

Open Kraków — summing up five years of the programme

2021-11-22

The coat of arms of the Royal Capital City of Kraków features a brick wall with three towers and a gate with open golden gate - this is how the city welcomes its guests and future residents. From its inception, Kraków has been open to migrants, some of whom decided to continue their life there and take part in the city's development. This was the case centuries ago, this is the case now.

“Multiculturalism has been the foundation of the identity of historic Kraków and we want it to stay that way even in modern times. We are glad to see foreigners, who choose our city as their new place to live, study, work or find safe asylum here. That is why we have been running the “Open Kraków” programme since 2016, the aim of which is nothing else but to create conditions and foster an atmosphere that will enable newcomers to feel a part of their new community,” said Jacek Majchrowski, Mayor of the City of Kraków, during this year’s “Kraków Ambassador of Multiculturalism” award ceremony.

Useful guides

Five years have passed since 14 September 2016, when the Kraków City Council adopted the “Open Kraków” programme to implement and enforce the policy of openness to representatives of national and ethnic minorities and foreigners. According to estimates, about 18,000 foreigners lived in the city at that time. In 2020, there were more than 41,000 registered foreigners with an address in Kraków!

With them in mind, in September this year we have prepared the *Guide for Foreigners Living in Kraków* in four language versions, with the aim of helping them live in our city. As part of the “Open Kraków” programme, we have developed many other guides and brochures for our international communities, concerning local initiatives and the civic budget, which are useful for our international residents, who want to be socially active, which is possible thanks to the conditions created by the city. However, due to the lack of adequate language and communication skills, this activity is less likely to succeed, which is why the city also offers Polish language courses for foreigners.

Foreigners at school

The recent *Education in Kraków - information for foreigners* guide shows that the City pays particular attention to this area. The number of international children in Kraków’s schools and kindergartens has been growing for several years now – according to the data from February, there are 3,081 of them, with the largest group coming from Ukraine. They are supported on a daily basis by qualified teachers and intercultural assistants who can foster inclusion thanks to “Open Kraków”.

Making official matters easier

One of the goals of “Open Kraków” is to make sure that handling official matters is more friendly to our international communities, including national and ethnic minorities, as well as to ensure equal access to services and benefits. This is often achieved through intensive cooperation with NGOs.



**Magiczny
Kraków**

The Foreigners Information Point has been operating in Kraków since 2018, and currently works within the framework of the Multicultural Centre launched this year. What is more, foreigners who planned to set up and run their own businesses could take advantage of the offering of the Entrepreneurship Support Centre for Foreigners. Now, at the Entrepreneur Service Point (Wielicka 28 a, 3rd floor) they can meet an entrepreneurship consultant, who can give them relevant information in Ukrainian, Russian and English directly at the service point or via phone: 12 616-56-07; available Monday to Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. To date, more than 200 foreign entrepreneurs have benefited from this support.

More help can be found on the “Open Kraków” portal (www.otwarty.krakow.pl), which hosts a variety of information about the programme, interesting events, including those organised by and for foreigners, as well as the most important official procedures translated into English, Russian and Ukrainian. It is worth mentioning that “Open Kraków” is also actively present in social media.

About us - with us

This aspect is particularly important – the activities for the international community conducted by the City are consulted with its representatives. In 2017, Kraków established the Interdisciplinary Team for cooperation on the implementation of the Open Kraków Programme, which currently has 33 members – representatives of multicultural organisations, expats, Kraków universities and multiculturalism advocates.

What is more, there is no shortage of people who want to see Kraków becoming a more open and friendly city. The city has been distinguishing such people by naming them “Kraków Ambassadors of Multiculturalism” since 2018. In 2019, the following people and organisations received distinctions for their activities for intercultural dialogue: Olha Menko, Urszula Majcher-Legawiec, INTERKULTURALNI PL Association, Diversity Hub Foundation. In 2020, the title went to Anna Wilczyńska, David McGirr, Chór w Kontakcie, Collaborate, Krakow!. In 2021, the ranks of Ambassadors were joined by Joanna Antonik, Ziyad Raoof, Federacja Znaki Równości, „Polistrefa” Foundation for Diversity.

“Open Kraków” is also all about numerous scientific, business, social, cultural and entertainment events within the city space, with particular emphasis on the Multicultural Festival, which has been held for many years to date. We invite you to participate in them and to contact “Open Kraków”.

Kraków City Hall

Department of Social Policy and Health

Office for Multiculturalism, Social Projects and Equality Policies

Dekerta 24, 30-703 Kraków

Phone: 12 616-78-18, 12 616-78-23

e-mail: otwarty@um.krakow.pl