



AIPC Media Release
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Centre Named 2003 Apex Award Winner

The Board of Directors of AIPC (the International Association of Congress Centres) is pleased to announce that the winner of the 2003 Apex Award for "World's Best Congress Centre" is the **Palacio de Congresos y de la Musica de Bilbao**. The presentation was made at this year's AIPC General Assembly in Mannheim, Germany from a field of 17 finalists competing for the coveted award.

"AIPC wants to congratulate our member from Bilbao as this year's winner of the Apex Award and emphasize the level of achievement required to earn this recognition", said AIPC President Barbara Maple. "The Apex Award is hotly contested, and to emerge the winner, a centre must truly excel in all aspects of their operations. Unlike many other industry competitions, the real judges of this award are the actual clients of the centres, so a win is not just a peer evaluation but a vote of confidence from those who matter the most – our customers!"

The AIPC Board also recognized the two runners-up to this year's award; Congress Centre - Sophia in Bulgaria and the Centre des Congrès de Québec in Canada.

The Apex Award is made annually on the basis of a comprehensive performance and customer satisfaction analysis carried out by an independent team led by Professor Jerzy Jaworski of the University of Applied Sciences in Heilbronn, Germany. The "blind" evaluation process used by Professor Jaworski ensures an objective analysis of the data that is based on a series of surveys covering such topics as congress facilities, project management, catering and technology. Surveys are completed by event organizers and meeting planners at the request of participants, and provided in confidence directly to the evaluation team.

The Award was initiated in the year 2000 as a way of recognizing the achievements of AIPC members in their pursuit of excellence in congress centre management. Previous Apex Award winners have been the Melbourne Exhibition & Convention Centre in Australia, Congress Innsbruck in Austria and the Vancouver Convention & Exhibition Centre in Canada

While the Apex Award winner is the focus of the competition, other participating members benefit as well, says Maple. "The Apex Award confers a great deal of benefit to the winner, particularly in terms of their being able to use this new level of recognition to advance their position in the market", she said. "However, all participating members get an individual evaluation report from the team at the University of Heilbronn. This enables them to see how they are rated in various aspects of their operations, and to identify areas where they may wish to implement improvements."

Founded in 1958, AIPC is a professional, non-profit association of 130 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.

For more information please contact the AIPC Secretariat.



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