



## INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF MINING AND UNDERGROUND MUSEUMS

The Cracow Saltworks Museum in Wieliczka is organising **the 2<sup>nd</sup> International Conference of Mining and Underground Museums (ICMUM2023)**. Traditionally, the organiser has invited the “Wieliczka” Salt Mine State Joint-Stock Company and the Zabrze Coal Mining Museum to co-organise the conference. The conference will take place from 22 to 25 May 2023, and the sessions and accompanying events will be organised in salt and coal mines and historic surface facilities belonging to these institutions, in Wieliczka and Zabrze in Poland.

The conference is planned as the next edition of the four-day ICMUM2018, which was organised in 2018. The previous conference was attended by more than 100 participants from 18 countries. The Honorary and Scientific Committee of the conference included representatives of such organisations as UNESCO, ICOM, ICOMOS, TICCIH and ERIH, professors of technical universities and international specialists in the field of industrial heritage. The speakers and participants at the conference were practitioners - managers of tourist mines that once extracted a variety of raw materials: salt, coal, silver and gold, copper, iron, mercury, zinc and lead, or slate. In line with the event's motto *"Let's meet and exchange experiences!"*, the conference provided an opportunity for everyone to get to know each other, share practical knowledge, and announce their successes in a professional forum. Each thematic session was accompanied by a lively discussion. Conference participants praised its excellent programme and organisation, and suggested that another meeting be organised. The event certainly contributed to the integration of the international mining museum community.

Encouraged by that success, the Cracow Saltworks Museum planned to organise another similar conference after three years, but the prolonged COVID-19 pandemic and the uncertain international situation forced the organisers to postpone it and to choose a date which now seems safe - May 2023.

The motto of the next ICMUM Wieliczka-Zabrze 2023 conference will be *"Mining Heritage = Human Heritage"*. During the session, we will talk about how much mining has contributed to the development of human civilisation, how important it is to preserve this heritage around the world. We will consider how we can contribute to the proper and positive perception of this heritage by the general public and visitors to mining sites.

We will take this opportunity to emphasise Poland's pioneering role in the protection of underground mining heritage. Importantly, the first decree of the President of the Republic of Poland recognising historic mines as heritage monuments was issued as early as 1928! We will briefly present our achievements to date: four mines entered in the UNESCO World Heritage List, Wieliczka - the most visited mine in the world, receiving almost 2 million tourists per year, dozens of tourist mines and mining museums open to visitors in Poland etc.

However, the conference will be primarily an international event and most presentations will be dedicated to foreign sites, not only in Europe. We aim to present mining tourist sites from North America, Australia, Africa and Asia at the conference. We are interested in historic underground mines of all minerals and ores. We invite both large, frequently visited and renowned sites, as well as small mines located on the sidelines. Those that have been operating on the tourist market for many years, as well as those that are just about to start in tourism. Mines where mining is continued, as well as those rediscovered after centuries of oblivion, unearthed by enthusiasts. The participants and speakers will be, once again, practitioners - facility managers, as well as scientists who deal with the history of mining and the revitalisation of mine workings. We invite specialists in financing and implementing such projects, creators of innovative solutions for education, recreation, treatment and entertainment in mines.

It is planned that about 100-200 participants will attend and about 40 papers will be delivered. We will prepare a poster presentation for all participants. The language of the conference will be English, but simultaneous interpretation from other languages will also be provided. As before, we plan to publish Conference Proceedings, containing full versions of the papers, which will then be distributed worldwide.

During the conference, we are planning several thematic sessions concerning among others:

1. The importance of mining for the development of human civilization, the need to protect and make accessible to tourists this diversified heritage worldwide (overview of the current situation in Poland, Europe and on other continents)
2. Mining history associations around the world and their cooperation with mining museums and tourist mines - together or separately? (papers prepared among others by the Mining History Association in United States and Canada, Australasian Mining History Association in Australia and New Zealand, National Association of Mining History Organisations in UK and Ireland, European Route of Industrial Heritage, Spanish Society for the Protection of Geological and Mining Heritage, etc.)
3. New mining sites on the UNESCO World Heritage List and chances for others to be entered - an overview of sites entered in recent years and those applying for listing (including: how to prepare a good application, what does inscription mean - theory and practice, what is UNESCO's approach to mining heritage).

4. Funding, organisation and legal basis of tourist mines (including: available European and national funds, funding opportunities in the times of crisis and lockdown, cross-border initiatives, creation of cultural routes as an example of teamwork).
5. Research and documentation standards and methodology for the preservation of mining heritage.
6. Protection and conservatory protection of mine workings, including in particular the need to preserve mining technological processes in order to make them accessible to tourists - examples of implementation.
7. Industrial archaeology research in mines and arranging exhibitions that feature discovered artefacts.
8. Narration in mines - how to construct an attractive story for a tourist, truly authentic and promoting technical knowledge of the place? (including: guided tours or individual experience? How to prepare exemplary historical and technical information about a place?, use of multimedia and VR).
9. Mass tourism in mines and its challenges and limitations.
10. New functions of mines (culture and entertainment, sport and recreation, science and research projects, medical treatment).
11. Designing the environment of a mine and protecting the industrial landscape (including the best examples of open-air museums, mining villages and industrial parks in the world).

During the conference, we will also return to the idea of compiling an "International Catalogue of Best Practices in the Creation and Operation of Mining Museums and Underground Mining Tourist Routes". This ambitious long-term project can become a model of good solutions both for existing facilities and those being now created, especially outside Europe.

Detailed information will be made available on the conference website **[www.icmum.pl](http://www.icmum.pl)** soon!

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