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World Technopolis Association

The 8th WTA General Assembly

Gliwice 2012

GLIWICE

Gliwice

host city of the 8th WTA General Assembly

Description of the city

Gliwice is a city located in the south-western part of Poland, in Silesia Region. The city is inhabited by 190.000 people. Gliwice is a part of the largest in Poland, nearly 2 million conurbation, consisting of 14 cities of similar size. Due to its location within the conurbation, Gliwice has got

numerous administrative centres of regional significance. Particularly worth mentioning are the Silesian University of Technology – one of the largest and most prestigious Polish technical universities, a seat of the National Administrative Court, and the largest in terms of its area and invested capital subzone of the Katowice Special Economic Zone. The city is favourably located at the crossing of two transeuropean transit corridors – A1 and A4 motorways.

Historical outline

Gliwice, similarly to other cities of the region, is a city with a post-industrial heritage. The Upper Silesia was one of those European agglomerations which at the turn of 18th and 19th centuries underwent a rapid industrialization process, combined with an equally rapid development of cities. The area of the Upper Silesia is very rich in hard coal deposits and it was coal mining, combined with steel metallurgy, which determined the great economic success of this region in the 19th and 20th centuries.

The process of political transformation and democratization of the 1990's in Poland coincided with vast economic changes. The country shifted from inefficient and crisis-ridden socialist economy, with central planning and emphasis on heavy industry, to a typical western market economy. That was the end of an era for Gliwice. At the same time the local governments were restored in Poland. They gradually received a very broad range of rights and competence. It was the local government that carried the burden of creating new growth motors in the municipal economy, which had lost its basic industrial sectors.

The authority of Gliwice put forward a concept of winning "a strategic investor" for the city – a big foreign corporation, whose investment in Gliwice would improve the reliability of the city for future investors. Following this concept, in mid-1990s the automotive plant of Opel, belonging to the General Motors, was built in Gliwice. Simultaneously with the construction of the Opel plant, a subzone of Katowice Special Economic Zone was established in Gliwice. The zone is an area intended for greenfield investments, where investors are offered fully equipped plots, as well as tax reductions proportional to the amount of the capital invested and the employment level. Through such business oriented policy, during the past few years Gliwice has won investors who invested in the city total amount of over 1,5 billion euro and established 11 thousand new jobs.

Economic character of the city

Among the investors who have located their ventures in the subzone, a major part consists of automotive production plants. Avoiding the domination of the automotive sector monoculture, for years now the city has been making efforts to diversify its economy. Two factors are decisive in this context - a good transport system and the presence of the Silesian University of Technology.

The location at the junction of A1 and A4 motorways places Gliwice among nodal points of the European transport network. A location favourable in terms of transport opportunities in a state which is a natural bridge between the East and the West of Europe has made Gliwice very attractive for logistics ventures in the recent years. Next to logistics companies, also retail chains notice that. Within a few years time several shopping centres, among them the biggest one in Central Europe, are located in Gliwice. This makes the city a regional retail centre, intended to service over three million customers living within an hour-drive radius.

Silesian University of Technology

A crucial factor for the municipal development is also the location of the Silesian University of Technology, one of the largest and most prestigious technical universities in Poland. The University currently gathers over a thousand scientific employees and educates over 30 thousand students. The municipal authorities, attempting to benefit from the potential created by the university, for many years now have been making efforts to stimulate the development of R&D centres and high-tech companies. Gliwice is a laureate of numerous national distinctions and awards for supporting this sector. The city, together with the University, has established the Technopark Gliwice Ltd – a technological park supporting development of innovative start-ups. Apart from renting office facilities, Technopark offers the start-ups consulting services in the field of law, patents, finance, accounting, marketing and technology. At present several dozens of IT and high-tech companies are located in the premises of the park. Considering growing demand for space, it is planned to double its area.

"New Gliwice" Centre

Another initiative worth mentioning is the Education and Business Centre "New Gliwice" located in post-industrial area after a closed hard coal mine. These 19th century buildings were transformed into office and conference centre, used by universities and new technologies incubator. The incubator offers office space on preferential terms as well as professional business advisory for start-ups. The project is now entering next phase – high-tech companies which were supported in the incubator, are currently constructing their own seats in the direct neighbourhood of the incubator.

The climate of a city of new technologies and innovations attracts numerous businesses of this type to Gliwice, such as one of the largest Polish IT companies Wasko S.A. or the largest design bureau in Poland, belonging to the world concern Fluor. Moreover the city itself established municipal company which renders a vast and constantly growing array of services basing on the wireless Internet. At present it is a system of wireless monitoring of the city, traffic lights integration and free hot spots for citizens. In the nearest future the company will service an integrated municipal IT network and will provide Internet access to external entities and citizens.

Date/Time	10 September	11 September		12 September	
09.00-09.30	Airport Pick-up	Registration			
09.30-10.00					
10.00-10.30				University Presidents Forum *Learning innovation – innovation in learning*	Mayors' Forum
10.30-11.00		Opening Ceremony Keynote Speech *Plenary session*			
11.00-11.30					
11.30-12.00					
12.00-14.00		Lunch		Lunch	
14.00-14.30		International Conference *Innovation as one of solutions for economic crisis* *Plenary Session*	University Presidents Forum *Long-life learning challenge for the university*	University Presidents Forum *Learning innovation – innovation in learning*	General Assembly Meeting
14.30-15.00					
15.00-15.30					
15.30-16.00					
16.00-16.30	Ex-Board Meeting			Cultural Events	
16.30-17.00					
17.00-17.30					
17.30-18.00					
18.00-18.30	Welcome Reception	Welcome Dinner		Closing Ceremony & Farewell Banquet	
18.30-19.00					
19.00-19.30					
19.30-20.00					

Conference facilities

Gliwice administers conference space fulfilling modern standards. We suggest organizing GA in three locations.

"Bajka" Theatre Venue for the opening ceremony.

A modern theatre and cinema hall located in the very city centre, seating up to 340 people, equipped with all audio and video facilities, and a large foyer fitting for a reception space.

"New Gliwice" Centre

Education and Business Centre located ca. 4 km away from the centre of Gliwice. The centre administers modern conference facilities, comprising of 811 seats in 5 lecture theatres (2 large ones and 1 three-part-one)

Education and Congress Centre of the Silesian University of Technology

Modern didactic and conference centre of the Silesian University of Technology, administering 845 seats in 3 lecture theatres.

Hotel facilities

In Gliwice there are the following hotel facilities available:

- 3* hotels in the city centre: ca. 460 beds – 256 rooms.
- 3* hotels within a short distance from the city centre: 283 rooms, ca. 480 beds.

Should there arise a need to secure a higher standard, the nearest 4 and 5* hotels are located in the centre of Katowice (ca. 30-minute-drive from the centre of Gliwice), availability of 4* rooms: 350 rooms, ca. 600 beds; availability of 5* rooms: 108 rooms.

Travelling tips

Considering travel arrangements, we recommend using Frankfurt International Airport as the main hub and choosing either Cracow or Katowice international airports as the destination, both of which are within an hour's drive from Gliwice. The hosts will provide airport pick-up for arriving guests.