



Tourists are needed in Kraków

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For years, Kraków has been the most recognisable Polish city brand in the world. Our city wins top places in rankings for the best tourist destinations. Recently, it was ranked among the most popular European destinations in 2022 in Travellers' Choice 2022, prepared by the popular TripAdvisor website. As residents of Kraków, this is something we can be proud of.

Unfortunately, the pandemic lasted two years and had a very negative impact on the condition of Krakow's tourism industry. We remember very well the deserted streets of the Old Town and the heart-breaking sight of the empty Market Square. Certainly, the vast majority of us do not want to experience this again. It turns out that the ongoing war in Ukraine is again deterring tourists from coming to our city. The troubles for the tourism industry, which started during the pandemic, are still getting worse.

Meanwhile, we residents know like no one else that Kraków is safe. This was also emphasised by the Mayor of Kraków, who, on 28 March this year during the Historic Cities 3.0 conference, said that Kraków was constantly safe and open to all visitors, both from home and abroad. Additionally, he assured that our communication possibilities with other cities and countries remain at a high level, and the airport in Balice was ready to serve our guests.

Hotels, restaurants, pubs, travel agencies, guide associations and congress and conference facilities provide jobs for many Cracovians. It is estimated that, in 2019, around 40,000 people were employed in the tourism sector, and visitors spent PLN 7.5 billion in Kraków. The tourism industry generates more than 10 per cent of the city municipality's GDP. Tourists are needed in Kraków.

Therefore, it is worth trying to make them come back. The condition is, of course, respect for our city. We want tourism to develop in Kraków in a sustainable way, with full respect for its residents and cultural heritage, which is, after all, inscribed in the first UNESCO World Heritage List, but also with a view to benefiting local entrepreneurs. Therefore, the Tourism Department is working on projects that will implement the recommendations included in the "Sustainable Tourism Policy of Kraków for the years 2021 - 2028," The document, adopted by the Kraków City Council a year ago, is aimed at developing an optimal model for managing tourism in Kraków after the collapse caused by COVID-19. The main task is to rebuild tourist traffic in the spirit of harmonious coexistence between the city' inhabitants and entrepreneurs and visitors.

Last year, we piloted the City Helpers programme. Throughout the streets of the Old Town, one could meet city helpers providing tourist information to visitors, as well as keeping an eye on the rules to be observed in Kraków. In the coming holidays, the programme will be continued as part of the Respect Kraków campaign, primarily with the inhabitants and the comfort of living in our city in mind.