

Focus on Senior Citizens

2017-02-03

I am pleased to welcome our Polish and foreign guests from partner cities at this special conference. In 2013, Krakow, as one of the first cities signed the Dublin Declaration which obliges us to act for the benefit of senior citizens. We want to create adequate conditions for seniors to actively and with dignity live through their old age - said Mayor Majchrowski opening the plenary session of the International Conference "Focus on Senior Citizens" held in Krakow on 8-9 November 2016.

The first day of the Conference, on 8th November, involved workshop type activities – the Stanisław Wyspiański Krakow City Council Session Chamber housed expert meetings devoted to good practice in four areas of senior citizens' lives. In total, there were 60 participants of the workshops, including guests from Vienna, Budapest, Edinburgh, Leipzig, Olomouc, Frankfurt, Bratislava and Trondheim. They discussed the activity of elderly people (active aging and integration), intergenerational dialogue (including education about old age and building links between generations), city space friendly to senior citizens (among others, about infrastructure and cultural life) and participation of the elderly in city management (including the experience of collective bodies being formal representation of senior citizens). Finally, the participants of the workshops visited Krakow's Activity Centres for Seniors.

On the second day of the Conference, the participants – city officials, scholars, representatives of elder citizens – gathered in the ICE Krakow to sum up the results of expert workshops. Planned for that day were also speeches of guests from Krakow's partner cities. Mayor Majchrowski pointed out that to make the old age policy effective it is necessary to gain involvement of numerous circles and communities, as only coordinated actions will allow to meet the challenges resulting from the demographic processes. Low birth rate and longer life expectation increase the percentage of elderly people (60 and over) in the population. The Krakow Conference is important, first of all, because it is for the first time when, at such wide forum, the world of senior citizens meets the world science, NGO activists and officials responsible for implementation of definite solutions.

We would like to create an alliance of cities which actively work for the improvement of the elderly's life. The involvement of higher schools that can be seen in the Third Age Universities is significant. Here in Krakow, we have managed to do a lot as concerns age friendly policies. There is a Council of Senior Citizens closely cooperating with the Mayor, we have Activity Centres for Seniors that are continuously developed, we have a special programme for active aging. I would like to express special gratitude to NGOs without which it would not have been possible to achieve what we did. Let us remember that although old people's activity centres are financed by the city but they are managed by NGOs, added Mayor Majchrowski.

The Krakow's Conference has also been appreciated by the government. Health Minister, Konstanty Radziwiłł, sent a letter to Krakow's City Mayor in which he writes: "I wish to sincerely congratulate you Mr Mayor, on the valuable initiative which expresses deep concern about Polish senior citizens. It is a most satisfactory fact that old age policy is considered by the Krakow self-government to be one of the most important issues."

Dr Anna Okońska-Walkowicz Ph.D., Advisor of the Mayor of Krakow for Senior Citizens Policy also reminded the participants that out of 758 thousand of Krakow's population, 167 thousand people, that is over 21%, are senior citizens. The over 20% of elderly people in the society



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constitutes an enormous capital that cannot be wasted. Therefore, as she underlined, the utilization of the valuable potential of senior citizens – their knowledge, skills, professional experience and wisdom as well as willingness to work for the benefit of others – is one of the key objects of age friendly policies.

View photographs from the event at: [OTO FOTOKRONIKA Miasta Krakowa](#)