



Kraków helps international residents

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Małopolska - Kraków in particular - is the “promised land” for foreigners, second only to Mazovia. Andrzej Kulig, Deputy Mayor of Kraków for Social and Municipal Policy, talks about Kraków's support for its international communities, and answers the question whether they feel at home in the City of Kings.

Kraków is becoming more and more multicultural. What measures does the City take to make its international residents feel at home in Kraków?

Andrzej Kulig: We are doing a lot. In 2018, we launched the Foreigners Information Point, which now operates within the framework of the Multicultural Centre – an important institution, which is well-known and appreciated by our international community, who takes advantage of various forms of support. The Centre provides general counselling, as well as legal assistance – the visitors can get help with obtaining documents that legalise their stays in Kraków. What is more, they can also get some help with everyday matters, such as appointments with government officials, visits at schools and even shopping.

You've mentioned assistance for foreigners in official matters. How does the City help them in that regard?

AK: They can take advantage of the support offered by the Multicultural Centre, but that is not the only avenue of finding help. The city also launched the www.otwarty.krakow.pl website in Polish, English, Ukrainian and Russian, where international audiences can find the most important administrative procedures published in the Public Information Bulletin, translated into three languages. There, they can find out how to register their address of residence, get registration plates for their car and more. The website is kept up to date and will be expanded with documents and procedures connected to living in Kraków. We plan to translate more procedures and documents that are required to function in our city.

What is the relationship between foreigners and the local populace? Do all these activities help them integrate into their local communities?

AK: In my opinion, this is indeed the case. We are doing our best to help our international community integrate with the local society and make them feel at home. We encourage them, for example, to submit their applications and ideas for projects they think are needed in the city, in the districts where they live, as part of the civic budget. They do not need a PESEL number, only to be a resident of the city. Turns out – this approach works pretty well, as statistics show that more and more foreigners living in Kraków participate in the civic budget.

The Multicultural Festival, which has been organised for several years now, also brings together people of different nationalities, cultures and religions. Of course, we cannot forget about Polish language courses and intercultural communication classes for international audiences. Without language skills, there is no activity or integration. That is why the City runs the “Polish as Second Language” programme, fostering language and communication competences of foreigners, and the interest is pretty high.

The phenomenon of migration concerns Kraków, as well as other large cities in



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Poland and abroad. Does Kraków cooperate with them, learning from their experiences?

AK: Yes. In 2017, during the “Inclusive Cities. Integration = Security” conference, 11 mayors of the cities belonging to the Union of Polish Metropolises, including Mayor Jacek Majchrowski, signed a declaration on cooperation in the field of migration. In 2020, Kraków joined the Intercultural Cities programme, which supports more than 140 cities worldwide. We also exchange experiences, working with others within the framework of the ADMIN4ALL: Supporting Social Inclusion of Vulnerable Migrants in Europe programme. We got in touch with Milan, Naples, Bari and learned about the solutions these cities use to integrate migrants.

Together with the “Czulent” Jewish Association and Voivodeship Police Headquarters in Kraków, we also implemented a project aimed at cooperation and activation of groups at risk of discrimination and social exclusion. We also went on and employed a consultant at the Entrepreneurs Support Point, who offers support in Ukrainian, Russian and English. He has already provided services to over 200 foreign entrepreneurs and carried out business training courses for international students in Kraków. One could say that this is how Kraków is laying the cornerstone of transnational entrepreneurship.