



INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
OF MINING AND
UNDERGROUND MUSEUMS

The Cracow Saltworks Museum Wieliczka together with Wieliczka Salt Mine and Bochnia Salt Mine is organising an International Conference of Mining and Underground Museums. The Conference will be held on 19-22 November 2018 in the properties inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List as “Wieliczka and Bochnia Royal Salt Mines”, visited by 1.5 million tourists a year.

The conference will follow on from regular meetings organised by the Cracow Saltworks Museum Wieliczka for domestic museum employees. This time it is addressed to the international community representing mining underground museums and their associations, as well as institutions and universities related to the history of mining from around the world.

2018 is a special year in the history of Polish salt mining due to several important anniversaries connected with Cracow Saltworks, i.e. the former royal enterprise encompassing salt mines, salt brewing facilities and the entire infrastructure related to extraction and processing of salt in Wieliczka and Bochnia. In 2018 we will celebrate the 40th anniversary of inclusion of the Wieliczka Salt Mine in the First List of UNESCO Cultural and Natural Heritage (1978) as well as the 5th anniversary of extending the entry into Bochnia Salt Mine and Wieliczka Saltworks Castle – the seat of the management of the Saltworks since the 13th century until 1945; the 650th anniversary of the preparation of a very important legal act: the *Charter of the Cracow Saltworks* (1368); the 500th anniversary of the *Brief But Accurate Description of Management and Relations in the Wieliczka and Bochnia Saltworks in 1518*, included in 2014 in the Polish National Register of the UNESCO “Memory of the World” Programme. It should be emphasised that Poland is one of the leaders in the field of protection of underground heritage. As early as 1928, a decree of the President of Poland established that prehistoric mines of “salt, amber, flint, copper, iron and mineral pigments” should be considered as historical monuments. Additionally, the celebration of the jubilees mentioned above fits in perfectly with the 100th anniversary of Poland’s regained independence.

The objective of the Conference is to acquaint the international community of museum experts with the Cracow Saltworks as well as to present the achievements and characteristics of related historical mines of salt, coal, metal ores, gold, oil and gas, raw rock and sulphur from around the world. We will try to identify the problems of all mining museums throughout the world. We will be asking questions about the challenges faced by historical mining sites, we will be seeking answers and we will make efforts to consolidate the community of underground museums in order to give them the appropriate rank in the great worldwide family of museums.

The Organising Committee:
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The Honorary Committee, chaired by Professor Piotr Gliński, Minister of Culture and National Heritage and Deputy Prime Minister will include: Krzysztof Tchórzewski – Minister of Energy; Suay Aksoy – President of ICOM, Mechtild Rössler – Director of the World Heritage Centre UNESCO; Professor Jacek Purchla, Chairman of the Polish National Commission for UNESCO; Professor Wojciech Nowak, Rector of the Jagiellonian University; Professor Tadeusz Słomka, Rector of AGH University of Science and Technology as well as representatives of other international associations.

There are plans for participation of some 200 attendees, 40 presentations of papers and poster sessions, presenting mining and underground museums, represented at the conference. The official language of the conference is English (there will be simultaneous translation into Polish, German and Spanish at the sessions). There are plans for abstracts publication before the conference and the publication of conference proceedings after the event. The agenda of the conference consists of 6 thematic sessions:

Session I: historical-commemorative:

- opening ceremony speeches
- anniversary lectures related to jubilees and the history of saltwater brewing and salt mining in Cracow Saltworks (lectures prepared by the Saltworks Museum)

Session II: Preservation, conservation protection, revitalization and research problems related to underground mining excavations.

Session III: Legal, financial and organizational aspects of the functioning of the underground museums in the international context.

Session IV: Organization of underground tourist routes and modelling of the museum space – authenticity or creation?

Session V: Educational role of mining museums and their functioning in local communities

Session VI: Ethical aspects and best practices for maintaining balance between the protection, education, sharing and earning money on underground tourist trails.

A detailed list of proposed topics of papers will be presented on the conference website, which will be launched in April 2018.

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