

Gala Brings Ultimate Flexibility to Baku's New High-Tech Convention Centre



A Gala Venue® Seating System for flexible multipurpose halls has been integrated into the new Convention Centre in Baku, Azerbaijan. Coop Himmelb(l)au, an Austrian architectural firm renowned for its innovative approach, designed this highly functional building, inaugurated in 2015 and now in full operation. The sculptural building covered by an elegantly curved shell definitely forms part of the modern movement in architecture, which began to appear in the early 2000s with Baku's economic development.



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Diligent collaboration between consultants from Obermeyer Corporate Group, Ingenieurbüro Helmut Tetzlaff, ILK Construction and Gala Systems ensured the completion of the first portion of this project in just over a year. The State Committee on Property Issues of the Republic of AZERBAIJAN and Coop Himmelb(l)au had the foresight to make Baku's Centre adaptable so as to suit future requirements of space for both business and entertainment activities, and they knew that only an automated flexible hall could eventually be 100% booked, as opposed to single purpose halls which are typically used 20% to 25% of the time.



The heart of the Convention Centre is a highly flexible auditorium for an audience of 3,500 with a Gala Venue Rotation System of 2,000 seats that can be quickly transformed from a raked seating layout to a flat floor space, with a range of configurations in between. For the comfort of the audience, high quality seats were supplied by Euroseating.

Besides its entire transformable audience parterre, the main hall's stage area was also equipped with 12 separately controlled platforms in order to accommodate many different types of events. A large orchestra lift allows for the transportation of equipment to the venue basement; coupled with a noise control service platform installed underneath, it even permits equipment to be moved during events. The stage area has also been furnished with five independent platforms to add multiple configuration possibilities.

Adaptable in size and capacity, and furnished with a fully configurable stage, the Convention Centre will be able to reach a wide variety of clients and host just about any world trade exhibition, conference or cultural event, such as concerts, banquets or dance performances. The automated transformation – in 15 minutes at the push of a button – enables even two completely different events to take place within the same day. The Gala solution makes the room also suited for several simultaneous events, with mobile partitions to temporarily divide the auditorium space. Controlled by a central board with a single operator, this fully automated system allows the Convention Centre to run very efficiently, making the best use of each square metre for decades to come.

Immediately after its opening in May 2015, the Convention Centre hosted its first major international event, the 48th annual meeting of the Board of Directors of the Asian Development Bank, attracting 3,000 delegates to the country. As a mixed-use building, flexible enough to provide space for such high-profile world-class events as well as cultural attractions for the general public, there is no question that this new high-tech multipurpose Convention Centre will be a key component in Baku's future commercial and touristic expansion.

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