



## **2021 - New Reality, New Challenges**

2021-12-22

### **New reality - "taming" the pandemic**

**The Kraków meetings industry, despite the continuing difficult situation, has adapted to the new reality by organizing online and hybrid events. However, both the organizers of the meetings, the academic world and the participants of congresses, conferences and training sessions agree that they want to return to meeting in person. The pandemic, the new reality and online life have shown how important meetings and people are in the meetings industry.**

We are observing an increased interest in organizing business meetings next year and in the years to come. Due to the pandemic, many events have been canceled or postponed, but the situation seems to be stabilizing and the organizers are looking for new destinations.

We hope that international regulations on crossing borders, especially between continents, the speed of the COVID-19 vaccination process, or precise provisions on sanitary safety, will be conducive to the organization of events in our city.

### **The holiday thaw**

According to the decision of the Minister of Health, it was only from June 6 this year that fairs, conferences and congresses were allowed to be held, so while maintaining the recommended restrictions, it was possible to plan business meetings again. Therefore, all the greater was the satisfaction that at this difficult time, Kraków can again host participants of large international events.

The largest hybrid Congress of Allergology and Clinical Immunology was held at the ICE Kraków Congress Center on July 10-12. The new, dynamic format made it possible to attend the congress in person in our city or participate online through the innovative, interactive digital platform called the EAACI Congress & Events. According to the organizer's declaration, 1,100 participants came to Kraków, and 6,500 people attended the online sessions. The agenda of the meeting was developed by the EAACI scientific committee, with the cooperation of Spanish and Polish experts. More than 40 sessions in various formats were prepared and additionally there were 6 plenary symposia.

In August, the 20th International Congress of the Polish Society of Anaesthesiology and Intensive Therapy was organized. The organizers prepared three active days of debates, hosted 120 lecturers and session leaders from Poland and abroad, as well as over 700 delegates. The program includes 40 plenary sessions, over 40 educational and company sessions, meetings with experts and workshops.

Another conference - Devovx Poland 2021, was held at ICE Kraków in August. 2,700 'Devovxians' from 20 different countries attended the conference, including over 100 speakers and 600,000 developers who participated online. On September 20-21, the [DesignWays Conf](#) was organized at EXPO Kraków - a two-day conference created by a community of designers and for designers. During the event, both advanced and novice designers were presented a lot of practical knowledge and inspiration for development through five thematic paths: #MissingPuzzle, Product Design, Design to Business, Research & Discovery, Design Processes.

Several events were held online, such as the 11th International Conference on Advanced Vibrational Spectroscopy (ICAVS 11), the 4. International KLOS Conference (Kraków-Lublin Ophthalmology Summit) or CLICK-WATCH-TALK KOMPOZYT-EXPO® 3.0 - the third virtual meeting of the composite materials industry

### **Autumn of fairs**

Starting from September, several fairs were organized, which is a good sign after many months of the inactivity of the industry, the more so that the EXPO Kraków Hall had operated as a temporary hospital until 31 May.

The autumn calendar of the Fairs in Kraków abounded in meetings prepared for the representatives of various industries. Among them there was the Book Fair in Kraków, which has been appreciated for many years, and which in October gathered 241 exhibitors, 300 authors and almost 25,000 visitors.

The [House and Apartment Fair](#) took place in September, where the participants became acquainted with the offer of the majority of Kraków developers, but also real estate agencies, banks and financial intermediaries, the producers of finishing materials, furniture and household appliances, and interior designers. There were also the [LNE Fair and Congress](#), gathering experts and exhibitors from the beauty industry and [Reha INNOVATIONS Physiotherapy Modern diagnostics. Wellness](#) fairs, where topics related to the use of new technologies to help people, including comprehensive rehabilitation in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic, were discussed.

After nearly two years of absence, the 28. HORECA® International Hotel and Catering Equipment Trade Fair, the 19. GASTROFOOD® Food and Beverage Trade Fair, and the 18. ENOEXPO® International Wine Fair in Kraków returned. 233 exhibitors participated in the fair, including ones from the Czech Republic, France, Georgia, Kosovo, Poland, Portugal, Turkey, Hungary, Italy, and Slovenia.

TUNING SHOW EXPO - another event for which fans of 4 wheels had to wait whole 2 years. They could see 300 modified cars, meet motorsport stars, test their own rally skills on simulators or take a helicopter flight.

Unfortunately, the international industrial fair has been postponed to 2022. Due to the persistent travel restrictions, the popular 13. SYMAS® International Trade Fair for Processing, Storage and Transport of Bulk Materials, the 13. MAINTENANCE International Trade Fair for Maintenance, Planning and Optimization of Production, and the 5. FASTENER POLAND International Fair of Fasteners and Connecting Techniques will be held only next year.

### **61. ICCA Congress in Kraków - an international success**

An undoubted success is the city's acquisition of the 61. ICCA Congress. It is one of the most important MICE events in the world, which in 2022 will bring together about a thousand of the most experienced specialists in organizing international conferences and congresses: destinations, facilities, PCO companies and associations.



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We sincerely hope that the event, which will be hosted in Poland for the first time, will contribute to the development and consolidation of the local and national MICE environment and will be an excellent opportunity to promote Kraków and Poland. The process of selecting the host city was multi-stage and detailed, as we have been fighting to be the host of the congress since spring 2020. The very development and submission of the city's offer in the times of the so-called new reality was a huge challenge.

Also next year, the ICE Kraków Congress Center will host, among others, the 28. Congress of the European Association of Endoscopic Surgery EAES, the European Veterinary Dental Forum ECVD, the International Powertrains, Fuels & Lubricants (PF&L) Meeting, the Tissue Engineering and Regenerative Medicine International Society (TERMIS) European Chapter Conference 2022 and regular Kraków congresses such as the Cities of History 3.0 and the OEES Open Eyes Economy Summit. With the participation of the Kraków Convention Bureau, we also managed to acquire the 12th UENPS Congress of the Union of European Neonatal & Perinatal Societies.

### **Consistent event acquisition - even for 2028**

Kraków is trying to acquire a few important events, on which the decisions of the organizers are yet to be made. These include the European Society of Regional Anaesthesia and Pain Therapy (ESRA) congress for 2024, the Rotary International convention planned for 2028, which allows more than 20,000 club members from around the world to meet, or a meeting of representatives of the Union of International Associations (UIA) in 2024 or 2026. For 2023, the organization of the General Assembly of the Lutheran Federation and the Congress of the European Society of Pediatric Orthopedics EPOS are confirmed.

### **Marketing and communication**

It is also worth paying attention to the promotional activities undertaken by the Kraków Convention Bureau, that is, the implementation of a new communication strategy, the narrative of which is based on the city's strengths and resources, such as: the IT industry, medicine, sustainable energy, Kraków universities, the achievements of local scientists, professors, and doctors, and Kraków's timeless heritage and culture. The advantages that have been less "affected" by COVID are emphasized, constituting a specific genius loci of the city. The main goal of communication is to build the image of Kraków as The Host City - ready to organize international congresses, to show that there is a substantive partner and professional facilities waiting for the organizer. A modern city with a technical and technological background that looks to the future, knows its values and draws on its centuries-old heritage. The advertising is carried out through the available KCB social media - Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, the website [www.convention.krakow.pl](http://www.convention.krakow.pl) and the Newsletter.

Kraków has been permanently marked on the map of the Polish, European and global meetings industry, hosting significant congresses in various fields of science, festivals, and prestigious sports events. And this position in the long-term strategy of activities and promotion should be maintained.

### **Affiliate project - "Małopolska - travel destination" - a chance for international advertising**



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In 2021-22, the Department of Tourism Municipality of Kraków, together with the local authority of the Małopolska Region and the Małopolska Tourist Organization (project leader), is implementing a project in the partnership formula concerning the advertising of the tourist value of Kraków and Małopolska on selected foreign markets. The aim of the project is to restore tourism in Kraków and the region to the state before the COVID-19 epidemic by conducting advertising and informational campaigns on the Internet and social media. The planned budget of the entire project will amount to PLN 8 million and come from the Regional Operational Program of the Małopolska Region as part of the co-financing of extraordinary projects aimed at counteracting the effects of Covid-19. The implementation of the part concerning the promotion of business tourism is the responsibility of the Kraków Convention Bureau. The preparation of the campaign, the development of its substantive and strategic part is ongoing, and the campaign itself is going to be implemented in 2022.

### **B2B advertising**

After a long break, we also managed to promote the city during fairs and business meetings, such as IBTM Barcelona, The Meetings Space, M&I Forum or at meetings with German hosted buyers MICE By Melody, organized by the Polish Tourism Organization. These events consistently build the brand of the city as the organizer of international events, and in the long-term tourism development policy, they expand the area of promotion, going beyond purely tourist aspects.

Additionally, on June 24-26 there was a fam trip organized by the Poland Convention Bureau and the Kraków Convention Bureau in cooperation with local partners, attended by incentive travel organizers associated in Site Poland. The purpose of the visit was to present the potential of the city and its experience in such a way as to inspire creative incentive programs in Cracow. Professional organizers of incentive events associated in the association got acquainted with the rich congress and tourist offer of our city.

### **The Kraków NETWORK project - a strong voice of the Cracow industry**

The industry's integration is fostered by initiatives taken around the Kraków Network. The Kraków NETWORK project, established on the initiative of KBF - the operator of ICE Kraków, aims to develop a coherent group of entities belonging to the MICE industry, which, thanks to mutual relations, aims to increase the number of business and science events organized in Kraków.

Last year, a documentary entitled "Post-pandemic event safety" was developed thanks to joint efforts, and the group's success this year is undoubtedly **The Kraków NETWORK Protocol - a strategy for operating in the post-pandemic reality developed by representatives of the Cracow MICE industry. Kraków NETWORK Protocol, inspired by the Protocol of Kaohsiung ICCA**, is a set of good practices and recommendations adapted to the new, post-pandemic reality, defining a list of key strategies that will enable the further development of the meetings and events industry, it's an introduction to the joint strategy for 2021-2023.

**The Kraków NETWORK protocol was the winner of two categories in the prestigious ICCA Best Marketing Award 2021 contest.** The award has been awarded since 1997 by



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members of the MICE industry association for outstanding achievements in the field of city, region or product marketing.

### **Business tourism - a key area**

It is worth emphasizing that the consistent development of the meetings industry is very important for the economy of our city. The "Kraków's sustainable tourism policy for 2021-2028", adopted in March this year, defines business tourism as one of the strategic key areas.

The analysis carried out for the purposes of the above-mentioned documentary confirmed that congresses and conferences are among the products that have the greatest value in terms of competitiveness and attractiveness. Quoting the provisions of the Policy: The organization of congress events is a strategic development market due to the transfer of knowledge, the profitability ratio and qualification of participants to the premium segment through a higher level of expenses (business tourists leave over three times more money in the city). It also disperses tourists both in time - the most popular congress months are late spring and autumn, not summer - and in space, as congress venues such as ICE Kraków, the TAURON Arena or the EXPO Kraków hall are located outside the city center.

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