

Common voice of the industry: the Meetings and Events Industry Council was established

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The Appointed Meetings and Events Industry Council, consisting of representatives of 18 organizations representing over 500 Polish entrepreneurs, is primarily to constitute a common voice for the industry and represent its interests in cooperation with the government.

On July 21, at the seat of Employers of the Republic of Poland, representatives of industry organizations signed a declaration on the establishment of the Meetings and Events Industry Council. Organizations (associations and foundations) represent more than 500 Polish entrepreneurs who organize both trainings and company meetings, as well as such congresses, fairs and festivals: the European Economic Congress, Impact, MSPO and Open'er events. The decision to appoint the Council results, among others, from the fact that the meetings and events industry has found itself in a difficult situation resulting from the pandemic.

- The health and economic pandemic has hit what is at the heart of the MICE industry, i.e. people-to-people contacts. The modern and resilient sector of the economy was completely frozen overnight. This is a cataclysm that no other industry has experienced - says Andrzej Malinowski, the President of the Employers of Poland, who hosted the meeting and signed the declaration in connection with this function. - Therefore, the reaction must be just as quick and decisive. The establishment of the Meetings and Events Industry Council is the first step. The voice of the industry will be louder and more effective. Further steps are to adapt state aid to the unique situation of the meetings industry. It must survive the crisis, be given time to restart and adapt to the new conditions, he points out.

As the representatives of the Council emphasize, it brings together industry organizations, and thus entrepreneurs who have not had a collective representation so far. The participants of the meeting emphasized that cooperation in the crisis management team made them aware of the fragmented nature of the industry, which in practice works pursuant to the principle of connected vessels, and as a result its economic impact is much greater than previously thought. - The meetings and events industry together accounts for nearly 15 percent of the Polish GDP (hotels, entertainment, coach transport, fairs, group and individual inbound and outbound tourism, MICE) and employs, together with suppliers and partners, approx. 1.5 million people - emphasized Bartosz Bieszyński, the coordinator of the crisis team of the MICE industry and now coordinator of the Meetings and Events Industry Council.

-The coronavirus pandemic has shown how closely the different sectors of the MICE industry are interconnected. The strength of the Polish economy is its sustainability - we should emphasize our contribution to the generation of GDP. Without meetings and events, many Polish cities - for example Warsaw, Krakow Poznan or the Tri-City - look completely different, and this also translates into the economic situation - emphasizes Mikołaj Ziółkowski, the president of the Association of Art and Entertainment Events Organizers.

-Since mid-February, our environment has been recording an average decrease in sales in the range of 80-95%, depending on the sector. No long-term and strategic solutions means not only bankruptcy and layoffs, it is primarily a threat to the modern and sustainable economy of our country - Bieszyński adds. The following figures also talk about the difficult situation of the

industry: 95% of canceled events (in March - July), event organizers' revenues are projected to decrease by 70%, and employment to decrease by 50%. 80 percent of entrepreneurs admit that they have lowered the salaries of employees. The value of tickets for artistic events, the costs of which the organizers will have to reimburse to customers, exceed PLN 500 million.

The representatives of the Meetings and Events Industry Council therefore set themselves the goal of defending the industry and its revival through a strong voice in the discourse at the government level. - In the Meetings and Events Industry Council, we want to communicate between sectors of the MICE industry and with the government, and to care not only for survival, but also for the future - declares Łukasz Adamowicz, Vice President of the Association of Incentive Travel Organizers.

Following this assumption, the Council will seek, among others, creating a platform for cooperation and exchange of information between organizations forming the broadly understood meetings and events industry, constant monitoring the condition of the industry (research), creating a body representing the interests of the industry towards the state administration, building awareness of the importance of the industry among state decision-makers and the public, creating and presenting proposals as part of the use of the EU Recovery Fund and cooperation with the most important social institutions.

This type of action is necessary, because the broadly understood industry of meetings, events, entertainment and free time is the part of the Polish and global economy that was the first to "stop" due to the spreading SARS-CoV-2 pandemic, and many of its sectors cannot return to work yet. The key postulates of the Council are to maintain and develop additional forms of support for the industry, such as: stimulating demand (lowering VAT, including services in tax deductible costs, social fund), additional direct support: financial (access to cheap ARP / BGK credit lines, subsidies), labor costs (exemption from ZUS (social insurance contributions), wage subsidies, parking fees), promotion of Poland as an individual, group and business destination, and making recommendations and guidelines for the organization of events and meetings more flexible.

-The cooperation of the MICE industry gives us visibility in the media and opportunities to reach the government that we would not have had, acting alone, all the more so since our sector is a system of connected vessels - says Grażyna Grabowska, President of Fairs in Krakow and Vice President of the Polish Chamber of Exhibition Industry.

-We have a lot to do, and it will certainly be easier if we act together - said Marcin Mączyński, Secretary General of the Polish Hotel Industry Chamber of Commerce.

Composition of the Meetings and Events Industry Council (in the order given by the Council):

SOIT Association of Incentive Travel Organizers

SAR Marketing Communication Association

SAR Event Agencies Club

Association Conferences and Congresses in Poland - SKKP



**Magiczny
Kraków**

SOIAR Association of Organizers of Art and Entertainment Events

Chamber of Commerce of the Polish Hotel Industry IGHP

PITE Polish Chamber of Stage Technology

IAKS Polish Association for the Development of Sports and Recreation Infrastructure

Association of IATA Agents in Poland

SITE Poland - Society for Incentive Travel Excellence - Chapter Poland

SBE Association of the Event Industry

PIPT Polish Chamber of Exhibition Industry

Harmony Polish Hotels

PSPA Polish Association of Bus Carriers

IGMAP Chamber of Commerce for Managers of Polish Artists

FOH Foundation

Future for MICE

Meeting Professional International Poland Chapter MPI