



On this year's season and plans for the next! Summary of the Tourism Forum

2023-11-13

At the initiative of the Krakow City Office, one of the most important cyclical events of Krakow tourism - the Tourism Forum - was held at the Krzysztofory Palace on 26 October. The event was an opportunity to sum up the season, discuss the future, and inaugurate a momentous event in the history of Krakow tourism - the establishment of the Association of Tourist Organisations of the Royal Capital City of Krakow.

The meeting was officially opened by Krakow Mayor Jacek Majchrowski. In his speech, he noted the role of the tourism sector in Krakow's economy and thanked the industry for its work to date. He also stressed the importance of the establishment of a local tourism organisation in the city, which was set up as a cross-sectoral platform for comprehensive cooperation. The president also presented Honoris Gratia awards to individuals of particular merit to Krakow tourism: Radosław Fronc – president of the MSHG group, Piotr Laskowski – president of the Małopolska Branch of the Polish Chamber of Tourism, and Stanisław Piśko – first president of the Krakow Chamber of Tourism. The “Krakow Tourism Wizard” („Kreator Krakowskiej Turystyki”) award went to Michał Niezabitowski, director of the Krakow Museum and chairman of the Council of the Association of the Tourist Organisation of the Royal Capital City of Krakow.

Let's talk about trends in Krakow tourism

The importance of the event was also underscored by a congratulatory letter from Krakow MP Aleksander Miszalski, read by Tomasz Daros, chairman of the Promotion and Tourism Committee of the Krakow City Council, which initiated the creation of a local tourism organisation in Krakow. The floor was then taken by Grzegorz Soszyński, Chair of the Board of the Association of Tourist Organisations of the Royal Capital City of Krakow. In his speech, he stressed that the local tourism organisation, operated on a partnership basis, was a pretext for civic thinking about the city, an attempt to replace particular needs with community thinking. He also expressed his desire for cooperation, shared responsibility and co-management to be the foundation of Krakow tourism.

Michał Niezabitowski delivered the opening lecture, raising the audience's awareness of the inherent link between progress and development and the need when thinking about the future, to learn from the past. He pointed out that the COVID-19 pandemic had been the catalyst for the changes we see today, while development should come from reflection on heritage. Expanding on these thoughts was a debate based on the keynote 'Bespoke. Are we ready for joint projects?' The panel included representatives from several sectors of Krakow tourism. Radosław Fronc, CEO of Main Square Hospitality Group TM, which manages, among others, Krakow restaurants awarded by the Michelin Guide. He stressed that the stars are an “authorisation element” that influences the choice of destination, while also being part of a larger whole. He noted that in reaching customers interested in premium offerings, relationships and listening to their needs were important.

Izabela Chyłek, a Krakow-based cultural animator and organiser of the “Kiermash” fair, presented a product that targets a niche audience. Krakow is the second city in Poland to host the largest number of alternative fairs, she noted. This potential should be taken care of and



developed, she added.

Lidia Wandas-Wilczura, 5 EVENTS owner, stressed that wedding tourism is all about quality and uniqueness and that the wedding industry focuses on tourists who have know a destination and want to return to it. This thought was elaborated by Jacek Legendziewicz, president of Jordan Group. He noted that in creating Krakow's offer, the various elements should be combined into a whole. He noted the need for cooperation in creating an offer that can be tailored to the needs of the most demanding customer. Patrycja Curyło, CEO of Gamescape Ltd. presented the opportunities for culture and tourism that gamification brings. This is a new trend that is gaining popularity and helps create a more attractive offer for the tourist. Participants in the debate agreed that the local tourism organisation is a tool in which they see opportunities to realise their expectations, that it should be a management centre of sorts, enabling bilateral relations and knowledge transfer. It is also a space for collaboration on "bespoke" projects that meet the needs of modern sustainable tourism.

What cultural events are planned for 2024?

Robert Piaskowski, the Mayor's plenipotentiary for culture in Krakow, encouraged people to build a "network of experiences" by taking advantage of the rich offer of Krakow – a UNESCO World Heritage City, which invites people to explore 108 museums of all kinds and participate in more than 3,500 events per month. From the perspective of a visitor interested in sports, Krakow's offer was also presented by Katarzyna Stępniewska-Walaszczyk, deputy director for marketing and organisation of sports events at the Sports Infrastructure Management Authority, who described the possibility of promoting the city through sports. Undoubtedly, Krakow's potential is huge and noticeable to more groups of tourists. This is evidenced by a 157% increase in the number of foreign visitors compared to last year, from June to August 2023.

Krakow appreciated

The meeting was summed up by Elżbieta Kantor, director of the Tourism Department of the City of Krakow. She presented the most important projects that the City of Krakow worked on with partners and stakeholders in the tourism market in 2023, as well as plans for the upcoming year. She thanked the local tourism organisation for its involvement in the work of creating and presented the projects that have been prepared within the framework of three executive groups working on the implementation of the recommendations of the "Sustainable Tourism Policy of Krakow for 2021-2028." Among the most important, she cited the city's efforts to introduce a tourist fee, regulate short-term rentals, manage Krakow's heritage and reduce excesses in the night-time economy of the city. This year has been a time of intensively conducted promotional activities in foreign and domestic markets under the "Destination: Małopolska" project, as well as the culmination of activities carried out around the Fortress of Krakow project, with the award of the chapter of the Business Forum – Tourist Product of the Year 2023 and the Odysseus award, granted by the Krakow Chamber of Tourism. At the initiative of Krakow, steps were taken together with the Polish Tourist Organisation, resulting in the Polish edition of the Michelin guide, in which 18 of the 49 distinctions in Poland went to Krakow, including for the only restaurant in the country with two Michelin stars. The city, recognising the need for ongoing monitoring of sustainability standards, has also joined the Global Destination



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Sustainability Index programme. Efforts are also being made to attract external funding, as in the case of the Tourism in Balance project, funded by the INTERREG programme, or the EUI – European Urban Initiative programme. Among the immediate challenges for the future, a topical issue remains the continuation of work on sustainability certification for destinations and operators, the continued acquisition of funding for tasks such as the “Destination: Małopolska” project, and the coordination of initiatives and legislative changes postulated by Krakow to support the development of sustainable tourism. The meeting ended with an invitation to implement joint “bespoke” projects and to cooperate with a new partner on the Krakow tourism scene – the Association of Tourist Organisation of the Royal Capital City of Krakow.