

Krakow supports the tourist industry

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The current situation related to the epidemic is impacting the entire economy, including the tourism industry, and it is currently difficult to assess the scale of all the possible effects. Researchers and experts forecast several possible scenarios for Krakow tourism, being an important branch of the city's economy.

Even though Krakow has been eagerly visited by tourists from all over the world in recent years, we need to remember that the majority of people coming to the capital of the Malopolska Region are domestic tourists. Krakow does a lot to maintain interest in the city, but also to intensify it.

The article by Zbigniew Bartuś, "Black Scenario for Krakow: Thousands of Companies will Survive the Crisis but Will be Left Without Customers. The Government Will Not Help Them. Better News for Podhale" published in "Dziennik Polski" (edition: May 30 this year) includes many references to the statements of Krzysztof Mazur, deputy Minister of Development, who, using Krakow as an example, announced the self-government shield prepared by the government and advised the cities with a well-developed tourist industry and people who derive revenue from tourism to "rethink their business model" and consider re-structuring.

The minister, who is from Krakow, claimed that the capital of the Malopolska Region has a much bigger problem than many Polish cities, as its development has been based on tourism in recent years; he said: "What is more, the majority were foreigners among the 13 million people visiting our city every year. Today, even the most optimistic scenarios of restarting tourism assume that foreign tourists will not return soon." However, the statements are not factual.

Domestic tourists have been the largest number of visitors to Krakow for years. It is difficult to estimate the scale of the impact of the epidemic on the tourism and economy of Krakow, Poland or even the world, but it is impossible not to pay attention to numbers.

- The research conducted annually by the Malopolska Tourist Organization (MOT) at the request of the Krakow City Office and published in the Public Information Bulletin, as well as on the City and MOT websites, clearly shows that the vast majority of visitors in Krakow were domestic visitors - emphasizes Krzysztof Borkowski, PhD, an expert in the field of tourism, coordinating the annual research on tourist traffic in Krakow and the Malopolska Region.- In 2019, there were 76.5% domestic visitors and 23.5% those from abroad in Krakow, and in 2016-2019 again, on average, 76.5% of the domestic and 23.5% of the visitors from abroad. In 2019, 10,150,000 tourists, i.e. travelers who spent the night in the city, 69.95% of tourists from Poland and 30.05% from abroad. In 2016-2019, it was also an average of 69.65% of tourists from Poland and 30.05% from abroad.

What is more, in 2019, as Krzysztof Borkowski indicates, there were 14,050,000 visitors in Krakow, i.e. all travelers who visited the city. - Therefore, the value of 13 million tourists cited in the article is not even an average of the published data, unless it is the average of the past four years: 2016-2019 - he concludes.

The researcher also refers to the words of the minister quoted in the article about the



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government's inability to influence the foreign tourists' decisions concerning their trips that are made out of fear, which threatens companies living off tourism with being without clients for the forthcoming months or years.

- We can impact this. The activities that can help have been described in the Proxenos Cracoviensis project which guarantees tourists social protection in the events requiring it, in justified cases, aimed at providing non-family institutional assistance to those hosted by the city (i.e. declared tourists).

Various forms of support for the Krakow tourism industry

The scale of the city's activities focused on reviving the local economy and tourism is also worth noting. Krakow is extremely attractive to tourists and, not forgetting about the development of other areas of the economy, the city authorities are aware that many companies and people in Krakow live on tourism. Institutional aid in this area is now necessary to preserve many jobs, hence the numerous initiatives aimed at rebuilding tourist arrivals and supporting the activities of Krakow entrepreneurs.

The "Krakow.Nondiscovered" nationwide campaign has been launched in cooperation with the Malopolska Tourist Organization. Large-format advertisements inviting to visitors to Krakow will be located in the largest cities in Poland - Tri-City, Wroclaw, Poznan, Lodz, Szczecin and Warsaw. The city will also be visible in top TV programs, advertising spots and lifestyle women's magazines, it will also intensify its online presence (spots on YouTube, reports on Instagram and Facebook). Everyone who decides to come for a minimum of one night and stay in one of Krakow's hotels will receive a Tourist Card, which entitles the holder to discounts in restaurants, hotels and other entities that joined the program.

The "Tailor-made" program - addressed to tourism and congress organizers, aimed at presenting the potential of Krakow as an ideal city for organizing congresses and conferences as well as tourist visits is another example of activities supporting tourism and the economy. The "Magic culture" project, which aims at expanding commercialization and increasing the accessibility of cultural objects is also worth mentioning. Cooperation with cultural facilities will be a contribution to discount packages targeted at domestic tourists.

Krakow also joined the "City will wait" campaign. Initially, under the slogan #KrakowWillWait, the city encouraged tourists to visit after travel restrictions are lifted by promoting Krakow on social media on domestic and foreign markets. Due to the successive opening of tourist attractions, the slogan was changed to #KrakowIsReady. The purpose of the campaign is to maintain interest in the city's tourist offer.

The "Be a Tourist in Your City" campaign, directed mainly at the local community, has been helping stimulate the local economy and involve the inhabitants of Krakow in the process of restoring the city to be the tourist capital of Poland for the past several weeks. The initiative is accompanied by numerous communication and promotional activities.

A separate group includes initiatives focused on building the sense of Krakow's tourist community. The program "I am lucky to live where others can only come for a while" is part of



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this scope and is addressed to tourist entrepreneurs and residents. It aims to show the role of tourism in the life of the city and become a platform for exchanging views on how to balance Krakow's tourism after the epidemic.

It should also be emphasized that the city offers various forms of support, being within the competence of the local government, offered to residents and entrepreneurs from Krakow whose financial situation has deteriorated due to the negative effects of the epidemic. The "Pause" program here, targeted at Krakow entrepreneurs, including tourists is worth noting.