EDITORIAL

For nearly three decades, the *Tourism & Hospitality Industry* Congress has served as an international platform for scholarly dialogue and knowledge exchange in tourism and hospitality. The *Proceedings of the 28th Biennial International Congress*, organised by the Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management, University of Rijeka, continue this tradition under the theme **"Trends and Challenges,"** reflecting the sector's dynamic, interdisciplinary, and rapidly evolving nature.

The Proceedings of the 28th edition of the Congress encompass a broad range of contemporary topics reflecting the interdisciplinary nature of tourism and hospitality research. The contributions address key areas, including Technology and Innovation in Tourism and Hospitality, Sustainable Pathways in Tourism, Tourism Economics, Gastronomy Experiences, Marketing and Communication, Cross-border Cooperation and Regional Tourism Clusters, as well as Governance, Policy, and Ethics in Tourism.

For presentation at the Congress, a total of 87 submissions were received, including full papers and abstracts. Following a rigorous review process, the accepted contributions were selected based on their scientific quality, relevance to the Congress theme, and overall contribution to the field of tourism and hospitality. In total, 38 full papers and 29 abstracts were accepted for presentation, resulting in an acceptance rate of 77% (or a rejection rate of 23%).

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all authors for sharing their valuable research and insights, to the reviewers for their time, expertise, and constructive feedback, and to all participants whose active engagement contributed to the success of the Congress. Their commitment, willingness to exchange knowledge and experiences, and openness to collaboration made the Congress a place for academic dialogue, professional networking, and the development of new ideas. We also extend our sincere gratitude to the organising committee, whose hard work, dedication, and commitment were essential to the successful realisation of this event.

We look forward to the next *Tourism & Hospitality Industry* Congress and to continuing our shared commitment to advancing knowledge, fostering collaboration, and addressing the emerging opportunities and challenges facing tourism and hospitality.