

## **Europa Nostra Heritage Hub starts operating in Krakow**

**The Society of Friends of Kraków History and Heritage (Towarzystwo Miłośników Historii i Zabytków Krakowa) will run the Europa Nostra Heritage Hub for Central and Eastern Europe in Krakow – the first outpost of Europa Nostra, a pan-European federation of organisations working in the field of protection, management and popularisation of cultural heritage in 40 European countries. On July 1, 2022 at the seat of the Society in Kraków, an office will start operating.**

Europa Nostra Heritage Hub will be a showcase of Krakow in terms of activities carried out in the field of cultural heritage by non-governmental organisations. It was conceived as a platform to strengthen the voice of civic organisations from Central and Eastern Europe towards Europe on shaping the European heritage policy. The hub will combine the formula of a think-tank, an observatory and a laboratory.

The activities undertaken by the hub will be two-way in nature – on the one hand, they are to serve the objectives of Europa Nostra in Central and Eastern Europe, Poland and Krakow (transfer of knowledge and competences, networking), and on the other hand, to integrate Krakow's achievements in the field of cultural heritage into the international circulation. The activities of the hub will turn Kraków into one of the most important civic heritage centres in Europe – next to The Hague and Brussels, where the Europa Nostra Secretariat operates, Athens, where a regional hub is also being established, and other cities, such as Venice and Lisbon, which are making efforts to create such European offices.

Hub in Krakow will be the agenda of Europa Nostra focused on the region of Central and Eastern Europe. It will maintain relations with the members of Europa Nostra in the region, establish new contacts and encourage members to cooperate, which will contribute to the exchange of knowledge and expertise in the field of heritage. The Kraków office will also initiate projects with the participation of non-governmental organisations and other entities shaping policy towards heritage – municipal governments, cultural institutions, universities and research centres.

During the 41st session of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee, hosted by Krakow in 2017, for the first time in the Committee's history, non-governmental organisations took the floor. Their message was read out at the assembly by the Secretary General of Europa Nostra, Sneška Quaedvlieg-Mihailović. The activity of the hub in Kraków is another step towards strengthening the position of non-governmental organisations dealing with cultural heritage, whose tradition in the city dates back to the 19th century.

The Society of Friends of Kraków History and Heritage in 2022 celebrates its 125th anniversary and is one of the oldest non-governmental organisations in Poland. As a member of Europa Nostra, the Society is actively involved in shaping the European, civic model of thinking about heritage. The Society is the oldest Polish member of this international organisation, and the president, Professor Jacek Purchla is also its vice president.

On May 9, 2022, on Europe Day, the memorandum of understanding on the establishment of the Europa Nostra Heritage Hub in Krakow was signed by the Mayor of Krakow, Professor Jacek Majchrowski and Professor Hermann Parzinger – Executive President of Europa Nostra. At the end of June, the Society won a competition for the operator of the hub organised by the Department of

Culture and National Heritage of the City of Kraków. The Kraków hub will be managed by Dr. Katarzyna Jagodzińska.

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