



KRAKÓW NETWORK Protocol

 **Kraków**
Convention Bureau

kbf:
ICE Kraków operator

 **KRAKÓW**
CONGRESS
CENTRE

The KRAKÓW NETWORK Protocol, modelled on the “**Kaohsiung Protocol Framework**” by ICCA, is a document created by the representatives of the Kraków MICE industry as the basis for a joint action strategy for the years 2021-2023, whose provisions are to be further updated.

It is a set of good practices and recommendations to be applied in the brand-new, post-pandemic reality, comprising a list of key strategies that will enable further development of the meetings and events industry. The key trends that have been identified include innovative business models, shared risk, digital restructuring and hybrid events, as well as strategies to increase the engagement of all stakeholders.



– The Protocol has been formulated as the response to the major global trends, such as technological advancement, safety and health, and the necessity to understand the next generations of attendees, i.e., all that impacts the global meetings industry. The keynote is that it is our duty as well as the privilege of the events industry to contribute to the advancement of the society through promoting core values, such as a knowledge-based economy, sustainable development and a global community, says Izabela Błaszczuk, director of KBF, the operator of the ICE Kraków Congress Centre.



The concept of the document coincides with the direction of the City’s strategy concerning support for the development of the meetings industry outlined in the study “**Kraków’s sustainable tourism policy for 2021-2028**” indicating detailed assumptions for sustainable business and cultural tourism in Kraków and the development of the tourism sector in the Małopolska Region. This document, like the Protocol, contains a set of recommendations and guidelines for areas of crucial importance to the city.



– According to the diagnosis presented in the document, the organisation of congress events constitutes a strategic market for development due to the transfer of knowledge and the rate of profitability and qualification of participants to the premium segment through a higher level of expenditure. Rebuilding the strong competitive position of Kraków as a city hosting international events is currently a key task, comments Elżbieta Kantor, Head of the Tourism Department of the Municipality of Kraków.



Team work on the Protocol, involving members of the **KRAKÓW NETWORK** initiative, is consistent with the work method recommended in the aforementioned city strategy, which assumes that the implementation of recommendations and proposed actions is only possible with the cooperation of all partners from the public, social and private sphere, including the inhabitants of the city. Tourism is a complex system of relations and cooperation of many entities operating also in the Internet space, such as tour operators, tourist offices, hotels and accommodation facilities, organisations managing tourist areas, tourist attractions, catering establishments, cultural institutions, carriers or guides.

– Our goal is to respond to the current need to create practical models of cooperation between members of the MICE industry in order to enable effective functioning in the new reality, to create a partnership between all stakeholders of the meetings industry, to jointly acquire and safely execute the most important events. We are aware that since last year we have been operating in a new reality, hence we intend to overcome uncertainty and gain competitive advantage, says Paula Fanderowska, deputy director for the ICE Kraków Congress Centre.



KRAKÓW NETWORK project, established in 2015 on the initiative of KBF, the operator of ICE Kraków, aims to develop a coherent group of entities from the MICE industry, which based on their mutual relations seeks the increase in the number of business and scientific events in Kraków. At the same time the group intends to develop the image of Kraków as a strong brand in the meetings industry. The activities of the KRAKÓW NETWORK include the analysis of the directions of MICE development, the effectiveness of activities and the monitoring of the economic impact of the meetings industry on the economic situation of the city. The initiative also offers a platform for discussion and the exchange of experience, knowledge and good practice between the attendees of meetings.



– In line with the mission of KRAKÓW NETWORK, we wish to continue to share our know-how, analyse the most important issues related to representatives of all sectors of the MICE industry on the forum, and efficiently adapt to current procedures and guidelines, just as we did together last year during our work on the document “**Event safety after the pandemic**”, adds Weronika Wirtel, Senior Sales and Marketing Specialist at ICE Kraków, coordinating projects carried out as part of the initiative.



The key benefits of implementing the KRAKÓW NETWORK Protocol are:

- a clear model of cooperation within the initiative,
- joint development, promotion and lobbying of the city's offer,
- gaining a competitive advantage for Kraków,
- good PR and transparency of the entities involved,
- integration of partners and suppliers in terms of knowledge exchange,
- creating innovative tools, including hybrid and online events.

– Communication, both internal and external, is recognised to be one of the key elements of the project's success. Being aware of the communication processes constantly occurring between us makes each of us responsible for representing a given location and assume the role of an ambassador actively involved in promoting it. The **KRAKÓW NETWORK Protocol** serves not only as a guidebook, but also as a communication tool. Based on the provisions we have reached together, we will develop offers, prepare information campaigns and create promotional activities, comments Michał Zalewski, spokesperson of the KBF.



The provisions contained in the document are compliant with the Kraków The Host City campaign prepared by the Kraków Convention Bureau. The materials are consistent, which makes it possible to multiply the message and saturate various media channels with information about the industry and the city.



#KrakówTheHostCity



CRISIS MEANS OPPORTUNITY

The COVID-19 pandemic has become a catalyst for transformations in almost every sector. Existing ways of doing business have been replaced by flexible innovations, kick-starting a progress from which there is no turning back. While we are aware that face-to-face meetings will in time return, there is ample evidence that they will function differently in the future than they have done so far.

– In developing the strategy for the KRAKÓW NETWORK Protocol, we discussed the four leading themes identified at the 59th ICCA Congress: involvement, technology, risk, and business. When combined, they encompass the key opportunities and challenges across the event industry ecosystem in an increasingly uncertain future. For event professionals and their business partners, all these themes should be considered as parts of an integrated whole, says Krzysztof Paradowski, CEO and Managing Director of CMA – Concept Music Art.



The future of the events industry is not about the debate over face-to-face meetings or hybrid events. It is about continuing to build and strengthen strong business networks and optimising their operation to support industry transformation and activity that drives economic and social progress, regardless of the formats and channels in which it takes place.

– With the ICCA Protocol as a model, we sought to find the best methods for further effective cooperation and, benefitting from the potential of the KRAKÓW NETWORK project, to jointly adopt the rules governing the local MICE industry which should be implemented by us as its representatives. I do believe that the document we have managed to create can be a starting point for adapting to completely new realities and taking advantage of the change, as commented by Anna Wodziańska, event manager at Stara Zajezdnia Kraków by DeSilva.

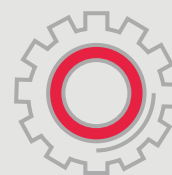


The implementation is intended to be a transition from an idea to practice. The pandemic has brought about new risks that need to be shared and converted into a new model of cooperation, while being documented in contracts and price lists. To ensure that this is not a fiction but a practical benefit based on business, consultation, negotiation and compromise seem indispensable in order for a new framework to be established.

– Our strategic goal is to strengthen the role of Kraków as a European metropolis and the city's position as a leader when it comes to safe events. The most appropriate way to develop the meetings industry in the region is to organise huge and important events of an international character. Tourism, especially tourism focused on business and cultural activities, has a chance for further dynamic development, whether on a global, European or Polish scale, as Agnieszka Faracik-Leśniak, managing partner of DMC Poland, points out.



Guidelines developed during B2B negotiations
conducted during the meetings of KRAKÓW NETWORK members
in January-March 2021 are the recommendations on key issues



JOINT RISK MANAGEMENT

**RISKS SHOULD BE
SHARED BETWEEN
SUPPLIERS AND
CUSTOMERS**

**TRANSPARENT
AND FLEXIBLE
NEGOTIATING
CONDITIONS HELP
OBTAIN VIABLE
SOLUTIONS**

**COMPREHENSIVE
'HEALTH & SAFETY'
PROTOCOLS
ARE TO OPERATE
ALSO AFTER
THE PANDEMIC**

– As representatives of the local market, we strive to safeguard all stakeholders and minimise risk by declaring respect for jointly developed and accepted principles. We know that risk must be shared between representatives of PCOs, DMCs, hotels, restaurants, venues or event agencies. The agreement concluded in the form of a protocol is a step towards a systemic change in the way business partners, customers and suppliers cooperate, which will allow to ensure satisfactory and effective conditions of cooperation, says Anna Jędrocha, CEO of Symposium Cracoviense and Intercrac.



SAFETY

KRAKÓW NETWORK members last year developed and adopted a **set of guidelines and good practices** for the organisation of post-pandemic events, consulted with the representatives of the Meetings and Events Industry Council (the then-TUgether Industry Crisis Staff), health and safety specialists and representatives of the medical and scientific industries with the recommendation of the City of Kraków.



– Transparent sanitation procedures are essential for everyone today. A clear yet detailed cleaning and disinfection etiquette developed by the Radisson Hotel Group in cooperation with SGS, the international company is a guarantee of the highest standards of hygiene and safety for our guests. It is thoroughly verified every year during a comprehensive local audit. I have no doubt that the principles set out in the **Radisson Safety Protocol** ensure the maximum safety and comfort of hotel guests and our employees, stresses Magdalena Młynarczyk, Sales and Marketing Director at Radisson Blu Hotel Kraków and Park Inn by Radisson Kraków.



Last year, over 1,500 venues joined the Polish Tourism Organisation's "Hygienically Safe Facility" programme and were awarded the "Safe MICE Facility" certificate, which aims to provide business tourists, parties commissioning meetings and events and professional congress organisers with access to information on venues adapted to provide services in accordance with the guidelines of the Chief Sanitary Inspectorate.

– We realise that the safety of tourists, business guests and venue employees is of paramount importance, which is why we have developed, together with the industry, two self-certification programmes. We are aware that trust is fundamental, both in life and in the business of tourism and meetings industry. We invariably invite you to register at bezpiecznyobiekt.pot.gov.pl, adds Rafał Szlachta, President of the Polish Tourist Organisation.



The interpretation area is also worth highlighting, which in the case of remote simultaneous interpretation guarantees the safety of participants since an interpreter works from a location outside the venue or in a full sanitary regime, as well as the possibility to receive the content on one's own devices in the case of simultaneous interpretation via a platform, with no additional equipment required.

FORCE MAJEURE

The discussion on the definition of 'force majeure' arose from the need to have the legal provisions and their interpretation standardised. When concluding contracts between parties and determining possible reasons for the withdrawal from a contract, establishing an identical understanding of this issue is of key importance.

It has been mutually agreed that neither Party shall be held liable to the other Party in the event of:

- force majeure understood as any external event that could not have been prevented at the time of concluding the contract, in particular: natural disasters, epidemics, state of emergency, martial law, new legal acts or binding administrative decisions preventing the execution of the agreement;
- circumstances related to the occurrence of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, making performance of the subject of the contract impossible, in particular restrictions issued or maintained by state authorities connected with preventing, counteracting or combating contagious diseases affecting the performance of the subject of the contract.

NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS

The cost of renting the conference room should be flexible depending on the number of participants. The favoured solution is a conference package and the possibility of changing the room to a smaller one or adjusting it to the number of participants on the service provider's side. The number of participants is particularly important in the case of catering services, therefore changes to the scope of the contract should be agreed by the contracting parties.

Proposed deadlines for confirmation of the number of participants for catering services:

- 30 days before the event – preliminary determination of the number of participants,
- 7 days before the event – specifying the actual number of participants with the option of increasing or decreasing it by up to 15% 48 hours before the event.

Confirmation of rental of additional rooms and audiovisual equipment:

- 30 days before the event – preliminary determination of the number of participants,
- 7 days before the event – indication of the real number of participants.

COST-FREE CANCELLATION

The need to develop good business practices for hotel reservations, including reliable information about the event, no double booking in hotels, limiting the practice of hotel room blocks.

Proposed dates for cancellation of room rental and catering services at no cost, depending on formal possibilities, availability and date of the event:

- up to 30 participants – 14 days before the event,
- up to 50 participants – 14-30 days before the event,
- up to 100 participants – 21-60 days before the event,
- up to 250 participants – 30-90 days before the event,
- up to 500 participants – 90-120 days before the event,
- from 500 participants – 120-150 days before the event,

provided that:

- PCO will cancel the booking or order immediately after receiving the decision from the target customer,
- in low season there is a possibility of individual negotiation of conditions,
- local organisers can count on preferential terms of cooperation with suppliers,

- reduction in the number of rented rooms is possible within the above specified deadlines of no-cost cancellations,
- reduction in the number of participants for catering orders is possible up to 7 days before the event, with the option to increase or decrease up to 25% 48 hours before the event.

Suggested no-cost cancellation deadlines for catering services at the venue:

- up to 250 participants – 30-90 days before the event,
- from 250 participants – 45 days before the event,

with the proviso that for hybrid and online events a no-cost cancellation period of 14 days prior to the event applies.

From the perspective of event agencies, the deposit and cancellation policy should remain individually tailored to particular service providers.

CHANGE OF ORDER

The estimated number of participants in relation to the contract for catering services should be specified in the formal confirmation of implementation or included in the contract.

Proposal of deadlines for updating the number of participants in relation to the contract for catering services:

- 30 days before the event,
- 14 days before the event with the option to cancel 10-25% or increase the order,
- 7 days before the event with the option to increase the order 24 hours before the event.

Proposed deadlines for updating the number of participants in relation to ordering of catering services during hybrid and online events:

- 30 days before the event,
- 14 days before the event with the option to cancel 10-25% or increase the order,
- 10 days before the event with an option to increase the order 4 days before the event.

Proposed dates for updating the number of participants regarding the ordering of restaurant catering services:

- 30 days before the event,

- 5 days before the event with the option to cancel 25% or increase order,
- 5 days before the event with the option to increase your order 24 hours before the event.

PAYMENT DATES

Suggested payment dates for room rental and catering services:

- 60-30 days before the event – 25-50%,
- 14-7 days before the event – 30-50%,
- 7 days after the event – 25% or full remainder.

Suggested payment dates for catering services at events, including hybrid and online:

- 14 days before the event – a down payment of 20-40%,
- 7-14 days after the event – the remainder of the payment.

Suggested payment dates for restaurant catering services:

- 7 days before the event – 0-30%,
- 7-14 days after the event – the remainder of the payment.

FINANCES

The PCO is responsible for the income and cost balance. Preparing several budget options for different numbers of participants is absolutely indispensable in order to be able to reduce costs when the number of participants turns out to be lower than expected. A recommended solution is a consortium for the event, represented by PCO, DMC, the venue, hotels, and other suppliers.

In the recommended option, the budget for the event is prepared at minimum cost. Cancellations and reductions entail no financial penalties, and the profit achieved during the execution of the order as well as any possible losses are proportionally distributed.

INSURANCE FOR PARTICIPANTS

Offering an insurance policy in case of cancellation seems to be a good solution. Such a product may encourage participants to register for the event in advance, guaranteeing that in random cases they will receive a refund of the costs incurred. At the same time, the organiser secures a more stable financial situation.

As part of the cancellation protection, the insurer should reimburse funds incurred for:

- participation in the conference: participation fee including social programme,
- transfer services,
- accommodation services.

Documented evidence of the reason for cancellation honoured by the insurer are:

- accident of the insured or the accompanying person,
- sudden illness of the insured or the accompanying person, including SARS-CoV-2,
- death of the insured or of the accompanying person,
- theft of documents necessary for the travel of the insured or the accompanying person,
- complications related to the pregnancy of the insured or the accompanying person.

TENDERS

In order to reduce costs and losses incurred, it is extremely important to build relationships in a comfortable and predictable environment, aimed at sharing risk in order to retain and win clients. In considering the terms of cancellation by the contracting authorities, including its proper formal procedure and timing, we finally focussed on how to price the work performed, taking into account the rejection fee in all tenders.

– In the course of the work of KRAKÓW NETWORK event group a need for precisely indicated costs of event pre-production has been identified. As early as at the cost estimate stage, the client should be aware which costs are incurred at the stage of event preparation. With the costs of agency work and external services explicitly stated, we will be able to share the financial risk as partners do, applying clearly defined rules, says Anna Leszczyńska, managing partner and creative director of Hula Events agency.



We have distinguished:

- external factors – the cancellation policy, determination of costs incurred and financial conditions of entities such as: hotels, venues, catering, event and conference technology, transport, attractions, infrastructure: set, fair buildings, event and catering equipment;
- internal factors – cancellation policy of the agency, determination of costs incurred and financial conditions within the scope of services realised internally by agencies, PCO, DMC: commission, costs of preparing offers, labour costs of team members, logistics.

INNOVATIVE BUSINESS MODELS

**DETERMINATION
OF NECESSARY
CHANGES IN
SPECIFIC AREAS
OF BUSINESS
COOPERATION**

**PUBLIC SECTOR
SUPPORT
BASED ON
'LEGACY IMPACT'**

INCREASING FULL-YEAR REVENUES THROUGH

- **E-COMMERCE**
- **DELIVERING VALUE TO
DIFFERENT CUSTOMER
SEGMENTS**
- **DIVERSIFYING MARKETS AND
DEVELOPING ADDITIONAL
SOURCES OF REVENUE**

CUSTOMISATION – FORMAL AND INFORMAL CONSORTIA

In order to create an offer tailored to the individual needs and expectations of our clients and business partners, we establish formal and informal consortia based on the widest possible cooperation between suppliers from our city and region. Based on the dynamic packaging method, we will provide participants of events in Kraków with current promotions for accommodation, transfers, tours, local attractions, concerts, performances, museum tickets or public transport tickets.

Every congress or event participant will be able to select and purchase services and products from our local suppliers at attractive prices. Thanks to this offer you will be able to plan and execute a personalised stay in Kraków, meet exceptional people, taste local delicacies, relax during an evening concert or learn about the history of the city and its inhabitants.

In 2020, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the Earth Day. The COVID-19 pandemic is a sign for us to rebuild the meetings industry and create a 'New Tomorrow' according to the principles of sustainable development, under the slogans:

"Build Back Better – legacy – inclusivity – sustainability – relationship – zero waste".



HERITAGE – A POSITIVE IMPACT

Legacy or positive impact in the meetings industry are applied to the mission of the organisation responsible for the event and the vision of the destination where it is to be organised. 'Impact' is not perceived by us solely in terms of the economic impact of an event, but more broadly: as the effects of organising an event or meeting which changes the world and the destination where the project takes place, transforming the attitudes of decision-makers, and inspiring local communities in almost every area of human activity.

The term legacy literally denotes 'a remnant of past events', thus the legacy that remains in a city, but also the mark left by the venue on the city itself. It is therefore an interaction between the event and the city.

In Kraków a few years ago we began to think of congresses in terms of 'heritage'. We assumed that they need not be an episode in the life of the city, having the potential to influence the local community. This awareness has also changed the understanding of the congress itself: an event confined to a group of specialists has become potentially 'open to the city', providing benefits for a variety of its users. This new perspective helps us to explain why events are or can be so significant for the city and why they are worth acquiring. A perfect example is **Congress Avenue**.



LEGACY IMPACT

Public sector support is to be based on increasing the legacy impact, i.e., the mutual influence of the congress and the city. As the partners in designing the impact of the event, we therefore recognise: an organiser together with a local organising committee, the industry association, and representatives of the scientific community as well as scientific and research committees, congress ambassadors, business representatives, sponsors, patrons, the local community, students, residents, and finally representatives of politics and local government.

– The Kraków Convention Bureau, as a public sector entity and partner of the KRAKÓW NETWORK, has been implementing this demand for several years, inspiring organisers to integrate events into the fabric of the city and linking support for the congress to the benefits it can bring to the local community. We value the benefits of organising conferences in Kraków for city residents, giving the opportunity to take a creative approach to this issue, depending each time on the theme of the event and the partners involved, as Małgorzata Przygórska-Skowron, manager of the Kraków Convention Bureau emphasises.



The potential benefits that are associated with being a congress host, namely heritage areas, include:

- access to the latest knowledge and exchange of experiences,
- organisation of open thematic sessions and workshops for the local community,
- cooperation between representatives of business and science,
- opening new fields of study, seeking scientific solutions to contemporary problems,
- improvement of medical services and health care, promotion of preventive health care,
- free examinations for residents in designated, often mobile facilities,
- increased social and ecological awareness,
- application of pro-environmental solutions, implementation of closed-cycle economy principles, engaging business partners in CSR actions,
- business partnerships established,
- increased chances of attracting investors to the city.

CASE STUDIES

- World Congress of the Organisation of World Heritage Cities OWHC 2019:
 - the position of Plenipotentiary for Culture of the Mayor of the City was created,
 - the Heritage Roundtables were inaugurated,
 - the Mayor of the City of Kraków was honoured with the title of OWHC President,
 - Social Media #KrakowHeritage campaign was launched.
- International conference of the MPI association: European Meetings and Events Conference – EMEC 2015:
 - a CSR campaign was carried out to equip the Children's Home in Kraków.
- European GP Congress WONCA Europe 2018:
 - a run around the Planty was organised to promote a healthy lifestyle.
- International Congress of the Polish Resuscitation Council 2013:
 - defibrillators were installed in the city space,
 - training sessions on the use of defibrillators were conducted.

- National and international congresses:
 - numerous open sessions were organised for residents and students,
 - environmental and technological awareness was raised.

INCLUSIVITY

Mental or motor disabilities can effectively impede access to the range of events on offer. Accessibility does not only mean architectural facilities for wheelchair users. The problem of accessibility starts with the first information about an event.

Events should be organised in an inclusive manner, i.e., excluding no one on any basis, including ethnicity, skin colour, age, gender, disability, sexual orientation or religion. The concept of inclusivity should be considered in a broader context, bearing in mind, inter alia, people with special diets resulting from health needs as well as worldviews.

During stationary events it is necessary to take into account the needs of people with movement disabilities, including temporary disabilities, pregnant women, elderly people, including the accessibility of the venue in terms of architecture and strategic areas such as: ramps, parking, entrances to a building, seats in the audience, seats on stage, and toilets. People with hearing impairments will appreciate the provision of interpretation for the deaf, and an induction loop for people with impaired hearing, while people with visual impairments will appreciate a spoken description of the space, access to the car park and the nearest public transport stops, and the provision of assistance.

We should design with universality in mind and prevent digital exclusion; therefore, we recommend adjusting websites to the needs of deaf and visually impaired persons by providing Polish and English subtitles, audio description or an introduction with a description of the multimedia material, taking into account the visual aspect and setting appropriate colour contrast between the background and text, as well as making it possible to choose the font size.

SUSTAINABILITY

Taking care of the sustainability of the destination is also of utmost importance. The meetings industry should develop in a responsible manner, and this responsibility should be equally shared between organisers and hosts. Sustainability is understood as caring for the environment, the immediate surroundings, openness and tolerance. The Zero Waste concept is currently being developed, among others, through the organisation of the so-called green meeting.

According to the World Tourism Organisation, sustainable tourism should make optimal use of natural resources, respect the socio-cultural distinctiveness of the reception areas and provide economic and social benefits to all entities involved in its development. It is a continuous process, requiring monitoring of effects.

In line with the Sustainable Tourism Policy of Kraków for 2021-2028, we wish to introduce sustainable solutions that maintain harmony in the city. Tourism permeating various spheres of our city is extremely important in the process of social participation and building a network of partnerships. The KRAKÓW NETWORK project creates a platform for cooperation, experience sharing, and competence development for group members, but also opens up to city residents, listening carefully to their needs and encouraging them to participate in pro-social activities.

The organisation and implementation of events should take place with concern for the environment, especially by reducing energy and paper consumption, as well as through waste segregation and abandoning the use of disposable plastic packaging, in accordance with the directional resolution of the Kraków City Council of 2019 regarding the implementation of the “**Kraków without plastic**” campaign.

Ecological catering in biodegradable packaging, actions against food waste such as foodsharing or Food Bankas well as the concepts of slow life & work-life balance can be successfully included in the event plan. The icing on the cake are **corporate social responsibility actions** carried out by co-workers and business partners, charity actions involving event participants, and social projects with the participation of the local community and out-of-town guests.

COMMITMENT AND VALUE FOR PARTICIPANTS

- the needs of the organisation’s members and event participants are a top priority,
- face-to-face events are not the only channel to engage participants and generate revenue,
- new data-driven tools are needed to optimise online learning and measure participant engagement,
- attention should be paid to the three main areas of interest for younger generations: diversity, sustainability and technology.

Like other destinations, Kraków is also building its image around selected specialisations, which are: new technologies; IT; business and commercial activity; ecology; food production; medicine; and the pharmaceutical industry. We believe that cities and regions which follow the smart philosophy will naturally attract those congresses and conferences, whose thematic scope will be coherent with the development areas defined in their strategic documents outlining their

development prospects. Conference and congress events will provide them with an opportunity to network with the business community and with scientific and non-governmental organisations, and as for the academic centres themselves, they should be an opportunity to internationalise through involvement in international cooperation networks.

MAINTAINING PARTICIPANTS' ATTENTION

Semi-finished products delivered to the client before an online cooking lesson, or perhaps keeping in touch through more creative forms of meetings such as a virtual coffee break during which a courier will deliver a hot drink and cake to the event attendee?

In our deliberations, we have obviously addressed the issue of effective online meeting design in order to meet participants' expectations, retain their attention and stimulate their activity. Here we recognise the considerable role of experts in designing attractive virtual experiences based on two-way communication. Owing to live chats, quizzes, surveys or applications designed for real-time conversations between attendees of a virtual event, and above all interactive presentations, our events trigger positive emotions and interactions, facilitating integration in a virtual environment.

Attendee-experience management solutions are particularly desirable. Even before the start of an event, we can provide participants with some value, for example in the form of the co-creation of its programme. And after the event we give participants access to VOD recordings, as in the case of the new **PLAY KRAKÓW** platform – the first Polish municipal VOD platform operated by KBF – and provide the organisers with reports full of reliable data.



FROM AUDIENCE TO ACTIVE PARTICIPANTS

Remote interpreting helps to enlarge the group of attendees by welcoming people who do not speak foreign languages.

Providing remote simultaneous interpreting (RSI) in the form of additional functionality for the digital platform, a platform overlay or other interpretation-related hub solutions:

- increases engagement, ensuring:
 - full and better understanding of the content, which improves audience concentration and encourages participants to take notes, ask questions during Q&A sessions, comment and join the discussion,
 - more benefits for sponsors and partners – proper understanding of the content means more attentive listening and remembering, e.g., features and functionalities of products or services,

- improves the experience of participants in terms of:
 - accessibility of content,
 - convenience through content in their own language or in a more familiar language,
 - the freedom to speak in their own or a better-known language,
 - the possibility of providing services in rare languages: a larger audience of participants and speakers,
- increases the reach of the event and the organiser's revenues by adding interpretation or widening the range of languages available for interpretation.

DIGITISATION AND HYBRID EVENTS

- destinations and venues are evolving as global platforms for knowledge exchange,
- the purpose of hybrid events is to increase reach and income while sustaining attendance at face-to-face meetings,
- there is a need to engage new human resources with digital skills,
- organisations need to implement a digital organisational culture in order to be able to balance their finances in the future.

The move from onsite to online is a necessity due not only to legal restrictions on audience size, but also to technological progress. This is the future of the meetings industry, which poses a challenge for venue operators, who are forced to immediately change their current strategy. The greatest benefit in this situation, however, is the opportunity to reach a much wider audience with their offer by broadcasting their content.

In the context of increasing coverage with all the restrictions imposed, a willingness on the part of venues to collaborate in order to deliver local hub events is of crucial importance.

The Declaration of Willingness to Cooperate concluded in 2018 by International Exhibition and Convention Centre EXPO Kraków, ICE Kraków Congress Centre and TAURON Arena Kraków might serve as inspiration.

– As part of the quarterly KRAKÓW NETWORK meetings, we have planned further activities consisting in developing agreed methods and strategies for the conversion of online meetings into hybrid meetings, as well as determining standards for 'multi-location' events. This will allow the organisation of meetings in several places simultaneously for a small group of people while maintaining the required social distance, informs Prof. Krzysztof Borodako from Kraków University of Economics.



Virtual and hybrid event delivery platforms and recording studios with professional audiovisual equipment enhanced with AR and VR provide high quality performance at moderate prices.

– When searching for optimal solutions, it is worth verifying novelties. The use of innovative, dedicated platforms for remote interpreting which are compatible with other systems allows for real-time simultaneous interpreting into more than one language, recording of the interpreter's path and the possibility of later matching the interpretation to the content, says Agnieszka Nowińska, President of the Polish Association of Conference Interpreters (PSTK).



POST-COVID INNOVATIONS

As part of the meetings of the Kraków Future Lab KRAKÓW NETWORK group – which is a platform for establishing contacts, exchanging experiences and cooperation between the local start-up community and the meetings industry – we have attempted to define new standards and values for cooperation in order to promote Kraków as a creative city in terms of innovations and new technologies.

– Technological solutions that we have learnt about can help control the way the virus spreads, having the potential to implement, during events, a platform to streamline event management, venue booking, online meetings or teambuilding. Kraków's startup scene is already a creative and technological showcase for the city. Meetings industry professionals should keep track of new services and products offered by local inventors, use them and promote globally, as Julien Hallier, CEO of Destination Poland points out.



In 2021, we will continue to discuss the implementation of new technological solutions in the MICE market, the involvement of startups in the development of post-covid innovations for the wider meetings industry and the COVID-19 pandemic as an innovation accelerator for meetings industry operators.

Multifunctional tools should work best. For instance, self-registration kiosks make it possible for event participants to register and print their ID tags on their own, streamline the registration process and eliminate physical contact with staff; they can also serve as carriers of information or promotional materials, as well as browsers for e-posters.

PROSPECTS FOR STARTUPS

In response to the urgent need to implement solutions to improve the sanitary and epidemiological safety of events, over a hundred exhibitors presented their services at the new **ANTYCOVID EXPO** Fair organised by Targi w Krakowie. The quick response to the unexpected situation made it possible to present a wide range of decontamination, medical and event security products.



In the report “**Kraków is ready! A strategy for a pandemic-proof city**”, we read about the increased demand for technologies that prove useful in a pandemic crisis and the rapid change in strategies and product lines of start-ups to address completely new needs. These range from med-tech solutions, such as telemedicine wristbands, to those related to online marketing and sales support. For example, smart city furniture manufacturer **Seedia** currently offers touchless disinfectant dispensers.



– New products and services have been created at a pace that is unattainable for many experienced companies, and this allows our startups to take part in competitions that until recently were beyond their reach. For an efficient company a dynamic, crisis-ridden market also means the possibility of launching express pilot sales and gaining credibility faster than slower companies can, emphasises Wojciech Przybylski, President of the Kraków Technology Park.



Meetlify Project, an app designed to detect proximity between users or groups, is also an interesting example of innovation in the industry. The Kraków-based startup, which has been operating since 2019 in the face of a pandemic outbreak and a freeze of the MICE market, presented a technology that enables safe participation in an event, supports social distance between users and makes it easier for them to find other users or venues, and offers support in managing the sanitary security of an event, enabling real-time surveillance of user movement and venue occupancy, as well as momentary and historical event statistics and analytics. All this by detecting the proximity between users based solely on the smartphones they are using, regardless of the operating system installed on them.



HYBRID EVENTS

Within a few months after the first restrictions on the organisation of events were introduced, members of the KRAKÓW NETWORK provided several original platforms and venues adapted for online events. There are currently over a dozen recording studios in Kraków, including those using large screens and extended reality (VR, AR, MR and XR).

These facilities also provide the opportunity to host events with audiences of up to several hundred people, while adhering to the applicable safety and sanitary regime. As part of our initiative, partner entities have the ability to stream each other's images, so that multiple studio spaces can support a single event, and thus the number of people attending a hybrid event can increase to several thousand.

Signatories of the KRAKÓW NETWORK protocol responsible for the implementation of online events guarantee full support at the solution selection stage, as well as full transparency at the pricing stage and flexibility in the offer preparation process.

According to data obtained by the Kraków Convention Bureau, in 2020 in Kraków we hosted:

- hybrid events total: 147, of which 120 are domestic and 27 are foreign;
- virtual events total: 960, of which 713 are domestic and 247 are foreign;
- stationary events (over 10 people) total: 812, of which 571 are domestic and 241 are foreign.

So far, hybrid events have been dominated by medical, corporate client, catering, beauty and educational conferences.

The members of KRAKÓW NETWORK joined forces to set up a recording studio for hybrid events located in the ICE Kraków Congress Centre and operated by CMA – Concept Music Art company. Applying the latest technological solutions, including VR & AR, and experience in professional editing and visualisation of recordings, a space was created that combines prestige, elegance, and advanced technological capabilities for streaming a particular event, maximising the possibility of reaching the largest possible audience through an educational and entertaining online space.

In turn, thanks to the IT solutions, Fortinet technology and fibre-optic connections applied at the construction stage, it is possible to organise almost any hybrid or online event at EXPO Kraków due to the variety of rooms available, from high-ceilinged halls allowing the establishment of the largest television studio in the region, to quite small meeting rooms that make it possible to design a television studio set according to the needs and the budget available to the client.

PROFESSIONAL PLATFORMS

Online platforms can be prepared in any language, including simultaneous interpretation and sign language interpreters, guaranteeing state-of-the-art technical solutions and support for 4K resolution, 360 transmission or VR solutions. They offer full content management and depending on requirements, the possibility to create virtual event zones, live stages, expo zones and partner zones. Their full support for networking solutions and direct communication between users as well as their virtual integration ensure the highest level of security confirmed by the necessary certificates. They can also be prepared in accordance with the current guidelines for equal opportunities and non-discrimination WCAG 2.1.

The development of platforms focuses on events where knowledge transfer, communication and networking are of key importance, i.e., congresses, conferences, presentations and trade fairs. Thanks to the platform and an experienced team, organisers can safely and effectively conduct an event online, regardless of whether it is fully virtual or hybrid.



Faced with the new challenges of organising an event for audiences with completely different needs – those present at the venue and connecting remotely, and also organising two separate events that share a single content – new apps and platforms are emerging. We discussed a selection of proposals to explore their possibilities. Among these platforms are: Meetings Application, EventsOnline.pl, freexon.pl and E-learning Platform.

Professional hybrid event platforms and applications provide:

- a wide range of innovative features designed to attract attention and engage participants,
- the ability to create your own domain and branding,
- responsiveness on mobile devices,
- availability in Polish and English language versions,
- no need to install,
- varied registration systems,
- live video or VOD broadcast from multiple locations,
- live chat, surveys, Q&A option,
- event agenda with speaker biographies and abstracts,
- possibility to add additional subpages,
- VOD and webinars with downloads and active hyperlinks,
- expo areas with virtual stands and exhibitions,
- sub-sites with partners, sponsors, speakers, with any content configuration,
- permissions and user groups with differentiated access to specific rooms and functions,
- networking and interactions, business matching – one-on-one appointments,
- sales support tools,
- monitoring of effects – generation of reports on user activity,
- advice on needs analysis, selection of appropriate solutions,
- support for simultaneous interpretation,
- supporting technical team,
- security confirmed by independent auditing companies,
- full compliance with GDPR rules.

Today, destinations and venues are evolving as global platforms for knowledge exchange.

In business tourism, the advantage of a particular location is the complementary offer that can be provided by professionals from all sectors of the MICE market who are well acquainted with each other's possibilities and cooperate with each other.

This is exactly how the representatives of entities associated in the **KRAKÓW NETWORK** project work.

The KRAKÓW NETWORK Protocol

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Honorary patronage:



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Signatory members to KRAKÓW NETWORK Protocol:



#KrakowNetworkProtocol
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krakownetwork.pl

Creators of **KRAKÓW NETWORK** Protocol:

Izabela Błaszczyk – KBF, ICE Kraków Congress Centre, supervision of project implementation

Paula Fanderowska – ICE Kraków Congress Centre, initiator and project leader

Weronika Wirtel – ICE Kraków Congress Centre, project author and coordinator

Agnieszka Faracik-Leśniak – DMC Poland, DMC group leader

Julien Hallier – Destination Poland, Kraków Future Lab group leader

Anna Jędrocha – Symposium Cracoviense, PCO group leader

Magdalena Młynarczyk – Radisson Blu Hotel Krakow & Park Inn by Radisson Krakow, hotel group leader

Krzysztof Paradowski – CMA, event group leader

Anna Wodziańska – Stara Zajeżdźnia Kraków by DeSilva, catering group leader

Michał Zalewski – KBF, PR group leader

Marcin Andrukowicz – Meeting Art

Piotr Baran – Puro Hotel

Paweł Bączek – JAN-POL DMC Poland

Prof. dr hab. Jadwiga Berbeka – Kraków University of Economics

Prof. dr hab. Krzysztof Borodako – Kraków University of Economics

Katarzyna Chmura – Sheraton Grand Kraków

Joanna Chwastek-Pluta – Mercure Kraków Fabryczna City & Conference Center

Marcin Cieślowski – Masters Catering

Jacek Florek – KBF

Paulina Garczarczyk – Q Hotel

Anna Gasińska – Wawel Queen Hotel

Agnieszka Grzesiak – JORDAN Congress Bureau

Elżbieta Jagłowska – Conference Section JU Centre for Communications and Marketing

Prof. dr hab. Marian Jaskuła – Jagiellonian University

Mateusz Jaworski – eventX

Krzysztof Jędrocha – Wyspiański Hotel

Jarosław Kruk – MICEART DMC

Natalia Kulec-Greń – Kraków Convention Bureau

Anna Leszczyńska – Hula Events

Katarzyna Marciszyn – Targi w Krakowie, EXPO Kraków

Monika Nahirny – Małopolska Tourist Organisation

Agnieszka Nowińska – Polish Association of Conference Interpreters PSTK

Izabela Osiadły – KBF

Joanna Ostrowska – Hotel Kossak

Tomasz Piórkowski – Vienna House Andel's Cracow

Izabela Postolska – Kossak Hotel

Małgorzata Przygórska-Skowron – Kraków Convention Bureau

Prof. dr hab. Tomasz Rachwał – Pedagogical University of Kraków

Katarzyna Rokicka – Mazurkas Congress Management

Justyna Skalska – KBF

Dorota Smagur – Hilton Garden Inn Krakow

Anna Stefańczyk – RT Hotels SA

Paula Święch-Wałaszek – KBF

Ewa Woch – Targi w Krakowie, EXPO Kraków

Piotr Wilczek – Grupa A05

Maciej Wójcik – TARIFA Corporate events

Barbara Zając – KBF

Signatory Members to KRAKÓW NETWORK Protocol:

Ad Innovations Agnieszka Dąbrowska
Arena Kraków S.A.
Akademia Górniczo-Hutnicza im. Stanisława Staszica w Krakowie
Akademia Wychowania Fizycznego im. Bronisława Czecha w Krakowie
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Estimote Polska
event-factory s.c K. Koper, S. Godula
EventX sp. z o.o.
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Instytut Kultury Willa Decjusza
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Piloci Studio sp. z o.o.
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PIX Agency Jakub Żak

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Politechnika Krakowska im. Tadeusza Kościuszki
Polska Organizacja Turystyczna
Polskie Stowarzyszenie Tłumaczy Konferencyjnych
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grupa Likus Hotele i Restauracje
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Urząd Marszałkowski Województwa Małopolskiego
Urząd Miasta Krakowa
Visualsupport Michał Płócienniak
F.H.U Bożena Czynciel
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