

Meeting

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Business Destination **Holland**

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Find out why Holland should be your next MICE destination

Rotterdam in the top ten Best in Travel - New stars: rating of Dutch hotels altered - A sneak preview at your future conference in the Netherlands - Utrecht: Healthy Urban Living - Brabant: southern pearl waiting to be discovered

‘I’m from Paris’,
she said. He smiled
and drank his wine.
‘Boston... but boy
do I love Amsterdam.’



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Dutch dynamics

This is the tenth issue of Meeting International. Since the first issue, published in 2011, we have made articles on many beautiful cities, interesting regions and other USPs of the Netherlands. One might think that, for such a small country, we have covered just about every aspect, but that is far from the truth. The Netherlands is an extremely dynamic country, and there are many developments taking place that are worth your while.

Did you know, for instance, that the Netherlands has a strong space industry? And that in 2018 the International Space University will be organising the Space Studies Program of the International Space University in the cities of Delft, Leiden, Noordwijk and The Hague, which will be attended by some 300 scientists from over 25 countries?

Or the fact that Lonely Planet has put Rotterdam on its list of the top ten Best of Travel cities of 2016? According to this travellers' guide this metropolis is 'a veritable open-air gallery of modern, postmodern and contemporary construction'.

Or that the multi-faceted Dutch creative sector, including design, architecture, music and fashion, has produced quite a few international players like Hella Jongerius, dj Hardwell, Iris van Herpen and Rem Koolhaas? Recently it was announced that the Mecanoo architects' agency, managed by Francine Houben, will do the renovation of the New York Public Library.

And of course, we must not forget to mention the source of all this creativity: the rich history of the Netherlands. In many cities and museums you can still experience the wealth of days gone by. This year, the focus is on Vincent van Gogh, by means of many exhibitions and events. In two years' time Piet Mondriaan will be in the spotlights. 2017 will see the 100th anniversary of the Dutch art trend De Stijl. In the past 25 years, the innovative impulse, started by De Stijl, is continued in the concept Dutch Design. In 2017 NBTC, in collaboration with partners, will put the Netherlands on the international agenda as cultural destination. So there are more than enough reasons to consider the Netherlands as an interesting destination!

Kind regards,
Team Meeting International

“The international guest knows what he gets.”

Ron de Bruijn, page 27

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Imagine: you can take a glimpse at a conference that you may want to organise in the Netherlands in future. Will you just proceed with the job at hand or rather spend a minute to take a sneak preview?

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Lonely Planet has put Rotterdam on its list of the top ten Best of Travel cities of 2016. “The Netherlands’ second-biggest metropolis is a veritable open-air gallery of modern, postmodern and contemporary construction,” according to the Lonely Planet.

18 Utrecht: Healthy Urban Living

A place where the ideals of a healthy and sustainable society become reality; where the citizens, entrepreneurs, scientists and local governments join forces to achieve solutions to improve the quality of life, regionally as well as globally. This place exists.

26 New stars

The rating of Dutch hotels, expressed in stars, is being altered. Does this mean that the entire system changes? Will other criteria play a role? In order to get answers to these and other questions, we consulted Ron de Bruijn of Hotelsterren, the organisation which now bears the responsibility for the star-classification.





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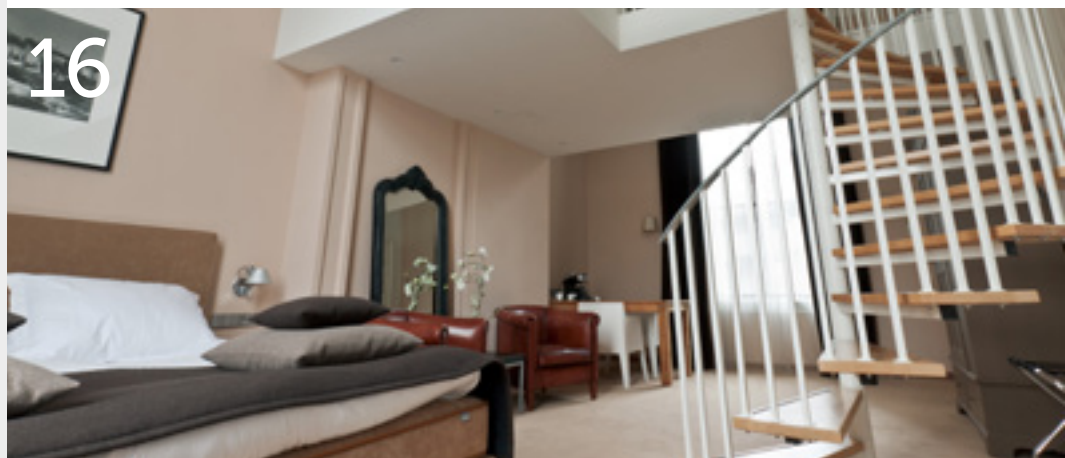
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COVER
The Wilhelmina pier in Rotterdam with, among other architectural eye-catchers, Hotel New York (middle), World Port Center (left. Sir Norman Foster), De Rotterdam (far left. Rem Koolhaas) en Montevideo (right. Mecanoo)

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30 Brabant: Southern pearl waiting to be discovered

The province of Brabant in the south of the Netherlands offers extensive ranges of open country, but also cities where history, industrial activity and innovation abound. Meeting Magazine lists a number of reasons why this province justifies more visits, now and in the (near) future.

44 Coastal conferences

Conferences, meetings, congresses, trade shows, you can organize them at many different locations. The variety of venues is really unlimited, from an estate in the middle of a forest to an ancient castle, from a former brewery to a tent. Each location has its very own attraction, and user group. The Netherlands can offer all these types of venues, but as a destination we have one big advantage (USP) over many other countries: our terrific coast.

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We also export knowledge



Visit our new brainport for your international
conference! conventions.holland.com



A sneak preview at your future conference in the Netherlands

Imagine: you can take a glimpse at a conference that you may want to organise in the Netherlands in future. Will you just proceed with the job at hand or rather spend a minute to take a sneak preview? The Netherlands Board of Tourism & Conventions wonders just how curious you are, now that it has launched its trendy conference portal: conventions.holland.com.

This new portal shows interested parties the most suitable Dutch cities as a venue for their conference. Options are largely determined by the presence of local expertise circuits. Eric Bakermans of the Netherlands Board of Tourism & Conventions (NBTC): "The

"The Netherlands are very cleverly organised with a focus on expertise."

Netherlands are very cleverly organised with a focus on expertise. Besides, initiators of conferences will be noticed soon in the Netherlands. Conference organisers

will achieve a programme with a strong focus on substance when they opt for the Netherlands."

EXPERTISE AND SUPPORT

Every Dutch city has its own distinctive expertise profile. As such, it is convenient to be able to locate the right expertise and support at a glance. This is why portal

The Dutch government has marked out 9 Top Sectors, with an aim to excel in and expand these sectors.

visitors first pick their Dutch 'Top Sector'. The Dutch government has marked out 9 Top Sectors, with an aim to excel in and expand these sectors. Bakermans: "Chemistry is one of these. That Top Sector is well represented in Maastricht and Rotterdam in particular. Likewise, Energy is a perfect fit for the profiles of Amsterdam and The Hague."

The portal shows matching conference cities for the field of expertise of your preference. And it will give you a real time impression of the environment, conference venues and knowledge flows by showing video or other footage, brief

THE NETHERLANDS BOARD OF TOURISM & CONVENTIONS

The Netherlands Board of Tourism & Conventions (NBTC) supports organisers of international conferences to nominate themselves and puts them in touch with a network of professional organisers. NBTC is funded by a government contribution of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and collaborates with relevant private trade parties. NBTC provides free, independent and expert services. For more information: please call +31 (0)70-370 5705 or email to congressen@holland.com.

explanations and maps. If you require more information, you will be linked to helpful parties that offer support and information with no strings attached.

START YOUR QUEST

All of this makes it very easy for you to imagine your options for a conference in the Netherlands. Moreover, you will soon discover the city that best suits your needs. Are you eager to learn about your future conference in the Netherlands? Be surprised at conventions.holland.com.

Rotterdam

City of ambition and innovation

Founded on a history of 400 years of successful trade and maritime activities, Rotterdam is today a young, multifaceted and dynamic city. This second city of the Netherlands is internationally acclaimed for its bold and contemporary architectural masterpieces including the Markthal and Rotterdam Central Station. The port and population that comprise no less than 174 nationalities create a unique open and cosmopolitan atmosphere.

Booming and bustling, Rotterdam is a forerunner in a number of areas. The people of Rotterdam have a roll-up-your-sleeves attitude and like to see results quickly. This makes Rotterdam a city that is characterised by ambition and creating and seizing opportunities. It is consequently the perfect place for anyone who wants to make something happen – also in the field of business events, congresses and incentives.



**ROTTERDAM.
MAKE IT
HAPPEN.**



← Cambridge Innovation Center

American-based Cambridge Innovation Center (CIC) is launching its first foreign branch in one of Rotterdam's major commercial centers, the Groot Handelsgebouw on Weena. Its goal is to attract approximately 550 innovative companies to establish themselves here within the coming 5 years, in order to consolidate and further expand its international network of innovators, investors and existing businesses.

CIC's CEO Tim Rowe says, "I'm amazed by Rotterdam's potential. It's not only an international transshipment port and the largest shipping port in Europe, but also home to some of the strongest universities in the region, and the work ethic here is incredible. Beyond all these things, Rotterdam is all about dynamics. And we're excited to be a part of them."

In the United States, CIC has developed a successful roadmap for innovation and entrepreneurship. The CIC will be bringing ideas, talent and funding together in the Groot Handelsgebouw, making it an appealing place for fast-growing start-ups looking to establish themselves in an environment in which they can fully focus on growth and development.

ROTTERDAM CONGRESS CITY

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- Has a compact city centre
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- Features modern congress facilities with a total capacity of up to 10,000 people
- Boasts more than 7,000 hotel beds
- Is home to renowned universities and institutions
- Is one of the world's leading regions in life sciences, agro food, logistics, chemicals, energy, architecture as well as maritime, offshore and delta technology
- Provides a varied leisure offering
- Is the 2nd Dutch association congress destination (ICCA ranking since 2009)

Rotterdam Partners Convention Bureau

Rotterdam Partners Convention Bureau will be pleased to provide you with independent, complimentary and professional advice regarding your organisation's congress.

For more information, please contact Jennifer Verheij (Account Manager)
j.verheij@rotterdampartners.nl

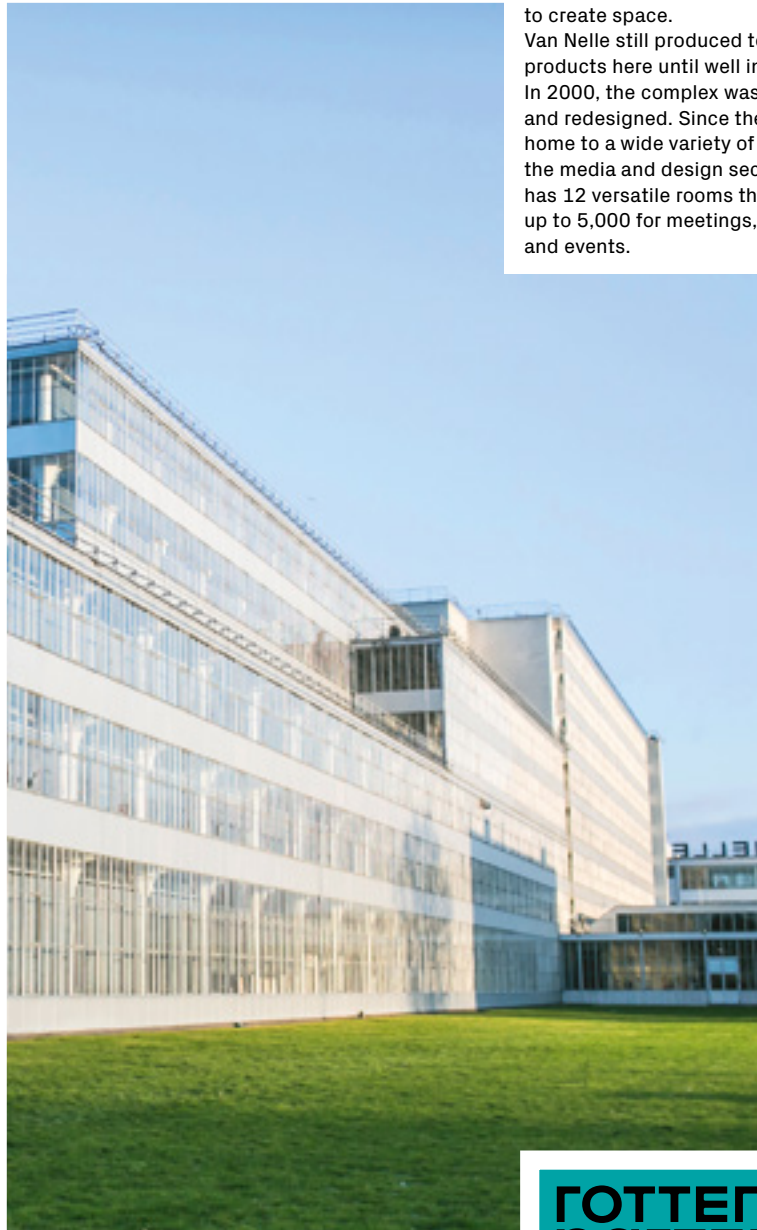
www.rotterdampartners.nl



↓ Van Nelle Factory

The former Van Nelle factory is the most prominent industrial heritage site in the Netherlands, and was recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2014. Built between 1927 and 1930, the building is a textbook example of the International Style architecture (*het Nieuwe Bouwen*). In this ingenious building, which was very innovative for its time, all facilities for the personnel had to be present, and the building was designed to be constructed entirely above ground to let in light and air and to create space.

Van Nelle still produced tobacco products here until well into the 1990s. In 2000, the complex was renovated and redesigned. Since then, it has been home to a wide variety of companies in the media and design sectors, and also has 12 versatile rooms that can host up to 5,000 for meetings, conferences and events.



↑ World Expo 2015

Rotterdam is preparing a bid to host the World Expo in 2025, an event that tackles global problems through innovation and cultural exchange. World Expo Rotterdam 2025 supports the move towards a new sustainable reality. A reality in which we restore and preserve what we have. The key question we want to ask businesses, governments and communities involved is: how do we create an economy that is not only greener and more resilient, but also fairer? For this reason, the theme of World Expo Rotterdam 2025 is **Changing Currents**. One of the proposed subthemes is **Deltas in Transition**. As a delta city, Rotterdam can show the world how it links its green ambitions to a strong economy. Bringing the World Expo to Rotterdam fits our constant drive for innovation and hands-on mentality perfectly.

**ROTTERDAM
PARTNERS**

Convention Bureau

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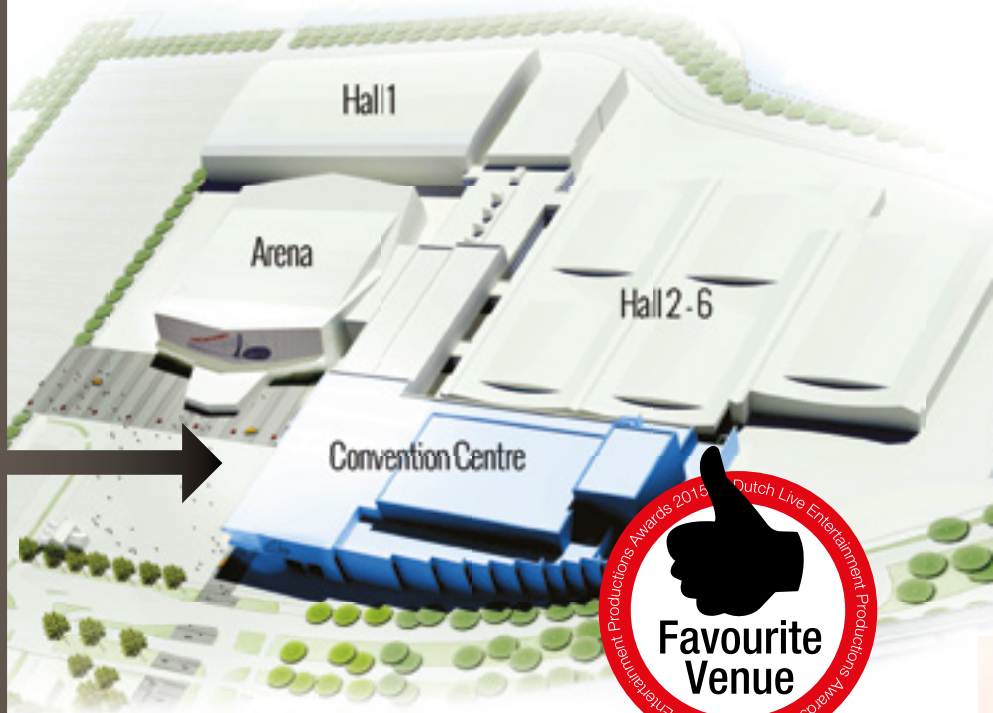
acoustic panels



orchestra pit



banquet restaurant



Great venue, great city

Ahoy is situated in Rotterdam, a city renowned for its bold architecture and can-do mentality. This not only means your congress visitors have a great place to venture into during their stay, the city offers even more possibilities for your event to surpass every and any expectation.

Welcome to Rotterdam!



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Rotterdam in the top ten Best in Travel 2016

Lonely Planet has put Rotterdam on its list of the top ten Best of Travel cities of 2016. "The Netherlands' second-biggest metropolis is a veritable open-air gallery of modern, postmodern and contemporary construction", according to the Lonely Planet.

Futuristic architecture, inspired initiatives such as inner-city canal surfing, a proliferation of art, and a surge in drinking, dining and nightlife venues make Rotterdam one of Europe's most exhilarating cities right now. All this and more is why Lonely Planet has the metropolis on the Maas at number 5 on its Best of Travel list.

According to the Lonely Planet, a number of "eye-popping recent openings" make Rotterdam a must-see city. The Markthal is specifically mentioned. The first indoor food market in the Netherlands, according to a spectacular design by architect Winy Maas (MVRDV), the Markthal attracted 8 million visitors just in the first year since it opened in 2014. The De Rotterdam on the Kop Van Zuid peninsula is also considered a must-see. This vertical city was designed by OMA, the architecture firm headed by Rem Koolhaas. The same firm also signed on for Rotterdam's latest architectural acquisition, the Timmerhuis. Featuring a

"cloud-like design", according to Lonely Planet, the building houses Museum Rotterdam, among other institutions, and will be opening its doors in January.

Rotterdam's innovative character is also acclaimed. According to the Lonely Planet, its innovative flair is expressed in daring, exciting transformations of underutilised urban neighbourhoods, in surprising water features designed to accommodate rain-water runoff, and intriguing, cutting-edge attractions like the upcoming RiF010, a channel for surfers in downtown Rotterdam.

"According to the Lonely Planet, a number of "eye-popping recent openings" make Rotterdam a must-see city."

The city's classics, like the iconic Hotel New York (the Holland-America passenger ship line's former HQ with timber-panelled suites in its old boardrooms) and the historic inner harbour of Delfshaven, are more than worth visiting, as the travel guide affirms.

"A fantastic compliment for Rotterdam," Mayor Ahmed Aboutaleb says in response

to making it into the Lonely Planet's top ten. "We're from Rotterdam, we'll keep going" appeared on a placard just days after the city was devastated by aerial bombing on 14 May 1940. This resolute motto in many ways typifies the character of Rotterdam and its inhabitants. It explains in my opinion how a buzzing metropolis was built literally on the post-blitz ruins. Today Rotterdam is a port city, where around 170 different nationalities help create an open and cosmopolitan atmosphere. And where the resolute perseverance of Rotterdam people still motors the city's continual push for innovation."

"It's a city where you can positively soak up the 'can do' spirit just about everywhere you go. And more and more people seem to be discovering its charms. Our city receives more and more international visitors every year, coming here for leisure or business. The fact that the Lonely Planet has put us in the top ten of its Best of Travel list is a well-deserved recognition of the hard work done by all the locals who built Rotterdam and made the city what it is today. And I look forward to welcoming you to Rotterdam in 2016."

www.rotterdam.info



So your guests can say 'Been there, done that'

"We think that each and every guest must return home with the best possible experience", says Brenda Kamphuis of De Rotterdam Tours, "that is why our guides know everything about a building, and we always visit spaces where others may not enter. Like the 40th floor of De Rotterdam."

As house partner of this 'vertical city' the tour organisation wants to deliver the best for each group, just like the bureau does for Markthal and the Timmerhuis. "We thrive on special wishes."

ARCHITECTURE WITH A BITE

Rotterdam is 'hot'. This is partly due to several remarkable architectural highlights. In November 2013, the De Rotterdam building designed by OMA/ Rem Koolhaas made the world press. One year later, the opening of MVRDV's Markthal broke all press records. Late 2015, the Timmerhuis, also by OMA, will open to the public. Eye-catching pro-

jects with sex-appeal. True icons that can be explored from bottom to top by guests of De Rotterdam Tours. In Markthal and the Timmerhuis this is always accompanied by a personal 'meet&taste' with one of the entrepreneurs.

ICONS TO ENRICH YOUR PROGRAMME

"Rotterdam is exciting. And we can't wait to welcome you and to show your guests around. Wherever you might organise your congress or meeting, we can arrange your social programme, city-excursion or break-out. We will make sure all your participants will experience their visit to Rotterdam as custom-made, complete and captivating. Often we combine icons, making use of sensational watertaxi rides or tuctucs. Speaker from within the architecture or food sector? We'll arrange it. Go down-under and enjoy bottom-up hotspots like Fenix Food Factory and Katendrecht? Call us."

EVENTS IN MARKTHAL

To be in Markthal feels like magic. Markthal comprises several venues. Hidden gems to

organise special events in, like De Wereld van Smaak. De Rotterdam Tours knows all ins & outs. "So please let us help you find the best location for your event, conference, cooking workshop, wine-tasting or afternoon drinks. Our only aim is to get appreciated as dedicated partner."

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- . exclusive tours in the 3 icons
- . collaborating partner Markthal, De Rotterdam, het Timmerhuis
- . partner Rotterdam Partners

www.derottterdamtours.nl



ss Rotterdam

The start of new memories

The ss Rotterdam, the impressive former flagship of the Holland America Line, has been renovated to its former glory. With its spacious and comfortable hotel rooms, meeting rooms, executive boardrooms, restaurants and more, the ss Rotterdam is as much an exceptional as an ideal location for a wide range of events. Although now permanently moored in the port of Rotterdam, the vessel has lost nothing of its attractions as a cruise ship.

MEETINGS AND EVENTS

Able to host meetings and events for up to 3,500 guests, the authentic and multifunctional Theatre and Grand Ballroom are perfect for, for instance, product presentations and congresses; the eleven executive boardrooms can also be used as temporary offices. The comfortable design furniture, relaxed atmosphere and cruise-like hospitality add an inspiring dimension to your (corporate) event. Let your personal party or event manager cater to your every need. The combination of top-quality cuisine and friendly and professional service at a venue with a stunning interior makes every event an unforgettable happening.

ENJOY WORLD-CLASS CUISINE

Conclude your day with an exquisite dinner at the Club Room fine dining

restaurant. Enjoy the epitome of luxury combined with outstanding hospitality in an authentic and stylish ambience reminiscent of the fifties.

"Everything you need to eat, drink, sleep, celebrate, meet and work is available on board."

Chef Rik Simonis and his team will delight your senses with culinary masterpieces that are contemporary interpretations of the finest international cuisine with a classic French twist.

4-STAR HOTEL

Stay overnight before or after your meeting or event in one of the 254 modern hotel rooms in the four-star hotel on board. All rooms are decorated in a fifties style. Each room has its own special theme that pays homage to the voyages the cruise ship made in days gone by. The rooms also feature a full range of modern amenities including a double bed, seating area, desk, laptop safe, minibar, flatscreen TV, free wifi, a Nespresso coffee machine and tea-making facilities.

The ship is easy to reach by car and public transport: the ss Rotterdam provides 580 lower deck parking spaces and a water taxi moors at the side of the ship.

There is no reason to ever leave the ss Rotterdam. Everything you need to eat, drink, sleep, celebrate, meet and work is available on board.

www.ssrotterdam.com



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nhow

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[NHOW-HOTELS.COM](https://nhow-hotels.com)

The Pincoffs Hotel Rotterdam:

Small riverside jewel

“City trip to Rotterdam? Trouw recommends The Pincoffs Hotel”. A recent review from the Dutch newspaper Trouw in their Rotterdam Special. Located on the quay of the Nieuwe Maas river in Rotterdam, The Pincoffs Hotel offers charm, comfort, quality and personal service. The small-scale four-star boutique hotel is established in a former Customs building, a national heritage building from 1879 in Rotterdam’s Kop van Zuid district.

From the hotel, guests can enjoy a beautiful view of the river, bridges, modern architecture and the fascinating skyline of Rotterdam. The Pincoffs Hotel is a romantic and sustainable hotel (Green Key Gold since 2010). It offers the ideal base for a weekend visit to Rotterdam.

PINCOFFS PINK FIZZ AT THE FIREPLACE

The elegant bar/lounge, with its wood-burning fireplace, offers a comfortable place where you can fully relax, enjoying, for instance, a delicious glass of their own

Pincoffs Pink Fizz. The hotel also offers an extensive library for books, magazines and DVDs. Access to the hotel is easy in many ways: the water taxi stop is located directly in front of the hotel; public transport is available at a short walking distance, and The Pincoffs Hotel offers ample parking space for your car.

BOUTIQUE HOTEL

The interior decoration of Pincoffs Hotel is a tasteful mix of design and antique, combining modern and classic elements.

For the design, the present owners were inspired by their many travels and in their previous occupations. ‘The divine Pincoffs is the baby of Karen Hamerlynck and her husband Edwin van der Meijde, former journalists who have turned an 1879 customs house into a smashing boutique hotel’, Wallpaper*Magazine wrote in their City Guide Rotterdam.

The creation of the hotel was broadcast for 43 weeks by the Dutch television station RTL4. On a weekly basis, viewers were taken along for the journey of the Hotel aan de Maas.

ORIGINAL & LUXURIOUS

The guest rooms and suites have all been furnished in a different way. Each is equally original, unique and luxurious in design, yet individual in terms of ambiance, size and interior. All rooms are provided with Auping boxspring beds. The bathroom amenities are from the designer brand Bvlgari. All the hotel rooms and suites offer free illy espresso coffee, free organic tea, tablewater and wifi.

www.hotelpincoffs.nl





ECC Leiden:

The perfect location for your next international congress

ECC Leiden is a unique and highly flexible 'black-box' location, boasting 2,700 m². Situated under one roof with Holiday Inn Leiden, ECC Leiden offers another 14 meeting rooms, 200 comfortable hotel rooms, a bar, a restaurant and a wide range of leisure facilities.

Because of our long hospitality experience in the industry, ECC Leiden executes any type of event or convention with great expertise.

ECC Leiden offers plenty of possibilities as a venue for your next event or conference, suitable for 25 to 2,500 delegates. Because of the 'black-box' concept, the function rooms are completely adaptable to your needs and wants. This allows us to transform the entire venue from a dazzling staff party to a pleasant and neatly organized hall for your public fair. For large (multiple-day) conferences we have more than enough space available. Within the plenary room of 1,775 m²

we can welcome up to 2,500 delegates. Furthermore, ECC Leiden offers a mezzanine (431 m²) that could, for example, be used for stands or VIP guests. There are 2 spacious foyers at your disposal (of 300 m² and 223 m² respectively), as well as two interconnected boardrooms.

"All events and conventions are entirely executed in full compliance with the needs and wants of the guest."

POSSIBILITIES

ECC Leiden has its own entrance, 4 service entrances, 12 emergency exits, spacious restroom facilities, 2 bars and a proper kitchen. Currently, it boasts 350 parking spaces, which will be extended in the (near) future. The combination of ECC Leiden and Holiday Inn Leiden ensures an endless amount of possibilities. Moreover, ECC Leiden can easily be accessed from Schiphol Amsterdam

Airport and all major cities of the Netherlands (thanks to highway A44 and public transport), and is situated across from the business district of Leiden (Leiden Bio Science Park).

NEEDS & WANTS

All events and conventions are entirely executed in full compliance with the needs and wants of the guest. Furthermore, ECC Leiden offers 'customized catering' and modern state-of-the-art technology and AV-facilities.

Other companies that were here before you include: Society for Event managers, the international congress of the 'African Studies Centre' on the Ebola crisis, exams and congresses from LUMC and Hogeschool Leiden, and musical events such as Q-music, DanceXperience, Ibiza Lovers and Hollands Live.

Event & Convention Center Leiden (ECC Leiden) is owned & operated by Holiday Inn Leiden (affiliated with InterContinental Hotels Group).



Utrecht:

Healthy Urban Living

A place where the ideals of a healthy and sustainable society become reality; where the citizens, entrepreneurs, scientists and local governments join forces to achieve solutions to improve the quality of life, regionally as well as globally. This place exists.

The city of Utrecht is in fact a unique hub: innovation and science flourish side by side with culture and history. Collaboration is common practice: an increasing number of coalitions is proof of this quality of Utrecht to the (corporate) market. With its young, highly educated population, Utrecht distinguishes itself from other regions in the Netherlands especially when it comes to talent and knowledge, in business life as well as in knowledge institutions. Welcome to Utrecht!

BIKE CAPITAL UTRECHT

The start of the Tour de France in Utrecht was an event of global proportions. Live coverage of the city and its surroundings were broadcast in 190 countries and in many

media the organisation was praised. Concurrently with the Grand Départ various parties worked closely together to organise several package deals for the corporate market in order to provide an optimal presentation of Utrecht's innovative qualities. The Grand Départ can be considered a blueprint for further collaboration in the city of the Dom cathedral.

For Utrecht, cycling is an important issue, seamlessly linked to its spear-heads green, healthy and smart. In the years to come, the city will invest in improving cycling routes and parkinglots. At the moment, for instance, the world's largest bicycle parking is under construction, able to accommodate 12,500 bicycles. It is no coincidence that at the Bikenomics symposium, which was held in Utrecht, the Dutch 'Fietzersbond' (Cyclists' Union) nominated the city for its Cycling city 2016 award, and that various internationally renowned media such as CNN more than once pronounced Utrecht the (best) Cycling city.

ECONOMIC COMPETITIVE POWER

Partly thanks to a strong and stable economic profile, the European Commission (EC), for the second time in a row, pronounced the region of Utrecht Europe's most competitive region. The special combination of globally renowned knowledge institutions, an exceptionally high level of education, the central location in the heart of the Netherlands and excellent corporate locations constitutes Utrecht's economic competitive strength.

The public-private collaboration Economic Board Utrecht (EBU) aims to reinforce this position by acquiring appropriate international knowledge events. In 2014, for instance, it was announced that the EBU had earmarked an investment package amounting to 1.3 million euros for organisers of knowledge events in the province. This applies to international congresses and meetings compatible with Utrecht's spear-head themes. The fact that the region attracts more and more international congresses provides Utrecht with the opportunity to present its reputation of green, healthy and smart region on an international level.

SUSTAINABLE MEASURES

Green is an important spear-head theme. Many of the innovative sustainable measures in the fields of energy, water, mobility and construction are tested in practice at the Utrecht Science Park. At this campus, the knowledge industry is concentrated, with institutions like Utrecht University, Utrecht University of Applied Sciences and University Medical Centre Utrecht, as well as internationally acknowledged institutes like Hubrecht Institute, TNO, Deltares, Fungal Biodiversity Centre (CBS-KNAW), SRON and RIVM. Apart from these, the campus comprises some 60 other organisa-

tions, half of which are active in the field of life sciences.

Within the domain 'Smart' Utrecht is actively developing innovative product-service combinations, based on the idea that present and future generations place less value on the possession of a product but look more for the fulfilment of a certain need. This offers opportunities for the ICT industry and the corporate and financial service providers, sectors with strong presences in the Utrecht region. With major knowledge institutions like the RIVM, TNO, KNMI, RVO, Utrecht University, the Universitair Medisch Centrum (Academic University Center) and the Hogeschool Utrecht (College of Higher Education), Utrecht boasts the highest density in knowledge services in the Netherlands. Apart from that, Utrecht is a lively city of culture, with many festivals and events. This dynamic mixture of knowledge and culture shows Utrecht as an inspiring place that enriches and enhances the exchange of knowledge.

LUSTRUM YEAR

The anniversary of the Universiteit Utrecht (380 years) will be celebrated in a grand manner, with a special dies feast, and many festive and spectacular activities organised

by students' unions in the months thereafter. Most of these activities are open to the general public, by which the university shows its engagement with the city of Utrecht. Apart from that, various leading parties celebrate important lustrums, including the Jaarbeurs (100 years), Uithof (55 years) and the Hubrecht Instituut (100 years). For the programme various parties work closely together to present Utrecht more explicitly as 'smart' city.

THE UTRECHT CONVENTION BUREAU

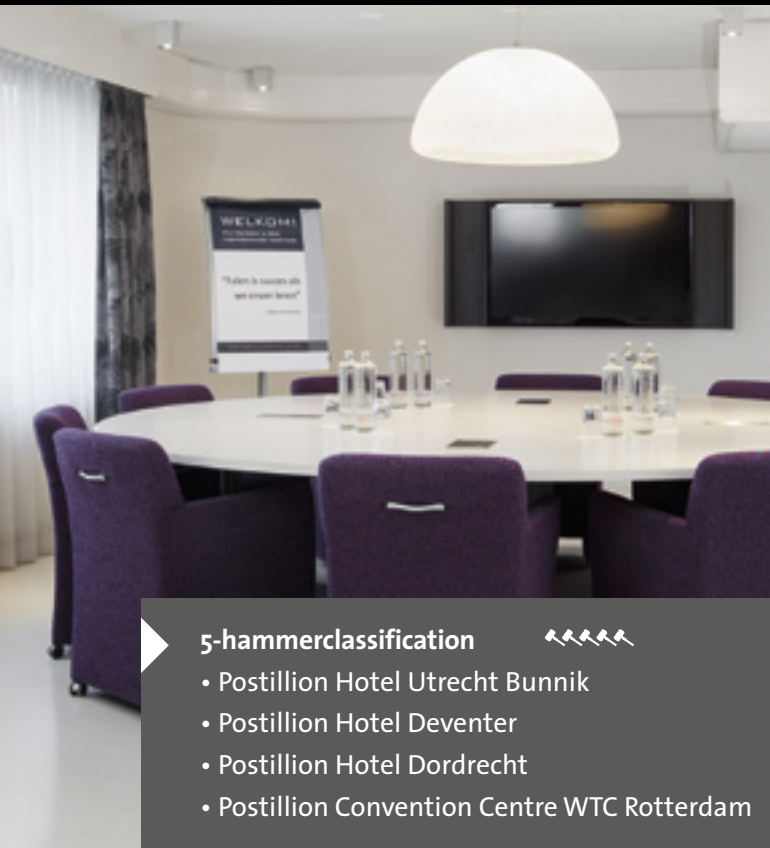
The Utrecht Convention Bureau (UCB) is a neutral and independent partner aiming to promote the city of Utrecht as (inter)national congress destination. To this end, the Bureau supports initiators of international scientific congresses in their efforts to attract their European or global congress to Utrecht. This support is done by means of the congress stimulation package, consisting of advice regarding the locating of larger and smaller meetings in Utrecht. This is combined with advice on marketing, promotion, possible subsidies and co-ordination of presentations. Apart from that, the UCB has a bid fund and a stimulation fund. All UCB services are free of costs.

www.utrechtconventionbureau.com





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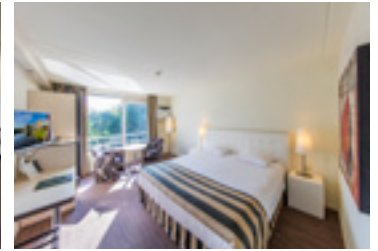
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Stadskasteel Oudaen

Oudaen, a 13th century stronghold city castle (stadskasteel), is the perfect venue for meetings and formal gatherings. A convenient location in the heart of the city of Utrecht, at walking distance from the central railway station. Furthermore, Amsterdam Airport (Schiphol) is just a 30 minute travel from Utrecht.

After your meeting we gladly welcome you for a taste of our home brewed beer, either in our Proeflokaal (grand-café) on the ground floor or as a tour through our Steam beer brewery (reservation required). Next, you can enjoy a refined dinner in Restaurant Oudaen on our first floor, or in one of our exclusive rooms. Furthermore, Oudaen joins hands in entrepreneurial sustainability and social responsibility together with Green Key!

FACILITIES

- Restaurant Oudaen (1st floor): dinner
- Beer brewery: tours and exclusive informal gatherings
- Proeflokaal (Knight's hall, ground floor): drinks, lunch and dinner
- City centre: yes
- Accessible by public transport: yes
- Number of banquet rooms: 6
- Maximum number of guests (reception): 200.

www.oudaen.nl

Naturally Mitland

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Nestled in a picturesque city park on the outskirts of the historic city of Utrecht lies the luxurious Hotel Mitland. With its prime location close to major traffic arteries and the city centre, this multi-faceted hotel is the ideal setting for your visit to Utrecht. Hotel Mitland is a genuine family business, where a high service level, warm hospitality and an informal ambience go hand in hand.

The combination of 141 luxuriously furnished hotel rooms and 14 multifunctional meeting rooms – all enjoying natural daylight – makes Hotel Mitland a favoured location for meetings and conferences for up to 250 people. And with extensive facilities including a swimming pool with sauna, its own bowling alley and a restaurant with two terraces, the four-star hotel also offers everything you need for a perfectly relaxed stay. The meeting rooms feature comprehensive modern facilities, including state-of-the-art audio-visual equipment. Some of them even have beautiful terraces with photogenic views over the peaceful waters of Fort De Bilt. What is more, at Hotel Mitland your stay is truly green: thanks to a host of environmentally friendly initiatives the hotel has proudly held the coveted golden Green Key certificate – the premier eco label for the tourism sector – since 2012.

www.mitland.nl



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Our ultimate goal: successful meetings

Located in the Utrecht region, the Carlton President is a luxury 4* business hotel. Its ultimate goal is to make every meeting successful. Ideally situated near various arterial roads and just a few minutes' drive from Utrecht city centre, the hotel prides itself on providing the perfect business destination always exceeding the expectations of its guests.

Meeting any possible demands concerning comfort, inspiration and connectivity, the Carlton President manages "to combine the personal attention required by guests with the efficient handling of the assignment", says General Manager Bart Blikman. "We welcome the trainer or keynote speaker of a meeting and together we will ensure that the day runs perfectly. The conference team then extend this personal attention and service to the participants or other meeting guests to create the perfect working environment - that is what Carlton President is known for."

MEETINGS, MEETING AND CONNECTING

The nine multifunctional rooms at the hotel are frequently used by a wide vari-

ety of industries accommodating guests from both the Netherlands and around the world. Able to accommodate meetings from 4 up to 300 delegates, each congress room at the hotel offers a range of business features – the largest of which at 265 square metres offers both uninterrupted meeting space and a 6 metre ceiling height for the ultimate conference destination.

Apart from the function rooms, there is also the possibility to use the President's business centre facilities with its range of complimentary coffee, office facilities and free wifi. "We invite our guests to network with each other and to share experiences. The unexpected is sometimes the most exciting; you often find the piece of the puzzle that you were missing."

FOODBOOK, EAT WHEN YOU WANT

Guests who wish to extend their stay, can be accommodated in one of the hotel's 164 rooms, famous for their uber comfortable Topperbox beds. For breakfast, lunch or dinner, the Garden Brasserie is the place to be with a selection of delicious international dishes available from the innovative FoodBook throughout the day. Possibilities for guests who wish to explore are also abundantly present in the nearby Utrecht

ABOUT CARLTON PRESIDENT:

- 164 Rooms
- 9 Multifunctional rooms with private dining areas
- Free wifi throughout the hotel
- Bar & Brasserie
- Business centre with complimentary work spaces, coffee and office facilities
- Leisure: billiard room, table football and darts
- Wellness: Jacuzzi, sauna, Turkish steam bath, solarium and fitness
- Complimentary shuttle service from Maarsse Train Station, as well as to and from various office locations
- Located on the A2 motorway. 22 minutes' drive from Schiphol Airport and 10 minutes' drive from Utrecht city centre
- Spacious parking lot for 250 cars, including charger facilities for electric-powered cars.

city centre, as is relaxation in the hotel's very own wellness and leisure centre.

The bar is located in the President's Exchange lounge and here the attentive nature of the bar manager generally receives high praise from hotel guests. "Perfectly matching the hotel's philosophy", says Blikman, "We want every guest to feel special."



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New stars

The rating of Dutch hotels, expressed in stars, is being altered. Does this mean that the entire system changes? Will other criteria play a role? In order to get answers to these and other questions, we consulted Ron de Bruijn of Hotelsterren, the organisation which now bears the responsibility for the star-classification.

MEETING MAGAZINE: WHY THE CHANGE?

Ron de Bruijn: Up until 1 January 2015, every accommodation providing stay-over facilities was required by law to register with the Dutch trade organisation Horeca en Catering and obliged to subject itself to classification. For this, each hotel paid a compulsory contribution based on levies. The trade organisation did the audits and awarded the stars. It also provided the shields on loan and maintained the standard system.

MM: WHAT WAS THE REASON FOR THE CHANGE?

RdB: Late 2014, all product and trade organisations were abolished, including the trade organisation Horeca en Catering and the compulsory participation in the hotel classification. After market research, Koninklijke Horeca Nederland (Royal Dutch Hotel and Restaurant Union, KHN) submitted a request with the trade organisation to be permitted to continue the Nederlandse Hotel Classificatie (Dutch Hotel Classification, NHC). This request was granted, and the trade organisation transferred the NHC to the KHN, including the ownership of the star-shields.

MM: ARE ALL HOTELS PARTICIPATING VOLUNTARILY IN THE CLASSIFICATION?

RdB: So far, over 800 hotels have applied, and counting. More than 80% wants to keep its stars, and about half changes to the European classification. Hotels that have not yet applied, can do this via aanmelding@hotelsterren.nl

MM: WILL THE NEW CLASSIFICATION BE MUCH DIFFERENT FROM THE OLD? HOW, AND BY WHOM, WILL IT BE MAINTAINED, EXECUTED AND AUDITED?

RdB: For several years now, KHN as a member of Hotrec, has had the ambition to apply in a European connection, the internationally recognised and harmonised standard of the Hotel Stars Union. Now that the standard has been definitively established and many hotel managers have expressed an active interest, this is the right moment to start its implementation in the Netherlands. KHN has appointed the Centrum voor Publieke Innovatie (Center for Public Innovation, CPI) to execute the existing Dutch and the new European classification. With its organisation, the CPI takes care of all

“So far, over 800 hotels have applied, and counting. More than 80% wants to keep its stars, and about half changes to the European classification.”

that is necessary for the classification of the hotels, the registration and publication, the further development of the standards. This is done under the name of Hotelsterren.

MM: WHY IS THIS AN IMPROVEMENT COMPARED TO THE OLD SYSTEM?

RdB: For each star-level the new standard has a Superior variety. With this, a hotel that has extra facilities, can distinguish itself within a category by means of the predicate ‘3 stars Superior’, for instance. That is internationally recognised.

The new standard also has more free levels for innovating hotel concepts. Take, for instance, a hotel with a bit smaller rooms but with extremely luxurious beds and many general amenities, this can now be

awarded 4 stars. This will certainly appeal to the modern-day traveller.

Finally, the European standard is more modern in language and facilities than the Dutch. For instance, payment by means of the ‘chipknip’ has been removed.

In order to facilitate the transfer, in 2016 hotels have the possibility to opt for the Dutch or the European classification.

MM: MUST HOTELS HAVE THEMSELVES ‘RE-EXAMINED’?

RdB: The European standard, for instance, comprises 270 norms, 80 of which are mandatory and 190 optional, the Dutch standard has 197 norms, 55 of which are mandatory and 142 optional. There is more freedom of choice in the European standard. These differences should be assessed and established on location. So hotels are assessed when they apply for the new European standard. This assessment has a period of validity of 4 years. This is not different from the Dutch standard.

At the moment, Hotelsterren is performing the first test classifications with interested hotels for the European classification.

This will provide a general picture of the compatibility of the European standard with the Dutch market. As holder of the standard, KHN has the authority to discuss with the sector any local deviations that apply to all. Hotels will sit on a users’ platform that will advise on this.

MM: WHAT WILL BE THE IMPACT ON THE INTERNATIONAL MARKET? WILL THE NEW SYSTEM PROVIDE MORE TRANSPARENCY?

RdB: With the new system, a star-hotel in, for instance, Germany, (or 1 of the 15 other participating countries) certainly has a comparable level of facilities. The international guest knows what he gets. The official stars prevent the opportunism you sometimes see in the market. In 60% of online bookings, the guest will look at the number of stars. The website Hotelsterren.nl has an up-to-date list of each participating hotel and its number of stars.

The new European standard provides room for distinguishing features and innovation. What remains, is objectivity, transparency and assurance for the guest and the travel sector.

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majestic historical gates into this intimate sanctuary. Greeted by champagne and warm hors d'oeuvres combined with its distinct atmosphere...an experience bound to remain in every guest's memory.

WHAT SETS US APART?

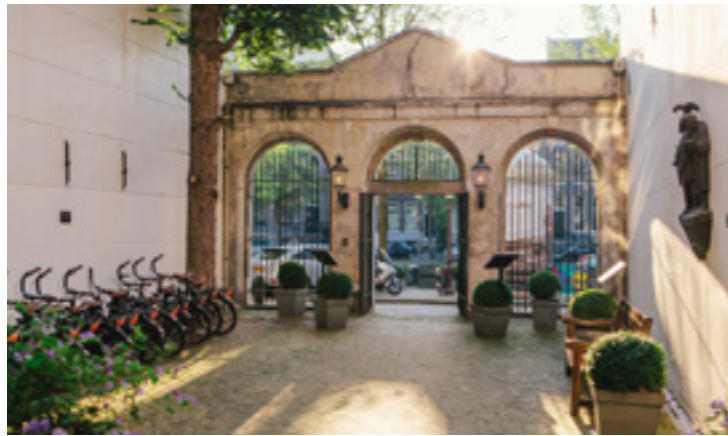
- Exclusive use possibilities; reserve the whole hotel, including 40 individually designed rooms, 3 event spaces, Bar-Brasserie and Michelin awarded restaurant for your group only.
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Southern pearl waiting to be discovered

The province of Brabant in the south of the Netherlands offers extensive ranges of open country, but also cities where history, industrial activity and innovation abound. Meeting Magazine lists a number of reasons why this province justifies more visits, now and in the (near) future.

In the Netherlands the province of Brabant is known as the region where life is enjoyed and hospitality is king. This is proved by, for instance, the historic provincial capital Den Bosch. Here you can make a cruise on the Binnendieze river or participate in a guided tour during which you can learn all about the many

historical features, after which you can relax in one of the many restaurants while enjoying local culinary specialties. One of these is the so-called 'Bossche Bol', a round puff filled with whipped cream and covered in dark chocolate. Later this year, a food hall will be opened where apart from getting the daily groceries, fresh products and luxury products, the customer can also visit one of the coffee shops, lunchrooms or the restaurant.

One of the must-see objects is the Jheronimus Bosch Art Center, located in the former Saint Jacobs church. In this museum replicas of paintings by the religious artist Jheronimus Bosch are shown, who from 1450 until 1516 lived and had his workshop at the Markt (market place) in Den Bosch. 2016 will see a special manifestation including various events as well as an oeuvre exhibition for which several panels from various international museums will be on loan. Apart from that, thorough scientific research is performed on the complete works of Bosch, this has even led to the discovery in a private collection of a so far unknown drawing which is now attributed to the painter.

HIGH-TECH AND DESIGN

To the south-east of the city of Den Bosch lies Eindhoven, the fifth largest city of the Netherlands. Eindhoven is the cradle of Philips, the Dutch electronics concern which in 1891 started as a factory where lightbulbs were produced, but grew into an innovative multinational specialised in lighting products, consumer electronics and medical apparatus. Thanks to the presence of the Technische Universiteit Eindhoven, this city yields many innovative high-tech developments. Strijp-S, the former industrial zone of Philips, now accommodates various office buildings, artists' workshops, exhibition spaces and other cultural initiatives, and offers room for several creative companies and concepts. An other interesting field is the focus on design and industrial design. Many well-known Dutch designers, for instance Piet Hein Eek and Hella Jongerius, got their degree at the Design Academy Eindhoven. Design is also the central theme during the annual Light festival GLOW, which takes place in November. Various artists will decorate the inner city of the 'Lichtstad' (City of Light, Eindhoven's aka) with a variety of artistic light objects that can be admired by walking a special route.

"One of the must-see objects is the Jheronimus Bosch Art Center, located in the former Saint Jacobs church."

RETAIL AND LOGISTICS

An other region with a specific profile is Veghel, where retail and logistics are the main industries. This region has an excellent infrastructure, which attracted a large number of national market leaders and multinationals, such as Kuehne + Nagel, DHL, FrieslandCampina and Mars Incorporated. The city of Veghel itself is part of the region North-east Brabant, which has the ambition to become the Netherlands' Agrifood Capital in 2020. In order to achieve this goal, entrepreneurs, governments and educational institutions collaborate in concrete projects and programmes. Especially the spear-heads Agrifood and Hightech are



VINCENT VAN GOGH IS ALSO IN NOORD-BRABANT

To commemorate that 125 years ago, Vincent van Gogh died, the year 2015 was pronounced the Van Gogh Year 2015. This is an initiative of the founding partners of the Stichting Van Gogh Europe: Van Gogh Brabant, the Van Gogh Museum, the Kröller-Müller Museum and Mons 2015. In collaboration with the partners at the Van Gogh locations in Belgium and France they compiled a varied cultural programme to commemorate Vincent van Gogh in 2015. As Brabant is where Vincent van Gogh's cradle stood, throughout the year various activities will be organised at the Van Gogh heritage locations Zundert (Vincent van GoghHuis), Etten-Leur (Van Gogh Informatiecentrum De Kosterwoning), Tilburg (Vincents Tekenlokaal), Nuenen (Van Gogh Village Nuenen) and Den Bosch (Het Noordbrabants Museum). The latter location is the only museum in Brabant exhibiting original works of art by Vincent van Gogh, including the farmers' wives from De Aardappeleters (the Potato Eaters), the vicarage of this father and the unspoiled Brabant landscape. www.vangoghbrabant.com



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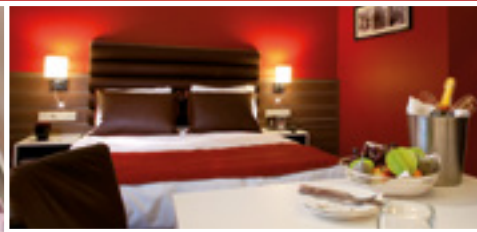
1931 is a national historic landmark that once housed the biggest indoor cattle market in the Netherlands, today it serves as an advanced and state-of-the-art convention center. The capacity of the convention center can be easily enlarged by incorporating the adjacent Brabanthallen 's-Hertogenbosch complex, resulting in a combined space of 44.000m²!

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Helga Aerssens and
Marieke Hendriks,
Convention Bureau Brabant

CENTRAL LOCATION

The province of Brabant has a central location in the Benelux countries and is close to the German border. The province has an excellent network of various highways, providing, for instance, a fast link to the city of Amsterdam. From Amsterdam Schiphol Airport there is a fast railway connection to the city of Breda. Thalys and ICE provide fast access by rail from the neighbouring countries. At Eindhoven Airport direct flights from various European cities land, as well as from Egypt, Morocco, Turkey and the Canary Islands. In 2020, the airport can more easily be reached by new exits and roads connecting to the city itself, the region, the highways and the Brainport Industries Campus (BIC). The airports of Rotterdam/The Hagues, Amsterdam Schiphol, Zaventem, Düsseldorf and Weeze are all at less than 90 minutes by car.



very interesting subjects for the organisation of (international) congresses in Brabant. Knowledge transfer can also be stimulated by means of company visits or expert speakers.

REMARKABLE LOCATIONS

The province has an enormous variety of venues and accommodations for the organisation of corporate meetings. From country mansions in a wonderful green environment to industrial or modern locations in city centers. Apart from that Brabant boasts many remarkable venues for events or private dinners, for instance a castle, church, wood cabin or a museum where you are surrounded by an exclusive collection of oldtimer cars.

The variation of extended nature reserves with urban areas makes for many excellent combinations of a social programme

and a corporate meeting. Such as a visit to the Dutch Design Week, GLOW or the De Efteling theme park. Here, in the largest theme park of the Netherlands, the focus lies on fairy-tales. These are expressed in the authentic Sprookjesbos (Fairy-tales forest) as well as in the many modern rollercoasters.

Many travellers and visitors have yet to discover the province of Brabant, but are pleasantly surprised after a stay. You will not find any tourist shops in Brabant, which makes you feel very much amongst locals. Because the province is relatively small, the unique locations are within easy reach. What is more: the price-quality ratio of the venues is very favourable compared to the Randstad region, the big cities in the west of the country. The Convention Bureau Brabant will be happy to tell you all about the many possibilities on offer in this province.

ABOUT CONVENTION BUREAU BRABANT

The Convention Bureau Brabant has many partners that can perfectly take care of the organisation of a congress or other corporate meeting. Partners include accommodations (mainly four-star hotels), venues (exchange buildings, churches, castles, country mansions, museums, industrial locations) and suppliers like catering companies, as well as DMCs. Apart from that the bureau is well represented in various high-grade networks which enables it to realise knowledge transfer, and can give meaning and content to corporate meetings.

www.conventionbureau brabant.nl/eng

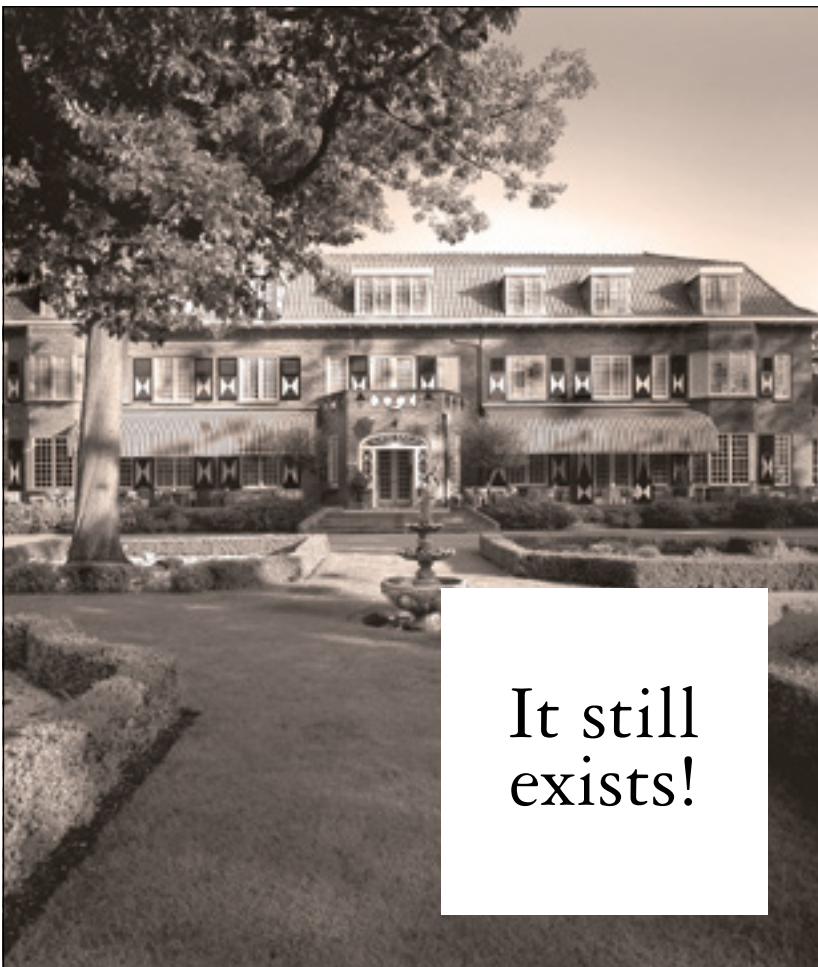
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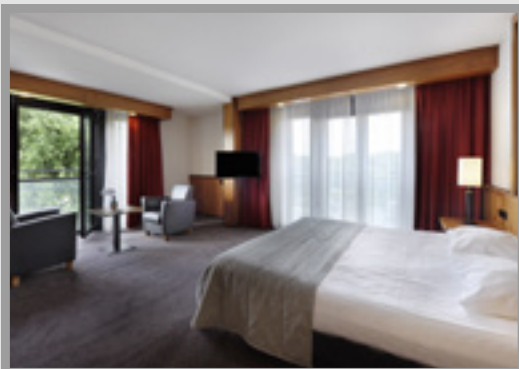




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The multifunctional 900m²-large conference room has a free span and a ceiling height of over six metres. 040 Congress & Events is eminently suitable for various types of meetings and events. The convention centre has references to the rich history of Eindhoven throughout.

The facilities are of the highest quality standards, which has resulted in the 5-star quality meeting venue classification. Hotel Eindhoven positions itself in the high-end business segment.

In addition to the 270 rooms and suites, the hotel offers three culinary concepts, i.e. the atmospheric à la carte 'Restaurant Martinus', Live Cooking Restaurant 'Het Buffet', and the trendy and modern 'OZZO Sushi & Lounge'. The hotel also has a casino, while the extensive sports and wellness centre will take care of mind and body.

23 meeting rooms | 2 - 2500 people | Greenkey Gold | 5-star quality meeting location | Free WiFi | Modern audiovisual equipment | 3 restaurants | Directly on the A2 / A67 highway and close to Eindhoven Airport | 270 hotel rooms | Free parking | Located in the Brainport region, next to High Tech Campus

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-  To Rotterdam The Hague - 93 minutes
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The competition gets fiercer

What is the opinion of foreign PCOs, Convention Bureaus and international associations regarding the Netherlands as a congress venue? Angelique Lombarts and Nicolette van Erven consulted some of the parties concerned and got quite a lot of feedback.

This was presented in six discussion theses to the participants of the fourth Congress by design Debate which was held in the Nationaal Militair Museum at Soest. The general message was clear: the competition is getting fiercer and the Dutch congress sector will have to better present itself, if it does not want to miss out.

MATERIAL FEATURES

The first question/thesis chairperson Angelique Lombarts asked the foreign parties, was about the main

AT THE TABLE:

- Chair: Angelique Lombarts, AloAconsultancy
- Eric Bakermans, NBTC
- Monique André de la Porte, Utrecht Convention Bureau
- Bart Klaver, Den Haag Marketing
- Joyce Wittelaar, Rotterdam Partners
- Marc Horsmans, Amsterdam Marketing
- Marlies Steinebach, Amsterdam RAI
- Kirsten Vosmer, World Forum Den Haag
- Vera Gouw, Nationaal Militair Museum
- Jeanette van Namen, JvN Congresmanagement
- Nicolette van Erven, Congress by design
- Monique de Brabander, Congress by design

reason for choosing the Netherlands as venue for the organisation of a congress. Apparently, the material reasons were decisive, with an important role for the infrastructure. The excellent accessibility of the cities, the vicinity of airports with connections to a large number of destinations. An other material factor was the high level of quality of the hotels. Also mentioned was

the fact that many cities have sufficient international appeal and dynamics. Eric Bakermans was not surprised. "Each developed country has these facilities to win congresses and other large-scale meetings. The attendance of a sufficient number of delegates is also important, but certainly not unique for the Netherlands." "This result makes me proud", said Marlies Steinebach. "The material reasons in the form of facilities and products must be adequate to be able to realise a congress. Obviously, we more than meet these requirements."

EMPHATIC FACULTY

The attendees mentioned an other issue: immaterial aspects, including areas like hospitality, emphatic faculty and understanding of the nature of the business would, for the parties, constitute a reason to not choose for The Netherlands. Steinebach recognised this. "I know that concrete mistakes have been made in this field. I admit that in the past I also underestimated this process. To name a specific case: I had been quoting for five years. When the end of the bid came into sight, it went wrong because we assumed we were going to win. We underestimated the process. What is also not really helpful, is the self-confidence we sometimes display, which sometimes can wrongly be interpreted as arrogance." Bart Klaver agreed: "Apart from the fact that we come across as rather direct, we are also quite outgoing. This is also apparent when we attend trade shows and talk to everybody. On the one hand, this is our strength, but on the other I can imagine that this creates a forceful, almost arrogant image to the public." According to Bakermans, this does not have to be a problem when approaching the corporate market, but in general, the association market is a bit more demure. There, you must remain in constant touch right until the end of the bidding procedure. "At the end of the line, one person can spoil it all. You must certainly not underestimate this person." Steinebach agreed: "Self-assurance in itself can help you in the discussion with the congress organiser. But a board with which no personal contact was established can not appreciate an attitude that is too laconic or amicable. You really have to watch this."



Marc Horsman

QUANDARY

Horsmans agreed, but also knows from experience that clients will not take advice. "And then you are in a quandary. As destination, you want to discuss the various possibilities with the client, but this does not work when this party is not prepared to listen to you but does tell you exactly what to do. You must work this out together."

Kirsten Vosmer recognised this: "Sometimes a client is surprised when I ask what the congress is all about. That is no great basis for a discussion. Because although you may have all material facilities in perfect order, if you do not know what the theme of the congress is, you can not adapt these to perfectly suit the event."

"I sometimes see that the client has not considered certain aspects of the event", Klaver indicated. "Or that within the association, there is a certain problem which can be revealed by means of direct questions. This may be regarded as inquisitive, nosy, but we just want to have a clear picture."

APPROACHING THE CLIENT

How to approach an association in a bid procedure and the arrangements for a congress is and remains a delicate process. The attendees admit that they have gained some experience in this field, but also indicate that there is room for improvement in the sector, certainly compared to the international competition. Jeanette van Namen also works as



Joyce Wittelaar

PCO for international clients, and thanks to her extensive experience she could write a book about it. "These experiences vary from non-verbal communication like 'O, they are here already' to discussions on things that are totally irrelevant. If the Netherlands do not want to miss out, attention must really be paid to this." Klaver: "I once had to take over a guided tour. A junior sales representative making a personal phonecall during that tour, does not create a very good impression. Consequently, I had to repair the damage afterwards." "At one location you get a full, hospitable reception, at the next they are obviously not well prepared for my arrival", said Nicolette van Erven. "In many other countries you get a royal reception."

"It is partly because of this that we have developed a sales training for junior staff", Horsmans said. "The training offers information on how to sell your destination, how best to collaborate, but also which role the various parties play, like PCOs, DMCs. For the average sales person, this is not always obvious."

POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT

Klaver opined that making a good impression also depends on the involvement of the local politics. "A delegation traveling to Bogota, is received by the Prime

Minister. Here in the Netherlands a mayor or city council member does not always realise what impact he or she can have on a reception. Rolling out the red carpet is not always in the DNA." Horsmans: "Also important is the way a delegation is received. We consider it amusing when the deputy mayor arrives on bicycle, but a German delegation will not appreciate this."

Steinebach: "On the one hand, the politics realise the importance of congresses or a city, but just supplying a large sum of money is hardly sufficient. The mayor or city council member must also be personally involved." "Fortunately mr Aboutaleb (Mayor of Rotterdam, ed.) is very much aware of this", Wittelaar stated. "He has indicated that, together with all stakeholders, he wants to pay more attention to the port as USP for water-related congresses. This immediately alerted the network related to the port. When a mayor makes such a statement, it mobilises the entire city."

It is obvious that partly because of the immaterial shortcomings, associations do not opt for the Netherlands as the destination for their congress. Monique André de la Porte indicated that it would help if she knew the exact reason for this. "The Convention Bureaus for one would be grateful if they could receive a bit more feedback from the associations. But often no response





Nicolette van Erven



Angelique Lombarts

is given." According to Lombarts, this might be caused by cultural differences. "Dutchmen are rather direct, but a Belgian will try to find an other way to make clear that something is not up to his standards. This, by the way, applies to a great many cultures. It would help to use an independent person to make an assessment." "I once organised a site inspection for a large group of Belgian meeting planners, and had them state independent comments on this afterwards. They were not so demure then, because they were extremely critical about things like the locations, but especially about the food."

NATURAL LINK

The third theme was discussed. This had to do with the fact that a natural link with the congress's nature is important to the choice of a destination. The presence of a leading scientist in the board of an international association is also helpful. Is the congress sector sufficiently aware of the natural connections present, and are these made to good use?

Bakermans: "As a party in the congress sector, you should certainly be aware of the scientific developments so you can also approach people for a congress; nowadays this is done more often than before. Although no congress will come to the Netherlands purely for the country itself. It is always a joint pro-



Bart Klaver

Eric Bakermans



ject of the city, the venue and the other stakeholders." "The problem is partly the lack of time and money for research to explore this further", Klaver said. "That is why now, the link often stays superficial. Regarding The Hague, I opt for the existing profile like 'The city of Peace and Justice'. Fortunately, the city council has given Den Haag Marketing more money we can use to do research. But I would like to see the general profile of The Hague more pronounced, giving us more scope to present ourselves to the city as a well founded connection in the corporate area."

Wittelaar saw a growing involvement of the parties in Rotterdam. "As a destination, you hold a strong position if all stakeholders, political, corporate and educational, maintain good relations and are aware of the others' activities. Then you can really present a city."

TRANSPARENCY

An other issue that was discussed, was that the transparency regarding the costs should be improved. Bakermans thought that the locations, among other factors, could contribute to this. "Sometimes an association wants to receive a quotation with a final amount. But if this results in a participation price per person, I still do not know what I will get. Or a wrong offer is made that does not cover the demands of the association." Steinebach did not recognise this problem. "On the contrary: you see that foreign locations are relatively cheap, but consequently, all sorts of costs are added. The last couple of years I get more and more positive feedback on the Netherlands, because we do make clear what we

deliver, and that what we deliver is of high quality." Bakermans agreed: "In southern European countries government buildings are often made available. But if you get something for free, you actually have no right to complain. Including when afterwards, you have to pay extra for all kinds of things."

Horsmans stated that more transparency in communication might also be helpful. "There are always two sides to the story. If one party sets hard demands, the other party can not always perfectly meet these. If the demanding party is stubborn, it will not work. Much better would be if you look for each other's weaknesses and make each other stronger."

SPONSORING

The fifth thesis was about sponsoring. A financial contribution or funding in kind plays an increasingly important role in awarding a congress. Players in the sector should be clear about the possibilities and include this in the budget.

"You see this happen in lots of sectors, not just in congresses", Lombarts explained. "It also has to do with associations who are struggling to attract and keep members. I am very curious about the way the Dutch sector handles this and how you can make sure that it stays transparent."

"This is how it is done in The Hague, and it more and more becomes standard procedure", Vosmer indicated, "although it concerns a very small part of the congress budget. Speaking for myself, I would rather do something extra that complements the client's demands." "A

client can certainly appreciate a monetary contribution”, said Monique de Brabander. “Exactly the fact that cities like Rotterdam, Utrecht and The Hague have a promotion fund, is considered an added value compared to other cities. This can really win a client for you.”

“I think it is a nice gesture to use a contribution in the form of a subsidy to, for instance, invite people who otherwise are unable to attend”, said André de la Porte. “In that respect, we prefer to be active regarding contributions”, Steinebach added. “Think about arranging visums, pointing out certain regulations, opening doors that otherwise remain closed.”



Joyce Wittelaar

POSITIVE IMAGE

Concluding, Lombarts asked the attendees how the image people have of the Netherlands and its cities can be made more positive. “It boils down to the fact that you must keep on investing in hospitality”, Bakermans said. “Here, around this table, this realisation seems obvious, but this also applies to the rank and file and the next generations. We have an important role in this.”

Steinebach: “You may have had a good training, but especially with the younger generation the attitude is often too amicable, too fraternising. The way people are addressed is very important. If, in the presence of an association, you find a subject not very interesting, it is not done to check your email under the table.”

“I am glad to hear that the suggestions offered in the field of politics, culture and society regarding sensitivity are embraced by the Dutch congress sector. Fortunately, our shortcomings are recognised, so we can work on this together”, said Lombarts.



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If you prefer outdoor activities, the nearby beach offers a great location for sportive, active or recreational breaks in the meeting schedule. The Zuiderduin staff can arrange it all for you. The village of Egmond aan Zee also has a great deal to offer in the range of shops, but a visit to other nearby villages such as Bergen is certainly worth while.

One of the advantages of the Netherlands is that you never have to travel far to reach a reach another interesting and attractive location. For instance, the Hotel Zuiderduin itself is only a 30-minute car-ride from Amsterdam Schiphol Airport. Thanks to our excellent infrastructure and public transport facilities, day trips are easy, with Hotel Zuiderduin as perfect 'home base'.

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Coastal conferences

Conferences, meetings, congresses, trade shows, you can organize them at many different locations. The variety of venues is really unlimited, from an estate in the middle of a forest to an ancient castle, from a former brewery to a tent. Each location has its very own attraction, and user group. The Netherlands can offer all these types of venues, but as a destination we have one big advantage (USP) over many other countries: our terrific coast.

For the Dutch, it is a common experience when we visit a coastal town or one of our islands: the shop or restaurant owner address us in German. Which shows that our seaside resorts are popular with our neighbors from the east, the reason being that they do not have such attractive locations in their own country – or hardly any. But apart from the fact that these seaside towns and villages are excellent locations to spend a vacation, they are also extremely suitable as venues for meetings or other types of (corporate/association) gatherings. Many a hotel in a seaside town has, apart from a

large number of guestrooms, ample facilities for all kinds of meetings. From the Kurhaus in Scheveningen to Hotel Zuiderduin in Egmond aan Zee, from Grand Hotel Opduin on the island of Texel to Nassau Bergen in Bergen aan Zee, they all have it: excellent facilities for meetings as well as for ‘ordinary’ guests.

LONGER STAY

It is exactly because of the hotel and meeting venue combination that many people link the useful with the pleasant: when they have to be present at one of the marvelous locations to attend a meeting, congress, presentation or whatever, they more often than not opt for a longer stay. Because although the venue itself has a lot to offer (sauna, fitness room, bar, et cetera), there is a great deal more to be enjoyed in the vicinity. The Kurhaus hotel in Scheveningen has, of course, its boulevard (the famous pier is being renovated), and just around the corner is the city of The Hague with its enormous offer of shops, culture and architecture. Egmond aan Zee boasts many nice shops and eateries, and when you visit the bustling town of Bergen aan Zee, the in many ways attractive artists’ village of Bergen lies just a few kilometers away inland. The island of Texel, one of the so-called Wadden islands, really merits a chapter of its own. Just consider (and enjoy) the many local products like beer, lamb and cheese, and of course the many delicious varieties of seafood.

USP

What all these towns and villages have in common, is of course their seaside location. For some, this is the key 'unique selling point' for a meeting venue. Because the sea has an appeal of its own. On weekends or daytrips, many people choose a seaside town to unwind, let the wind clear their head. This is exactly the reason why these seaside meeting venues can work miracles as breakout spot for delegates who want to have a relaxing break during long meetings. And what can be more relaxing than a walk along the coastline?



“The effect of this open space – which the beach obviously offers – is that people get a feeling of relaxation that can only be compared to what they experience during a vacation

VACATION FEELING

The effect of this open space – which the beach obviously offers – is that people get a feeling of relaxation that can only be compared to what they experience during a vacation. The result is that their creativity is boosted. Many research projects have proved that the work environment greatly influences the productivity of the people who work there. If they are com-

fortable and at ease, their performance level rises almost by itself. As we all know, not every meeting room is conducive to the creativity, and not every subject is quite so interesting, but if you are aware of the fact that just outside the door lie the dunes, and behind these, the sea, it will give you a special feeling. One that is very much better than when you know that behind the door of the function room lies some anonymous industrial zone which makes you want to run home – or to the coast.

CUSTOMER FRIENDLY

It is exactly because many people choose one of the seaside resorts to enjoy their vacation that the owners and staff of the

coastal hotels are exceptionally customer friendly. This attitude is not only shown the vacation guests, but also the business guest. Who, as we already mentioned, is often also a private visitor. An other advantage of these inspiring destinations is that the personnel speaks several languages – not just German.

At some time we all have, as a private guest, spent some time at a hotel, bed and breakfast or cabin at a seaside location. Almost always, this stay has resulted in pleasant memories. Then why not select a venue on the coast for your corporate or association meeting? You have a wide variety to choose from. And who cares about some sand in his shoes?



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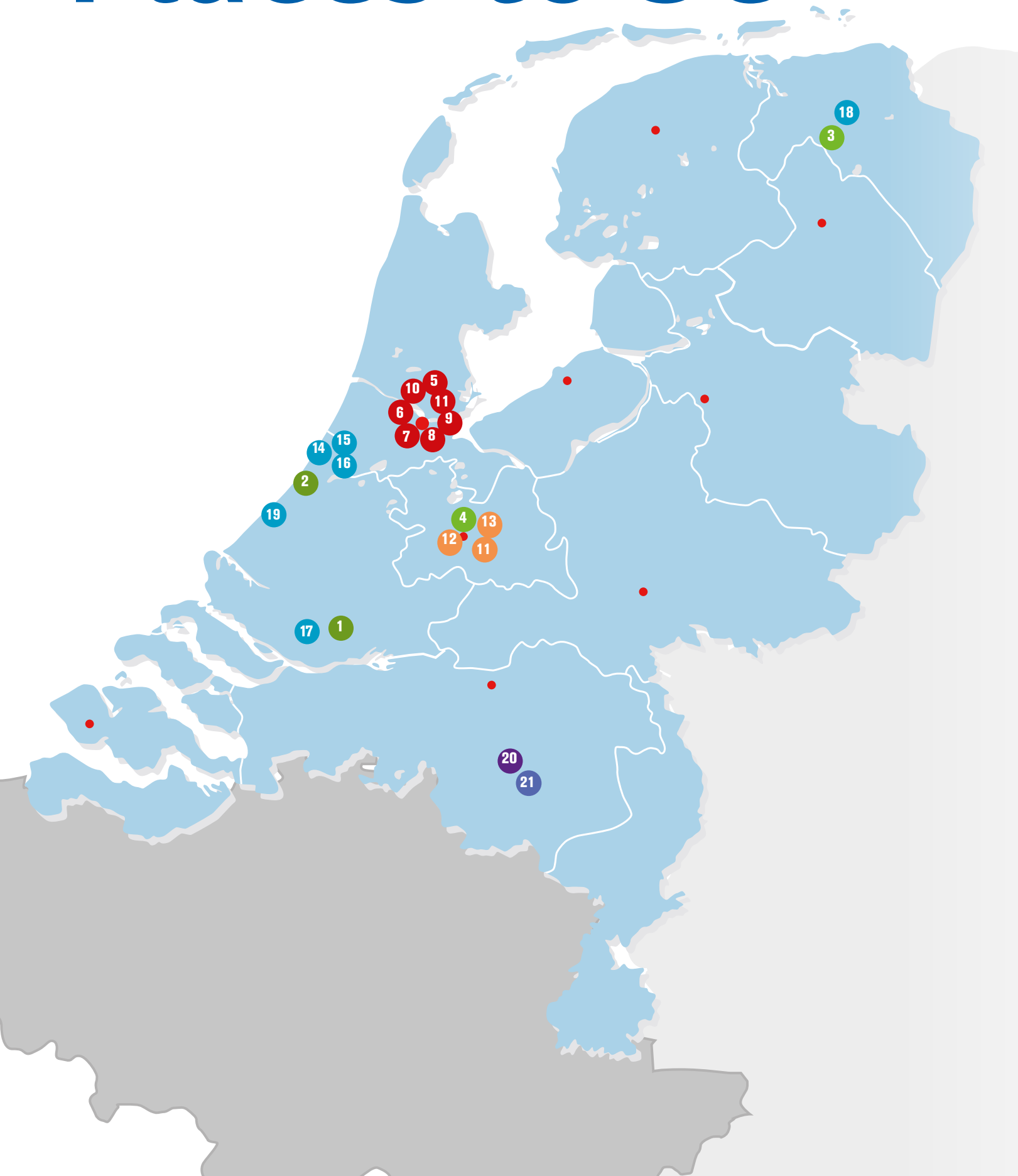
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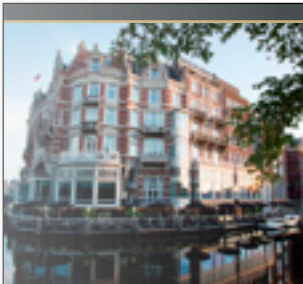

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