



## **Time of trial**

2020-05-22

**The SARS-CoV-2 coronavirus pandemic turned the world upside down. In just a few days, the reality as we knew it had disappeared. The crisis has affected the entire world. It struck most sectors of the economy with enormous force, without sparing the meetings industry.**

During this uncertain time, the word solidarity gained new meaning and trust became the most important value.

The Krakow Fairs, owner of EXPO Krakow, is a company employing more than 70 people. We are a family company, despite the fact that we are not bound by blood ties - we have known each other for years, we support each other and we know that we can always count on a helping hand from our colleagues. The Board of the Krakow Fair has for years been emphasizing that fantastic employees are behind the company's success. They are the brand's strength. According to the proverb, "a friend in need is a friend indeed," has also proven true in this case, the coronavirus has put our relationships to a test. The management has once again shown that it will do everything to make every employee feel as safe as possible. Employees supported each other and encouraged each other for weeks of remote work. Thanks to this, the work was continuous, without a moment's interruption. The speed of making decisions was also a big positive aspect, as a result everyone knew what the next plans were. From the beginning, we have been aware that we are fighting not only for the company as an institution, but for the company meaning - family.

## **New reality**

The pandemic strongly influenced our business: withdrawal from conducting events, often at short notice, rebuilding relationships with customers - it's just part of the challenges that we need to contend. Two months ago we did our daily work. We talked with clients, we booked the EXPO Krakow space for the forthcoming months. The spring season promised to be sensational. We are currently observing what is happening in our country, and above all in our city, with great concern. Social distancing, empty streets, as well as empty EXPO Krakow halls is a new reality that we need to face every day. Within a few days, the whole world stopped. We didn't have a Plan B because face-to-face meetings are the basis of our business. After the first difficult talks, we understood that nothing would be the same as before and we began to listen to the new needs of our clients. After each conversation, however, there was one most important conclusion - the longer we live in isolation, the more we all miss meetings. We are longing for conversations, thirsty for events, yearning for everyday relations with work colleagues and friends. People have a natural need for closeness, and although life online seems simple and comfortable, at some point there is a need for direct contact.

## **Near the industry**

Every day, thousands of entrepreneurs wonder how they are going to save their businesses and retain their employees. The Krakow Fairs has been cooperating with entrepreneurs from many industries for many years. The fate of companies dealing with, among others, industry, gastronomy, medicine, as well as the book market, is important and dear to us. We feel part of each of these sectors. We are keeping our fingers crossed strongly for Polish companies that



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are making heroic efforts to survive this worst moments. Our contact with clients lasts all year long, it never ends with an event. We talk, discuss and look for the best solutions together.

### **What's ahead?**

The current situation has triggered a lot of reflections on the future of the meetings industry - we are all looking forward to returning to "normalcy". One thing is certain, nothing can replace direct meetings. For many years, the exhibitors of our trade fair were asked a question - can everything be done online? There was always one answer, no matter what the industry - no. In the online world, we cannot smell the coffee, test out a machine, or feel the emotions associated with the signing of the book by a favorite author, we will not be a community of people at a concert, we will not integrate as if we did it offline. Let us be solid, let us be patient. Joint meetings will return and our joy will be double.