



Ten years of the International Exhibition and Convention Centre EXPO Krakow

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May 2024 will mark the ten-year anniversary since the opening of the International Exhibition and Convention Centre EXPO Krakow - the most modern and multi-purpose facility in the region. Its capacity to accommodate a vast array of fairs, congresses, conferences and events has made it the key point on the business and cultural map of Europe - every year it welcomes over 100,000 visitors from all over the world.

For a decade now, EXPO Krakow has brought inspiration, provided the greatest emotion, and surprised, dazzled, and moved people to tears, and seduced them with its out-of-the box layout and design. The story of this place is actually a story of people who believe that direct meetings are powerful, give hope, open new doors, fire the imagination, and make you want to reach for more! Experience more, live more, offer more. But let's go back to the beginning...

Through dreams to action

"There is nothing like a dream to create the future." The words of Victor Hugo can serve as the starting point of the story of EXPO Krakow. More specifically, the story of three people brought together by a dream of doing business together. It was a kind of events business, as we would call it now, but back in the 90s no one had ever used that term. In 1996, the dream came to fruition and the firm Targi was established in Krakow. The firm soon earned its place as leader in the trade fair industry. The rapidly expanding events, increasing interest among exhibitors and visitors, and numerous ideas for the development of the business presented the President of Targi w Krakowie Grażyna Grabowska, and Vice-Presidents Ewa Woch and Paweł Nikliński with a new challenge - the construction of the first trade fair and congress center in the south of Poland. "We had been dreaming about a new facility for a long time; we spent a long time looking for a location and working on the design, and finally it was decided that the facility would be built in Czyżyny, then known as the Nowa Huta "bedroom community". After eighteen years, Targi w Krakowie finally had its own site and address, and this was emotional and exciting for us" recalls Grażyna Grabowska

In 2013, chimneys of the former "Prefabet" Concrete Industry Company in the Czyżyny district were pulled down. This was a symbolic moment that started a new chapter in the story of Czyżyny, and also the whole of Krakow. The EXPO Krakow International Exhibition and Convention Centre was built on the site, and was to become one of the most modern facilities of this type in Europe, fully financed by Targi w Krakowie. *"When designing the facility, sustainable development was our priority, even though at the time it was not as popular as it is now. From the very beginning, we used available technologies and introduced systems that were environmentally-friendly, especially saving energy, water and paper. We always look for subcontractors who propose reusable materials,"* emphasizes Paweł Nikliński, Vice-President of Targi Krakow.

That winter was exceptionally warm, and so construction took only 228 days. On 14 May 2014, nearly 2,000 invited guests celebrated the opening of the facility. *"When EXPO Krakow was opened, we felt this new energy motivating us to work. New opportunities arose, and we could actually start implementing the ideas that until that time had been unattainable. The number of*



customers from abroad and international events grew. The new professional infrastructure and top-quality service were like a magnet, attracting foreign customers interested in doing business with Polish companies," Vice-President of Targi w Krakowie Ewa Woch recalls .

A rising tide

The first event organized at EXPO Krakow was ConExPest (disinfection, disinsectization and deratization industry trade fair), and the next – Moto Show Krakow. Opening the facility was a breakthrough, with exhibition space of 15,000m², a system of air-conditioned, modular seminar rooms of various sizes, meeting rooms, a restaurant, and a spacious lobby. The usable space of EXPO Krakow was designed with a capacity for multiple configurations. With a view to making maximum use of the space, construction was based on specially reinforced wooden girders, so that there were no partition walls or pillars in the 4,000m² and 5,000m² areas, limiting the space. This sets EXPO Krakow apart from other exhibition centers. Also, this is the largest facility in Lesser Poland in terms of a flat area with extensive under-floor media ducts (with the option of quickly connecting electricity, water, or compressed air, and connecting to the Internet). Thanks to all this, from that day, customers interested in renting the facility started calling.

"All the previous efforts and projects were building the brand and preparing us for what was to happen once EXPO Krakow was open. The new type of business shifted rapidly to a completely different, higher level. The long-awaited dream of building something great became a reality. To me, all previous experiences had been preparation for what happened when EXPO Krakow opened," recalls Katarzyna Marciszyn, Head of the Sales and Rental Department.

In ten years, the portfolio of Targi w Krakowie has expanded. In addition to the main events, which are the International Book Fair in Krakow®, the International Dental Fair KRAKIDENT®, and the International Trade Fair of Hotel and Catering Equipment HORECA®, new events have emerged, such as the HUNT EXPO Hunting Fair and an event for interior designers – the Krakow International Interior and Architecture Fair. EXPO Krakow also accommodates a series of events for the broad industrial sector, e.g., the International Trade Fair for Composite Materials, Technologies and Products KOMPOZYT-EXPO®, the International Trade Fair for the Processing, Storage and Transport of Bulk and Dry Bulk Materials SYMAS®, the MAINTENANCE Trade Fair for Maintenance, Planning and Optimization of Production, the International Trade Fair for Fastening, Joining and Fastener Technologies FASTENER POLAND®, or the Packaging Innovations International Packaging Fair, attended by customers not only from major European countries, but also from countries such as the USA, UAE, Japan, South Korea, and China. Targi w Krakowie has also successfully organized fan events. For instance, the BookGame Festival and Board Game Fair or the TUNING SHOW EXPO event for car enthusiasts.

Now, EXPO Krakow is not only fully booked with events organized by Targi w Krakowie, but also numerous other events put together by external organizers, including Tattoofest, Fair of Nice Things, Magnificon, WaysConf, Evertq Expo, CSR and ESG, Confidacne, the LNE Congress and Fair, and many others.

EXPO Krakow enabled Targi w Krakowie to develop a third area of activity – organizing international congresses, conferences and symposia for external organizations – in addition to trade fairs and facility rental . This high level of performance has repeatedly become clear to



universities, scientific and industry associations, and companies from Poland and abroad; for instance, during such events as the 22nd International Congress of the Polish Cardiac Society, the EWMA European Wound Management Association, or Routes Europe.

People, emotions, experiences

People are the backbone of Targi w Krakowie and EXPO Krakow. They help EXPO Krakow to guarantee the highest quality of services. When the center was opened, the company had 45 employees and three Management Board members. At present, Targi w Krakowie employs 63 people, and the Management Board has been joined by Chief Accountant Małgorzata Borowiec and the facility's Administrative and Technical Director Marcin Bugajski. The company is planning numerous investment projects, with the focus on extending EXPO Krakow by one more hall.

Throughout the decade, EXPO Krakow has become a platform for networking and sharing knowledge and experience. It has welcomed distinguished experts, outstanding scientists, and people from the world of science and culture, including Nobel Prize winners writer Olga Tokarczuk, prof. Ada Yonath, prof. Robert Huber, and prof. Emmanuelle Charpentier; the writers it has welcomed include Katarzyna Bonda, prof. Jerzy Bralczyk, Wojciech Chmielarz, Jacek Dehnel, Aneta Jadowska, Marek Krajewski, Roma Ligocka, Jakub Małecki, Robert Małecki, prof.

Jan Miodek, Valerie Perrin, Katarzyna Puzyńska, Marusz Szczygiel, Szczepan Twardoch, Michał Witkowski, Janusz L. Wisniewski, and Jakub Żulczyk; the talented athletes include Jan Miodek, Valerie Perrin, Katarzyna Puzyńska, Mariusz Szczygieł, Szczepan Twardocha, Michał Witkowski, Janusz L. Wiśniewski, and Jakub Żulczyk; the talented athletes include Jerzy Dudek, Mateusz Kusznerewicz, and Mariusz Pudzianowski; the prominent chefs include Andrea Camastra, Przemysław Klima, Phillipe Mille, Tommy Myllymäki, Jean-Michel Perruchon, Emmanuel Renaut, Kurt Scheller; the motorsport celebrities include Jan Chmielewski, Krzysztof Hołowczyc, Karolina Pilarczyk, and Bartosz Ostałowski.

“I want to come here again”

Nothing sums up the efforts of the last ten years than positive reviews from satisfied customers, *“When I hear EXPO Krakow, I think space, large scale, great energy and a wonderful team. Great advice, always on time and to the point, very kind people who also know what they are doing. My wish for the tenth anniversary of EXPO Krakow is for the venue to remain as good as it is now. I have organized dozens of events in my life and I know that the place we choose to hold an event is one of the main conditions for its success. EXPO Krakow gives me a guarantee of a sense of security from start to finish. An exceptional place, exceptional people, great events,”* says Agnieszka Keller, Editor-in-Chief of LNE, Program Director of the LNE Congresses.