OPENING CEREMONY

Mr. Rasim Ljajic,
Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia and Minister of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications

After a long journalist career, in 2000, he was appointed Minister for National and Ethnic Communities in the Government of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and shortly after, in 2003, Minister of Human and Minority Rights in the Serbia and Montenegro Council of Ministers. He was also in charge of Serbia’s cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia as well as Minister of Labor and Social Politics in the Government of the Republic of Serbia. In 2012, he was appointed Deputy Prime Minister of the Republic of Serbia and Minister of Foreign and Domestic Trade and Telecommunications. Since 2014, as Minister of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications, he added tourism to his scope of work. He graduated from the University of Sarajevo, Faculty of Medicine.

Ms. Karla Robin Hershey,
UN Resident Coordinator in Serbia / UNDP Resident Representative (February 2017 – present)

Ms. Karla Hershey has a total 28 years of development and humanitarian experience and has served in four ‘Delivering as One’ UN countries to date. Karla served as the UN Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator, UNDP Resident Representative and Designated Official in Maseru, Lesotho (2012-2017). Karla was also serving with the World Food Programme as their Representative and Country Director in Swaziland (2009-2012). Other previous posts have included leading positions in various international programs across Africa. Ms. Hershey began her UN career with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs as Humanitarian Affairs Officer (OCHA) in Angola (1998-2000). Prior to joining the UN, she served in various capacities with World Vision Relief and Development in Angola, Rotary International in Evanston, Illinois, American Employee’s Association in Rwanda and United States Peace Corps in Rwanda as a Business Advisor to the Ministry of Youth and Cooperatives (Rwanda 1989 – 1993) and the YMCA. Ms. Hershey holds an M.B.A in Management from the American InterContinental University and a B.A. in Economics and Political Science from the Southern Methodist University in Texas. She also took post graduate courses at the London School of Economics and Political Science in Sociology, Middle East studies, Nationalism and Foreign Relations.

Mr. Taleb Rifai,
Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)

Taleb Rifai is Secretary-General of the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). He began his four-year term on 1 January 2010 and has been elected for a second four-year term, starting January 2014, by the 20th Session of UNWTO General Assembly held in August 2013. Mr. Rifai has an extensive background in international and national public service, the private sector and academia. Positions held include: Assistant Director General of the International Labour Organization (ILO), several ministerial portfolios in the Government of Jordan (Minister of Planning and International Cooperation, Minister of Information and Minister of Tourism and Antiquity), CEO of Jordan’s Cement Company, Director of the Economic Mission to Washington DC and Director General of the Investment Promotion Corporation of Jordan. Mr. Rifai was involved in research, teaching and practicing Architecture and Urban Design in Jordan and the USA. He has a Ph.D. in Urban Design and Regional Planning from the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, an M.A. in Engineering and Architecture from the Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT) in Chicago, and a B.S.c. in Architectural Engineering from the University of Cairo in Egypt.
**HIGH LEVEL PANEL**

**Moderator: Mr. Dirk Glaesser,**

*Director, Sustainable Development of Tourism programme, UNWTO*

Dirk Glaesser is Director for Sustainable Development of Tourism Department at the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO). The department deals with the different challenges and opportunities of tourism development, among them environment and planning, investment and finance, risk and crisis management. Dr. Glaesser obtained his Ph.D. from the University of Lüneburg, Germany and won the ITB scientific award for his work on Crisis Management. He is the author of a number of publications which have been widely translated. Dr. Glaesser is married and has two children.

**Ms. Nikolina Angelkova,**

*Minister of Tourism of the Republic of Bulgaria*

Nikolina Angelkova has graduated the Harvard Business School – Boston, USA under the programme for management personnel "Leadership Development". She has also obtained a MA in Law from the University of National and World Economy in Sofia, Bulgaria. In 2011, she was a member of the Management Board of the Road Infrastructure Agency, and up to 2013 she was a Deputy Minister of Regional Development and Public Works and National contact person for the Danube Strategy. Within the period 2013-2014, she was adviser to the President of the Republic of Bulgaria for European regional cooperation. In March 2014, Angelkova was chosen as one of the 214 young global leaders of the Community of Young Global Leaders of 2014. At the moment she is the Minister of Tourism of Republic of Bulgaria.

**Ms. Renata Pindžo, PhD,**

*Associate Professor of Investment Management and Investment Decision Process at the Faculty of Economics, Finance and Administration (FEFA), Belgrade.*

Since August 2014, she has been in charge of the tourism sector while working as Assistant Minister in the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Telecommunications. In the 2008-2014 period, she was employed as Assistant Minister at the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development and at the Ministry of Finance and Economy. Since 2013, she is a member of the National Council for the Development of Tourism in the Republic of Serbia. Dr Pindžo graduated from the Faculty of Economics, University of Belgrade, where she obtained a Master’s degree in 2003. In May 2011, she obtained her PhD degree. Her experience includes more than 13 years in management consulting and financial advisory services. She has gained knowledge by providing consulting services to many domestic and international companies, including financial institutions and local municipalities during her employment at Deloitte. Also, as consultant, she was engaged in the World Bank’s projects related to restructuring and improving competitiveness of the Serbian economy. At the Economics Institute, Dr Pindžo participated in research and market analysis projects. She has cooperated with many international institutions (USAID, EAR, EBRD, DFID and GIZ) on complex projects of restructuring the Serbian economy. She is author more than 50 scientific papers.

**Ms. Željka Radak Kukavičić,**

*Director of the National Tourism Organisation of Montenegro*

Ms. Željka Radak Kukavičić has more than 15 years of experience in the field of tourism. She was Director General of the Directorate for Tourist Destination Management at the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism, Secretary of the Ministry of Sustainable Development and Tourism and prior to that Investment Manager at the Development Fund of the Republic of Montenegro. She was involved in preparation of the Tourism Development Strategy by 2020 and Strategy for Human Resource Development in Tourism Sector. She is experienced in teaching and is member of the examination board at the Faculty for Tourism in Budva, for the field of education of tourist guides. She co-authored the book “How to Start One’s Own Business”. Ms. Kukavičić graduated at the Faculty of Economy in Podgorica – University of Montenegro. She earned her Master’s degree at that same faculty in 2010, with the thesis – “Creating Modern Concept of the Promotion of Tourism Product of Montenegro”.

**Ms. Cristina Tarteata,**

*Deputy Minister, Ministry of Tourism of Romania*

In January 2017, Ms. Cristina Ionela Tarteata was appointed as Deputy Minister in Romanian Ministry of Tourism. She is in charge of internal affairs, development, marketing and promotion. She started her professional career in banking sector and after working for five year as the Assistant manager of the president of UNPR political party in 2011 she became Parliamentary advisor – Vice President of the Cabinet Romanian Senate. Between 2014 – 2016 she was Parliamentary advisor in the Committee on Transportation and Energy in the Romanian Senate.
Ms Eva Stravs Podlogar,
State Secretary, Ministry of Economic Development and Technology of the Republic of Slovenia

Ms Eva Stravs Podlogar has an extensive experience in tourism on local, regional and national level. She was a Director of Tourism Bled from 2001 until 2015. She served as Director-General of the Tourism and Internationalisation Directorate at the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology from 2015 to 14th September 2016. On 15th September 2016, the Government of Slovenia appointed her at the post of State Secretary at the Ministry of Economic Development and Technology. During her career she always had a good cooperation with the local communities and private sector. She strongly believes in a vision of Slovenian tourism to become a 5 star destination for green, active, healthy experiences.

Ms. Marija Labović,
Director, National Tourism Organization of Serbia

Marija Labovic was born on 15th September 1974 in Belgrade. She graduated from the American College of Thessaloniki in 2000. Before being appointed in November 2015 at her current position - the CEO of NTO Serbia, she worked at Ekos Tours as a Senior Financial Manager, at Privredna banka Beograd as Head of product development and alternative distribution channels, as well as at the Belgrade Fair as the Deputy General Manager. She has full professional proficiency in English language and elementary proficiency in Greek and Russian language.

Mr. Slobodan Unković, PhD,
Deputy President of the National Council for Tourism Development, Republic of Serbia
Full Professor of the Faculty of Economics (University of Belgrade), Professor Emeritus of Singidunum University and Deputy President of the National Council for Tourism Development, Serbia.

Professor Unković graduated in 1961 from University of Belgrade, Faculty of Economics, received his MBA in 1964 and PhD in 1966. He studied on the Stanford University, Graduate School of Business, US (1967-1968). He was Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Rector of University of Belgrade (1987-1991). Professor Unković was granted the title of Honoured Professor of State Moscow University “Lomonosov”, and Zenmin University in Beijing, as well as Honoured Doctor of Lincoln University in Oakland, US. He published more than 60 scientific works in Serbian and other major languages in the fields of Economics, Management and Tourism. He was speaker of the Parliament of the Republic of Serbia, Vice Premier and Minister of Science and Technology of the Republic of Serbia, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in China, President of the Marketing Association of Serbia and Belgrade and Member of the Administrative Board of UNWTO Affiliate Members.

PANEL SESSION: INVESTING IN PEOPLE:
BRIDGING THE SKILLS GAP

Moderator: Ms. Edit Szivas, PhD,
UNWTO, Themis Foundation

Dr Edith M Szivas is an expert in tourism strategic planning and tourism human capital development. She has been collaborating with UNWTO and the UNWTO Themis Foundation for over 20 years on a wide range of programmes and initiatives. She started her career in international trade and emerging markets. She had a distinguished academic career during which she was Director of PhD Programme and led the renowned tourism MSc Programmes at University of Surrey, UK. She gained her MSc Degree in Tourism Planning and Development and her PhD in Tourism at the University of Surrey, UK.

Mr. Christian de Barrin,
Chief Executive Officer of HOTREC, the umbrella Association of Hotels, Restaurants and Cafes in Europe

Christian de Barrin is CEO of HOTREC since 8 April 2014. HOTREC brings together 41 National Associations in 29 countries, representing 1.8 million businesses in Europe, 91% of which being micro-sized enterprises, and is therefore the voice of the industry before the EU Institutions. French native, with an economic and law background at the Paris University of Assas, Christian has built up expertise and experience in strategic communication, stakeholder relations and public affairs in Brussels for 15 years where he held several communication and association management positions in various environments such as metals, air transport and media. Christian de Barrin is a Member of the Steering Committee of the UN 2017 International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development and of the Steering Group of the Manifesto.
Mr. Florian Aubke,
Assistant Professor/Senior Lecturer, Dean, MODUL University Vienna Department of Tourism and Service Management

Florian received his first degrees from Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia, before he completed his doctoral studies with distinction at the Vienna University of Economics and Business. In his research, Florian mainly takes a relational approach to innovation, creativity and career progression. He focused on the analysis of social networks - both within and between organizations - with a particular application to the hospitality and tourism industry. Florian is an active member of the International Network for Social Network Analysis (INSNA) as well as the European Chapter of the International Council on Hotel, Restaurant and Institutional Education (EuroCHRIE), where he also serves as the area consultant for Austria. At MODUL University Vienna, Florian teaches Strategic Hotel Management, Asset Management and Hotel Development across undergraduate and graduate programs.

Mr. Robert Gasser,
General Manager, Marriott Belgrade

Robert is Austrian citizen and grew up at the Woerther See in Carinthia. With 5 years the hospitality started for him, having a family restaurant. Robert started his career as Chef Apprentice in Munich and Allgaeu, with final exam. After his exam Robert moved to front of house, working in London as Bar Manager and Bermuda Island as Head Wine Steward. In 2001 Robert started his Bachelor study at the Heidelberg Hotel Business School with final exam in 2003. Next to school Robert founded his own consulting company which was sold successfully, travelling then for one year thru Australia and Thailand. In 2013 Robert started with Marriott in Munich which brought him in different Executive positions over Shanghai, Beijjing, Copenhagen, Lisbon and Istanbul to Belgrade.

Mr. Georgi Genov, PhD,
Director, HORES, Serbia

Georgi Genov, PhD, was born in Bosilegrad in 1960. He graduated from the Faculty of Economics in Belgrade where he also obtained his MA degree (MA thesis title - 'Investment Financing in the Emerging Tourist Destinations'). He obtained his PhD degree at the Faculty of Economics in Banjaluka (PhD dissertation title - 'Tourist Destination Development Management'). He has been a member of numerous non-government organisations/agencies and business associations in the field of tourism and hospitality industry. He has taken part in organising a number of congresses, travel fairs and tourism events in Serbia and abroad. Nowadays he is the director of HORES – Business Association of Hotel and Restaurant Industry of Serbia – and a professor at the College of Tourism (vocational college) in Belgrade. He is a member of the National Tourism Council of the Republic of Serbia. At the same time, he is a consultant and an advisor to numerous hotel enterprises in Serbia and Montenegro.

PANEL SESSION:
DEVELOPMENT AND PROMOTION OF DANUBE TRANSNATIONAL TOURISM PRODUCTS

Moderator: Mr. José Manuel Fröhling,
Group Private Sector Cooperation / Section “Tourism for sustainable development” Division Economic and Social Development, GIZ

Jose holds a diploma in Applied Geography, Economics and Ethnology. After his diploma thesis, where he researched the economic impacts of Community-Based Tourism Projects, José started his career at the German federal development agency Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), working on the themes tourism and poverty alleviation, regional development, biodiversity and climate change. He worked in Serbia for several years, within the National Tourism Organisation (NTO) of Serbia on the topics sustainability, product development, marketing and cross border tourism. After returning to Germany, José returned to GIZ Headquarters to advise the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) in tourism related questions and on international processes as well as in the development of sustainable tourism projects, strategies and tools, with a special emphasis on cooperation with the private sector. Recently he was assigned as external lecturer at the University of Applied Science HTW Chur in Switzerland on the topic of tourism in international development cooperation.
Mr. Miguel Gallego,
Head of Marketing and Communication, European Travel Commission (ETC)

Miguel Gallego has a ten-year experience in destination marketing. Having worked in different levels of tourism administrations, from city tourism boards to regional and national tourism organisations, since 2012 he is Head of Marketing and Communication at the European Travel Commission (Brussels, Belgium), where he coordinates its marketing activities and supports member NTOs’ efforts to promote Destination Europe on major long-haul markets. He has also contributed to several publications and research papers on destination marketing and tourism development.

Mr. Oliver Fodor,
Chief Advisor, Hungarian Tourism Agency

Oliver holds a degree in tourism and hotel management from the Budapest Business School and he also studied Business Administration in the University of Canberra, Australia. Oliver is managing international affairs at the Hungarian Tourism Agency. The newly established Agency is responsible for the public administration of tourism and for the promotion of Hungary on international and domestic markets. The Government executes tourism related tasks through the 100% state owned Hungarian Tourism Agency which is also the sole entity for the management of tourism related funding. Besides regional and bilateral cooperation, Oliver is representing Hungary in various international bodies, such as the Program and Budget Committee of UNWTO or the OECD Tourism Committee. He is also appointed as national expert in the field of tourism to Priority Area 3 (culture & tourism) of the EU Strategy of the Danube Region.

Mr. Tom Buncle
Managing Director, Yellow Railroad

Tom Buncle is Managing Director of Yellow Railroad Ltd., an international destination consultancy, which specialises in Destination branding and marketing, Tourism strategy, Destination management planning and Crisis recovery. Tom’s client list spans the UK, Europe, Africa, Middle East, North America and the Caribbean. He is a former Chief Executive of Visit Scotland. His early career included jobs with Visit Britain in the USA, Canada, UK, Scandinavia, and Southeast Asia. Tom is also an author and lecturer on destination branding, tourism marketing, global travel trends and crisis recovery. He speaks regularly at international conferences and lectures at universities and business schools. He authored the definitive Handbook on Tourism Destination Branding, published by the United Nations World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO) and European Travel Commission (ETC). Tom’s motto: “Life is not a dress-rehearsal”

Mr. Ljubiša Nešovanović,
Director, Robinson Travel, Serbia

Ljubiša has been involved with tourism for more than 30 years. He graduated at the Tourism Department of Faculty of Mathematics and Nature science at Belgrade University and started his career as Representative and Supervisor for Yugotours Frankfurt in Montenegro straight away. Afterwards, he was working as Hotel manager in GENEX HOTELS in Bečići, hotel Alet (Montenegro) and Kopaonik hotel Grand (Serbia). Since 1995 he has been an owner and Manager of Robinson Travel, Belgrade, Serbia.

PANEL SESSION: BRINGING HERITAGE TO LIFE THROUGH THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES

Moderator: Mr. Michael R. Werner, PhD,
Department of Art and Art History, University at Albany, State University of New York

Michael Werner is a Roman archaeologist with over 40 years’ experience in archaeological research and excavations on Roman sites in the Balkans, including Diocletian’s Palace in Split (Croatia) and the Roman Imperial Palace in Sirmium (Sremska Mitrovica, Serbia). More recently, since 2009 in the Danube Region, Prof. Werner has acted as scientific advisor for various government institutions and regional agencies engaged in the development and promotion of heritage tourism on Roman archaeological sites which are now part of the Roman Emperors Route. Currently he is president of the Scientific Committee for the EU certified Roman Emperors Route with the Danube Competence Center. In his home base at the University at Albany, State University of New York, Dr. Werner is Professor of Roman Art and Archaeology in the Department of Art and Art History.
Mr. Stefano Dominioni, PhD,
Executive Secretary, Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe (EPA) and Director, European Institute of Cultural Routes (EICR)

Dr. Stefano Dominioni is Executive Secretary of the Council of Europe Enlarged Partial Agreement on Cultural Routes, and Director of the European Institute of Cultural Routes, Luxembourg. He is responsible for overseeing the certification by the Council of Europe of cultural routes in the field of European heritage across its 47 Member States and the regular evaluation of the current 32 certified cultural routes. Dr. Dominioni regularly interacts with Ministry of Culture and Tourism representatives, Cultural Routes of the Council of Europe and International Organizations. During his career at the Council of Europe he has worked for the Directorate General of Education, Culture and Youth, and the Directorate General of Social Cohesion. He received his Ph.D. from Yale University and a B.A. in Political Science from the University of Milan, Italy.

Ms. Véronique Dauge,
Head of Culture Unit UNESCO, Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, Venice (Italy)

Trained as a historian of art and archaeologist, Véronique Dauge specialized in Oriental studies and worked in various cultural institutions before joining UNESCO in 1989 to prepare UNESCO's action for the safeguarding of the site of Angkor in Cambodia. From 1994 to 1998, she worked at the Division of Cultural Heritage at UNESCO Headquarters, in charge notably of the Middle Eastern files. Between 2001 and 2004, Véronique Dauge moved first to the UNESCO Jordan Office and then to the Cluster Beirut Office, in charge of the culture files in Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon and Syria. At the end of 2004, she returned to Headquarters as Chief of the Arab States Unit at the World Heritage Centre, contributing to the implementation of the World Heritage Convention in the region. She then joined the Regional Bureau for Science and Culture in Europe, Venice, Italy, in October 2013 as Head of the Culture Unit, responsible for the overall management and coordination of the Culture programme and activities within the framework of the Bureau’s mandate, notably the preservation of cultural heritage in South-East Europe.

Mr. Bora Dimitrijević,
Former Director of National Museum “Zaječar”, Serbia

Since 2001. Mr Bora Dimitrijević was leading the National Museum “Zaječar”. Together with the colleagues from the Institute for Protection of Cultural Monuments of Serbia and Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Serbia he was working on the nomination of the archaeological site Romuliana for UNESCO’s World Heritage List. The locality became part of the list in 2007. Except from vast experience in the field of archaeology, Mr. Dimitrijević managed the process of development of National Tourism Development Strategy of the Republic of Serbia and Master Plan “Roman Emperors Route” which in the end led to the registration of first cultural route in this part of the Europe at the Institute of Cultural Routes – The Roman Emperors and the Danube Wine Route.

Ms. Niki Dollis,
Director, President’s Office, Acropolis Museum, Greece

Niki Dollis was born in Australia and migrated to Greece in 1999. She has a Degree in Social Work from the University of Melbourne and post graduate qualifications in Public Relations. Prior to migrating to Greece she had over 20 years experience in the fields of health, education, immigration and welfare working in local government, state and federal government positions as well as in the non-Government sector and as a statutory appointee. In 2000 she commenced work with the Organization for the Construction of the New Acropolis Museum in Athens playing a key role in the coordination of communications for the construction project. Since June 2009 when the Museum opened to the public, she advises on operational policies and supports the implementation of planning and development of services in the Museum from the position of Director of the Museum President’s Office, including the management of the Museum stores. She has authored two children’s books.

CLOSING REMARKS

Mr. Zoltan Somogyi,
Executive Director, UNWTO

Mr. Somogyi is currently Executive Director for Programme and Coordination at the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) based in Madrid, Spain. Between January 2010 and December 2013 he held the position of UNWTO Executive Director for Member Relations and Services. He graduated from the Budapest University of Law with a Doctorate and later the Budapest University of Economics. Mr. Somogyi is a Hungarian national. Prior to this appointment he was Hungarian Ambassador to Montenegro. Mr. Somogyi served in the Hungarian national tourism system as Under-Secretary of the State in charge of tourism (1997-1999), Chairman of the Hungarian National Tourism Agency (2002), President of the newly established Hungarian Tourist Office (2005), and State Secretary for Tourism (2006). In this period he initiated the elaboration of the National Tourism Development Strategy, the modernization of Hungarian tourism-related law and the creation of an efficient tourism crisis management system. Under his leadership Hungary was elected as a member of UNWTO’s Executive Council and was later Vice-President of the Council for two terms.