



Reasons for decarbonisation in the meetings industry

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On 2 July 2024, Krakow5020 and the Carbon Footprint Foundation together held a press conference “Reasons for decarbonisation in the meetings industry?” at the ICE Krakow Congress Centre. The conference was a chance to present “Decarbonisation Strategy. From WHY to Offset.” This document was recently prepared by members of the Krakow Network, an initiative that brings together representatives of the MICE industry in Krakow.

The press conference was moderated by Magdalena Kondas, editor-in-chief of MeetingPlanner.pl, and the participants were: Stanisław Mazur, Deputy Mayor of the City of Krakow; Izabela Błaszczuk, CEO of Kraków5020; and Agnieszka Rozwadowska, CEO of the Carbon Footprint Foundation. The press conference served to present the assumptions of the decarbonisation strategy, the first such document for the meetings industry. The strategy was developed by the Carbon Footprint Foundation on behalf of Krakow5020.

“It is our 10th anniversary, and we decided that this would be the best gift for our facility and the entire industry. For the past 10 years, the City of Krakow, the Congress Centre, and also the entire meetings industry in Krakow, have been the leader and pioneer of many initiatives. We are creating an efficient ecosystem, the evidence of which we can see today. I would like to use this platform to thank you very much, both members of the Krakow Network and the Carbon Footprint Foundation. The decarbonisation strategy is the result of great cooperation,” said Izabela Błaszczuk, CEO of Krakow5020.

The strategy is supposed to address growing regulatory requirements and public expectations to reduce the climate impact of economic activity, thus supporting sustainable development.

“Not that long ago, it was only a whim, and now it is becoming the rule. Big banks or investment groups refuse to cooperate if their policy is not followed, which gives us two very strong motivations. The first is normative – responsibility for what is happening in the city. The second is very pragmatic – it's simply what the world expects,” - emphasised Deputy Mayor of the City of Krakow, Professor Stanisław Mazur.

The strategy is designed to support participants in the meetings industry to comply with global climate goals, and improve competitiveness and image through sustainable business practices. It is a comprehensive action plan that integrates sustainable development principles into the day-to-day operations of the meetings industry, raises environmental awareness, and contributes to global climate goals.

The strategy was formulated through several months of work, including meetings and workshops with members of the Krakow Network initiative, which works locally to promote Krakow as a model to follow in organising sustainable events, and is a milestone that will contribute to our common good. “Today, global trends show the urgency of the topic. The entire value chain around the meetings industry is conducive to new actions and encourages more stakeholders to participate,” said Agnieszka Rozwadowska, CEO of the Carbon Footprint Foundation.

“You have always been at the forefront of the industry in Poland and set the course of action. For that, I would like to congratulate you. I hope to present this paper internationally, more



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specifically at the Convene 4 Climate conference on October 2-3 in Barcelona. At the same time, this will be the first edition organised by the Strategic Alliance of the National Convention Bureaux,” emphasised Aneta Książek of the Polish Tourism Organisation, inviting the public to join.

The press conference was followed by a section featuring representatives of the Power of 4, a unique agreement of medium-sized conference centres that brings together: the Copernicus Conference Centre at the Copernicus Science Centre, the Lublin Conference Centre, the European Solidarity Centre and the ICE Krakow Congress Centre. They presented activities undertaken by the venues to implement ESG policies and strategies.

The meeting ended with an expert debate, summarising and complementing the previous two parts. It was a huge dose of knowledge about what decarbonisation really is, what it entails, and why we need to take steps to eliminate our carbon footprint today. Participants of the debate included: Agnieszka Rozwadowska, Anna Woda, Dawid Zieliński, Paula Fanderowska and Przemysław Grzywacz.

Climate change is here and now. It's a challenge for everyone, including, of course, the meetings industry. This gives weight to the choices we make now.