

City Helpers will return to the streets of Kraków at the end of May

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The *City Helpers* pilot programme, carried out in the summer of 2021, enjoyed great popularity among tourists and Krakow residents alike. Providing information, promoting events and fostering responsible behaviour boosted the positive image of the city, showcasing it as a great destination. This year, *City Helpers* will be seen on the streets of Kraków from the end of May until the first days of September.

Responsible and sustainable tourism

City Helpers is a tool for supporting sustainable tourism policies in keeping with the #RespectKrakow initiative launched by the city back in 2019. The programme hearkens back to similar successful campaigns in cities such as Dubrovnik, Marseilles and Amsterdam.

Taking care of the residents

Continuing the project is crucial from the standpoint of promoting the right image of Kraków among residents and tourists alike. This year, the city is considering a broader backdrop and the spectrum of its planned activities in the process of designing the concept and outlining the scale of the project's implementation. This time around, it will not only concern international visitors, but also guests from Kraków and the region arriving in the Old Town for leisure and entertainment. The project needs to address the concerns of the residents of the historic city centre, who bear the consequences of the night life in the city.

Protecting the historic heart of the city

The historic space at the heart of the city has been particularly vulnerable to a wide variety of issues in connection with the 'night-time economy'. The outcomes of last year's edition of the *City Helpers* project showcased its role as a valuable tool for protecting the Old Town as a cultural park. Effective action in that regard is crucial, especially given the challenges and issues that Kraków faces, as well as the need to make the local space quieter and more peaceful. The *City Helpers* project boosts the image and positive public perception of this area.

Starting in May, the specially trained *City Helpers* will offer information for tourists, reminding them about the rules of our city. They will stay on our streets until September. The Helpers will also note all violations of the Cultural Park regulations. The responsibilities of the *City Helpers* were decided during a series of workshops and meetings with residents and representatives from Kraków City Hall, the municipal police and the tourism industry.

What makes *City Helpers* so important?

Last year, most of the interventions concerned disturbances at night and public consumption of alcohol. The vast majority of these incidents occurred on Saturday nights, and more than 70 per cent of them concluded with the offenders ceasing their behaviour.

Within a very short timeframe *City Helpers* became recognisable, and as a result their presence was often enough to alleviate numerous problematic situations in those areas they serviced. The distinctive uniform and symbols with clear markings have led many tourists to ask them for



help unprompted. There were other cases in which the municipal police had to intervene and give the offenders fines or even arrest the most belligerent of them.

Additional safety in the city space

The project enjoyed particularly strong support from diplomatic missions in Kraków. The consuls appreciated the idea, noting the information and warnings printed on the leaflets distributed by the *City Helpers*. Some of consulates and embassies decided to add them to their information boards. The City of Kraków has also received official thanks from foreigners for the assistance provided.

The programme has also been recognised for its efforts to make the city space safer and to build and promote the expected norms of behaviour in the historic heart of the city. This feedback came from the municipal police, the Department of Administrative Affairs and the Department of Tourism of Kraków City Hall.

City Helpers will appear on the streets of Kraków on **23 May** and will remain there until **11 September**.

The project is in line with the recommendations of the *2021-2028 Sustainable Tourism Policy* adopted by a resolution of the Krakow City Council on 24 March 2021.