ICCA Ranking 2025

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The international meetings and congress industry, an important component of the knowledge-based economy, has been undergoing dynamic changes in recent years. Post-pandemic recovery, increasing competition between destinations, and evolving expectations of event organizers mean that the positions of cities and countries in ICCA rankings have become an important measure of their attractiveness and development potential. In this context, an analysis of Poland’s and Kraków’s performance in the latest ICCA GlobeWatch 2025 report provides a clearer understanding of their current standing and future development directions.

International Meetings Market – Key Development Trends

The ICCA GlobeWatch 2025 report confirms that the global market for international meetings has returned to a growth trajectory and is entering a phase of further expansion. Europe remains its key hub, accounting for more than half of all events, while competition between cities and countries continues to intensify.

Among the most significant trends shaping the industry are the growing importance of scientific, technological and medical events, the increasing relevance of mid-sized meetings, and the rising attractiveness of cities outside major political and administrative capitals. Strategic approaches based on cooperation with universities and the creation of so-called “knowledge legacy”—the long-term impact of events on local development—are also gaining importance.

ICCA forecasts indicate that by 2030 the number of events, participants and generated expenditures will continue to grow steadily, creating favorable conditions for countries such as Poland, which still have significant room for development.

It should also be noted that the ICCA ranking is based on strictly defined criteria. Only international association meetings are included—those that rotate between at least three countries, attract a minimum of 50 in-person participants, and are held regularly (e.g. annually or biennially). This means that the ranking does not cover all events held in a city, but only the most formalized and competitive ones, which further increases the significance of the results achieved.

Poland in the ICCA Ranking 2025

In 2025, Poland ranked 18th in the world, hosting 215 international association meetings. This marks an improvement compared to 2024, when the country was ranked 19th with 191 events.

This result indicates:

- an advancement in the global ranking,
- a clear increase in the number of hosted events,
- maintenance of its position as a leader in Central and Eastern Europe.

Poland outperforms most countries in the region, such as the Czech Republic and Hungary, but still lags behind the largest European markets—Italy, Germany and Spain—which host several hundred events annually.

From a strategic perspective, this places Poland among medium-sized meetings markets—stable and recognizable, but not yet part of the global top tier.

National Structure – The Role of Major Cities

The internal structure of the Polish meetings market remains stable. The leading destinations are:

- Warsaw – the national leader and main beneficiary of congress traffic,
- Kraków – the second most important hub,
- followed by Gdańsk, Wrocław and Poznań.

This model reflects the broader European trend of geographical diversification in the meetings industry, where increasing numbers of events are hosted in cities beyond national capitals.

Kraków in the ICCA Ranking 2025

In 2025, Kraków ranked 62nd in the world and 31st in Europe, with 44 international association meetings. This position places the city among medium-sized conference destinations that play an important role in the European market but are not yet part of its top tier.

A comparison with 2024 shows that Kraków’s situation was clearly stronger then. The city ranked 42nd globally with 49 events and held a high 26th position in Europe. Year-on-year, this represents a decline in both the number of events and ranking position, resulting in a lower standing in the European classification.

However, in the longer term Kraków has maintained a growth trend. Both in the pre-pandemic years and during the post-2020 recovery period, the city systematically improved its performance, confirming its strong and lasting presence among important conference destinations.

The decline recorded in 2025 should primarily be interpreted in the context of increasing international competition. The meetings market is developing dynamically, and many cities are intensifying their efforts to attract events and invest in congress infrastructure. As a result, Kraków is not losing importance, but rather operating in a more competitive environment where other destinations are growing faster and improving their rankings more effectively.

It is also important to note that changes in ICCA rankings depend not only on the number of events, but also on their nature and compliance with international criteria.

Kraków as a “Second-Tier City”

ICCA reports emphasize the growing importance of so-called second-tier cities—those that are not national capitals but have a well-developed congress offering. Kraków is one of the most prominent examples of this trend in Europe.

Such destinations are gaining popularity due to:

- greater organizational