



GDS-Forum and Impact Day 2026

2026-06-26

From June 16-18, 2026, Szczecin became a global hub for discussions on the future of tourism and the meetings industry, hosting the prestigious GDS-Forum and Impact Day 2026. Representatives of the Kraków Convention Bureau were among the participants, actively contributing to the program, exchanging experiences, and co-creating solutions for a more sustainable and responsible industry.

This year's edition, held under the theme "Better Together," focused on collaboration, co-creation, and turning ambitious strategies into real actions. Kraków's participation in this international forum confirms the city's growing position as an active contributor to the global discussion on the future of tourism and business events.

Representatives of the Kraków Convention Bureau had the opportunity not only to draw inspiration but also to share locally developed experience and best practices.

Presentation by Kraków's Night Mayor

One of the key points of the program was the participation of Kraków's Night Mayor, who presented the city's approach to managing the night-time economy. His presentation covered:

- the model of cooperation between the city, residents, and the night-time economy sector
- mechanisms for dialogue and mediation between stakeholders
- actions aimed at balancing tourism attractiveness with residents' quality of life
- examples of implementing responsible and sustainable practices in urban space

The presentation attracted significant interest, serving as an example of how cities can effectively manage one of the most dynamic and challenging areas of urban life – nightlife.

Cooperation and knowledge exchange

Kraków's participation in the event also formed part of broader cooperation among Polish cities, which jointly presented their experiences during the "The Future is Now" session. This provided a platform to showcase concrete initiatives implemented in Poland in areas such as accessibility, inclusivity, well-being, and sustainable event management.

For the Kraków Convention Bureau, the event was also an opportunity to:

- establish new international partnerships
- explore innovative tools and working methods
- strengthen Kraków's position as a destination aware of its social and environmental responsibilities
- Significance of the event

GDS-Forum and Impact Day is not just a conference, but a "living laboratory" where participants



**Magiczny
Kraków**

collectively design practical solutions for the industry. Particular emphasis is placed on:

- moving from declarations to measurable outcomes
- developing regenerative tourism
- strengthening the role of events as catalysts for positive change in cities

GDS Innovation Award 2026 for Gdańsk

The award-winning project by the Gdańsk Tourism Organization, titled “Nothing About Us Without Us: Accessibility Audits and Communication Cards as Tools for Inclusive Change in a Destination,” demonstrates that accessibility is not just an add-on to a city’s offer, but a practical way of designing spaces, services, and experiences with the participation of those who best understand real barriers—people with disabilities and diverse needs.

Auditors included people with disabilities and their caregivers, who shared their experiences, identified barriers, and proposed practical solutions. Assessments covered public spaces, tourist attractions, and cultural institutions.

[Watch movie](#)

An integral part of the project includes [Communication Cards](#)—a simple tool developed with the participation of Deaf and hard-of-hearing individuals, supporting communication between people facing communication barriers and staff in institutions, hotels, restaurants, and event organizations. The solution was recognized for its ease of implementation and scalability for other cities and destinations.

As emphasized by **Łukasz Wysocki, President of the Gdańsk Tourism Organization:**

“Accessibility is not only a social initiative but also a conscious business decision. We are talking about millions of potential users who often travel with family, friends, or caregivers. If a place does not offer independent and comfortable access, they will choose another, more accessible destination. Therefore, accessibility should be treated not as a cost, but as an investment that builds competitive advantage and delivers real economic benefits.”

The jury appreciated Gdańsk’s innovative approach to accessibility, based on user experience, universal design, and practical tools supporting independence and informed decision-making by visitors. The project shows that accessibility goes beyond infrastructure—it also includes clear communication, reliable information, and creating spaces where everyone feels welcome.

Anna Puskiewicz, project coordinator, added:

“From the very beginning, this project has been about listening to people and their real-life experiences. We didn’t want to create solutions ‘for someone,’ but together with those who best understand where barriers arise and what can truly help. That’s why this award is so important—it shows that accessibility starts with attentiveness, dialogue, and simple tools that can make places more welcoming for everyone.”

In this year’s edition, five organizations and destinations from Europe and North America qualified for



**Magiczny
Kraków**

the GDS Innovation Award final: VisitAarhus, Gdańsk Tourism Organization, Göteborg & Co, Culture Liverpool, and Ottawa Tourism. Gdańsk's victory means that its accessibility solutions were recognized by the jury as the most innovative and inspiring among the submitted projects.