

ASPIRE

LEADERS
SUMMIT

MEETING THE MOMENT

KRAKÓW'S NEXT MOVE

19 February 2026
MOCAM Kraków



MUZEUM
SZTUKI WSPÓLCZESNEJ
W KRAKOWIE

MOCAM

MUSEUM
OF CONTEMPORARY ART
IN KRAKOW

Na koniec ludzie skarleją do
wymiaru bezmózgich stąg
żelaznych geniuszy i, być może,
poczną oddawać im cześć boską...

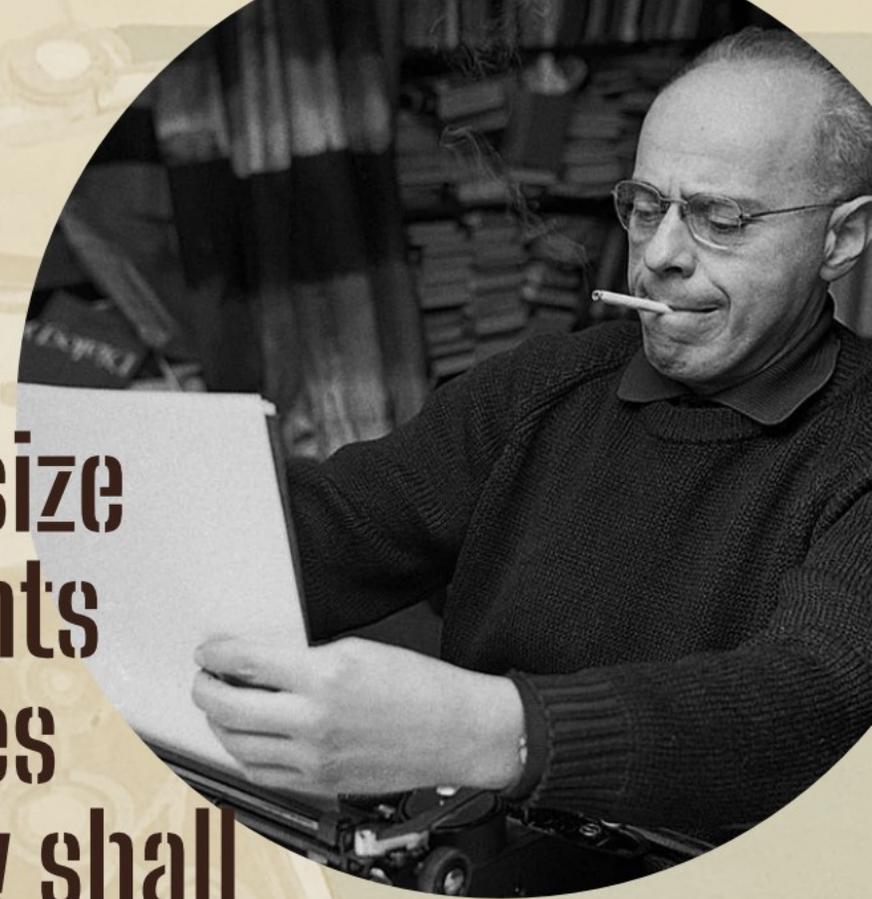


Stanisław Lem



Pomyśl: Literatura!

**'In the end, people
will shrink to the size
of mindless servants
of the iron geniuses
and, perhaps, they shall
worship them as divine...'**



Stanisław Lem
Dialogues, 1957



abbvie



ASSA ABLOY

BELVEDERE



HAYS

HEDGESERV



IAGGBS



MOTIFE



PCS



revvity

STRATO
ADVISORY



TESCO
Technology



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SUMMIT



AGENDA

SUMMIT (14:00–16:00)

Setting the Scene (14:00–14:20)

- Welcome and purpose
- “Meeting the Moment”: what’s changed, what matters now
- How we’ll work: candid, constructive, action-oriented

Reality Check and Priorities (14:20–14:40)

- The pressures leaders are managing (HQ signals, cost base, narrative)
- What’s most urgent to stabilise confidence and protect momentum
- The one question we must answer: what is Kraków’s next move?

Kraków’s Narrative and Positioning (14:40–15:20)

- How we position Kraków: nearshore, HQ extension, innovation platform
- What we communicate internally (HQ/teams) and externally (city/talent/investors)
- What we need to do together—across companies and with stakeholders (City, agencies, airport, universities, culture, hospitality)

Man vs Machine: Turning AI into an Advantage (15:20–15:40)

- Where AI threatens value—and where it multiplies it
- What we can do collectively to harness the machine
- “Synthesis is ecosystem”: the human advantage we can build in Kraków

Feeding the Dragon’s Teeth: From Talk to Action (15:40–16:00)

- Each participant shares one actionable idea
- Each participant shares one idea for the Annual Conference
- Next steps: contributor sign-ups, work teams, and deadlines

NETWORKING (16:00–16:45)

- Informal intro to MOCAC
- Museum walk
- Group photo
- Networking drinks

Meeting the Moment

- Catching the wave or holding to the wave passing by anyway
- Decisions taken somewhere else; we focus on the execution and process excellence
- Ambiguity and volatility requires more effort on the strategic direction (keep, set new) and the effort must be collective

How to work together to secure the future?

How to move from “how” to “what”?

Reality Check and Priorities

- Crisis of identity
- No clear guidelines – teams' perceptions result in fear and sometimes panic
- We travel less – naturally we are less visible; impact on the work culture got in the package

**What is urgent? What are the priorities?
What is Krakow's next step?**

 Mentimeter

Live Poll Answers

What is urgent?

1. Strategy & Business Model

- strategy for growth
- Move from sustainment to breakthrough
- Value proposition
- New business model
- Transformation
- Rethinking GBS
- Building a plan and executing it
- Higher ranking roles in Kraków

2. Adaptability, Change & Organizational Resilience

- Adaptability and visibility
- To be Flexible
- Adaptation – new ideas
- Adapting
- Adapt, learn, change
- Resilience
- Entrepreneurs

3. People, Skills & Future of Work

- Understanding the business by staff
- Giving certainty to the employees, talents
- AI education
- Education
- AI adoption
- Understand deeply how white collar work will radically change very soon

4. Communication, Brand & External Positioning

- Keep positive narrative
- Change the communication for the public about the changes in my company
- Better press
- Better advertising
- Higher profile
- Conscious and relentless city branding

5. Engagement, Collaboration & Information Flow

- Information exchange
- New ways of engaging

What are the priorities?



What is Kraków's next step?

1. Strategic Positioning & Global Brand

- Strong brand
- Branding and visibility
- Innovation hub branding followed by tech skillset and infrastructure
- Presentation of success stories
- Education, Promotion
- Rise up!
- Change or become irrelevant
- Open minded and modern approach

2. Innovation, AI & Future Industries

- Center of excellence and AI hub
- Building AI/Data and cybersecurity talent pool
- New offering based on the skills of the future
- New industries funded on the existing assets of people, biotech & academia
- Create expert positions
- Creativity
- More scaleups
- Competition

3. Investment & Economic Growth

- Vision of attracting new investors
- Support business better
- Creating a friendly environment for business
- Supporting local business outside
- Diversity of portfolio, high-level jobs, trade & production mix
- Diversified sectors
- Break the glass ceiling
- Reorientation

4. Talent, Workforce & Mobility

- Attractive place to live
- Job mobility
- Invest more in infrastructure and attract more workforce
- Improving standards
- Present quality

5. Collaboration & Ecosystem Governance

- Cooperation
- Cooperation and joint responsibility
- Cooperation of diverse branches

6. Infrastructure & Connectivity

- New airport
- Infrastructure development (linked to workforce & innovation growth)

Krakow's narrative and positioning

CIA process “How to Make Things Happen When You're Not the CEO”

- Where is the value? Direct or indirect?
- How you create and deliver this value?
- Story that will go under the CEO's skin: Heart (vision), Head (credible evidence), How-To (personal relevance)
- Get out of your office, walk the Halls, beat the drum
- You Go First! Who Dares Wins!
- Inspire! Beat the drum, again!
- Just Do It

Krakow's narrative and positioning

- Negative campaign around Krakow as location and the industry itself
- Are we Nearshore, HQ extended team, Offshore or Innovation Platform/Centre of Excellence/Product Owner?
- Perception vs. Reality; playing the victim
- What and how we communicate internally and externally?
How we could all contribute to the collective messaging?

Man vs Machine: Turning AI into an Advantage

Quality	AI (2025)	Human's brain
Power required for ops	MWs (power plants)	ar. 20 W (small bulb)
Data to learn	Trillions of words and pictures	Few examples („few-shot” learning pattern)
Specialisation	Exceptional but limited to one domain	Polyvalent, general
Consciousness	None	Exist

Synthesis in ecosystem: building human advantage

Prediction 1: Split of single agent vs multi-agent systems

- Will speed to goal and low overhead costs challenge decide in which bucket you will land?
- Complex processes kill agents trying to talk to each other
- What is the impact on the skills and the career development? Will we lose youngsters definitely?

Synthesis in ecosystem: building human advantage

Prediction 2: Human-in-the-loop is a must

- How critical are your operations to the business? Will it go autonomous?
- We have been fighting for HQ's trust for years. How to preserve it / regain it?
- What it mean in practice to have teams AI ready?

Synthesis in ecosystem: building human advantage

Prediction 3 and 4: AI stagnation, AI degradation

- Not enough of raw data coming from Human – AI degradation
- AI Agent vs AI Assistant
- How to avoid to be called “Mr Promiss”?

***AI predictions for 2026: Dominik Jaskulski's (Office Samurai) posts on LinkedIn**

Synthesis in ecosystem: building human advantage

Prediction 5: AI impact on P&L and Balance Sheet

- Are we making money in the business using AI or it is just another “big expensive toy for a big boy”?
- Is ROI and argument or simply the “promise of AI” is a nice excuse to restructure?

ASPIRE SURVEY - KRAKOW



CHALLENGES



Quality of life

Public transportation (therefore people in the office)

Investment-ready infrastructure (energy access and technical facilities)

Expensive housing pushing graduates out of Krakow

Limited Public Private Partnership and bureaucratic hurdles



Skills gap

Adaptive education is still a challenge

Transparency and availability of the data regarding skills and people in Krakow

Support for international talents

Upskilling process hard to deliver in Public Private Partnership



Promotion of the City

City hall not enough engaged in the promotion of Krakow as “to be” location, worldwide

No promotion of Krakow to attract talents within Poland

SUPPORT TO THE CITY



Branding

Branding of Krakow as a location, worldwide

Talent pool branding –great place to source and procure

Promote connectivity and community (CSR, projects, knowledge sharing)



Talent development

Cross-sector, Public-Private, platform to develop talents, deliver joint projects, digital inclusion

Focus on Education and Universities

Open meetups, hackathons and other events to create innovative spirit and attract people



Industry reputation

Great feedback about the industry in Krakow spread out worldwide in our companies

International visibility

Success stories must be shared

STRENGTHS



Talented and educated people

Great number of students

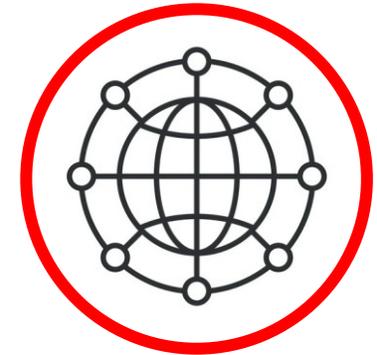
Large number of well-educated,
multilingual experts



Work culture

Work culture close to the West

GBS culture, Customer-centric



Ecosystem

Academia (Education + Universities)

Mature business in place already,
there is something to build on

Community in Krakow demonstrated
how to integrate foreigners (students,
business, refugees)

ADVANTAGES / WHY KRAKOW



Location

Mature infrastructure and ecosystem
(accelerates start and ramp up)
Safe place to live and run the business
Hospitable and open city for newcomers



Value for money

Great capabilities demonstrated at
competitive cost



Proximity

Geographical and cultural proximity to
the business
Proximity to the Universities



Talent pool

Highly educated people



Expertise

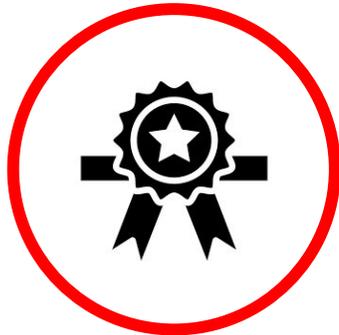
Ability to deliver high quality
projects/products at global scale



Trusted nearshore

Delivery proofed the initial concept and
exceeded the expectations

POSITIONING OF KRAKOW



Centre of Excellence, R&D Centre

Strategic capability for the business

Transformation vehicle for the company

Pool of skills, knowledge centre

Key enabler

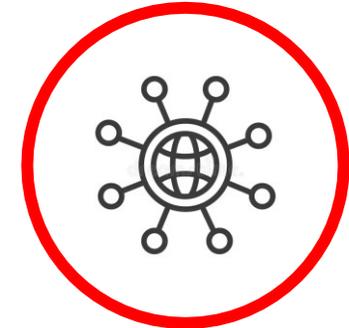


Trusted business partner

Delivered complex programmes over years

Keeping the promises

Key contributor to the global programmes



Local hub delivering global value

Acting local, winning global

Being in Krakow, always being part of the global business



BLOCKERS

Specific skills gaps

Talent availability in specific areas
Cross-sector upskilling

Not sufficient engagement of the City

Public infrastructure as facilitator
Fragmented collaboration

Leadership

New, emerging leaders going beyond
their business

ENABLERS



Ecosystem

Academia – intellectual capital
Mature business
Start ups

Mature and well-established industry

Infrastructure in place
Business well established

Academia

Cross functional knowledge exchange
Talent supply

CONCLUSIONS

- We must act now; the world is changing fast and the times when things were happening itself ended
- We must act collectively, but not only as industry but truly collectively: City, Universities, Secondary schools, BSS/IT/R&D Centres, local business
- Mr President Donald Trump just did us a favour kicking off the deglobalisation; we have a chance to really move up the value chain as the foundations were shaken (old established positions and trenches will be captured but we do not know on which side we will end up)

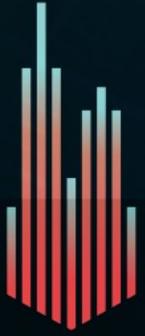
NEXT STEPS

- Process that began - migration of effective power centres (not administration!) beyond offices and elected self-government institutions - is a continuous process of growing intensity
- Solid foundations (Adaptive City model); next cycle has just begun
- Strategic workstreams in Krakow: ASPIRE / City / Academia
 - City's Strategy 2050
 - University platform and skills of the future
 - Education platform => primary and secondary education

DO NOT WAIT FOR THE CITY
TO DO SOMETHING FOR YOU,
THINK WHAT YOU CAN DO
FOR OUR CITY!

ENGAGE TODAY!





ASPIRE

LEADERS SUMMIT

- 1. What skills do we need that we currently do not have to be on top of new tech?**
- 2. What cultural reset if any is required to seize the opportunity? What leadership is required? How deep?**
- 3. How do we get there? (Initiatives but also how to utilise the ASPIRE conference as a trigger to inspire and shape the narrative)**



ASPIRE

DRAGON'S TEETH

MAN VS
MACHINE

8 - 9 JUNE 2026

KEYNOTE SPEAKERS



**Giles
Duley**

photographer, triple
amputee

human spirit + lived
augmentation;
human dignity lens



**Mariana
Mazzucato**

economist

mission-oriented
innovation;
“moonshot” public-
private coordination



**Fons
Trompenaars**

world expert on intercultural
communication

intercultural leadership
as infrastructure



**Keshav
R. Murugesh**

WNS; Chair
NASSCOM (2019–20)

India perspective on
tech-enabled services



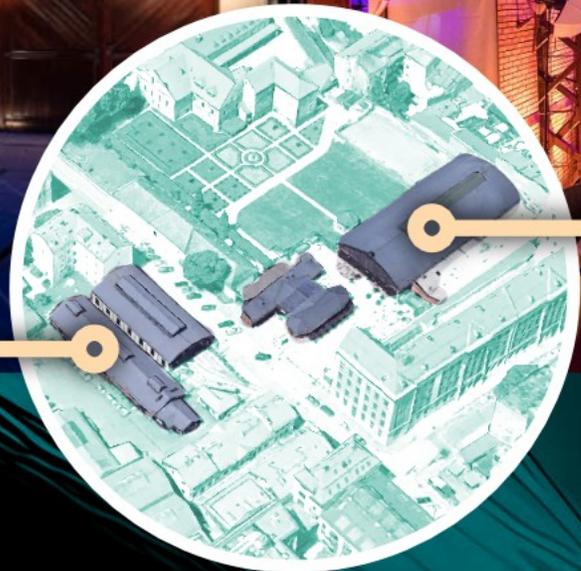
**Elizabeth
Stokoe**

conversation analyst

AI + human
intervention in
conversational tech/
chatbots

ASPIRE
**MAN VS
MACHINE**

8 - 9 JUNE 2026



**M
=
T**

Muzeum
Inżynierii
i Techniki



Stara Zajezdnia

DAY 1

- 13:00 - 13:45  Registration
-  **Opening Plenary**
Stara Zajezdnia (main hall)
- 14:00 - 14:20 Welcome & Introduction
- 14:20 - 15:00 **ASPIRE Plenary Session**
- 15:00 - 15.30  Coffee break
-  **Mid-afternoon Plenary**
- 15:30 - 16:10 **Keynote: Giles Duley**
- 16:10 - 17:00 **Keynote + Discussion: Marianna Mazzucato**
- 17:00 - 18.00  Networking Drinks

DAY 2

- 9:00 - 09:30  Registration
-  **Morning Plenary**
- 09:30 - 09:50 Welcome & Introduction
- 09:50 - 10:30 ASPIRE Plenary session
- 10:30 - 11.00  *Coffee break*
-  **Mid-Morning Plenary**
- 11:00 - 11:40 **Keynote: Elizabeth Stokoe**
- 11:40 - 12:20 Global Leaders session
- 12:30 - 14.00  *Lunch*
Group photo
-  **Break-out sessions**
- 14:00 - 14:35
 1. **What students think** - deep dive into ASPIRE research
 2. **Founders Club** - what we can learn from Entrepreneurs and what they can learn from us
 3. **How we work with Universities** - deep dive into ASPIRE research
 4. **ASPIRE 2 Grow** - Turning Kraków and the A4 Corridor into a super region
- 14:45 - 15:20  1,2,3,4
- 15:30 - 16:10  1,2,3,4
-  **Closing Plenary**
- 16:20 - 17:00 **Keynote: Fons Trompenaars**
- 17:00 - 18.00  *Networking Drinks*



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MEETING THE MOMENT

THANK YOU