

**International Conference on Religious Tourism:
*Fostering sustainable socio-economic development in host communities***

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Session 3: Innovative approaches to tourism management in religious sites

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Bio:

Szymon Gatlik is the chief specialist in tourism marketing at the Office of the Mayor of Krakow, Poland. He graduated in Tourism from Krakow's Academy of Physical Education. He has dedicated his professional career to city branding and tourism marketing. Between 2000 and 2010 he was responsible for preparing four presentations of the Krakow Region – Malopolska at EXPO exhibitions in Hannover (Germany), Aichi (Japan), Zaragoza (Spain) and Shanghai (China). He designed and implemented Poland's first marketing cooperation program between a regional authority and low-cost airlines. He was a member of the organizing team for the visits to Krakow by Pope John Paul II (2001) and Benedict XVI (2006). His current works includes preparations for the city of Krakow to the World Youth Days 2016 and implementing the Operational Plan on Religious Tourism in Krakow until 2018.

As an active Krakow city guide and tour leader he has an opportunity to learn first-hand about tourists' needs, interests and expectations including in the religious tourism sector.

Abstract:

One of the interesting dimensions of Krakow's phenomenon as a tourist destination is the great diversity of tourist offers, rarely seen even amongst

world's top city brands. According to the 2014 survey on incoming tourism, visiting Krakow's culture heritage was the most popular motivation for coming to our city. However, significant numbers of visitors pointed out other reasons as their prime motivations: visiting friends and relatives, entertainment, taking part in a conference, business trip, education, shopping, taking part in a cultural or sporting event and – of course – religious purposes. Tourists, fun seekers, businessmen, sports fans, culture lovers and pilgrims – they all meet in the narrow streets of Krakow's Old City.

This situation is obviously a reason to be happy, as we have many options to diversify tourist products, but it's also a great challenge: how to develop the tourist offers and program the routes along which different groups visit the city, in order to retain balance between their different (sometimes even contradictory) needs and behaviours. This really gives a whole new meaning to the term "sustainable tourism".

How to achieve that balance? One perfect answer is perhaps impossible. Krakow's experience indicates the need to set clear rules of visiting the sites, to separate sacrum (prayers, services) and profanum (sightseeing) spheres, but also to provide discrete but visible and, if necessary, efficient safety measures used in the situations of inappropriate behavior. But on the other hand, restrictions do not seem to be the right direction, especially in Krakow – a city opening its gates for every tourist.