



## **To all our Members and Partners around the Globe**

The Prague Convention just finished and we have experienced one of the largest and best organised events ever. We all want to thank our capable host, Dr Stanislav Voleman and his Team for all that they did for us: great meetings, varied workshops, interesting tours and fabulous food and drinks - what else do we want to learn about a different culture?

Thank you Prague for that great experience!

General Assembly had intensive discussions about tourist guide portals, income and qualification, promotion of professional skills and marketing tools. Forty-one (41) member-countries were present; 32 votes accredited for voting. The new Executive Board consists of:

President Felicitas Wressnig, Austria  
Vice President Ruby Roy, Canada  
Treasurer Hermann Friedsam, Austria  
Secretary Esther Banike, USA  
Head of Training Ivana Curuvija, Serbia  
Area Representative Coordinator Roger Rajah, Malaysia  
Administrator Alushca Ritchie, South Africa

I want to thank all those that gave their time and efforts over these last two years to enhance WFTGA work: Vice President and Head of Training Wilja Siebe from the Netherlands, Treasurer Pat Blain from UK, Maria Aristidou from Cyprus as Area Rep Coordinator and many in other functions! All these volunteers helped WFTGA members to become better known and respected in their region.

Executive Board and other donors dedicated various scholarships, extended to Barbados, Philippines, Turkey, Ukraine, Uruguay; alas not realised due to visa and other problems: Cameroon, India, Malawi.

The bidders for the 2017 convention were Denmark, Iran and Singapore. They each presented - after a long, detailed preparation - new approaches to our profession: I want to thank you for your enormous efforts! The secret ballot - excluding Executive Board - gave a clear majority 18 votes to the winner: Tehran in Iran from January 28<sup>th</sup> - February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017. The pre-tour offers the largest brick dome in the world and the tomb of legendary Queen Esther and her cousin Mordechai. The post-tour takes us to Shiraz, the city of nightingales and poetry and the famous excavations of Persepolis. This will be the first time in Iran for many, to finally see well known treasures in reality, to learn about one of the oldest cultures too secluded these last decades! It will mean to all of us astonishment, breaking down walls and prejudices; it will hopefully bring peace to a territory as tourism should, a country so important for all our early cultural development. It will truly mean: experience another culture with all five senses!

Tourism as WFTGA understands it, should promote understanding for the other on either side and thus help develop peace. It should raise cultural awareness and expand the regional growth. Tourism is the force to enhance progress and quality. I am sure that voters had something similar on their mind when they chose Iran for the next WFTGA convention.

I do hope that we All celebrate the **International Tourist Guide Day on February 21<sup>st</sup>** in precisely this **Mood of Responsible Care for Each Other and Our Heritage.**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Felicitas Wressnig', is written over a light-colored rectangular background.

Felicitas Wressnig  
WFTGA President