

PRESS RELEASE – 23 September 2025 – Athens, Greece

ICCA and SANCBE Announce Strategic Partnership, Launch Joint Study on Industry Academic Offerings

ICCA and the [Strategic Alliance of the National Convention Bureaux of Europe](#) (SANCBE) are proud to announce a partnership that aims to improve the future of the international business meetings and events industry. The partnership was shared at SANCBE's semi-annual meeting in Athens, during a highly productive gathering that brought together leaders from across Europe.

This partnership reflects ICCA's forward-looking approach: shaping the future of the industry while driving progress in the destination marketing sector and knowledge development for ICCA members and partners worldwide.

The two organisations are jointly launching the first-ever survey focussed on understanding the future of learning and the academic landscape in the European business events industry. This initiative will provide a data-driven overview of current educational offerings, identify critical skill gaps, and look at evolving industry needs as part of ICCA's strategy to support lifelong learning and to offer valuable educational programmes to our community.

Dr. Senthil Gopinath, CEO of ICCA: "ICCA's partnership with SANCBE is very long term and this is yet another important step forward in our efforts to better serve destination marketing members. Initiatives geared toward identifying the needs of the industry with regard to academics are key to innovating toward solutions."

Survey findings will be used to develop a strategic action plan for the next three years — one that strengthens talent development, supports innovation, and ensures the industry is equipped to meet future challenges and opportunities. The survey results will also help shape the continuing development of ICCAUni, which aims to connect the academic and business events spheres.

Matthias Schultze and Eric Bakermans, Co-Chairs of SANCBE: "One of SANCBE's strengths lies in its ability to collect data across 29 European countries and agree on a shared analysis and strategic approach. This makes collaboration with ICCA not only logical but essential, as we combine forces to gain a clearer understanding of the education landscape in Europe and foster meaningful dialogue with academic institutions to drive its development."

The initiative will provide convention bureaus and DMOs throughout the European region with actionable information they can use to bolster educational offerings and partnerships with relevant academic stakeholders.

About SANCBE

The Strategic Alliance of the National Convention Bureaux of Europe is a network of 29 national destination marketing organisations. As a collaborative industry platform, it concentrates on strengthening Europe's position as a leading destination for international business events. Since its foundation in 2014, the initiative of European convention bureaus has increasingly gained importance as a platform for exchanging experiences and knowledge transfer between the membership countries.

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About ICCA

The International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) is a global community and knowledge hub for the international association meetings industry. Founded in 1963, ICCA specialises in the international association and governmental meetings sector, offering unrivalled data, education, and communication channels, as well as business development and networking opportunities. Today, ICCA is one of the most prominent organisations in — and advocates for — the world of international meetings. Initiatives such as the ICCA Association Community offers associations across the world education, connections, tools, and resources to help them organise more effective and successful meetings with the global network of ICCA member suppliers.

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