



## **“Wide open for sustainable meetings” - Leonardo Hotels**

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**Magdalena Młynarczyk - Cluster Poland Director of Sales and Marketing at Leonardo Hotels, joined us for an interview and shared the solutions implemented at Leonardo Hotels. Last year, their Krakow hotels received Green Key certification, which confirms the efficiency of operations and commitment to sustainability of Leonardo Hotels and the entire team.**

### **What measures, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals, are implemented or will be implemented in your company this year?**

Sustainable management in the hotel industry is not about taking shortcuts: it can lower or, as is often the case at the stage of implementing new solutions, raise the cost of labour, but it is an absolute necessity. The right approach to sustainability topics can reduce business costs. However, in order for them to actually have an effect, more attentiveness and concrete actions should be required of everyone employed in the hospitality industry, and education in this regard should also be addressed to guests. These cover such topics as leaving towels on the floor to be washed during a hotel stay and hanging up ones to be used again.

The EU ESG (Environment, Social, Government) directive requires companies to report data on a regular basis. ESG is a new standard: a focus on presenting real and measurable actions, an emphasis on accountability and commitment. Leaders in the hotel industry also focus on socially responsible practices, focusing on the DEI (Diversity, Equity & Inclusion) principle: Leonardo Hotels is a forerunner on this front in the hotel industry.

Sustainability also includes a responsible approach to employees. At Leonardo Hotels, Corporate Governance means, in addition to procedures, monitoring systems, corporate integrity and ethics, also incorporating the health and well-being of the team in its strategy. Our employees are at the heart of the organisation, without them the chain could not function at such a high level. The DEI principle reflects that every employee should be able to fully be themselves while performing their daily duties. Guaranteeing opportunities to develop and improve the team's competence is also key. Those employed at our hotels can participate in the Leonardo Academy, an in-house professional and personal development programme, ensuring that everyone has an equal opportunity for career advancement, regardless of gender, age or ethnicity. The brand places special emphasis on the well-being of employees, promoting activities in the field of preventive medicine, healthy living and physical activity, balancing work and leisure time, and valuing the individuality of employees already at the recruitment stage. Equality is also included in Leonardo Hotels' regular and thorough analysis of salary levels to actively combat the gender pay gap.

Our ESG strategy also includes the careful selection of suppliers, in accordance with which we choose to collaborate with partners who follow the principles close to our hearts.

### **Are you or do you plan to have your company certified for sustainable operations?**

In early 2023, the Leonardo Hotels brand introduced a comprehensive monitoring system to measure and control the use of electricity, water and waste resources. This enabled NYX Hotel Warsaw, Leonardo Boutique Krakow Old Town and Leonardo Boutique Krakow City Center to



receive Green Key certification. The Leonardo Royal Warsaw is also in the process of being certified.

### **Do customers expect your company to have sustainable solutions or certifications?**

Certifications are an absolute must for hotels in today's world – any large company interested in collaboration will check this aspect early on. At Leonardo Hotels, sustainable and environmentally friendly operations are embedded in the global ESG strategy, and each of our hotels is obliged to earn the Green Key certification specifically.

### **What trends have you recently observed in the organisation of events?**

Organisers around the world are committed to environmentally-friendly standards during meetings – reducing plastic consumption, catering based on local products, and often opting for hybrid meetings – this is no longer a trend, but standard practice in Leonardo Hotels, with sustainability strongly supporting our approach to organising meetings and conferences. Leonardo Hotels has implemented a comprehensive ESG strategy covering 160 action points. For meeting organisers, this means that they can implement low-emission events with us and minimise the meeting's environmental impact. From saving precious resources to efficient energy management, Leonardo Hotels consistently implements climate protection measures.

### **Can you share with our readers some interesting solutions in your ESG strategy?**

I'll start with the obvious and simplest things – such as keeping any printed material related to providing information to guests to a minimum. In our hotels, we usually replace them with clearly displayed QR codes or on NFC chips. At the same time, we use wooden room key cards in all our hotels – they are both practical and elegant, and it is hard to believe that they are still not a common solution in the hotel industry to replace plastic ones. In our rooms, guests will find information about the possibility of opting out of daily cleaning, and changing linen and towels – always with an indication of the environmental benefits of minimising the use of water and detergents. We don't use plastic bottles – water in our rooms, bars and restaurants is always in recyclable glass containers. We conserve water and electricity in each of our facilities, and the head office of our NYX hotel in Warsaw – Varso Place, has the highest standard in this regard – a BREEAM Certificate in the 'Outstanding' category. In addition to environmental aspects, we also ensure professional development opportunities for our employees through our Leo Exchange Programme, or Leonardo Academy, and we also support retired employees by voluntarily involving them in joint initiatives, or exchanging experiences. We also support people with disabilities – including by inviting patients of SOS facilities from Łowicz or Leszno to internships, apprenticeships and vocational training in our hotels.... Of course, these are just examples, as there is much more to share about our initiatives – both locally in Poland and internationally, in line with the chain's strategy. All of them clearly demonstrate that we approach the topic of ESG seriously and with commitment.

### **Where do you get your knowledge and inspiration on the topic of organising sustainable meetings?**

With 106 hotels in nine countries and 46 locations, Leonardo Hotels Central Europe is where



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“business happens”, where people meet, train and celebrate success. Delivering events on more than 31,000 sqm of conference space across Europe makes us a great reader of customer needs and international trends. However, we are always closely following market trends, the needs of local communities, as well as global trends. We participate in meetings, conferences and congresses. Our Polish hotels not only fit perfectly into this approach, but even set the tone.