

AND THE 2005 AIPC APEX AWARD WINNER IS... **CONGRESS CENTRE-SOFIA, NATIONAL PALACE OF CULTURE!**



individual evaluation report on their particular centre's results, which enables them to see how they are rated by clients in various aspects of their operations. This allows them to identify areas that may need improvement, which in turn addresses AIPC's overall mission of enhancing excellence in centre management."

RECOGNITION

The Award was initiated in 2000 as a way of recognizing the achievements of AIPC members in congress centre management. Previous AIPC Apex Award winners have been the Melbourne Exhibition & Convention Centre in



Australia, Congress Innsbruck in Austria, the Vancouver Convention & Exhibition Centre in Canada, the Palacio de Congressos y de la Musica de Bilbao in Spain, and Cairns Convention Centre in Australia.

Founded in 1958, AIPC is a professional, non-profit association of 142 of the world's leading meeting facilities. Its mission is to encourage and recognize excellence in congress centre management, and it supports this mission with activities designed to assist members in improving their level of management expertise in such areas as operations, finance, technology, staff development, marketing, client relations and environment. It is based in Brussels, Belgium.

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THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF CONGRESS CENTRES (AIPC) IS PLEASED TO ANNOUNCE THAT THE WINNER OF THE 2005 AIPC APEX AWARD FOR "WORLD'S BEST CONGRESS CENTRE" IS THE CONGRESS CENTRE-SOFIA, NATIONAL PALACE OF CULTURE OF BULGARIA. THE PRESENTATION WAS MADE AT THIS YEAR'S AIPC GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN QUÉBEC CITY, CANADA, FROM A FIELD OF 20 NOMINEES WHO HAD QUALIFIED TO COMPETE FOR THIS HIGHLY SOUGHT-AFTER AWARD.

is selected. Their achievement is a demonstration of the extent to which great service and satisfied clients can advance a centre in today's highly competitive meetings market."

RUNNERS-UP

The AIPC Apex Award is made annually on the basis of a comprehensive performance and customer satisfaction analysis carried out by an independent team at the University of Applied Sciences in Heilbronn, Germany. The "blind" evaluation used in the selection process ensures an objective analysis of the data arising from a series of surveys covering such topics as congress facilities, project management, customer relations, catering and technology. Surveys are completed by event organizers and meeting planners and provided in confidence directly to the evaluation team, who rate centres accordingly. The AIPC Board also recognized the two runners-up to this year's award: last year's winner, Cairns Convention & Exhibition centre in Australia, and Congress Innsbruck of Austria, who were the award winner in 2001. "While we salute Congress Centre-Sophia for their achievement, the fact is that all participants are winners, since each competitor gets an

"We are delighted to be congratulating Congress Centre-Sophia on their win of this year's AIPC Apex Award, after such a hard-fought competition amongst so many highly qualified participants," said AIPC President Barbara Maple. "This win is a real tribute to their great relations with clients, who are the ultimate decision-makers in the AIPC Apex Award program and the basis on which the winner