts and systems of different manufacturers but our team together with *Bombardier* and other partners are doing excellent work so that our passengers could have the best flying experience."

airBaltic currently has seven *CS300* aircraft operated on many popular routes. Thus far, *airBaltic* has completed more than 12 167 scheduled flights and flown over 4 560 block hours with the *Bombardier CS300* aircraft.

By the end of 2019 *airBaltic* plans to have 20 *Bombardier CS300* aircraft in its fleet. By 2021, as an all-*Bombardier* operator, *airBaltic* will have one of the youngest jet fleets in Europe. With the next order, already being negotiated, eventually, *airBaltic* will increase the number of

Bombardier C Series aircraft on its fleet to at least 34.

The new *Bombardier CS300* aircraft, with a total of 145 seats, offers excellent flying experience with such benefits for passengers as wider seats, larger windows, more hand luggage space in the cabin, improved lavatories and more. New aircraft is also much quieter – with four times smaller noise footprint. Moreover, at the moment, it is the greenest commercial aircraft in the world, as it is the first aircraft to have a transparent declaration of the life-cycle environmental impact, helping to reduce CO_2 and NO_X emissions by 20% and 50% respectively.

airBaltic operates direct flights from Riga to over 60 destinations. *airBaltic* offers convenient connections via Riga to its network spanning Europe, Scandinavia, the CIS and the Middle East. In addition, *airBaltic* also offers direct flights from Tallinn and Vilnius.

Pas de salafisme radical à la Grande Mosquée



Le ministre Jan Jambon, compétent pour la Régie des Bâtiments, a annoncé la résiliation de la concession de la Grande Mosquée de Bruxelles, suivant ainsi une recommandation de la commission parlementaire chargée d'enquêter sur les attentats terroristes de l'année dernière. « Un nouvel avenir va peut-être devoir être trouvé pour la Grande Mosquée », explique Jambon.

La mosquée est financée par des salafistes saoudiens. D'après la commission parlementaire, elle pourrait ainsi contribuer à propager le radicalisme violent. La commission propose de lutter contre l'ingérence et le financement étrangers. Une solution serait qu'une organisation reconnue – représentant

plusieurs courants de l’islam – gère la mosquée.



Plus de droit de séjour pour l’imam
Le secrétaire d’État Theo Francken avait déjà retiré le droit de séjour de l’imam de la Grande Mosquée. Il avait reçu des signaux clairs indiquant que l’homme (également un salafiste) serait radicalisé. « L’imam représente un danger pour la société et la sécurité nationale », affirme Francken. « La lutte contre le salafisme reste une priorité pour le gouvernement. »

Save the date of the European Conference on Natural Spas



The flagship spa & wellness event of the year in Central

Europe will be held on 16th November 2017 in the natural Thermal Spa Resort of Radenci, which is known for its springs of the natural mineral water, Radenska. The Conference is organised by the Slovenian Spas Association, which is also celebrating its 60th anniversary, and will bring together leading experts in the fields of Balneology, Hydrotherapy, Physical Rehabilitation, Spas and Wellness for the occasion. You can expect very vivid discussions on all current topics.

Save the date of the conference on key wellness, health and medical wellness trends and join us for the celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Slovenian Spa Association. The **European Conference on Natural Spas**takes place on 16th November in Terme Radenci. The Slovenian Spa Association has already received the confirmed participation of the presidents of FEMTEC (the World Federation of Hydrotherapy and Climatotherapy), ESPA (the European Spas Association), ISMH (the International Society of Medical Hydrology and Climatology), Wellness Hotels & Resorts, GWI (the Global Wellness Institute) and many more international experts. The conference will also be enriched by Slovenian experts and stakeholders in the wellness and spa industry. You can find the Preliminary Programme on the official website of the event **here**.

The Slovenian Spas Association is also the initiator of the SPA-CE trade show where the most important providers of spa and wellness services from European countries meet, exchange ideas and provide opportunities for new connections in the wider Central European Region. It will take place at Ptuj Thermal Spa from 17th to 19th November.

Slovenia’s natural spas, which are the backbone of the country’s tourism facilities, are developing medical, wellness and selfness programmes. Some of these health resort and spa centres are among the best in Europe, and are famed for their outstanding programmes of preventive care, treatment, rehabilitation or relaxation. The therapies and treatments in

Slovenia’s natural spas bring together a century of tradition and cutting-edge medical approaches.

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airberlin to cease operating as part of oneworld from 28 October



airberlin will cease participating in the **one**world® alliance with effect from the close of business on 27 October 2017, following the filing by Air Berlin PLC & Co. Luftverkehrs KG’s (“airberlin”) for the opening of insolvency proceedings over its assets.

airberlin’s affiliate NIKI – which joined **one**world alongside airberlin in March 2012 – will no longer fly as part of **one**world at the same time.

oneworld will continue to serve more than 1,000 airports in almost 160 countries worldwide. The withdrawal of airberlin and NIKI from the alliance will mean a dozen destinations – half of them regional cities in Austria and Germany and the rest southern European holiday spots – leaving the alliance’s global network.

oneworld will maintain a strong presence in airberlin’s Germany and Austria home markets. Ten other **one**world member airlines serve a total of 13 destinations across the two countries, linking them with the alliance’s global network. Throughout Europe, **one**world member

airlines will continue to fly to more than 230 destinations in some 40 countries.

A number of **one**world member airlines are making a tier-status matching offer to members of airberlin's topbonus frequent flyer programme, enabling them to maintain their Emerald, Sapphire or Ruby status when flying with any **one**world member airline. For details, see individual member airline's frequent flyer websites, specifically

- British Airways.
- Finnair.
- Iberia.
- Royal Jordanian.

For further information on the current situation at airberlin, including advice to customers with bookings on flights it has cancelled, see airberlin.com



The following arrangements will apply in the withdrawal of airberlin and NIKI from **one**world:

Frequent flyer programme redemption flights	airberlin closed its flights for new redemption bookings by members of its and partner airlines' frequent flyer programmes as it filed for insolvency two months ago. airberlin has confirmed that redemption flights already booked by members of other **one**world airlines' frequent flyer programmes for travel on airberlin on or before 27 October 2017 remain valid. If you have a redemption flight on airberlin booked for 28 October 2017 or later, or if the airberlin flight for which you hold a redemption booking is not operating, please contact your frequent flyer programme. airberlin topbonus cardholders have not been able to make redemption bookings for flights on any airlines since it filed for insolvency. Redemption flights made before then remain valid.
Earning frequent flyer rewards and tier status points	Most **one**world member airlines, other than airberlin, have indicated they will honour frequent flyer reward miles/points and tier status points earned for flights on airberlin by their frequent flyer programme members for a period, up to and including 27 October 2017. Refer to your frequent flyer programme for details. airberlin topbonus cardholders have not been able to earn frequent flyer tier status points or mileage rewards on any airline since its insolvency filing.

Lounge access	Emerald and Sapphire tier members of other **one**world airlines' frequent flyer programmes may continue to use airberlin lounges, in line with **one**world's existing arrangements, until the close of business in 27 October 2017. airberlin lounges will not be available as part of the **one**world offering thereafter. airberlin topbonus Platinum and Gold cardholders will be able to use the lounges of other**one**world member airlines until the close of business on 27 October 2017, in line with **one**world's existing arrangements. They will not be able to use these other airlines' lounges as part of the**one**world offering thereafter.
Other frequent flyer benefits	Members of all other **one**world airlines' frequent flyer programmes will continue to receive all other **one**world frequent flyer services and benefits (additional baggage allowances, priority check-in, boarding, waitlisting, etc) when they fly on airberlin until the close of business on 27 October 2017. Likewise, members of airberlin topbonus will continue to receive all other **one**world frequent flyer services and benefits when they fly on the other **one**world airlines until the close of business on 27 October 2017, when these services and benefits will no longer apply to them.

oneworld **fares and sales products (including Explorer, Circle, Visit fares, corporate agreements etc)**	All sectors on airberlin and NIKI booked and ticketed as part of a **one**world fare or sales product for travel before the close of business on 27 October 2017 remain valid. For sectors on airberlin thereafter, or if a ticketed airberlin sector scheduled for before then has been cancelled, please contact the **one**world member airline that issued the ticket. airberlin and NIKI sectors will not be available as part of any **one**world fare or sales product from the close of business on 27 October 2017.
Sectors on airberlin ticketed by another oneworld **member airline**	If you have been ticketed by another **one**world member airline for sectors on airberlin scheduled for departure on 28 October 2017 or thereafter, or for sectors on airberlin that will not operate before then, please contact the airline that issued the ticket.

About oneworld

oneworld is an alliance of some of the world's leading airlines, committed to providing the highest level of service and convenience to frequent international travellers. They include American Airlines, British Airways, Cathay Pacific, Finnair, Iberia, Japan Airlines, LATAM Airlines, Malaysia Airlines, Qantas, Qatar Airways, Royal Jordanian, S7 Airlines and SriLankan Airlines, and around 30 affiliates.

As part of **one**world, these airlines:

- Serve more than a thousand airports in 150 plus countries, with 14,000 daily departures.
- Carry some 550 million passengers a year on a combined fleet of 3,500 aircraft.

- Generate US$ 130 billion annual revenues.

oneworld member airlines work together to deliver consistently a superior, seamless travel experience, with special privileges and rewards for frequent flyers, including earning and redeeming miles and points across the entire alliance network. Top tier cardholders (Emerald and Sapphire) enjoy access to more than 650 airport lounges and are offered extra baggage allowances. The most regular travellers (Emerald) can also use fast track security lanes at select airports.

oneworld is the "most highly prized alliance" as current holder of:

- FlightStats' Airline Alliance On-Time Performance Service Award for 2016, for the fourth year running.
- Business Traveller's 2017 Best Airline Alliance for the fifth year running.
- Global Traveler magazine's 2016 GT Tested Reader Survey – for the seventh year in a row.
- Trazees' Favorite Airline Alliance, for the second time.
- Business Traveler North America's 2016 Best in Business Travel Awards, for the second consecutive year.
- World Travel Awards' World's Leading Airline Alliance 2016 for the 14th year running.
- Premier Traveler's Best of Travel Awards – for the third year running.

Raffles Europejski Warsaw a Beloved Icon Is Restored to

Warsaw



Warsaw, October 19, 2017 – Early 2018, Raffles Europejski Warsaw will open its doors to welcome a new chapter in an extraordinary history which spans 160 years.

In the heart of the city, on the Royal Route, neighboring the cobbled streets of the Old Town with its own high-end retail space; 106 timelessly elegant suites will come alive mixing bespoke furniture, oak floors, a corner library and a carefully curated Polish art by Anda Rottenberg and Barbara Piwowarska.

Proudly Polish, from the original 19th century cornicing, now restored, to the 21st century mural by Jarosław Fliciński specially commissioned for the Long Bar. The rich blend of Polish heritage, skilled local craftsmen and contemporary art at Raffles Europejski Warsaw is a narrative of the nation's history.

Built by Enrico Marconi in 1857 it quickly became enshrined in history, its glamorous New Year's Eve ball parties, immortalized in the Polish 19th century classic, "The Doll" by Bolesław Prus. In the 1880's, Polish artists such as Józef Chełmoński and Stanisław Witkiewicz had their studios there and the hotel resonated with fin-de-siècle glamour; its patisserie a well-known haunt of writers and poets. In the 20th century it witnessed Poland regaining its independence, the centenary of which is marked next year, before the devastation of World War II and the decades of communism that followed.

Chris Cahill, CEO AccorHotels Luxury Brands says: *"We are delighted to be opening the iconic Raffles Europejski Warsaw, such a landmark in the city of Warsaw, to which we will bring the legendary Raffles service, known for its benchmark standard across the globe, as well as a series of gastronomic delights, stunning ballroom and conference facilities, and a beautiful spa. The Raffles Europejski Warsaw will offer the visitor bespoke luxury and beautiful art-filled interiors, building on the past and preserving for the future as it opens for its next exciting chapter in the very heart of Warsaw."*

Restored to its rightful pre-war owners in 2005, a majority stake was later taken in the hotel by Vera Michalski-Hoffmann a publisher and patron of the arts. New owner shared the vision with the descendants of the founders to not only return to the Polish people a hotel as luxurious in the 21st century as it had been in its 19th century heyday, but to also create a showcase for the best of Polish modern and contemporary art.

Julien Barbotin-Larrieu, representing the owning company, H.E.S.A., explained their choice of Raffles to manage the property: *"With Raffles at the helm of the hotel, a brand synonymous with heritage and luxury, whose own illustrious history, began just thirty years after the Europejski's with the iconic Raffles Singapore, we feel confident about bringing a new level of luxury to Warsaw; one that is as much about the cultural experience as the comfort. Our aim is to provide a real sense of place, allowing guests to understand the soul of Poland by immersing themselves in the art, the gastronomy and the history which they will be surrounded with, on a level as yet unsurpassed in the capital."*

The 106 elegant guest rooms and suites will be the largest in the city yet, with the Raffles Suite a magnificent 293 sq.

meters. Interior design comes courtesy of Warsaw-based internationally acclaimed WWAA Architecture practice together with National Opera House stage designer Boris Kudlička and APA Wojciechowski team. WWAA's previous projects include the Polish Pavilion for Expo in Shanghai and they are known for an interdisciplinary approach with a focus on storytelling, a perfect match for Raffles Europejski Warsaw which is a grand story, rich with detailed narrative waiting to be unveiled. Drawing on the very Polish element of wood, floors come in blackened oak or in traditional marquetry, glossy veneer clads cupboard doors and brass adds turn-of-the century elegance. Furniture and lighting is mostly bespoke and commissioned from local craftsmen and designers. Running through the hotel are references to Warsaw, whether in the skyline of the city etched into the marble of the bathrooms or the River Vistula which cuts through it, represented in an art installation behind the reception desk. Previous eras of the hotel have not been forgotten with original cornicing and ceiling roses immaculately restored in the restaurant and the Spa, complete with six treatment rooms and the pool, housing a mosaic from the hotel's 1960's incarnation.

Spanish designers Lazaro Rosa Violan are spearheading the design of the Signature restaurant which will flow out onto the terrace of the magnificent Piłsudski Square, with the eternal flame of the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at its far side. Interiors will be a bold mix of blue and white referencing Polish pottery traditions. There will also be a Long Bar and a Humidor, complete with a patisserie to serve the much loved Polish cakes and pastries.

Born in Germany and brought up in Paris, the General Manager of Raffles Europejski Warsaw is Thomas Guss, the third generation of hoteliers in his family, who brings with him an experience in 5* star hotels that stretches from mainland China to Berlin.

Today, the iconic Raffles collection includes 11 distinguished

addresses around the world. In Europe, Le Royal Monceau, Raffles Paris is the most exciting palace hotel in the City of Lights, combining Parisian Chic with relaxed sophistication. Raffles Europejski Warsaw will set a new standard for luxury in the historical city while reinventing one of Poland's most iconic and best loved buildings. Raffles has also recently announced a partnership to complete its already stunning portfolio with an exclusive asset in London, transforming the Old War Office into a new British symbol of hospitality. This November, Raffles Dubai celebrates 10 years since opening its doors and welcoming its very first guests. Meanwhile Raffles Hotel Singapore, the iconic Grande Dame has announced that it will embark on a careful and sensitive restoration program.

About Raffles Hotels & Resorts

Raffles Hotels & Resorts is a luxury brand with an illustrious history dating back to 1887 when the world-renowned Raffles hotel first opened its doors in Singapore. Today, the remarkable collection includes eleven extraordinary properties in many of the world's best cities and top holiday destinations including favourites such as Paris, Istanbul, and the Seychelles. Many more exciting locations are also on the horizon with new hotels being developed in destinations such as Warsaw and Jeddah. Whether it's a secluded resort or a lively city-centre, each Raffles promises an oasis of calm and charm and a compelling mix of cultures and styles, and has its very own story to tell. Part of AccorHotels, a world-leading travel & lifestyle group and digital innovator offering unique experiences in more than 4,200 hotels, resorts and residences, as well as in over 10,000 of the finest private homes around the globe. Raffles is proud to draw on the timeless essence of Raffles – to deliver thoughtful, personal and discreet service to well-travelled guests.

For more information or reservations, please visit raffles.com

Impaired mobility doesn’t mean impaired experience, as Vision of the Fjords wins universal accessibility award from DOGA



Vision of the Fjords unlocks the jaw dropping beauty of West Norway’s fjords for everyone, regardless of mobility. That’s the message from the jury of this year’s Norwegian Centre for Design and Architecture (DOGA) Universal Design awards, which today chose the stunning hybrid electric vessel as the 2017 ‘transport’ winner for its commitment to optimal passenger accessibility, experience and environmental sustainability.

Owned and operated by The Fjords DA, Vision of the Fjords is as unique as the UNECSO World Heritage listed habitat it travels through. Designed to mirror the mountain paths that zigzag alongside the fjords themselves, the 400-passenger tourist vessel offers comfortable and accessible lounges, sweeping panoramic windows and low emission operations, with silent running electric motors carrying its carbon fibre hull through the spectacular Nærøyfjord. However, it’s the unparalleled functionality of the design, allowing all passengers to literally ‘climb’ over it, which really hit home with the DOGA

jury.

“We, and our owners Fjord1 and Flåm AS, are not only committed to safeguarding our fjords, but also to ensuring that absolutely everyone can enjoy an experience of a lifetime on board our vessels,” states The Fjords CEO Rolf Sandvik. “As such, we ensured that the ‘path’ passengers use to ascend the ship, and really immerse themselves in the sensory delights of the nature here, is as accessible to those in wheelchairs, or of limited mobility, as it is to all. There’s no stairs, no elevators, no obstructions, just a gently sloping surface leading everyone to unforgettable views.

“The recognition from DOGA is, of course, very pleasing, but the real prize is in seeing the reactions of the passengers who take one of the 700 yearly trips on Vision of The Fjords. They have the ability to lose themselves in, and really be a part of, the nature here – using the vessel, both inside and out, to connect to it in a way that has never previously been possible.

“We’re delighted to be able to offer this standard of environmentally responsible, high quality and accessible service to *all* visitors from all over the world.”

Designed and built by Norwegian shipyard Brødrene Aa, Vision of The Fjords was conceived with the aim of universal accessibility from the outset. Consultations during the build process ensured that all passenger groups would be accommodated, with the Norwegian Handicap Society bringing a user group on board once completed to test the concept worked as well in practice as in theory.

DOGA was equally as impressed as the users, with the jury commenting that the design was both “radical and ground-breaking”, addressing the mobility issue with true innovation and creating a vessel with the potential to become genuinely “iconic”.

The Fjords, with the financial backing of Fjord1 and Flåm AS, is now seeking to build on the success of the vessel with a new ship, Future of The Fjords, in 2018. This vessel shares the design of its predecessor but actually improves the experience and environmental performance, as Sandvik explains:



“Vision of The Fjords marked an important step forward for ourselves, and for all operators and passengers interested in environmentally responsible, accessible and high quality tourism. However, we have, and our world needs, even greater ambitions.”

He continues: “Our new ship, Future of The Fjords, replaces its sister ship’s diesel-electric hybrid solution with pure electric propulsion. This means absolutely zero emissions, zero noise pollution and the most immersive experience possible for passengers. Basically the ship will just ‘melt away’ as we pass through the fjord panorama, allowing those on-board to escape into the purity and magic of their surroundings.

“This marks the fulfilment of our vision. Showing the world that it is possible to open up natural beauty to all, while safeguarding it for future generations and still providing the optimal passenger experience today. This is truly sustainable tourism, designed for everyone to delight in.”

Vision of The Fjords sails between Flåm and Gudvangen, a 90-minute journey, and is the only tourist vessel in the region to operate year round – opening up the area in off-peak periods to expose the breath-taking beauty of Winter, Spring

and Autumn months. The Fjords operates a fleet of seven tourism vessels in the area, with the Future of The Fjords due to set sail in May next year.

The Fjords

The Fjords is dedicated to moving its passengers. Operating a fleet of seven tourism and transport vessels on the Western Norwegian fjords of Nærøyfjord, Geirangerfjord and Lysefjord, the company aims to connect customers not just to their destinations, but also to the unique natural beauty that surrounds them. The Fjords is co-owned 50/50 by Fjord1, Norway's largest ferry company, and Flåm AS, which works to promote Flåm's world-class tourism opportunities. www.thefjords.no

The Fjord1 Group

The Fjord1 Group is one of the major transportation companies in Norway. The core operational area for the company is sea-based transport, by ferries- and passenger vessels. In addition, the company has operations in relation to catering, travel agency and property management. Fjord1 AS is owned by Havila AS and the County council of Sogn and Fjordane. www.fjord1.no

Flåm AS

Flåm AS is a leading provider of tourist attractions in the fjords and mountains of western Norway and the global marketing and sales arm of the Flåm tourist business cluster including world class attractions such as the Flåmsbana railroad and The Fjords' cruises in UNESCO world heritage fjords. Flåm AS is owned by SIVA (a Norwegian state business development company), Aurland municipality and Aurland Savings

Bank. www.visitflam.com

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Amadeus Time Limits and Group Time Limits – new automatic tools for the booking process



LOT Polish Airlines introduces new automatic tools for the booking process: GTL (Group Ticket Limits) and ATL (Amadeus Ticket Limit). ATL is an improved version of the existing ARI platform that defines real-time

reservation limits.

After successful ATL and GTL tools tests the company is ready for implementation, which will take place on **October 18, 2017.**

From this point, in each group booking, the system automatically generates new OPW and OPC elements for Amadeus reservations and SSR ADTK and SSR OTHS for reservations in other systems, with information on limits for:

- name,
- ticketing,
- deposit,
- final payment.

In each individual booking additional elements (OPW/OPC – in Amadeus and SSR – in other systems) will apply only to the ticketing time limit.

LOT would like to emphasize that each reservation will be automatically cancelled if the limits are not met.

In addition to group bookings which contain deposits each time EMD must be sent to queues (for reservations in Amadeus) or email (for other GDSs) listed in the PNR. This is required to complete the deposit limit.

The implementation of GTL is the beginning of the LOT's path to complete automation of group handling processes. This is the first step before introducing another tool – AGM (Amadeus Group Management).

Click here for the presentation!

IHG® opens Europe’s largest Holiday Inn Express® in Cologne City Centre

InterContinental Hotels Group® (IHG®), one of the world’s leading hotel companies, announces the opening of Holiday Inn Express® Cologne City Centre, the largest Holiday Inn Express® in Europe.



The newly opened property boasts 323 rooms all featuring the next generation Holiday Inn Express design which balances home comforts with smart design features. Guests can enjoy sound absorbing headboards, bedside USB ports and flexible in-room working spaces. Free Wi-Fi and a continental breakfast buffet are also included in the room rate.



Ideally located, the hotel is walking distance to the Old Town or a short U-bahn ride to the famous twin spires of Gothic Cologne Cathedral tower. Within a short distance of Poststraße and

Severinstraße U-bahn stations, as well as Cologne Central railway station. If flying in or out, Cologne Bonn Airport is only 25 minutes' drive away.

Mike Greenup, Vice President, Brand Management for Holiday Inn Express commented: "At Holiday Inn Express we know what matters to our guests. Successfully delivering on that brand promise has enabled Holiday Inn Express to grow rapidly across Europe in recent years, and particularly in Germany. In 2017 alone we have opened 5, and signed 11, new Holiday Inn Express properties in Germany. The Holiday Inn Express Cologne City Centre is a great addition to that portfolio."



Sonja Comberg, General Manager, Holiday Inn Express, Cologne City Centre commented: "Holiday Inn Express is designed for savvy travelers who want a straightforward, uncomplicated experience, delivered in an engaging manner. We support guests without hassle, without complication, without extravagance – but always with a warm smile. We're extremely excited to open a new haven for travellers right in Cologne's city centre and look forward to welcoming our future guests."

There are currently 32 Holiday Inn Express hotels in Germany, and a further 29 in the development pipeline. In Europe, there are 239 Holiday Inn Express hotels with 60 in the development pipeline.

Across all brands, IHG now has a total of nearly 120 hotels open and in the development pipeline in Germany.

German Treasure Hunters Reportedly Claim to Know Whereabouts of Russia's Missing Amber Room



© SPUTNIK/ SERGEY VELICHKIN

German authorities have given a green light for an expedition to a group of treasure hunters who are convinced that the legendary Amber Room of the Russian Tsars that went missing after being looted by Nazi soldiers during World War II lies in one of the caves in the Hartenstein hills, near Dresden, The Daily Mail reported.

German researchers – 73-year-old Leonhard Blume, 67-year-old Guenter Eckardt and 71-year-old Peter Lohr – who claim to know where Russia's legendary Amber room worth over 266 million dollar is stored started thesearch for it after they were

allegedly contacted by a “reliable source”, who informed them on the whereabouts of the treasure.

Lohr said he scanned the soil in the Prince’s cave that was reportedly used by Nazi scientists with radar and found cavities resembling a bunker.

‘The hideout lies underground and above the railway line, where in April 1945 a train from Königsberg was stopped,’ the geo-radar specialist said, cited by the Daily Mail.

‘We discovered on a tree traces where the steel ropes were used to haul up crates. Geo-radar and dowsing measurements reveal a system of secret tunnels beneath the cave system itself,’ his colleague Guenter Eckart added.

Russia’s Long-Lost Amber Room Could be in Hands of Legendary Teutonic Knights

Commenting on the expedition, the President of Russia’s State Museum of Fine Arts named after Pushkin, Irina Antonova, noted that reports about the alleged discovery of the Amber Room appear every few months, but if the news is true, then the treasure should be returned to Russia, she argued.The Amber Room was created by German masters for the Prussian King Frederick I, and then presented to Peter I. In 1941, German troops stole the room from the Tsarskoye Selo Palace and took it to Königsberg.

Königsberg which is the historical name for the present-day city of Kaliningrad belonging to Russia, was at that time a part of Germany. The room was reportedly stored in a local castle, but after 1945 disappeared without a trace.

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The Extraordinary MCE South Europe 2017 was Successfully Delivered, Exceeding all Expectations



This week, the 3rd edition of MCE South Europe took place in Catania, Sicily, Italy. The forum has been brought to life already 3 years ago to showcase South Europe as a wonderful and resourceful MICE destination. Once more, a rich variety of South European MICE Solution Providers came to the island to represent their destination and build strong relationships with leading event planners keen on finding new business partnership.



This year, the event was hosted at the Four Points by Sheraton Catania Hotel & Conference Center. All participants were welcomed at Catania Fontanarossa Airport by the organizers Europe Congress, the Sicily Convention Bureau and event partner Incoming Italy DMC.



“We at Incoming Italy were excited to welcome all MCE South Europe guests to Sicily. As one of the leading Italian DMCs we are proud to have been part of this prestigious event and are always looking forward to offer a warm experience in our beautiful country. I can’t wait for all event planners and their groups to return to Catania for us to showcase all the fantastic possibilities that this incredible region has to offer.’’ tells Mr. Pedro Marugan from Incoming Italy DMC.

After the hotel venue arrival and the welcome reception at the property, the evening progressed to one of the Sicilian jewels, the city of Taormina, to spend a wonderful dinner time with sea view at the Hotel Villa Diodoro by Gais Hotels Group on their terrace and in their wonderful dining hall. The evening was made complete by thematic Dolce Vita entertainment brought by event partner Azimut.



Monday the 9th of October brought business generating pre-scheduled and matchmade B2B meetings, a presentation of all the participating South European destinations and of course a lot of networking activities. For the evening program Il Giardini de Villa Fago, an exceptional venue at the foot of Mount Etna, was chosen. All forum participants were offered a fabulous evening. A welcome reception in the beautiful gardens, a fantastic dinner with opera performances and traditional musicians, topped off by a little after party completed the days success.



Daniela Marino from Sicilia Convention Bureau said “It was a great pleasure and opportunity for us to have MCE South Europe and its participants in Catania, Sicily. We are very proud of the excellent proceedings of the event in which every partner was fully involved to achieve excellence. We hope all participants had the time to discover the beauty of our island and we’re confident to see successful MICE business as the result of it.”



Tuesday saw a keynote performance by event MC, Jonathan Bradshaw, delivering an updated version of his masterpiece: Meetology®: The fascinating psychology powering interpersonal communication. This highly engaging performance was followed by further B2B meetings and networking features as luncheons and coffee breaks. The event was formally closed through short speeches by the Sicily Convention Bureau and the organizing company, Europe Congress.



“The forum in Catania, Sicily was a great success. Together with all involved event partners we have offered all participants a very rich program. We’re happy to have been able to create so many new cooperation’s for new MICE business with South Europe as a destination and will think back with great pleasure about the created experience in Sicily.” Alain Pallas, Managing Director of Europe Congress said.

We are then very much looking forward to MCE South Europe 2018 that will take place in Thessaloniki in October 2018!

For more information and participation possibilities, please contact Europe Congress on: Email: info@europecongress.com or Telephone: +420 226 804 080

In the First Autumn Month airBaltic Carries a Record Number of Passengers



Riga. In September 2017, the Latvian airline *airBaltic* carried 342 645 passengers or 24% more than in the same period of 2016. For already the fourth month in a row it has been the biggest number of transported passengers in the airline's history. During the first nine months of 2017, *airBaltic* has transported a total of 2 688 016 passengers to its network spanning Europe, Scandinavia, Russia, CIS and the Middle East.

Martin Gauss, Chief Executive Officer of *airBaltic*: "This year we are showing great results and we are looking forward to the next year with excitement. In the future, we will grow further – with modernized fleet and extended route map we will be able to offer even better connectivity between the Baltics and the rest of the world. We are happy to take our passengers on this journey and offer wide variety of destinations."

In September, the airline performed 4 604 flights, or 16% more than in the same period of 2016. During the first nine months of the 2017 *airBaltic* has operated 37 663 flights.

The airline’s load factor, which represents the number of passengers as a proportion of the number of available seats, was at a level of 79.5% in September 2017. During the first nine months of 2017, *airBaltic’s* load factor was at a level of 77.9% and it once again is the highest in the history of the airline.

The 15-minute flight punctuality indicator for *airBaltic* reached a level of 85.2% in September 2017. This means that more than 85 of every 100 *airBaltic* flights departed at the planned time or with a delay of no more than 15 minutes. The flight punctuality indicator during the first nine months of 2017 reached a level of 87.1%.

	September, 2017	**September, 2016**	**Changes**
Number of passengers	**342 645**	276 899	+24%
Number of flights	**4 604**	3 968	+16%
Load factor	**79.5%**	77.0%	+1.5 percentage points
15-minute departure punctuality	**85.2%**	90.6%	-5.4 percentage points
	January-September, 2017	**January-September, 2016**	**Changes**
Number of passengers	**2 688 016**	2 228 096	+21%
Number of flights	**37 663**	32 995	+14%
Load factor	**77.9%**	75.9%	+2.0 percentage points
15-minute departure punctuality	**87.1%**	89.0%	-1.9 percentage points

For the summer season of 2018 *airBaltic* has added Malaga (Spain), Lisbon (Portugal), Split (Croatia), Bordeaux (France) and Gdansk (Poland). A complete schedule of *airBaltic* flights can be found on the company's homepage at www.airbaltic.com.

airBaltic operates direct flights from Riga to over 60 destinations. *airBaltic* offers convenient connections via Riga to its network spanning Europe, Scandinavia, the CIS and the Middle East. In addition, *airBaltic* also offers direct flights from Tallinn and Vilnius.