Proposing Szeged, Hungary for Drupalcon Europe 2008

A core group of the Hungarian Drupal community in collaboration with the University of Szeged submitted in January an application for Drupalcon Europe 2008 to the Drupal association. The proposal is still under evaluation and there is no certainty that the event will be in Hungary, but we are so enthusiastic about this that we wanted to share some details about our proposal with the broader community.

We are proposing to organize Drupalcon Europa from Wednesday the 27th until Saturday the 30th of August with the participants arriving on the 26th and leaving on the 31st.

Hungary has been a strong Drupal country for some time now but also in the surrounding countries a lot of people have been adopting Drupal as a development platform. For financial reasons a lot of these people haven't been able to attend previous conferences. By bringing the conference to them and with a low budget accommodation option (student hostels at 10-15 euro/ night) we want to reach out to Drupal users from Central Europe with less financial means.

For the people that are less budget sensitive there are of course other options. To make sure that the event will be of good quality we are working with C&T, a local conference organizer.

We are planning Drupalcon at TIK the library of Szeged University that does double as a conference center. The building can host conferences of up to 1300 people but in our proposal we are aiming for a 1000 participants. The Congress Hall (the biggest session room) has seating capacity for 685 people and a camera system is available that allows us to show a projection of the presentations in the other session rooms. Pictures on the venue are available at: http://www.u-szeged.hu/object.715D6A9C-0888-4A01-9709-0A13F4995DEE.ivy

Szeged is the fourth biggest city in Hungary located in the South of the country near the Romanian and Serbian border, approximately 180 km from Budapest. http://en.wikipedia.org/ wiki/Szeged. Sure it's not the capital, but that has some positive implications on the cost of living (e.g. a coffee is less than 1 EUR , half a liter beer approximately 1-2 EUR). A lot of Hungarians will also tell you that Szeged is nicer than Budapest.

How do I get there?

Budapest airport is well connected, Ferihegy 2 services flights for a range of destinations, there is a daily flight with Malev to and from NY JFK. Ferihegy 1 services low cost carriers such as Wizzair, Easyjet, German Wings and SkyEurope to a wide range of European destinations. Every hour there is a direct train (2.5 hours) from Budapest to Szeged that also stops at Budapest airport. We are planning shuttle buses on the main travel days (e.g. day before and after Drupalcon).

If you miss the shuttle bus and don't want to take public transport you can get a taxi for a Budapest - Szeged one-way trip for approximately 200 EUR.

Do I need a visa?

Hungary is part of the European Union: EU, Canadian and US citizens do not require a visa to visit Hungary.

Is Szeged big enough (e.g. Hotels, restaurants)?

A 1000 people event is a stretch for anything but a capital. Szeged however has in the past hosted events for big groups of people: in 2005 Szeged hosted the 15th world championship Kick box. In 2006 the 35th ICF World Championships Flat water Racing was held in Szeged.
http://worldchampionships.kickbox.hu/eng/
http://kajakkenusport.origo.hu/en/index.html
Recently a conference for 1300 doctors was organized in the same venue. Szeged is a a student town with 30'000 students. Since we are planning the conference for the last week of the summer holiday we'll be able to rent some of the dormitories for these students.

I don't speak Hungarian, how will I get accommodation?

C&T, a local conference organizer will help you organize your accommodation for the conference. People that sign up at least a month before the conference will be able to reserve a hotel that fits their budget at the conference website.

My family and customers are coming, will they be bored?

In Hungary Szeged is often referred to as the city of sunshine and there are enough interesting things to do even if you are not attending a conference. We asked C&T, the company that will manage the conference to provide an interesting side program for not-attending family members. C&T is also a travel agency, if there is sufficient interest from the participants it is possible to organize post-conference city trips to Budapest, Vienna and/or Prague.

How can we make this come true?

If you would like the next Drupalcon to be organized in Hungary there are 3 things you can help us with:
- Help our proposal win: You can help us convince the board of the Drupal association that they should accept the Hungarian proposal.
- Help us prepare the marketing machine: If you are living in Central Europe and you are in contact with organizations with potential conference attendees (e.g. Drupal user groups, IT associations, Design associations, etc.) let us know.

- Help us reduce the conference fee: If you are in contact with decision makers at companies for whom it would make sense to get marketing coverage in the regional or global Drupal market, please let us know.

You can contact us at drupalcon.hungary{a}gmail . com