

## **Statement regarding SMOFcon 2021 Bid by James Bacon and Vincent Docherty:**

Sorry, we were enjoying ourselves in Lisboa (Lisbon, Portugal), in the fantastic company of many fans and professionals, imbibing inexpensive excellent wine and enjoying evenings that are not cold. Hence the delay with this FAQ

We have a number of sections to this FAQ.

- First the FAQ
- Our distinct approach to a European SMOFcon
- Challenges
- The team.

We have already visited Lisboa and we wrote a piece about it, please check it out:

<http://file770.com/trip-to-lisboa/>

And check out all the amazing Sfnal activities on the Portuguese Portal:

<https://theportugueseportal.com/> (in English)

## **General**

### **Name of Bid**

SMOFcon Europe. We want to excite people over the idea of travelling to Europe, and while we cannot be called SMOFcon Number until we win, we think it is appropriate to emphasise the location, the third time a SMOFcon (York, UK in 2001 and Amsterdam, Netherlands in 2011) will be outside North America.

### **Who will represent your convention at SMOFcon 37 and how can the bid be contacted?**

Vincent Docherty, the only European at SMOFcon.

email for all queries: [info@SMOFconeurope.com](mailto:info@SMOFconeurope.com)

### **What are the dates for your convention?**

7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> of December 2021

### **Is your convention site in a city center location or a suburb? If a suburb, what are the transport options into the city center? How far is the site from the city center?**

We have been looking at 6 venues so far and have strong support from the city.

3 are 10 minutes and €10 Taxi to the city centre and equidistant to the airport.

- Hotel Novotel Lisboa, Av. José Malhoa 1 1A, 1099-051 Lisboa, Portugal
- DoubleTree by Hilton Lisbon – Fontana Park
- Lisbon Marriott Hotel - Avenida dos Combatentes, 45, 1600-042 Lisbon, Portugal

3 are 15 minutes and about €15 to the city and closer to the airport (2 stops on a metro, 5 minutes and €6) in an area known as ‘Oriente’

- Hotel Olissippo - Oriente
- VIP Arts Hotel - Oriente
- Tivoli Oriente Lisboa Hotel

## Travel

**What is the typical current airfare to your closest airport from world cities such as London, Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Wellington?**

Boston	\$483 direct (TAP)
Chicago*	\$585 direct (TAP)
Los Angeles	\$850 (1 stop)
New York	\$449 direct (TAP)
Dublin	\$86 direct (TAP)
London LHR	\$84 direct (BA**)
Helsinki	\$245 direct (Finnair)
Wellington	\$1172 (2 stops)
Chengdu	\$908 (1 stop)

Rio De Janeiro	\$650 direct (TAP)
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TAP – are Air Portugal. Cheaper flights were available with stops.

\* LIS – ORD flying on Wednesday and returning Monday, no direct flights on Thursday.

\*\* you can find cheaper flights out of London Luton, but we wouldn't recommend it, as it's the UK's worst airport and they charge you for everything, including drop off and pick up.

**Do international flights, as well as domestic, fly into your local airport? Which airlines? If not, where is the closest international airport? Are direct flights from the cities above flown into your local airport?**

Lisboa airport is centrally located only 15 min transfer from city centre.

As a European Capital City Airport it is served by all major airlines and has daily non-stop connections to all major European cities as well as the USA, South America and Africa (more than 50 destinations in total).

There are direct flights from Xi'An in China, 14 a day from Sao Paolo, Miami, San Francisco, Moscow, Berlin, Nice, Edinburgh, Seoul, Tel Aviv, Toronto, Montreal, Washington (Dulles) and Caracas. It is a destination city.

**Are there other major transportation options to reach your city such as ship or train?**

Lisboa is served by cruise ships. During Vincent and James' visit they observed a number in Lisboa.

Trains go directly from Spain to Oriente Station, which is now the main international train station. A journey from London can take 26 hours with 3 changes.

**How far is your convention site from the nearest airport/train station and what is the realistic cost of getting to the hotels by both public transport and taxi from that airport/train station?**

The metro system connects the airport to the city. Taxis are cheap and plentiful and currently Uber operates in the city.

### **Our potential hotels:**

3 hotels are 10 minutes and €10 taxi to the airport.  
2 of these are 10 minutes from the nearest Metro, 1 is 5 minutes.  
These Metros connect to the airport with 1 change.

3 hotels are 5 minutes and €6 Taxi to the airport. Direct Metro is 2 stops away.  
These 3 are at Oriente, which has an international Train Station as well as Metro.

BUT – Taxis are cheap and quick, and we will be encouraging their use.

The city also has two types of travel cards. The Lisboa Card is for a short tourist visit and covers transport and access to tourist sites. The Viva Viagem card is a top-up card like the Oyster in London and Leap in Dublin.

### **Facilities**

#### **What venue do you plan to use for the convention?**

We are currently looking at a variety of hotels

- Hotel Novotel Lisboa, Av. José Malhoa 1 1A, 1099-051 Lisboa, Portugal
- DoubleTree by Hilton Lisbon – Fontana Park
- Lisbon Marriott Hotel - Avenida dos Combatentes, 45, 1600-042 Lisbon
- Hotel Olissippo - Oriente
- VIP Arts Hotel
- Tivoli Oriente Lisboa Hotel

Negotiations are ongoing.

#### **What are your hotel rates?**

Rates will be negotiated closer to the vote. We intend to have another site visit in Spring.

Based on what we have seen, we expect they would be cheaper than many US destination cities. A search of current rates for the 6 hotels shows low-mid hundred Euro rates (€100-160) per room, inclusive sales tax (plus €4 per night per room hotel tax).

**Do hotel rates include breakfast?**

Usually this is standard but it depends on the rate we get. We noted that Breakfasts varied, but that some were very 'Full Irish' in style.

**Do they include internet in the room?**

Depends on the hotel, but those we visited so far did so.

**Do any of the hotels have shuttles to/from the airport, train station, or port?**

A number of hotels have taxi ranks close to the hotel, and were exceptionally good value. We did not encounter shuttles. This can be investigated.

**What is the distance from the main hotel(s) to the closest entrance of the convention site?**

We would look to use function space in the hotel where people are staying.

**What are the transportation options for those who prefer not to walk or who have mobility difficulties?**

TAXI. Accessible taxis are available and cheap.

We noted some access challenges regarding Lisboa. The city is hilly and cobblestones are predominantly used as paving.

We will be thoughtful and constructively considering this challenge. For people who use mobility and wheelchairs, we need to work on what our strategy is, but we are already considering a taxi stipend to enable full access for our members.

The Metro is very good and there were lifts, but we need to map out routes with those with access requirements to ensure that they are valid.

In the city there are wonderfully historic but dreadfully inaccessible trams (trolleys) that go across the city, stopping at major tourist locations. There are also modern, regular low floor trams, but again, this has made us consider carefully how we enable those who require access.

## **What provision do you have for assessing access and disability at your venue?**

We have Paul Shortt on our team who managed Access for Dublin 2019. Paul has experience in this area and is aware of the specific requirements of our members and will work with the unique challenges that Lisboa presents.

We will 'stress test' our venues in 2020.

We commit to listening and incorporating the needs of anyone with accessible requirements, as well as encouraging members with specific access needs to become part of our volunteer team.

## **Please describe your convention site facilities. For example, the quantity and sizes of function rooms, tech options, accessibility issues, etc.**

### **We are looking at Hotels that have a minimum of:**

- One large room between 150 and 200 seats.
- 2 and 3 medium sized rooms of 50 to 90
- 2 board rooms
- Good social space.
- Fully accessible function and social space.

## **Please describe the restaurant scene near your site.**

**Oriente area** has quite a lot of restaurants in the immediate vicinity, and if we choose a hotel here, we will look to list them. In saying that, the city centre is an adventure.

**Lisboa is incredible.** As a destination city with vast cultural connections, it is so cheap and so good. We will provide a selection of restaurants but we loved the local restaurants, where they were full of people, enjoying beers at €1.70 and full dinners for less than €10. (The local team translated these places as 'DIVES' but that is unfair.)

Styled over 400 years by the Moors and certainly enriched by the spice trade in the golden age of its overseas connections during the 15 and 16th centuries. Lisboa is a historic capital, a collection of unusual character and charm. The city is an amalgam of 1000 years of cultural influences that mingle with modern trends and lifestyle creating intricate and spectacular contrasts.

Spread across seven hills always opening a window towards the majestic Tagus river.

**What are the policies/laws regarding smoking at your:**

**Hotels**

Total ban inside, with designated smoking areas outside.

**Function Area:**

Total ban inside.

**City:**

The vast majority of restaurants and bars are completely no smoking inside. Smoking is also prohibited inside public buildings including shopping centres, on all public transport, schools and hospitals and a long list of other places.

Two things to be aware of:

- There is no restriction on smoking outside. So outside tables, be aware.
- Some restaurants and bars DO ALLOW smoking. The areas where smoking is permitted are identifiable by the display of signs with a blue background, but usually can be found on the door. Vincent and James only found one restaurant where this was occurring.

**What type of weather can we expect at the time of year your convention is to be held?**

The weather this weekend (6-8 Dec 2019) is currently expected to be a high of 17°C (63°F), a low of 11°C (52°F), sunny/light rain, 60% humidity and 10-15 kph (6-9mph) winds. Quick and sudden showers do occur, as the City is on the Atlantic.

Average weather for December is a high of 15°C (59°F) with a low of 9°C (48°F) and 10 days with rain.

**What arrangements will be made for evening socializing and Con Suite?**

We will work with the hotels. Con Suites are not normal in Europe, and this may not be something we can facilitate. In Amsterdam in 2011 we organised light breakfast in the con social space (and at other times) sponsored by various seated cons and bids.

All of the hotels visited had ample social space with nearby hotel bars/cafes.

**Do you currently have a code of conduct in place for your bid/convention?**

- **If so, what is it?**
- **If not, do you intend to have one?**

We will develop a code of conduct based on the Dublin 2019 Code of Conduct, working with Dublin 2019 staff, and plan to have one available before the vote. We will have a code of conduct in place before we are actually a convention.

**What are your plans to include diverse representation both amongst your membership and on programme / events at the convention?**

We understand this is important to fans. Currently we have one Russian, two Scots, three Irish, five Portuguese, one Chinese, a Canadian and an English fella in the Token Tree.

Given how many US folks have been genuinely supportive of conventions and undertakings that James and Vincent have worked, we anticipate that some US fans will come on board.

We will be working to engage and involve fans who are local, and from diverse backgrounds. We also want to celebrate Portuguese SF and fandom and will look to feature this.

We may have a discount especially for local fans to encourage first time attendance. We may also look at a discounted rate for those under 26.

We will reflect on what we can do with Con or Bust, and emulate the success that the The Fantastic Dublin Fund (FDF) and Traveller and Pavee Point Outreach had at that convention.

**Are you planning to have any membership discounts for certain groups, such as young adults, military, or seniors?**

We will not be having a Military discount.  
We may have discounts for local and younger fans.

**What are some of the attractions of your city?**

Mild weather - the climate has lots of warm sunshine in winter.

Lisboa is amongst the most competitive cities for international events.

Lisboa is a friendly and tolerant city by tradition.

Lisboa is a “resort city” with a unique triangle – historic and cosmopolitan, the resort of Cascais, the romantic village of Sintra, a World Heritage Site and Arrábida Mountain and nature reserve area are just 45 minutes away. There is culture, history and World heritage sites. Gastronomy & wines feature strongly. A vibrant new destination.

Did we mention the nice weather...

FAQ ends here. Further information below.

## **SMOFcon Europe: a convention for Planners, organisers, con runners and fans. A distinct approach.**

SMOFcon Europe is a Convention for convention runners, or those interested in the field. Our members come from a background of organising Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror conventions covering all media and all sizes from meet ups of a dozen people to hundreds and thousands. We have already recruited as a bid a number of fans who operate with different models, run events based on differing societal and organisational systems and who do not do things the way 'we do'. Lisbon has a thriving fan scene, and most Sfnal events take place in public buildings, such as a steampunk convention in the Train Museum and Contact and Forum Fantastico festivals in Libraries.

SMOFcon Europe sets out to do a number of things, aspirational, hopeful and happy to fail along the way.

### 1. Organising a Convention.

The organisation of the convention itself is a vital part of the opportunity that this event presents.

The team will be open to fans to join, to gain insight, experience, develop and work with a team. The committee will be working to a high standard, in the style of a centre of excellence.

With considerable experience to call upon, there is scope for fans to work on and to try new ideas, concepts and systems, in a safe environment, where there will be a fall back with basics in place and the membership and team wholly understanding the desire to experiment and develop new ideas into deliverables which have a risk attached, which we are happy to accept. It's ok for something not to work out if we try hard and have a contingency and we will.

Self development is opportune as part of this, working in areas that are new or exciting while stretching and being self aware and seeking input as desired.

Observing, shadowing, mentoring are all aspects that SMOFcon Europe will allow and encourage. Experienced fans will be the fall back but if you are new at something, leading an aspect of the convention to gain experience is open to those who wish to do the work, in the secure knowledge that support is immediate. A blame free culture and supportive learning environment is the aim.

### 2. The convention itself.

The convention itself will have three days of programme. Friday will see longer workshops, in depth. Workshops will continue over the weekend, while small discussions, expert groups and panels will occur.

What's important here is to know Convention organisers feel would be helpful. Where you want to learn more, what challenges you are faced with.

Are there experts or resources you want to hear from or about? What level of development do you want to have covered? We don't want to patronise anyone, while recognising we all have something to learn and there are many ways to run a successful convention.

### 3, Working with other conventions.

We will not assume an entitlement which expects other conventions will have to march to the beat of our drum, for the likes of the Fannish Inquisition. We will use the 20 or so questions developed over a number of years by Esther MacCallum-Stewart and Colette Fozzard, which we have used above and which a number of Worldcon bids have used.

We are privileged to host a fannish presentation and question session (and we may investigate terminology further) and want to make that easy for bids to participate in, while recognising that for many it is a key event.

We will work to have the questions we want asked ready by the time of the VOTE. A whole year prior to the event.

### 4. Understanding other cultures. Giving the benefit of best intent.

Most fans act out of best intent. We think we are doing what is right. We try.

It is important to the team, that as fans, we are as respectful for European and Worldwide cultures as is expected for North American ones. History and culture are different for different countries. An example of that would be the successful Traveller outreach and support that Dublin 2019 carried out. The Travellers who engaged and brought so much to brilliance to Dublin were supported, but come from a marginalised community. Members of that community suffer racist abuse and discrimination. We need to learn and understand the nuances and subtleties of marginalisation and how different communities are affected, depending on the location.

We also need to recognise how historical elements can have different perceptions. A good example was Regency Dances which are a fan tradition for some, and for others a dreadful celebration of a racist and oppressive time. 1798 was not a good time in Ireland.

As fans who look forward, we need to contemplate Worldcon and SMOFcon going to new countries and learn what we may need to adjust or finesse for the welcome we genuinely want to give to be received. It is very well saying what we think is the right thing, but what is the right thing by people there. This is something we want to be forgiving and thoughtful about.

Some of the SMOFcon Challenges.

SMOFcon faces challenges. While ideas are welcome, the challenges need to be actively overcome and we are calling on aspiring convention organisers to help us to overcome these distinct challenges by helping the solutions come to fruition.. We'd like to welcome you to engage with the team and help us overcome these challenges with tangible solutions that are not just ideas, but worked out ways and tasks that will be willingly undertaken.

1. What needs to be done so that new fans feel welcomed to SMOFcon?
2. SMOFcon expects 100 to 150 people paying 50 euro each, this is a budget of €5,000 to €7,500 - we have to keep our expenses within this amount, how do we do new or exciting things within this budget. How can we discount for new attendees, or for those locally?
3. The electronic world, fans dialing in, the provision of speech to text, programme systems, registration systems. What's best. What can we try and how do we bring them to SMOFcon. Streaming sessions is feasible, but staffing every programme item so that two way engagement can occur is a huge use of human resource, is that feasible?
4. Lisbon is a vibrant and colourful city, with a long history and dreadful pavements. How do we successfully overcome any access issues that are presented.

Our growing Team SMOFcon Europe.

Rogério Ribeiro  
Carlos Silva  
Cristina Alves  
Miguel Jorge  
Marguerite Smith  
Paul Anthony Shortt  
Regina Kanyu Wang  
Paul Taylor  
Tammy Coxen  
Vincent Docherty  
Ricardo Pinto  
Anna Gryaznova  
James Bacon