



Why Kraków?

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By Aneta Książek, Head of Poland Convention Bureau, Polish Tourism Organisation.

Many countries have been heavily affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. How is Poland currently dealing with this crisis?

Last year transformed the MICE industry all over the world. The Polish MICE sector has instantly adapted to the new reality. Polish destinations and conference venues, hotels, DMCs, PCOs, convention bureaux and subcontractors operating in them adjusted themselves to the changes and successfully introduced solutions making it possible to arrange top-quality events that are not only safe, but also technologically advanced. Dedicated studios facilitate the process of organising hybrid events and more and more agencies specialise in related professional services

According to the current Covid-19 situation in Poland from May 15th we can organize indoor social gatherings, such as weddings, up to the 25 people and from 29 May, it will be possible to organise special events indoors (e.g. in a restaurant), with a limit of max. 50 people.

Such events will be allowed to take place under a strict sanitary regime, including keeping a safe distance between the tables and abiding by the limit on the number of people per table (applicable regulations are the same as in the case of open-air gastronomy).

The MICE industry is also struggling during these difficult times. How do you think this will change our industry, and what measures can be taken, in your opinion?

The new reality calls for the development of new procedures, with safety and hygiene measures likely to remain the number one issue in the years to come. Already at the beginning of the pandemic, the Kraków Network Together initiative (platform for sharing experience, knowledge and good practices) launched a project group working on available options of organising events in coronavirus times, producing the "Post-Pandemic Event Safety" document.

Almost a year later (March 2021) the Kraków Network announced the KRAKÓW NETWORK Protocol. The document inspired by the ICCA's "Kaohsiung Protocol", which is not only a set of good practices and recommendations adapted to the new post-pandemic reality regarding such issues as: joint risk management, innovative business models, engagement and value for participants, digitization and promotion of hybrid events, but also an introduction to common strategy of Kraków for the years 2021-2023. The KRAKÓW NETWORK Protocol is covered by the honorary patronage of the Polish Tourism Organisation and the Poland Convention Bureau. We are very proud of such a great cooperation.

Did you know, that...?

- ...Poland is home to a large number of UNESCO world heritage sites and was quickly growing to become one of the 20 most visited countries in the world prior to the pandemic?

The Kraków University is the oldest higher education institution in Poland and one of the oldest



in Europe? It was founded on 12 May 1364 by the Polish king Casimir the Great. The Studium Generale – as the University was then called – comprised three faculties: of liberal arts, medicine and law. Kraków's university tradition is key to the innovation of both the city and the region. And with 160,000 students, the city is young not only in spirit.

- ...Poland is one of the safest countries in Europe?

Eurostat: Croatia seemed to be the safest with the lowest share of reported crimes in 2019 (2,7 per cent). Lithuania and Poland followed closely behind, with 3,2 and 4,4 per cent of shares, respectively.

- ...Kraków is a heaven for foodies?

Kraków also boasts rich culinary traditions, mouthwatering regional cuisines and locally produced treats. Not without cause, European Academy of Gastronomy granted Kraków the title of European Capital of Gastronomic Culture in 2019. The Main Market Square and the surrounding narrow, cobblestone streets of Kazimierz are brimming with cafes, fine dining restaurants, milk bars, food trucks and bars that have terrace spaces, allowing you to soak up the seasonal atmosphere whilst tucking into a plate of the good stuff.

Where to meet?

Kraków is celebrated as a city of artists, culture, art, historical monuments, as well as business. The capital of the Małopolska region needs no introduction – it is capable of hosting even the most spectacular events and achieving a world-class level of organisation. Only in recent years it has hosted seminal events, such as UNESCO's 41st session of the World Heritage Committee and 15th World Congress of the Organization of World Heritage Cities, as well as a wide range of medical congresses of diverse subject matter.

Great hotels and conference centres (ICE Kraków Congress Centre, Expo Kraków, TAURON Arena Kraków), high-potential professionals, including access to qualified academic staff (renowned universities, research and development centres) continue to attract customers.

Kraków is a very compact city. As participants can simply walk between conference centre, hotel and restaurant, there is no need to arrange transfers and potential virus transmission risk is eliminated.

Where to stay?

Kraków's accommodation offer includes hotels forming part of international chains as well as numerous stylish, renovated boutique hotels, providing world class services and facilities. There are over 170 hotels in the city offering over 11000 rooms. 15 of them are five-star facilities, 52 of them are four-star facilities.

How to get there?



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Kraków Airport offers many convenient, direct airline connections with major destinations, such as: Berlin, Brussels, Copenhagen, Frankfurt, London, Madrid, Milan, Moscow, Munich, Oslo, Paris, Rome, Stockholm, Vienna, Zurich, Warsaw, Chicago or Dubai. A flight from most European airports will take you about 2.5 hours. In 2019 there were in total 150 regular direct flights to 28 countries. It is estimated that by 2022 the number of connections will amount to 80% of 2019 connections. The city has also direct railway connections with most of the bigger towns in Poland, Germany, Hungary, Austria and the Czech Republic.

Personal recommendation/insider tips?

Kraków is a city vibrating with cultural life. Prior to the pandemic, every year, nearly 100 festivals and other world-famous cultural events took place here. It is also a city of art galleries and museums showcasing local creativity and heritage. My favorite one is Museum of Contemporary Art in Kraków (MOCAK), as well as The Glass and Ceramics Centre (Lipowa 3). It is a place which employs educational, teaching, exhibition and cultural activities to acquaint Cracovians and tourists with the history and technology of glass art. I wouldn't miss also the opportunity to visit the latest temporary exhibition "All the King's Tapestries. Homecomings 2021-1961-1921" in Kraków is a great starting point for a trip to the world-famous "Wieliczka" Salt Mine, which each year hosts approx. 300 underground events, Poland's highest Tatra Mountains, the equally charming Pieniny and Beskid Mountains, as well as Błędów Desert, dubbed "Polish Sahara", Europe's largest accumulation of loose sand.

Whom to contact?

Kraków Convention Bureau - your best partner in Kraków.

The KRAKÓW CONVENTION BUREAU (KCB) has been operating since 2004 within the Urban Municipality of Kraków - Kraków Municipal Office on a non-profit basis. It currently operates as part of the Department of Tourism.

MISSION: Building Kraków's image and presenting its resources and values, owing to which the City is an important player in the international meetings industry.

Currently, the Kraków Convention Bureau is running a promotional campaign #KrakówTheHostCity. The narrative is based on the strengths, assets, and resources of the city such as the IT industry, medicine, sustainable energy, Kraków's universities, the achievements of local scientists, professors, doctors, and timeless heritage and culture. These are the city's strengths, which have been less 'affected' by COVID, and constitute a kind of genius loci of the city. We encourage you to visit KCB's profiles on Facebook, Instagram or LinkedIn! Many interesting facts and beautiful photos of the city are waiting there.

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