



ICE Krakow in international company

2020-07-13

Representatives of the ICE Krakow Congress Center represented Krakow and the entire country during the "AIPC Community Outreach Webinar on COVID-19" online conference which took place on May 28th. Each of the discussion participants described the epidemic situation in their country and its impact on their event venue, and presented actions taken locally to alleviate the crisis.

Sixteen persons from 8 countries participated in the debate – apart from Poland these included Switzerland, Great Britain, Italy, Turkey, Scotland, UAE and South Africa. The discussion was moderated by Julianne Jammers, the Managing Director of the SwissTech Convention Center. Poland was represented by Bożena Wojnar and Anna Fryc.

AIPC is an organization connecting congress facilities worldwide. Its mission is to develop the best practices in managing congress centers. The ICE Krakow Congress Center joined the organization in 2011 as a "provisional member", and its full membership was confirmed after the opening of the facility. The presence of the Krakow venue among such participants confirms its role in the global meetings industry. Also, thanks to this, during the May conference, the ICE Krakow Congress Center was able to share its know-how and present how the Polish industry is responding to the pandemic.

Our representatives informed the participants that on June 6th the Polish government announced the decision to allow organizing cultural events under the condition of a maximum of 50% capacity; however, the detailed rules applicable at event facilities have not yet been established. Krakow is trying, among others, to acquire hybrid events: thanks to the Concept Music Art CMA virtual recording studio created last month, it is possible to transfer events from the real world to the Internet. Such an option in the offer was prepared due to the number of canceled or postponed events - organizers postponed as much as 80% of the events planned at the ICE Krakow. In the event of allowance of those announced for autumn 2020, the organizers are ready to act, waiting for the Polish government's decision.

It is an important point of the ICE Krakow strategy to activate the industry and the entire meeting industry community. Thanks to the Krakow Network project, which is celebrating its 5th anniversary this year, it participates in cyclical meetings at the congress center, and in recent months also online through the Facebook social networking site and connections with interested participants during the Krakow Network Together conference. The issue raised in two online editions was the safety of post-pandemic events. As a result, a group of participants was selected to work on creating a document which provides examples of solutions and good practices for organizing events under current conditions.

Other countries participating in the discussion also presented their solutions and know-how. The Swiss government announced at the end of May that events with groups of up to 300 persons will be allowed again from June 6th, while the United Kingdom is seeking to open their meetings industry in September. Presently, the "lockdown" and 14-day quarantine for persons coming to the Islands are still in force, which has an obvious impact on their event industry. In Italy, the situation is improving, and although small companies (including restaurants) have already been opened after 2 months of isolation, conference facilities, cinemas and theaters remain closed.



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The rooms of the Dubai World Trade Center in the United Arab Emirates have now been transformed into a field hospital with a capacity of 3,000 beds (there were 450 patients at the end of May). International flights have already started, 9 flights are currently available with a limited number of destinations. On the other hand, in South Africa, an order was introduced that all events in 2020 have been canceled - the border is closed and there are no international flights until at least December, and perhaps even until January 2021.

Joint conclusions that specified the need for cooperation of the entities involved in order to improve communication and activities were an important point of the online conference "AIPC Community Outreach Webinar on COVID-19". Event facilities should plan further steps to respond to the crisis and not treat the current situation as isolation but become part of the ecosystem. An approach based on compliance with the assumed values allows the implementation of a holistic vision by representatives of event destinations and local authorities.