



## **Invaluable potential of scientific staff (by Paula Fanderowska)**

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**The scientific potential of Kraków's universities can be used to strengthen Kraków's position as a place for organising congresses, conferences and international artistic events. Paula Fanderowska, Vice-President of the board of Kraków 5020, on the study of intellectual potential and the importance of cooperation with the academic community in attracting international events.**

Acquiring international conference and congress events is one of the key strategic objectives of Kraków's sustainable tourism policy adopted by the City Council for the years 2021-28. This is a necessity in Kraków, which is trying to restore its tourist potential, strained by both the pandemic and the war in Ukraine. The scientific potential of Kraków's universities can be used to strengthen Kraków's position as a place for organising congresses, conferences and international artistic events. This potential includes about 12,000 academic teachers (including 794 full professors) educating about 130,000 students at 23 universities, although it is currently difficult to estimate how many academics and researchers working in public and non-public universities have a real impact on attracting prestigious international events to the city.

### **The strength of Kraków: human capital**

After Warsaw, Kraków is the best-developed metropolitan city with a well-established image and huge development potential. The strengths of Kraków lie in its human capital – academics, university graduates, and specialists in various fields. The Kraków Convention Bureau, the Kraków Network, the Krakow5020 company (managing the ICE Kraków Congress Centre) and specialised entities (such as PCO, DMC and incentive travel office) are actively involved in organising events. Kraków also has a modern and well-developed congress and fair infrastructure and a rich cultural and recreational offer. The city's location is another asset, along with the air connections to other international destinations.

Until March 2020, the widely understood meeting industry was one of the key service activities in Kraków. 2019 saw a record number of participants in meetings and events – 1.2 million. More than half of these were conferences and congresses, attended by 670,000 delegates. However, despite the growing recognisability of Poland in terms of organising events for the market of associations and international organisations, Kraków doesn't rank very high. According to the ICCA Statistics Report in 2019, the city ranked 48th in the world ranking of host cities, i.e. the most important cities hosting congresses. In the "Destination Competitive Index for International Convention Destination", a ranking of the competitiveness of congress cities in 2021, Kraków ranked 66th in the world and 34th in Europe (out of 101 most important congress destinations).

The global ranking of the GainingEdge consulting company, which names 50 global destinations in terms of the number of intellectual leaders and their influence in attracting international events to destinations, doesn't list Kraków at all. The impact of domestic decision-makers on attracting congress events to Poland was estimated at only 37.9%. Meanwhile, the development of the conference and congress segment and the widely understood meeting industry creates an opportunity for the city threatened with overtourism to change the tourism model – a transition from excessive and not fully controlled development to a sustainable tourism model, which allows for a balance between various interest groups and the protection



of existing resources.

### **Kraków leaders**

Kraków has many outstanding and world-renowned scientists in various fields: well-known doctors, architects, economists, engineers, etc. Usually, however, they are not aware that they have great opportunities to attract international events to Kraków.

A preliminary study carried out by the team of the Kraków University of Economics was supposed to assess the scientific potential of the city in terms of attracting international conference and congress events. For this purpose, the structure of universities in Kraków was analysed; the fields of science and scientific disciplines with the greatest chances of generating scientific leaders in the meetings industry were identified; the achievements of research and teaching staff were analysed in order to select key representatives of the fields in which Kraków is a strong hub; the number of local leaders active on the boards of international associations was determined, and their potential to attract new association events to the city was assessed. The potential of the city in terms of individual scientific disciplines, as well as the potential of individual scientific and didactic staff, were examined.

### **The study covered six Kraków universities (five public universities with an academic profile and one non-public university):**

the Jagiellonian University,

the Kraków University of Economics,

the Hugo Kołłątaj University of Agriculture in Kraków,

the Krzysztof Penderecki Academy of Music in Kraków, the Jan Matejko Academy of Fine Arts

and the Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski Kraków University.

The study was conducted based on 5,574 records about scientists from Kraków representing 45 disciplines.

The study allowed to select scientific leaders:

in non-artistic fields and disciplines, with the highest rate of scientific achievements (taking into account the number of citations, the number of publications, the number of points obtained for publications),

in artistic fields with the highest rate of artistic achievements (participation in international artistic events, number of awards and distinctions received in international artistic events, managing/participating in the jury of international artistic events, managing artistic events, curating exhibitions, participating in a competition jury).

The study identified the top 100 scientists in Kraków (among the analysed universities). The



following disciplines were most represented in this top 100: medical, biological sciences, chemical, pharmaceutical and physical sciences, as well as astronomy. The study also named people with “promising” potential, who in the next few years may join the group of the best scientists.

The prestige of intellectual leaders in the international arena is built not only through the number of their publications and citations but also through their organisational and conference activities. After taking into account all the factors, the researchers involved in the study were divided into four groups:

Masters,

Sages,

Activists,

and Journeymen.

26 Masters were selected, including three academics who held positions on the boards of international associations. These are scientists who, due to their scientific achievements and activity in international fora, have the greatest opportunities to attract large and important scientific events to Kraków. They are the ones who should be motivated and supported in the process of obtaining congresses in the first place.

68 Sages were also awarded – scientists with outstanding scientific achievements but without a declared association.

Building synergies between academia and business

In the discussed study, it was not possible to examine and draw conclusions for the entire academic community of Kraków. Therefore, it is necessary to continue the efforts and convince other local universities to participate in the project. This will allow for the selection of intellectual leaders and leaders of attracting events from all entities – these people will constitute an invaluable resource in the context of building the city’s competitive advantages in terms of rebuilding the incoming business traffic to Kraków.

The Kraków survey conducted by the team from the University of Economics was based on anonymised data. Therefore, in order to be able to use the results, it is necessary to obtain consents from selected leaders from individual universities to declassify their personal data and publish the list of their names. This will allow the Kraków Convention Bureau, the Association of Polish Conferences and Congresses (SKKP) and entities associated with the Kraków Network to reach them directly and invite them to the Kraków Congress Ambassadors programme. This is important because many scientists, despite their international recognition, are unaware of their own power of influence. The creation of a special programme for potential event ambassadors should primarily aim at promotional and networking activities.

Such a programme will enable new partnerships between the world of science and public and



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private actors, i.e. organisers, service providers and subcontractors.

The identification of academic/scientific intellectual leaders is, therefore, the beginning of an internal (city-wide) process of building synergy between academia and business.

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*Photo: Filip Frydrykiewicz, Gala in Gdynia in 2023*