



## **Meetings That Build a City - MICE Tourism in Kraków**

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**MICE tourism (Meetings, Incentives, Conferences, Exhibitions) is one of the most important and dynamically developing segments of the modern urban economy. In Kraków, this sector has been developing for years in a conscious and sustainable way, bringing benefits not only to the meetings industry itself, but above all to local residents.**

### **A City of Meetings and Knowledge Exchange**

Business tourism plays a far greater role in Kraków than one might expect. It is not only about conferences, congresses and trade fairs, but above all about creating a space for the exchange of knowledge, experience and professional contacts that have a real impact on the city's development. Thanks to a strong academic base, the presence of experts from various fields and well-developed infrastructure, Kraków has become a place where science, business and innovation come together.

The city is home to as many as 23 higher education institutions, making it one of the most important academic and research centers in Poland. This unique potential means that events organized in Kraków are not only of local importance, but often also of international significance.

### **Kraków's Strong Position**

The consistent tourism policy pursued by the city has resulted in a further strengthening of Kraków's position in the highly competitive meetings industry market. Kraków ranked 1st in the Meetings Star 2025/2026 ranking in the category of large congress destinations, clearly confirming its advantage over other European centers.

The city boasts extensive and diversified infrastructure: nearly 200 hotels, more than 190 conference venues and hundreds of meeting rooms enable the professional organization of events of all sizes. Another major asset is Kraków's excellent accessibility, including a dynamically expanding network of air connections, which significantly facilitates event logistics and supports high attendance.

### **A Sustainable Tourism Model**

Business tourism is characterized by high predictability and an even distribution of visitor traffic throughout the year. Events take place mainly outside the peak tourist season, which reduces congestion in the city center and eases pressure on urban infrastructure. As a result, the MICE sector supports more sustainable tourism development and improves residents' quality of life.

In 2022, Kraków became the first city in Poland to join the international Global Destination Sustainability Index (GDS-Index), which assesses global destinations based on nearly 70 environmental, social and governance criteria. In 2025, the city recorded significant progress, improving its score by 12.9 percentage points and advancing from 72nd to 53rd place among 81 assessed cities. Kraków also placed 2nd in the "Most Improved Destinations" category, confirming the



effectiveness of its sustainability policy.

The greatest progress was noted in cooperation with the tourism industry, social initiatives and pro-environmental actions, which have become key development priorities in recent years. High ratings were given to the growing number of categorized accommodation facilities meeting sustainability standards – currently, 21 hotels hold valid certificates confirming the application of good environmental and social practices, demonstrating the hotel sector’s increasing commitment to responsible management.

Educational and competency-building initiatives addressed to tourism industry representatives were also an important element of the evaluation.

Positive assessments were also given to actions aimed at improving the accessibility of urban spaces, both in terms of infrastructure and transport, supporting the idea of inclusive tourism accessible to all users. Additional points were awarded for a stronger inclusion of short-term rental issues and climate protection in the city’s strategic documents, confirming a systemic approach to social, environmental and housing challenges. This translated into a high score for Kraków in the destination management category.

## **Legacy - The Lasting Impact of Events**

One of the most unique aspects of business tourism is so-called “legacy” – the lasting effects of events on the city and its community. In Kraków, these increasingly take very concrete forms: open lectures, workshops or preventive initiatives accompanying congresses, particularly medical ones.

Legacy also includes knowledge transfer – specialists acquire new competencies and implement them in local institutions, raising service quality and residents’ standard of living.

## **Tangible Benefits for Kraków’s Economy**

The importance of business tourism is best illustrated by numbers. According to data from the Congress Office / Krakow Convention Bureau at the Tourism Department of the Kraków City Hall, in 2025 Kraków hosted 5,341 business meetings with more than 50 participants, attended by over 1,163,847 people.

Research conducted in Kraków and across Poland indicates that, on average, a delegate spends around PLN 3,000 in the city. This provides real support for local businesses – hotels, restaurants, transport companies and the cultural sector – as well as a stimulus for job creation and the development of services available to residents.

The scale of these benefits is also confirmed by nationwide research presented in the report “Poland Events Impact 2023 – The Economic Impact of the Meetings Industry on the Polish Economy”, prepared with the support of the Poland Convention Bureau. According to its findings, the total contribution of meetings and events to Poland’s economy in 2023 exceeded PLN 54.6 billion, representing around 1% of the national GDP. The gross value added generated by the MICE sector amounted to more than PLN 22.9 billion.



The meetings industry also contributed to sustaining 215,000 jobs, confirming its role as a stable and high-value segment of the economy. These figures demonstrate that the development of business tourism – primarily at the city level – has real and long-term economic significance.

## **MICE in the City's Strategy**

In the “Sustainable Tourism Policy of Kraków for 2021–2028”, business tourism has been identified as one of the key areas of development. Its predictable nature, high economic value and positive impact on residents' quality of life make it one of the most desirable forms of tourism.

The importance of congresses, conferences and business events has also been reflected in key strategic documents at both the municipal and national levels. In the “Kraków Development Strategy. This Is Where I Want to Live. Kraków 2030”, the development of the city's metropolitan functions – including Kraków's role as an international hub for meetings, knowledge exchange and innovation – was identified under the “Economy and Metropolitan Potential” pillar as one of the foundations of long-term development.

At the national level, the meetings sector aligns with the objectives of the “Polish Development Strategy to 2035”, including the “Strategy for Responsible Development”, as well as policies supporting competitive, high-quality knowledge-based services, internationalization and innovation. These documents identify business tourism as a tool for strengthening the international position of Polish cities and building long-term economic and social benefits.

A key role in implementing these objectives is played by the Congress Office / Kraków Convention Bureau (KCB) – a specialized and professional unit within the structure of the Kraków City Hall, responsible for developing and promoting Kraków as a MICE destination. KCB has over 20 years of experience in acquiring and servicing international congresses, conferences and major industry events, working closely with organizers, academia, business and municipal institutions.

The bureau offers a wide range of support for event organizers, including assistance with the bidding process, coordination, promotional activities and building event legacy. Among the largest and most prestigious events acquired in 2025 and hosted in Kraków was the 76th World News Media Congress, one of the key global events for the media and journalism sector.

Kraków is also consistently strengthening its position as an important center for international debates on energy transition and sustainable development. This is confirmed by the fact that the Euroheat & Power Congress – one of the world's most important congresses dedicated to modern and efficient district heating systems – will take place in Kraków in June this year.

The city's potential as an attractive and credible destination for large international events is also reflected in the calendar of congresses and conferences planned for the coming years. These include WordCamp Europe 2026, one of the largest events for the WordPress community in Europe; EuroPython 2026, one of the key European meetings of the international programming community; and the XXXVI General Assembly and Scientific Symposium of the International Union of Radio Science (URSI GASS 2026) – a prestigious international event bringing together representatives of scientific and research communities from around the world.



**Magiczny  
Kraków**

The development of MICE tourism is a long-term process that requires consistency, investment and effective competition with other global meeting destinations. Thanks to a strategic approach, close cooperation with the industry and professional institutional support, Kraków is successfully strengthening its position on the global meetings industry map, building lasting value for the city for years to come.