

COMPLEX CHALLENGE FOR KRAKOW

Meetings of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee are ranked among the most demanding international events held each year. Krakow, Poland's first site to be inscribed on the World Heritage List, was selected to host the 41st session last year which, lasting from 2-12 July, was not only the longest but the most logistically complex meeting ever held at ICE Krakow Congress Centre.

Each year, representatives of 21 of the 193 signatory states of the Convention Concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage (1972) are in charge of implementing the meeting, allocating financial support and deciding on the potential new listed sites to be deliberated.

In Krakow, 2,500 participants attended. The organisers were various Polish ministries, the National Heritage Board of Poland, the city of Krakow and the Polish UNESCO Committee, the PCO was BERM i Congress & Fair Centre and 1,000 service staff were involved in preparing 35 ancillary events.

Krakow Festival Office, the operator of ICE Krakow, seconded staff from other departments to support the facility's

permanent staff. Security of the participants was a high priority and several hundred police were involved in that.

Every space in ICE Krakow was reconfigured for the event. The auditorium was adapted to serve as the plenary hall in classroom style with specially designed desks, the theatre and half the Chamber Hall served as offices, the other half and the underground S5 Hall as venues for lectures, film screenings, exhibitions and small receptions. The Conference Hall Complex became offices and secretariats and even the dressing rooms were turned into small offices.

David Martel, conference officer in the cultural section of UNESCO for more than 20 years, said: "It was a huge challenge for us all but showed that it is possible. I can truly say that, thanks to the flexibility of the venue, the session in Krakow was one of the most innovative." ■

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Deliberations at 41st UNESCO World Heritage session

CITYFILE

Airport

Krakow Airport is Poland's second largest airport offering more than 100 direct scheduled flights to major destinations. It is 12km from the city centre, about a 15-minute drive or 20 minutes by train.

Accommodation

Krakow has 11 five-star hotels, 42 four-star and 85 three-star properties.

Key venues ICE Krakow Congress Centre

Centrally located, ICE Krakow has an auditorium with 1,915 seats and a theatre seating 600. The Chamber Hall with 300 seats is on the same level as the Conference Hall Complex of 500 sqm and the two combine to create 1,000 sqm of space ideal for exhibitions or large banquets. The foyers are also used for exhibitions and events.

International Exhibition & Convention Centre EXPO Krakow.

Opened in 2014, EXPO Krakow is a multi-functional, 13,000 sqm venue offering exhibition space, two halls, several modular seminar rooms, meeting rooms, a restaurant and a 1,400 sqm lobby. **Tauron Arena Krakow.** Spectacular sports and entertainment hall with conference facilities.

Key industries

Krakow is among the world's top 10 outsourcing destinations attracting 70 international corporations from the business services sector. A number of Krakow's universities and scientific institutes are active in research and development. Other major industries include steel, biopharmaceuticals, biotechnology, advanced technology, IT, arts and sciences, life sciences, tourism and gastronomy. Next year, Krakow will be the first ever European Capital of Gastronomy Culture.

Worth a visit

UNESCO listed locations such as Wawel Castle and Wawel Cathedral, Krakow Old Town and main square, the Jewish Neighbourhood Kazimierz and Wieliczka Salt Mine.