



WTTC Unveils First Wave of Heavyweight Speakers for Landmark 25th Global Summit in Rome

The world's biggest names in Travel & Tourism set to take to converge in the Eternal City

London, UK: The World Travel & Tourism Council ([WTTC](#)) today revealed the first wave of headline speakers for its milestone 25th Global Summit in Rome, which includes a glittering line-up of some of the most influential figures shaping the future of the sector.

From the 28 - 30 September, the Eternal City will play host to a gathering of global business leaders from across business, government, and media, as the Global Summit returns to Europe in partnership with the Italian Ministry of Tourism, ENIT (the Italian national tourist board), the Municipality of Rome, and the Lazio Region.

Taking place at the iconic Auditorium Parco della Musica, the event will set the stage for high-impact debates and bold commitments on the issues defining Travel & Tourism.

From the game-changing potential of AI to shaping the future of a sector that generates 10% of global GDP.

The first confirmed speakers include:

- Minor Hotel Group, Founder & Chairman, William E. Heinecke
- Virtuoso, Founder & CEO, Matthew Upchurch
- Trip.com Group, CEO, Jane Sun, CEO
- TBO.Com, Co-Founder, Gaurav Bhatnagar
- Diriyah Company, Group CEO, Jerry Inzerillo
- MSC Cruises, Executive Chairman of Cruise, Pierfrancesco Vago
- Arsenale Spa, CEO, Paolo Barletta
- IC Bellagio, CEO – Sole Founder, Andrea Grisdale
- The Bicester Collection, Chair & Global Chief Merchant, Desiree Bollier

- Marriott International, CEO, Anthony Capuano
- Visit California, President & CEO, Caroline Beteta
- Google Inc, Head of Retail & Travel, EMEA Partnerships Solutions, Christie Travers-Smith
- InterContinental Hotels Group, Global CEO, Elie Maalouf
- Amadeus, President: Travel, Decius Valmorbida Menezes
- VFS Global, Founder, Founder & CEO, Zubin Karkaria

Other speakers include:

- Indian Hotels Company, CEO, Puneet Chhatwal
- Microsoft, Global Managing Director - Travel, Transport & Hospitality Industry, Julie Shainock
- OMRAN Group, CEO, Hashil Al Mahrouqi
- Terme & Spa Italia, President & Owner, Massimo Caputi

During the Global Summit, WTTC's current Chair, Greg O'Hara, Founder and Senior Managing Director of Certares Management LLC ("Certares") will pass the torch to Manfredi Lefebvre, Chairman of Heritage Group and co-chair of luxury travel company Abercrombie and Kent - one of the most recognised names in Travel & Tourism.

Julia Simpson, WTTC President & CEO, said: "We're thrilled to have such a distinguished group of speakers already confirmed for our Global Summit in Rome.

"The Eternal City provides a perfect backdrop for a Summit where the world's Travel & Tourism leaders will gather to innovate, collaborate, and drive a decade of exceptional, sustainable growth."

Minister of Tourism, Daniela Santanchè, who will also be addressing delegates at this year's Global Summit said: "The names confirmed so far reaffirm the absolute prestige of the world's largest tourism event: the WTTC Global Summit will be a historic moment that will offer enormous opportunities in favour of large investments in Italy, so much so that a special focus with Invitalia is dedicated precisely to this issue".

Greg O'Hara, Founder & Senior Managing Director, Certares, and WTTC Chair, added: "The WTTC Global Summit has evolved into the most influential gathering in Travel & Tourism, bringing together the people and ideas that shape our sector's future. Rome will be a launchpad for the next decade of growth, innovation, and collaboration.

"I'm honoured to host my final Summit as Chair alongside such an extraordinary line-up of leaders, as we work together to ensure Travel & Tourism continues to drive prosperity and connect cultures around the world."

Manfredi Lefebvre, Executive Chairman of AKTG, Abercrombie & Kent and Crystal Cruises and WTTC Chair-Elect, added: "As we gather in the heart of Rome, we are reminded that the future of Travel & Tourism is not just about destinations, but about the connections we forge and the experiences we create together. This summit marks a pivotal moment for our industry; it is an opportunity to embrace innovation and resilience, ensuring that we not only thrive but also leave a lasting legacy for future generations."

More speakers and headline sessions will be announced in the coming weeks, with the programme set to tackle the most pressing challenges and exciting opportunities for a sector that generates millions of jobs, drives economic resilience, and connects communities across the globe.

For updates, the latest agenda, and to register interest in attending, please visit [WTTC](#).

Members of the press interested in attending can send an email to ufficiostampa@ministeroturismo.gov.it to receive instructions on accreditation procedures.

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