Magiczny Kraków

Meeting of Fortress Communities in Krakow

2023-12-11

On 19 and 20 October 2023, Krakow hosted representatives of fortress communities from Warsaw, Poznań, Toruń, Przemyśl, Kostrzyn nad Odrą, Zamość and Kłodzko. The meeting enabled the sharing of experiences in the management and promotion of fortress facilities.

The guests were invited to visit the capital of the Małopolska region by the Municipality of Krakow. The main organiser, the Municipal Housing Administration (*Zarząd Budynków Komunalnych*), prepared a programme presenting the achievements of the Municipality of Krakow in recent years regarding the renovation, revitalisation and adaptation of fortress facilities to new functions.

The guests were welcomed by Deputy Mayor of the City of Krakow Bogusław Kośmider, who has been a great promoter of the renovation, among others, of the “Borek” and “Jugowice” forts, enabling their use by the people of Krakow, and also scouts. Today, the facilities are managed by municipal units and available for residents to use.

During the two-day visit, the guests, under the guide of Krzysztof Wielgus PhD, Eng. of Architecture, and Deputy Director of the Municipal Buildings Management Board Marcin Paradyż, were shown the following sites: bastion no. III “Kleparz", fort 2 “Kosciuszko”, gate spur “Bielany”, fort 52 ½ S “Sidzina”, fort 52a “Jugowice” and fort 52 “Borek”.

These are important sites of the contemporary **tourism product of Krakow Fortress**. The bastion “Kleparz”, which is privately owned, houses a restaurant and hosts concerts and art exhibitions. Fort “Kościuszko,” which belongs to the Municipality of Krakow, is home to the Kościuszko Mound Committee, which runs the Kościuszko Museum and takes care of the Kościuszko mound, while part of the former barracks buildings house a national radio station. A partial reconstruction of the bastions destroyed after World War II is currently underway.

The “Bielany” gate spur is owned by the Municipality of Krakow, and is used as a refreshment centre for cyclists using the nearby bike paths. The “Sidzina” fort is home to the “Pełna Życia” Foundation (“Fully Alive” Foundation), which conducts its statutory activities there for the benefit of people with disabilities. Renovation of the “Jugowice” fort was finished in 2022, and houses a branch of the Krakow Museum and the Scout Movement Centre (as of September 2023). The “Borek” fort was finished in July 2022, and houses a branch of the Podgórze Cultural Centre and the Polish Song Library. The fort also has a cultural and educational trail, and welcomed 70,000 visitors during its first year of operation.

In a meeting summarising the two-day visit, the guests shared their experiences with revitalising sites, ways to use them and promoting fortress heritage in Zamość, Toruń, Kłodzko and Krakow. The UMK Tourism Department delivered a presentation on Krakow Fortress as a tourism product, which is increasingly popular with visitors, locals and enthusiasts of ancient architecture. The potential of the Fortress and its current use is evidenced by the fact that the Forum Biznesu economic portal, which cooperates with “Dziennik Gazeta Prawna,” awarded Krakow Fortress the title of **Tourism Product of**

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the Year 2023.