



Kraków Network 2.0 - a new chapter of meetings industry cooperation in Kraków

2025-07-15

On June 9, 2025, the inaugural meeting of the Kraków Network 2.0 project, coordinated by the Kraków Convention Bureau (UMK Tourism Department), took place at the ICE Kraków Congress Center. The event brought together nearly 150 representatives of Krakow's MICE industry, experts from home and abroad, representatives of universities and city cultural institutions.

New opening with city support

The Krakow Network 2.0 meeting was ceremoniously opened by the Mayor of Krakow, Aleksander Miszalski, who set a clear strategic tone for the entire event in his speech. In a short but extremely succinct speech, he pointed out that the meetings and events industry is not only a vital component of the local economy, but also an important tool for building the city's prestige in Poland and around the world.

- Business and congress tourism is not just about visitors and hotels - it's about knowledge transfer, promotion of the city's brand, attracting investors, as well as specific revenues to the local budget. Krakow wants to be a leader in a sustainable approach to tourism, and Network 2.0 is an example of how to build a city strategy in cooperation with experts and practitioners, the mayor said.

Tourism data on the MICE industry is now available on the Open Data website - it can be found at the following link: [Tourism Data](#). The collection will be updated on an ongoing basis and gradually expanded with new information.

The mayor also stressed that the city wants to focus on quality, not just quantity. He noted that modern tourism policy must be based on data, shared responsibility, open dialogue and effective cross-sector cooperation.

- I believe that activities such as Kraków Network 2.0 are the future of city management. This is where people from science, business, culture, tourism and administration come together. Only together are we able to create solutions to real challenges - from countering tourism overcrowding to climate neutrality to supporting local entrepreneurs and innovators," he added.

The mayor also expressed the office's readiness to continue supporting projects that not only promote Krakow internationally, but above all strengthen its position as a modern, open, sustainable and creative city.

Shortly after the President's speech, the floor was taken by Katarzyna Olesiak, President of the Krakow City Development Agency, manager of the ICE Krakow Congress Center - the city's flagship conference facility. In her speech, she stressed that ICE Krakow, the host of the project, is not just a venue for events, but a platform for cooperation and dialogue, which is becoming more and more involved in the development of the meetings industry every year.



Strategic approach to tourism

The floor was then taken by Natalia Kulec-Greń, director of the Tourism Department of the Cracow City Hall, who focused on the strategic assumptions of the Cracow Network 2.0 and its importance for the development of tourism in the city.

- Our goal is to create a stable, substantive partnership between the city and the meetings industry, culture, science and business. Kraków Network 2.0 is not a promotional project, it is a strategic project," she stressed.

The director noted that the new iteration of the initiative is not just a continuation of previous activities, but a foundation for long-term cross-sector cooperation that has a real impact on the quality and direction of tourism development in Krakow. The project is directly in line with the updated "Development Strategy of Krakow Here I Want to Live. Kraków 2030", taking into account the changing expectations of visitors, trends of sustainable development and the needs of local communities.

- Thanks to initiatives such as Krakow Network 2.0, we can create system tools that will support the development of the entire industry - not only in the context of promotion, but also in terms of innovation, service quality and social responsibility," Director Natalia Kulec-Greń noted.

Development of the Kraków Network 2.0 project

Malgorzata Przygórska-Skowron, head of the Congress Bureau, began her speech by reminding us that the Kraków Network is a project that for 10 years has been bringing together representatives of the meetings industry, tourism, science and culture in order to jointly develop the city as a leading congress and event center. She stressed that the current edition - Kraków Network 2.0 - is a continuation of this idea, but with new energy and new challenges, as the project is now implemented and coordinated by the City of Kraków, which opens up a wide range of possibilities for its development and integration with the city's tourism strategy.

The head of the Congress Bureau thanked all the participants of the surveys conducted in the spring, which were the basis for the development of the new meeting program and indicated which elements of the existing activities should be maintained and which should be developed. She stressed that the positive feedback and industry involvement testify to the need to continue and further develop the project.

In her speech, she also mentioned the most important leaders and coordinators of the previous Kraków Network, thanking them for their contribution and commitment, which allowed the building of a strong and integrated industry community.

The head of the Congress Office stressed that in surveys, participants indicated networking, industry integration and educational programs as the most valuable aspects of the project. These three pillars will also remain the most important elements of Kraków Network's activities in version 2.0.

The main goal of the project remains the creation of a strong, multi-sector business group that, by



working together, will be able to increase the number and quality of congress, conference, and cultural and business events organized in Krakow. It is through such initiatives that Krakow has a chance to strengthen its position as a European leader in the MICE industry, combining science, culture and business.

Małgorzata Przygórska-Skowron also drew attention to the strategic dimension of the project, which is part of the city's broader policy on the development of tourism and the meetings industry. She noted that Kraków Network 2.0 is not only a platform for exchanging contacts, but also an important tool to support the building of a local ecosystem of innovation, cooperation and promotion of the city on the international arena.

At the end of her speech, she stressed her readiness to continue cooperation with all entities operating in the fields of tourism, culture, science and business, as well as with the municipal authorities, in order to jointly create the future of Krakow as a modern, sustainable and attractive event center.

On the new tourism information strategy in Krakow

Another highlight of the program was a speech by Olga Potempa, representing the Krakow Tourism Alliance, a local tourism organization. Her presentation focused on the ambitious Integrated Tourist Information System project, which is expected to completely change the way tourists use Krakow's offerings.

Among the key measures were:

- Introducing the sale of tourist products and services at stationary information points - not only information, but also real service for visitors,
- Producing a new tourist map, adapted to the current offer and the structure of the city,
- Changing the location of the main information point - the new headquarters will be in the representative Potocki Palace,
- New visual identification of tourist information points - consistent, modern and attractive to visitors.

However, the most important component of the project is the Krakow Tourist Card, the pilot of which will start on May 1 and last until the end of December 2025. The project has received funding from the Ministry of Sport and Tourism in the amount of PLN 280,000.

The modern tourism product will consist of:

- physical card,
- mobile application,
- and an integrated web portal.

This tool is not only intended to make it easier for tourists to enjoy the city's attractions, but also to be used to collect data on tourist behavior - which, in the long run, will allow better management of tourist traffic in Krakow.



The web portal, integrated with the card application, will give users quick access to information about the city, cultural events and a calendar of events. Importantly - tourists will be able to purchase tickets for events in one place, which will significantly improve their user experience.

Thematic projects: concrete actions, real effects

As part of the new iteration of Kraków Network 2.0, two open thematic projects were also presented, which can be joined by all interested network members - regardless of their business profile or the sector they represent. This is an opportunity to jointly develop solutions that will have a real impact on the development of the MICE industry and a positive image of Krakow as a business tourism destination.

1. Sustainable development in the MICE industry

The project, coordinated by Anna Jędrocha (Symposium Cracoviense), focuses on making real changes in the way events are organized - in accordance with the idea of sustainable development. Project participants will be able to:

jointly develop and test tools to measure the carbon footprint of events,
participate in workshops on social responsibility and ethical labor standards,
co-create codes of good practice and operating procedures for the entire industry.

The aim of the project is not only to educate, but also to implement solutions in companies that may become a standard for Krakow events in the future.

2. Kraków Science & Business Bridge

This project, implemented by the Academic Group (Krzysztof Borodako, Elżbieta Jagłowska), provides a wide range of opportunities for cooperation at the interface of science and business. It is interdisciplinary in nature and includes:

participation in networking meetings that will allow to establish direct relations with leaders of scientific circles,
participation in study visits presenting the potential of Kraków's conference venues,
involvement in the creation of a consulting point for scientists, where experts in the industry will share their knowledge on the organization of events.

The project is open to participation by representatives of universities, scientific institutes, as well as event companies, hotels and venue operators.

International experience - the Empowering Open Innovation Tourism Networks project

An important part of the meeting were presentations by guests from the Czech Republic, Serbia and Hungary, who represented the European project Empowering Open Innovation Tourism Networks funded by the Visegrad Fund, focused on cross-border cooperation, developing innovative networks in



the tourism sector and supporting local ecosystems. Their presentations provided valuable inspiration and comparisons for Krakow's activities.

Czech Republic - Liberec Region: Crystal Valley Brand and tourism cooperation networks

Ing. Jitka Vávrová, Ph.D. and Ing. Lenka Červová, Ph.D. presented the Crystal Valley project from the Liberec region - a brand based on local glassmaking and craft heritage. Their presentation focused on building a regional cooperation network in tourism, including:

promoting heritage in narrative form - strong storytelling based on emotions and local identity, better geographic positioning of the brand by linking it to authentic production sites, engaging the accommodation industry and operators in promotional activities, developing digital tools (mobile app, interactive portal) and improving accessibility of tourist facilities.

The representatives stressed that consistent communication, investment in infrastructure and networking of local stakeholders are key to building a sustainable, balanced tourism industry in the region.

Serbia - Vrnjačka Banja: Innovative cooperation in tourism destinations

A team from the Faculty of Hotel Management and Tourism in Vrnjačka Banja presented an analysis and diagnosis of cooperation networks in one of Serbia's most important resorts. They identified the main challenges, such as:

- Lack of diversity in the structure of partnerships,
- too centralized, top-down innovation structure,
- poor balance between stakeholders.

They recommended, among other things, including NGOs, SMEs and IT companies in tourism networks, transferring management to local DMOs, and using industry leaders to increase cohesion and innovation throughout the system. A strong emphasis was placed on the need to jointly design tourism experiences and facilitate internal communication between partners.

Hungary - Balaton: Balatoni Kör and the sustainable development of the lake destination

Judit Sulyok and Eszter Madarász from the University of Pannonia presented the Balatoni Kör project, which brings together local entrepreneurs (mainly SMEs and family businesses) around the common idea of promoting the Lake Balaton region. The presentation addressed the issues of:

- the seasonality and uneven distribution of tourist traffic (both spatially and temporally),
- the inclusion of atypical forms of tourist mobility and the adaptation of the offer to the aging population,
- the importance of authenticity and nature as the main values of the region,
- the need for better traffic management and the integration of the offer based on data and technology.

All three speeches showed that the challenges of tourism management are often similar - regardless of the country - and that building open,