



**Magiczny
Kraków**

The 15th Congress of the Organization of World Heritage Cities

2019-06-21

Workshops for city mayors from around the world, thematic workshops, plenary sessions, the General Assembly meeting of the OWHC and the election of the host city of the next Congress and attendance of members of the Board of Directors are the most important events of the 15th Congress of the Organization of World Heritage Cities to be held in Krakow on June 2-5 in Krakow. Over 400 delegates from five continents will participate!

I am proud that Krakow is once again becoming a place for international debate on contemporary challenges facing historical cities. Guests from around the world will experience the richness of European culture in Krakow's unique atmosphere and will become tourists in one of the most visited Polish cities. "Heritage and tourism" is the theme of the 15th Congress of the Organization of World Heritage Cities and I am convinced that our city, which constitutes a center of cultural, business, pilgrimage and culinary tourism is a perfect place for international discussion on the issue – emphasizes Jacek Majchrowski – the Mayor of the City of Krakow.

The World Congress of the OWHC will be organized for the first time in Central and Eastern Europe. During this prestigious event, Krakow will represent the cities of the Secretariat of Central and Eastern Europe of OWHC (Warsaw, Budapest, Kutná Hora, Riga, Rhodes, Vienna, Vilnius and Zamość) cities which supported our candidacy in last year's voting related to the election of a subsequent host of this extraordinary global meeting.

The congress will be attended by delegates coming from all parts of the world: mayors of cities, directors of international cultural centers, experts in the field of cultural heritage management, UNESCO specialists, the OWHC representatives, university lecturers and journalists specializing in heritage.

Why was Krakow chosen as the organizer of the congress? For years, the capital of the Malopolska Region has been making efforts to harmonize tourism, while at the same time supporting the development of the region as a center of cultural, congresses and pilgrimage tourism. The introduction of a cultural park that clearly defines the principles of the functioning of the historic center of the city is a good example of caring for the welfare of residents and tourists. What is more, new tourist routes have been marked out to balance tourism traffic, including in the districts of Podgórze and Nowa Huta. We are expanding the cultural offer for residents by moving events from the center to individual districts - which also increases their attractiveness. During the 15th Congress of the Organization of World Heritage Cities delegates will discuss experiences of being a historical city and exchange experiences in debates on how to wisely use heritage resources for sustainable urban development and tourism, how to balance heritage protection policies with development policies, and above all, how to include the residents themselves in managing world heritage sites.



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We would like to remind you that Krakow was granted the privilege of organizing this past year's Congress in South Korea in the autumn of 2017. Spanish Granada and Russian Kazan were our competitors. We have gained the support of the secretary offices of the Organization of World Heritage Cities through the presentation of such achievements in the field of management of world heritage sites by consistent efforts to cherish non-material traditions, customs and traditions, and to protect the unique urban landscape. Among other things pointed out as the justification for granting Krakow the privilege of the organization of the 15th Congress of the OWHC included the experience of Krakow in the organization of prestigious international meetings and the reputation and functionality of the ICE Krakow Congress Center.

The thematic axis of the OWHC meetings is the protection and management of historical cities - an issue currently belonging to the most difficult challenges for dynamically developing urban centers, cities exposed to natural disasters and armed conflicts as well as those just being discovered as destinations for mass tourism. The modernization and transformation of historic cities and their adaptation to new functions, standards and needs are also important developmental challenges. The OWHC members care about authenticity issues - about the preservation of addresses, buildings, shops, craft shops, bookstores, antique shops or places representing the history of the city. The cities' tasks are to ensure that the local community permanently identifies itself with its place in the city and, based on that, develops its own capabilities, remembering also to cultivate intangible traditions in their authentic and still live dimension.

World Congresses of the Organization of World Heritage Cities are organized every two years with meetings of all member cities of the organization. Among others, the congresses have been held so far in Rhodes (2003), Kazan (2007), Quito (2009), Sintra (2011), Arequipa (2015), and Korean Gyeongju (2017).

Preparations for the event include a dedicated bilingual blog called krakowheritage.com and three special English-language social profiles that have already been launched. The common denominator of them all is the combination of two words: "Krakow" + "Heritage".

The official website of the OWHC 2019 congress