

Situated in the southeast of the country, between the Jura uplands and the Tatra Mountains, on the banks of the Wisla (Vistula) River, Krakow is a vibrant city with great cultural and historical dignity. It is now well established as a major tourist destination, apart from being a thousand-year-old centre of culture, art and science. Poland's former capital was labeled World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1978, thanks to its having one of the best-preserved medieval city centres in Europe. Dozens of churches cover almost every architectural period and are surrounded by monasteries and abbeys. The Rynek Glowny (Main Market Square), laid out in 1257, is one of the largest medieval market squares in Europe - as well as a remarkable set piece fronted by elegant facades. It is dominated by the 16th-century Sukiennice (Cloth Hall), which continues to perform its role as a trading centre with lively market stalls and pavement cafés in and around the building. The surrounding lanes of the Stare Miasto (Old Town) are ringed by the Planty, a leafy, linear park that follows the line of the Old Town walls. The voluminous hulk of Wawel Hill, to the south, is home to Wawel Castle, the seat of Polish kings from the 11th to the early 17th century.

In the nearby Kazimierz, the Jewish culture of the area is being revived, with lively art galleries, Jewish restaurants and regular cultural events. Having largely fallen into decline during World War II, Kazimierz is currently undergoing something of a renaissance.

The city's cultural heritage finds its reflection in Krakow's intellectual achievements - the Jagiellonian University is one of the oldest European universities, as well as the oldest and most prestigious one in Poland. Its most prominent graduates were, among others, Nicolaus Copernicus and Pope John Paul II. In the year 2000 Krakow was justifiably named as one of the nine European Cities of Culture.

Visas

No visas are needed for the EU, USA and Canada citizens. If a visa is necessary, please contact the nearest Polish Embassy or Consulate as soon as possible, since the Conference Secretariat is not in the position to assist in the visa application procedure. If a special invitation is needed to attend the Symposium, please contact the Conference Secretariat.

Weather

Temperatures in Krakow in June may vary from 15 to 30°C. Usually, there is a lot of sunshine at this time of the year, but rain is possible.

Getting around

The Conference Venue and most hotels are located closely to the Old Town, so you won't need buses or trams, unless you will be staying outside the centre. It is worth knowing that a uniform system of transportation has been introduced in the whole area of Krakow. A Fare is paid for a single bus and tram ride, as these are the only means of transportation available, apart from taxis. There are single tickets, one-hour tickets, and daily tickets available.

Transport from the airport:

There is a train service from the Krakow Airport Balice to the Main Train Station in the city centre. Alternatively, you can reach the centre by taxi. The recommended taxi service is 9191 (0048 12 9191), which is available at the front door of the airport, and costs approximately EUR 20. There are also car rental companies operating in Krakow, such as: Avis, Budget, Hertz, Europcar.

International flights and train travel from/to airport Krakow Balice

The International Airport Krakow Balice offers many convenient airline connections with major destinations in Europe and US, such as: Amsterdam, Athens, Barcelona, Belfast, Birmingham, Bologna, Bristol, Brussels, Chicago, Copenhagen, Dortmund, Dublin, Dubrovnik, Edinburgh, Frankfurt, Glasgow, Helsinki, Lille, Liverpool, London, Milan,

Munich, New York, Oslo, Paris, Prague, Rome, Stockholm, Tel Aviv, Torino, Vienna and Warszawa. Further information concerning the timetable as well as the airlines operating at Airport Krakow Balice (among them there are also low-cost airlines) can be found at www.lotnisko-balice.pl/eng/

If you plan to travel by rail, the most useful information is available at www.krakow-info.com/travel.htm, www.pkp.pl. Krakow is one of Poland's main railroad junctions, and its central Krakow Główny station is situated most conveniently in the very city center, close to the Old Town historic district. Every day express trains arrive from Germany (Berlin, Dresden, Frankfurt/M, Frankfurt/O, Leipzig), Austria (Vienna), the Czech Republic (Prague), Hungary (Budapest), Rumania (Bucharest), Slovakia (Bratislava and Kosice), and the Ukraine (Kiev, Lvov and Odessa). There are also express trains to all major cities in Poland, and the shuttle express service to and from capital Warsaw, departing every hour, is particularly convenient (the 300-km trip takes two hours and half or so, no stops in between).

Safety

In general, Krakow is a safe city, and most welcoming to visitors. However, as in all burgeoning cities, it is recommended that you are on your guard against pickpockets in trains, buses and trams, as well as other crowded places, and avoid dimly lit areas and parks at night.

Money

The standard unit of currency of Poland is the zloty. Currency can be exchanged at airports, banks and currency exchange offices (kantory). There are also a large number of bankomats (cash machines) in the streets. Exchange rates on February 01, 2010: 1 GBP = 4,58 PLN, 1 EURO = 4,00 PLN.

In the conference reception and hotels only Polish zlotys or credit cards will be accepted.