An international campaign to promote Małopolska and Kraków

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Hospitality, diversity and openness to tourists: These are the key distinguishing features of Małopolska and Kraków, which are highlighted in the latest campaign to internationally promote the tourism offering of the region and its capital. The campaign was launched on 1 May as a joint venture of the Małopolska Tourist Organisation, the Małopolskie Voivodeship and the City of Kraków.

The promotional campaign is being carried out as part of the ‘Małopolska – Your Destination’ project. One of its key elements is the gesture of open hands, which highlights the main slogan of the campaign: *‘Wide open…’/ ‘Unglaubliche vielfalt…’*. Hospitality and openness are qualities that distinguish Poland and Poles. They are also always deeply appreciated by all visitors to the region and its capital, so that is what the organisers of the campaign decided to focus on in the clips and banners. The region of Małopolska and Kraków are well-prepared to host visitors from all over the world and to welcome them with open arms after the pandemic, offering comfort and safety for sightseeing and recreation.

The campaign was launched on 1 May. Initially, it will focus on the British and German markets –those tourists who have tended to top the charts in Małopolska in recent years. The organisers envisage extending the campaign to the Austrian, Swiss, Italian, Nordic and American markets.

The campaign will include multiple channels, with a particular emphasis on online campaigns, taking advantage of the latest products and online marketing tools. The campaign features ads and banners that highlight the breadth of the tourist attractions on offer in the Małopolska region and Kraków. Audiences will be persuaded that they have an opportunity to experience an extraordinary adventure in the lap of nature, revel in masterpieces of art and architecture, taste unique flavours and relax and unwind. This message is accompanied by images of scenic trails, the most beautiful monuments, local specialties and soothing health and beauty treatments.

‘Małopolska remains one of the most attractive and popular regions in Poland, while Kraków is the most widely recognised Polish tourist brand worldwide. In 2019, we welcomed nearly 18 million tourists from Poland and abroad. This perfect track record was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic. To revive tourism in the region in the aftermath of the pandemic, we have launched a variety of support mechanisms for the sector. Thanks to them, the resurgence of domestic tourism has gained some significant momentum. The promotional campaign aimed at the international tourist is our attempt to further boost this process by attracting visitors from all over the world to Małopolska and Kraków,’ says Iwona Gibas, who is responsible for tourism matters in the Board of the Voivodeship.

The ‘Małopolska – Your Destination’ project, with 16 million PLN earmarked for its implementation, is financed from European Funds under the 2014–2020 Regional Operational Programme as a joint venture of the Małopolska Tourist Organisation, the Małopolskie Voivodeship and the City of Kraków. Each of the project partners carries out different tasks. The project is led by the Małopolska Tourist Organisation, which is responsible for creative concepts, producing and disseminating materials and organising economic missions (with a total budget of over 7.3 million PLN). The Małopolska Region

and Kraków are partners in the project.

The region is responsible for communicating the breadth of leisure tourism products – including cultural, culinary, spa, wellness and active offerings – as part of an online advertising campaign with a budget of over 4.6 million PLN. The city, on the other hand, is to focus on promoting business tourism: one of the strategic avenues for the tourism industry in Kraków, due to its outstanding organisational potential and numerous facilities, which can host business meetings for organisers from all over the world. The total budget for this work amounts to 4 million PLN.

‘The activities carried out within the framework of the “Małopolska – Your Destination” project are necessary in the context of the aforementioned pandemic, which disrupted the tourism sector in the last two years, as well as in the context of the ongoing war in Ukraine. Our city remains safe and open. Nothing has changed in that regard. This is a message that we would like to shout from the rooftops and spread as far and wide as possible. This is exactly the objective of the campaign and its various measures. I would like to encourage everyone, media representatives in particular, to spread the word and to create their own publications that will encourage those who are on the fence to come to Poland, Małopolska and Kraków’, says Robert Piaskowski, the Plenipotentiary for Culture of the Mayor of Kraków.

‘I also encourage you not only to spread the word, but also to take advantage of the tourist offerings of our region and city. The pandemic has taught us that being a tourist in one’s own city can be worthwhile, since it allows us to discover our surroundings, explore the places that were unknown to us and support the tourism industry – local companies, our families, friends and neighbours – in a tangible way. Every little helps,’ he added.

All the tasks planned as part of the ‘Małopolska – Your Destination’ project are slated to be completed by the end of 2023. As Grzegorz Biedroń, President of the Małopolska Tourist Organisation, explains, the scope is very expansive. ‘We are going to organise ambient campaigns, economic missions, online ad campaigns and MICE-themed campaigns, along with a *landing page* and running social media profiles in two languages: German and English’, he explains.

The creative concept, along with a strategic brief, was created by Kraków-based Admind back in 2021. Based on this concept, the partners created a number of materials, including distinctive collages, promotional clips, a landing page and social media profiles.

‘All these elements will be used throughout our extensive online promotional campaign that launches on 1 May. Over the next six months, the inhabitants of Germany and the United Kingdom will learn more about what to see, what to taste and which bicycle routes to choose to enjoy their time in Małopolska. The campaign is aimed at individual tourists, but we have not forgotten about the tourism industry. Thanks to the extensive promotion carried out by the City of Kraków regarding the MICE industry, we will be able to boost the visibility of Kraków and Małopolska among business customers as well’, Biedroń points out.

According to Radoslaw Wloszek, the president of John Paul II Kraków-Balice International Airport, on 1 May the airport launched its own campaign, entitled ‘Fly Abroad – #STRAIGHTfromKRAKÓW’.

‘The summer flight schedule comprises 144 connections to 33 countries and 99 cities, served by 20 airlines. There are some newcomers to the list of summer destinations, which now includes Las Palmas, Burgas and Abu Dhabi. As always, tourists can also travel to vibrant Spanish and Italian cities or the ever-popular Croatia, or take a flight to one of the numerous Greek islands. Georgia awaits those who do not shy away from active recreation’, says Wloszek.

As the project partners unanimously point out, the campaign was prepared and launched to counteract the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism sector; however, in the context of the Russian Federation’s invasion of Ukraine, it can also be viewed from a different perspective. ‘Since the invasion started, the tourism industry in Poland, including in Małopolska, has been struggling with a wave of cancellations. We are well aware that these cancellations stem from the fact that the hostilities are taking place near the Polish borders. Thus, the main slogan of the campaign, which highlights our openness, now has a double meaning – it shows our openness to help those in need. At the same time, it is supposed to offer our assurance that staying in Poland is safe, and that the hospitality which Małopolska is known for is a promise and an obligation to anyone who chooses our region as a travel destination’, says Iwona Gibas of the Voivodeship Board.