

5 years have passed ... ICE Krakow is celebrating its anniversary!

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The year 2014 was undoubtedly extremely important for Krakow and its inhabitants.

In spring, the largest Polish sports and entertainment hall - today's Tauron Arena Krakow - and EXPO Krakow, a modern exhibition and fair complex were opened, while in the autumn the meetings industry gained a powerful tool to create the most attractive events. The first event at the ICE Krakow Congress Center, located on the right bank of the Vistula River opposite the Wawel Royal Castle, was held on October 16, 2014, after 1824 days of construction. The panorama of Krakow extending from the glass foyer, the original shape and technical capabilities of the building are just some of the distinguishing features of one of the most modern congress and concert facilities in this part of Europe. Krakow's business and cultural showcase is celebrating its fifth anniversary.

It is no coincidence that the city facility, operated by the Krakow Festival Office, has become the showcase of Krakow. This is evidenced primarily by the number of meetings organized here over the last five years - there were nearly 1000! The three key facilities opened in 2014 are connected by a Declaration of Will to Cooperate. Due to the operations of TAURON Arena Krakow, EXPO Krakow and ICE Krakow, the number of key events that took place in the city has doubled since then. According to recent research and the International Congress and Convention Association (ICCA) ranking, as many as 53 association meetings were organized in Krakow last year (according to the ICCA criteria), thanks to which the capital of the Malopolska Region advanced by 9 places, as compared to the previous year, to 45th place worldwide. In turn, in the ranking prepared by the Union of International Associations (UIA) Krakow - with 24 meetings qualifying for the association criteria - took first place in Poland, surpassing Warsaw as the leader. Many of the events were organized at the ICE Krakow Congress Center.

The city's proper showcase is confirmed by research on the economic impact of the meetings industry on the economy of Krakow, as presented in December 2018 by the Malopolska Tourist Organization, a team of Krakow tourism experts from the Krakow University of Economics and the City of Krakow together with the Krakow Convention Bureau. Participants of business events spent a total of PLN 1.4 billion, while the meetings industry generated nearly PLN 2.2 billion of GDP, which accounted for 3.38 percent of the share of Krakow's entire economy in GDP for 2018. In accordance with the strategy of the City of Krakow and the plans of the Krakow Festival Office, the operator of ICE Krakow, the number of business events is to increase from year to year, thus supplying the local economy.

The city focuses on acquiring international congresses and conferences and creating its own, prestigious cyclical events. The increase in the number of meetings is a result of many factors, the growing number of air connections, accommodation places and the creation of professional congress facilities undoubtedly contribute to this increase. ICE Krakow plays an extremely important role on the urban map of the meetings industry, . The facility enables the implementation of various events from congresses, conferences, symposia and forums, to cultural events - says Małgorzata Przygórska-Skowron, head of the Krakow Convention Bureau, with whom KBF cooperates on a daily basis, seeking new events for the City.

The main goal of ICE Krakow is to organize various events in the meetings industry, as well as



concerts. This is undoubtedly one of the most multifunctional, but also modern in terms of architecture, buildings in Krakow. The design was managed by Krzysztof Ingarden and Jacek Ewý who collaborated with Japanese designers Arata Isozaki and Hiroshi Aoki. The main ideas behind the concept of the ICE Krakow structure were four key dispositions: the very often emphasized location, creative use of restrictions and the foundation of the building 20 meters from the nearby communication junction (Rondo Grunwaldzkie), the spatial typology of the rooms and the definition of a four-colored facade and roof. The walls of the conference building are defined by red, graphite, white and silver. Color also given to individual places in the interior of ICE Krakow, i.e. the Theater Hall, foyer, the corrugated roof or Auditorium Hall, which has had its patron since last year - one of the greatest Polish composers. This is what Monika Lato from the TOMLA Music Agency says about the Krzysztof Penderecki Hall:

I have fond memories of every concert organized at ICE Krakow. Although initially I was attracted to the facility by the brilliant acoustic parameters of the Krzysztof Penderecki Hall, our long-term cooperation also results from the excellent cooperation with the experienced team of the Congress Center. I am happy that Krakow has such a place, so that we can carry out world-class music events in our city!

The capital of the Malopolska Region has undoubtedly become one of the main stops of the concerts of international artists and the place of the most famous and specialized congresses and conferences. Over the past five years, the facility has been visited by over 1,200,000 guests from around the world.

Małgorzata Przygórska-Skowron also adds: *The ICE Krakow Congress Center is one of the most modern facilities of this type in Central Europe. Undoubtedly, it is also distinguished by its architecture and central location, which is emphasized by congress organizers. Professional staff and active marketing activities have resulted in the facility being rented for several years in advance. Close cooperation between the Congress Center and the Krakow Convention Bureau teams in obtaining events is natural. It commenced even before the opening of the facility and has been continued to this day. Over the past fifteen years of the Krakow Convention Bureau's operation, the Krakow brand, as a place to organize various events, both Polish and international, has been clearly strengthened.*

Suffice it to mention several events that set the bar for the scale of the events taking place in Krakow. In June of this year, the 15th Congress of the World Heritage Cities of the OWHC took place, during which the Mayor of Krakow Jacek Majchrowski was announced the new president of the OWHC. Guests included, among others, General Secretary of the OWHC and authorities of several dozen cities from around the world. Other events that took place this year that are worth mentioning include: the 48th World Congress of Surgery (WCS), FEBS - a forum for the exchange of knowledge and ideas in molecular life sciences that took place in Poland again after 15 years - as well as EMDR, the jubilee, 20th edition of the event for psychotherapists and Microsoft ONE, a conference for Polish partners of the technology giant. A team of 60 people is responsible for all projects on a daily basis.

I had the pleasure of organizing the first international congress in this place, both sides were getting to know the facility, its possibilities and limitations. The first inspection of the Congress Center took place 2 years before its opening, when only the foundations were laid at the time,



**Magiczny
Kraków**

nevertheless we decided that the congress would be held there. Why? Because then it was the only opportunity to organize an event in Krakow, otherwise the congress would have to be held in Warsaw. But now, from the perspective of five years, I can say that the facility has many advantages that speak in its favor and attract event organizers – Anna Jędrocha from Symposium Cracoviense evaluates, the vice president of the Conferences and Congresses Association in Poland.

ICE Krakow is appreciated not only by customers, but also by a group of jurors and industry experts. From the beginning, it has been on the podium in the Meeting Star Award plebiscite, winning first, second and twice third place in the CONGRESS VENUE category. ICE Krakow also has two MP Power Awards in the "Congress" and "Congress Venue" categories.

The success developed in recent years is undoubtedly also due to the cooperation that was already established at the beginning of the activities of ICE Krakow with representatives of the Polish meetings industry. One of the projects that testify to this is the Power of 4 initiative, an agreement between conference facilities in: Warsaw, Krakow, Gdansk and Lublin. Effective cooperation was also established within the Krakow Network which brings together local service providers, hoteliers, caterers and restaurateurs, the academic community and experts. At present, nearly 600 people are involved in the project.

Thank you to the ICE Krakow team for meeting the expectations of viewers, artists, producers and organizers, for innovation, understanding production needs in the preparation of the so-called "Show", all their help, searching and finding solutions. We hope that in the ever-changing changing and galloping entertainment industry, the ICE Krakow facility will always meet new expectations as well as trends and host the most interesting productions from all around the world!

Makrokoncert team

In Krakow - the City of Historical Heritage, the European Capital of Culture, the UNESCO City of Literature or the European Capital of Gastronomy Culture, but also a university, scientific and intellectual center enriched with modern facilities - each event acquires a unique meaning, dimension and taste. The organizers' positive experience strengthens Krakow's excellent reputation and position as a leader in the meetings industry.

What will the next 5 years be like for the ICE Krakow Congress Center? Judging by the calendar of already planned events - and new ones still appearing in it! - this time promises to be extremely intense.