

## **Summary of Meetings Week Poland 2020: #We meet again**

2020-11-13

**The eighth edition of Meetings Week Poland (MWP) was devoted to the situation of the meetings and events industry in the new reality, trends that can significantly affect the shape of the market, security and research presenting the image of the industry.**

The meeting was held in a hybrid formula - simultaneously in five Polish cities and within an online conference center. The program includes speeches and panels with the participation of Polish and international speakers, premieres and an awards ceremony.

This year's edition of Meetings Week Poland consisted of two days (September 16-17) of industry meetings and talks. They took place in facilities in five cities in Poland (Katowice, Krakow, Lublin, Poznan and Warsaw) and online at the same time. On the first day of the event, a local audience was gathered in each of the venues, and the participants of the panel discussions also took the floor. The event was attended by several dozen speakers representing all sectors of the meetings market.

### **PMD: What's next for the meetings industry?**

Meetings Week Poland traditionally opened the Poland Meetings Destination. The official opening of the conference, and thus this year's edition of MWP, was made by: Andrzej Gut-Mostowy, Secretary of State in the Ministry of Development, responsible for tourism, and Arkadiusz Opoń, Vice President of the Polish Tourist Organization. Both emphasized the significance of the tourism industry and the meetings industry for the economy and the seriousness of the challenges faced by entrepreneurs in this sector with the onset of the pandemic and the resulting economic freeze.

During this session, Teresa Buczak from the Polish Tourist Organization presented data from the report "Meetings and events industry in Poland 2020" for the first time. The report mentions approx. 24.5 thousand meetings and events that took place in Poland in 2019. Compared to the data presented a year earlier, the number of events is higher by more than 2,000.

Participants at the panels in the Poland Meetings Destination session took up topics related to the commercial and educational potential of hybrid and online forms of conferences and congresses, the need for applying the principles of safety and hygiene resulting from the SARS-2 threat. The available tools used to stimulate the meetings market that can be offered by local governments and government agencies were also considered. During the meeting, the topic of the local tourist tax also discussed once again - Minister Gut-Mostowy declared that he would resume work on its introduction this year.

### **SKKP: Sustainable development**

The session prepared by the Conferences & Congresses in Poland Association and the Poland Convention Bureau of the Polish Tourist Organization revolved around the thesis that sustainable development is the basis for rebuilding the meetings industry. The issue of sustainable development was covered in presentations of international experts in this field, Claudia van't Hullenaar (Global Destination Sustainable Movement) and Lesley Williams (BestCities Global Alliance). As the report "Marriott Natureworks Research January 2020" reads, 97% event organizers implemented sustainable development practices for their events, and 95% event professionals believe that sustainability is important or extremely important. In Barcelona today 93% companies from the tourism industry declare their commitment to



sustainable development post COVID-19.

During the discussion panel, participants shared examples of innovative solutions in the field of organizing business events in the world and in Poland, introduced in order to increase competitiveness in the dynamically changing world dominated by COVID-19. The discussion ended with the statement that the ability to adapt to new conditions in this difficult time in which we are all now is the most important thing.

### **PIPT: Trade fairs are the basis of economic recovery**

The "B2B Exhibitions - Back to Business" session, prepared and conducted by the Polish Chamber of Exhibition Industry, was devoted to the multifaceted function of the fair, in particular during the economic recovery. The panelists emphasized that the fair plays a key role in rebuilding business, companies and contacts after the period of stagnation caused by the epidemic, they are a quick tool for Polish companies to return to the Polish and international market, they are a leverage for the development of cities and regions and the Polish economy, being an accelerator of economic development on many levels. The global exhibition industry has a GDP of EUR 167 billion, in Europe alone it is EUR 92 billion. European governments know how important trade fairs are for their national economies. They realize that if fairs get companies on their feet, the entire economy will also get back on its feet. The international perspective was presented by Nick Dug-dele Moore, regional manager of Europe, UFI The Global Association of the Exhibition Industry.

The end of the first day of MWP was the final concert of this year's Cyber Wianki – Music Feast 2020 entitled "Zaucha is good for everything". Participants feasted virtually, on a stage in the Avatarland virtual conference center, made available by the Krakow Festival Office and the VOD platform - Play Krakow.

### **SBE, SOIT and SITE: # ZnowuSię We meet**

The meetings planned for the second day of Meetings Week Poland were held in Warsaw and were broadcast online. The session devoted to the role of industry organizations in the meetings and events industry consisted of two panels. The discussion prepared by the Event Industry Association concerned the prospects for the organization of events and the situation of the event industry. The discussion prepared by the Association of Incentive Travel Organizers and SITE Poland concerned the prospects of business and incentive travel and raised the question of how incentive travel agencies, airlines and business hotels see the Covid future. Conclusions of this panel, during which the interlocutors presented the market situation, includes challenges related to demand and a chance to rebuild the industry, including the need for reliable and honest communication regarding the pandemic and security on three levels: in the mass media, the government administration and the industry - tour organizers, facilities and airlines. From the point of view of the aforementioned communication, it is very important - according to both the panelists and participants of MWP - to talk about the events that were organized, hence the #ZnowuSięSpotykamy campaign was announced during the meeting. In order to rebuild the demand in this market sector, customers must feel safe at every stage of the project. Airlines have been recognized as the most important link in the reboot of the entire business tourism and incentive travel industry. It is inevitable to adapt to the new "Covid" reality and organize trips in new conditions. Invariably, face to face meetings are crucial in building teams, relationships, community, along with motivation among employees and partners, especially in such demanding times. Consistent and well-founded administrative



decisions, regulations or sanitary guidelines, which build trust and a sense of security, and do not block business will be the foundation for the reconstruction of the industry.

### **MPI: Security**

The whole session prepared by the MPI Poland Chapter was devoted to the issue of safety. Paul Foster, an international expert specializing in crowd management, was the special guest of this part of the meeting. In his speech, he focused on new safety rules in the organization of events. During the session, the invited speakers discussed the issue of security and protection from various perspectives - legal, cybersecurity, information and data (the "Poland Events Impact" report was presented), security in the field during integration events combined with CSR activities (the panel concerned the summary of the Challenge for GOPR). Presenting the report, Krzysztof Celuch emphasized that the organization of meetings and events in 2019 generated an estimated 1.5 percent. GDP, and their contribution to the economy fluctuated at the level of PLN 35 billion.

### **Vistula's compasses in the final**

Meetings Week Poland ended with the Vistula Compasses gala, during which the winners of the first edition of the competition distinguishing the best graduates of the Vistula Central School of Tourism and Hotel Industry were honored - in the manager category: Michał Maziarczyk (director of Sales Poland & Baltic States, Liberty International Tourism Group) and Adriana Rogalska (director at the Natura Mazur Resort & Conference), in the entrepreneur category - Diana Jabłońska (co-owner and managing director, Dan-Kart). The gala was also an opportunity to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the 2B Business Tourism Research Club and the summary of Meetings Week Poland 2020.

### **Hybrid meeting in several locations**

MWP 2020 was held in Warsaw (FHouse Warsaw, Novotel Centrum Warszawa), Krakow (ICE Kraków Congress Center), Katowice, (International Congress Center & Spodek), Poznan (MTP Poznan Congress Center), Lublin (Lublin Conference Center) and online at Avatarland™ Virtual Trade Fair and Conference Center. All locations were connected live by Brill AV Media.

### **Organizers and patrons**

The honorary patronage over this year's Meetings Week Poland was taken by the Ministry of Economic Development and the President of the Polish Tourist Organization. The event, as a strategic partner, was also supported by the self-government of the Malopolska Region. The organizers of the MWP are: the Conferences and Congresses in Poland Association, MPI Poland Chapter, the Event Industry Association, the Association of Incentive Travel Organizers, SITE Poland, the Polish Chamber of Exhibition Industry, the Polish Tourist Organization Poland Convention Bureau, the Main School of Tourism and Hotel Industry in Warsaw, The Warsaw Voice, MeetingPlanner.pl and the Warsaw Tourist Organization.