



Why does the MICE industry need culture?

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On 15th September 2022, the IBTM team published a ranking of The Most Cultural Cities for International Meetings, thus helping to narrow the options for everyone planning an international meeting where culture plays the leading role. The publication of the ranking is directly connected with this year's theme of IBTM World - 'Creating Culture' - that will take place in Barcelona from 29th November till 1st December.

The IBTM team decided to look at how destinations around the world use their unique culture to inspire and attract events. For this purpose, it created a global ranking of 99 cities with respect to the number of:

- UNESCO World Heritage sites
- museums
- restaurants in the Michelin guide
- art galleries
- theatres

As many as seven European cities ranked in the Top 10 of The Most Cultural Cities for International Meetings.

Although Europe as a continent is not the cradle of the human species, as contemporary researchers representing most diverse fields of science tend to agree that we come from the African savanna, it is certainly the place where culture and civilisation as we know it originated and developed. For this reason alone, a journey to the European continent can be almost a return to the roots for someone who grew up in another part of our globe. This is how Europe is often treated by tourists from both Americas and Australia, who arrive here not only to see historical sites dating back to all epochs, but also to learn the rhythm of life and atmosphere of the old continent. Unfortunately, there is no Polish city in the global Top 10, or even Top 20.

The highest-ranking Polish city (31st place) is **Kraków** with 3 UNESCO sites, 109 museums, 18 restaurants in the Michelin guide, 33 galleries and 12 theatres. Kraków is the world's most recognisable Polish city, the cultural capital of the country and a city of literature and poetry. In 1978, Kraków was inscribed on the first list of the world's most valuable heritage sites by the decision of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee. In 2000, Kraków was granted the title of the European Capital of Culture and subsequently the title of the UNESCO City of Literature, which includes Kraków in the UNESCO's Creative Cities Network program.

Another Polish city in the ranking is **Warsaw**, which took 42nd place, with one UNESCO location, 95 museums and 13 restaurants in the Michelin guide (representing a decrease consequent to Covid-19), 19 galleries and 26 theatres. The Warsaw Old Town was inscribed on the UNESCO list in 1980 not because of its historic value, but as an example of the unusual meticulousness of the almost complete restoration of the oldest part of the city, which had been systematically destroyed by the Germans after the Warsaw Uprising. The restoration of the Old Town was carried out on the basis of careful historical and conservation studies. The spatial system from the foundational period (12th century) and 18th-century architectural buildings were restored on the basis of city images that have survived, e.g., in Canaletto's paintings.



The last Polish city included in the ranking with 40 museums and 8 galleries is [Poznań](#). The historical capital of Wielkopolska is strongly connected with the beginnings of the Polish state. When visiting Poznań, history lovers should start their sightseeing tour from Ostrów Tumski – the place that is presumably connected with the baptism of Mieszko I, the first bishopric in Poland and the burial grounds of the first Polish rulers. It is difficult to imagine Poznań without fairs and fairs without Poznań. Few institutions have had such a big impact on the character and shape of this city. This relationship has lasted for over 100 years (since 1921). Since the beginning, **Poznań's** fairs have been the scene of market premieres where valuable trade relations are established and the Polish economy is promoted. As a result, Poznań had already become the fourth biggest fair centre in Europe by the start of World War II. Today, the MTP Group is the biggest fair organiser in Poland and the indisputable leader in Central & Eastern Europe.

Interestingly, the top three “cultural” cities in Poland actually corresponds to the top three Polish cities from the ICCA Ranking Report – the only difference is that Warsaw is ahead of Kraków and Poznań in the ranking of cities.

The ICCA Ranking is regarded as one of the most important lists of this kind beside the ranking prepared by the UIA (Union of International Association). It is a benchmarking tool with regard to the congress and conference potential of business destinations, allowing the city to determine its competitive advantages and shortcomings in the case of candidacy for the host of an event. Thanks to its expanded infrastructure, central location and intellectual potential, Poland has maintained a stable position in the ranking for many years and it is still the only country of the Visegrad Group ranked in the Top 20. The credit for this result goes not only to first-choice congress cities (Warsaw – 49 meetings, Kraków – 45), but also to second-choice cities (Poznań – 15 meetings, Gdańsk – 13, Wrocław – 12, Łódź – 6, Katowice – 2) and third-choice cities (Lublin – 3 meetings, Olsztyn – 3, Szczecin – 2 and Białystok, Będlewo, Chęciny, Toruń, Wieliczka, Zakopane – each with one meeting in the ranking).

The MICE industry market plays a special part in building the image of cities. Its role is crucial in terms of benefits for the city's economic, cultural and social development.

Text: Aneta Książek, an article from the cycle #konkretyAnety based on ibtmevents.com