



World Federation of Tourist Guide Associations
info@wftga.org
In Operational Relations with UNESCO

reg.: Vienna, Austria
www.wftga.org
Affiliate Member of UNWTO

Dear Members, colleagues and friends:

December 2016

Many of you are in high season; others celebrate Christmas and start into a New Year. It might mean holidays, but for some it might also remind them of difficulties, uncertainty and ailments past and present. Let us be thankful if we do have the possibility to take some minutes off and let's keep in mind that life holds many aspects - not all are happy.

Although peace seems far away for many, our profession ideally promotes peaceful communication; tourism, our main income, intends to learn about the other's culture and traditions, with open mind and heart. For us tourist guides, promoting this aim should be the most important initiative during the coming year: the Year of Sustainability, declared by the UN World Tourism Organisation.

The preparation of the 17th WFTGA Convention in Iran has proved a milestone in cooperation for many of us: to organise across hurdles built up by politics, to overgrow misunderstandings and proof that tourist guides can prepare tourism in an emerging - by some ousted - country, is an experience for itself! So many 'friendly' suggestions creep in where only trust can overcome prejudices, so many interpreters try to suggest another path: I am proud that we do have almost 300 participants from around the world and hope to get even more from our Host's side! After the wonderful experience in Prague, Tehran will become a great pursuer in the long line of successful international tourist guide meetings!

We are all aware of some difficulties concerning the visa and I can only ask you to remain patient: our Host in Iran can only facilitate the path, not issue the visa. I am certain though, that all of you will get the relevant number - already an achievement - within the next days. Good to know that UNWTO General Secretary Taleb Rifai supports our convention in Tehran: he is the most ardent fighter for visa free travels around the world and has put this on all political agendas at international fairs. That a visa is still a major part of travel, consuming time and money, is unpleasant for all of us: by organising our Convention each time somewhere else, different members experience these unpleasant hurdles each time differently.

At the Tehran Convention, WFTGA General Assembly will ballot for one of these three bidders, for 2019: the finalists are from Tbilisi in Georgia, Bangkok in Thailand, New York in USA. What a wonderful occasion to move around the world and meet with colleagues: do start in your association to discuss the goodies you expect and which area to choose. Make it a big issue to know what happens and what you think important; your delegate wants to represent your ideas and wishes, has to work intensively many hours for the sake of your future: please give her/him advise and help. Many items are on the agenda sent out last month; you might want to add your ideas....



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The convention programme for Iran is in progress and the final version will reach you almost parallel. It announces important speakers from UNWTO and universities, although officials will add their appearance only last minute. Additionally, museums and many workshops will be presented by colleagues who volunteer to give international examples to observe and learn. It will certainly be most interesting and varied – unforgettable, as is tradition with WFTGA.

Tradition is also the Auction: those who attend in Iran, please bring some typical item to support the Jane Orde Scholarship. Bring some cash to participate in our silent and live auction: the income directly sponsors a colleague from an emerging country for attending the next convention or training throughout the following years.

I look forward to seeing many of you in Tehran, to enjoy the hospitality of our partners and to discover Iran; let's also discuss new ways of promoting our area specificity and qualification. General Assembly meets to find not only the winner for the 2019 convention, a new Executive Board is elected for the coming years: any member can send a qualified tourist guide to come up for positions on this board – do consider your cooperation, stand up to work for our profession on an international level!

For the coming year I wish you excellent health and productive work, blessed hours with your family and friends! I hope for moments of delight and peace for you – wherever you are!

Felicitas Wressnig
WFTGA President

