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EDITORIAL

These proceedings comprise papers presented at the 29th CROMAR Congress held in Opatija and Rijeka on 13th and 14th November 2025. The Croatian Marketing Association – CROMAR - organized this edition of the congress together with the Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management, University of Rijeka, and the Faculty of Economics and Business, University of Rijeka.

Today, as digital transformation and artificial intelligence shape marketers’ roles and the skills and competencies required, the conference theme “Empowering the Future: Bridging Science and Practice through Collaboration” highlights the importance of integrating scientific research with practical applications to advance marketing knowledge and develop effective marketing strategies. The theme inspired 37 research proposals, with 27 full papers submitted. Following a double-blind review process, 23 papers by 56 authors from Croatia, Serbia, Slovenia, and Portugal were accepted for presentation at the conference.

Beyond academic paper discussions, the conference offered numerous opportunities for practitioners and researchers to confront and challenge each other’s perspectives. The first day of the conference hosted three keynote speakers. Selma Kadić-Maglajlić, associate professor at Copenhagen Business School, discussed how to move beyond surveys in conducting marketing research in the AI era. Maja Šimunić, PhD, director of sales at Hilton Rijeka Costabella Beach Resort & Spa, proposed how to create sustainable, win-win value between business and education, and Sanja Stamenić Oštrić, PhD, director of marketing at Solana Nin, elaborated on the power of storytelling. On the same day, a panel on “Rural development in cross-border tourist destinations” (EU Horizon project CROCUS) and a student workshop were held by Tomislav Pancirov, a consultant in digital communications and branding, on how to build a personal brand on digital channels. The second day of the conference hosted sessions and workshops, “Cracking the code: what top-tier journals really want from your paper to get published?” and „Connect with editors - Successfully navigating the business journal publication process“ session, and a doctoral students conference. Finally, as CROMAR aims to foster excellence in marketing among younger generations, awards were presented to students who authored the best bachelor’s, master’s, and doctoral theses, as well as to those who completed the best project between the two CROMAR Congresses.

Of the 23 papers presented at the conference, three were selected for publication in the partnering journals, and 19 are included in these proceedings. In these papers, the authors approached the congress theme from both consumer perception and marketing strategy perspectives. Specifically, when it comes to consumer perception perspective, authors studied: sustainable preferences (in tourism, food, electric vehicles, and fashion industries), consumer behaviour in digital environment (by analysing consumer fear of missing out on social media and consumer mobile application usage), and consumer emotions and attitudes (when it comes to marketing as a profession, a higher education

institution, music in marketing and impulse buying). When it comes to marketing perspective, researchers investigated the role of artificial intelligence (in marketing agencies, in cybersecurity, and in personalized tourist destination development), destination marketing (based on heritage and storytelling), and the importance and understanding of marketing process elements (such as market analysis, packaging development, and the marketing process as a whole).

We thank the authors for their valuable contributions; the keynote speakers, session chairs, reviewers, and program and organizing committee members for their dedication and expertise; and, finally, the partners and sponsors for their support. We hope these proceedings will inspire further dialogue, collaboration, and research, and continue to strengthen the vital bridge between scientific insight and practical impact.

We look forward to the 30th anniversary of the CROMAR congress in 2027!

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