

EURO 2012: THE KRAKOW'S PHENOMENON

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Poland**ABSTRACT**

The case study concern *the Krakow's Phenomenon* that was directly and personally revealed during UEFA EURO 2012 in Poland and Ukraine. Cracow, despite was excluded from the list of the city that hosted the event, became the mainly actor of the tournament among foreign tourists visiting. The basis for the formulation of this conclusion are the results of the survey realized in Krakow from 9 to 19 June 2012. The mainly goal of the survey was to analyze the influence of UEFA EURO 2012 on the decision of the foreign tourist to visit Cracow and their opinion about the city organization for the sport events, like: quality of public services (safety), tourist information, public communication, Fan zone, easiness of communication with the rest of Europe and the rest of Poland, accommodation and entertainment services.

Key words: Cracow's phenomenon, sport events, foreign tourists incoming, games, public service

INTRODUCTION

On 18 April 2007, at the session held in Cardiff (Wales, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland), the UEFA Executive Committee decided that the final games of the European Soccer Championships in the year 2012 would take place in Poland and in Ukraine.

Cracow was the only candidate endowed with all the assets, viz. an international reputation, convenient transport to Ukraine (250 km) as well as available hotel and transport infrastructure, incl. the International Airport. However, Cracow's candidature was rejected in favor of Danzig, Posen and Breslau I (the participation of Warsaw was par for the course for being the capital city). *Anyway it is hard to understand why Cracow was excluded from being a host during Euro 2012* - said Adam Giersz, Minister of Sport and Tourism, when the playoff pairs had been drawn in October 2011. Basing upon talks held with Cracow's inhabitants one might be impressed that there were triggered not only perennial animosities between the former and today's capital cities of Poland (as Andrzej Sikorowski, a Cracow's troubadour, sings – *do not move our capital to Cracow*), but also political retaliations.

For first time in the history of the European Championships three national teams – England, Holland and Italy - decided to stay in a non-hosting town.

The [British] **Football Association** chose Cracow as its training centre. The decision was made only in January 2012 at request of Fabio Capello, ex-coach, who expressed his strong preference for Cracow to any town in Ukraine. And this must be surprising in consideration of long distances between Cracow and Kiev and Donetsk where the English team played their group stage matches and the knockout match to progress to the quarter final against Italy.

Hotel Stary is situated at the heart of Cracow, and crowds of fans had been waiting for the team. The press conference centre was arranged in the nearby *Andel* hotel, whereas trainings were held at the *Suche Stawy* stadium belonging to *Hutnik Nowa Huta*, a 4 division club. The stadium was upgraded to meet the needs of *the FA* team. The new structure was inaugurated for the first training session of the English national team with an attendance of 3,200.

The three training sessions open to the public had an attendance of almost 40,000. Cracow's administration offered 39,000 charge free tickets made available on 2 June at the Centre of Tourist Services nearby the Wawel castle. Some tickets were booked for schools and VIPs, and another 100 could be bought at the stadium ticket office.

The English did appreciate the conditions and local audience: the warmth from the local public.

According to **David Bernstein**, the FA Chairman: *All three hotels in which our players stayed - Stary, pod Różą and Andel did offer not only excellent conditions, but also a friendly and professional service. I'd also like to thank the City for the assistance in the works at the Hutnik Stadium which became an ideal place for players and coaches. We are glad that the Club Hutnik and the Cracow City will be able to make use in future of the pitch we have left.*

The Honorary Consul of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland - Kazimierz Karasiński - in his letter to Jacek Majchrowski, Mayor of Cracow, said that Cracow had done a great job as the fifth hosting town during the European Soccer Championships UEFA EURO 2012™. *It was rumored that the English admired a perfect organization and an unforgettable aura dominating during the European Soccer Championships UEFA EURO 2012, and after that event.*

The **Royal Dutch Football Association** (*Koninklijke Nederlandse Voetbal Bond*, KNVB) chose Cracow after having given up other two options – Danzig and Donetsk. The Dutch stayed in a modern hotel – Sheraton, situated nearby the Vistula River and offering a panoramic vista of the Wawel Castle; they trained at the Municipal Stadium of Wisła Cracow.

As the coach of the Oranje - **Bert Van Marwijk** had it: *Cracow impressed me as a magnificent and extremely hospitable place. This is a beautiful city, and I hope we will be able to stay there for a longer time (...). A brand-new stadium of Wisła Cracow meets our training needs. And in the Sheraton Hotel, situated nearby the stadium, I immediately felt as if I were at my own home. And this is actually very important.*

Such opinions are confirmed by **Bert van Oostveen**, Chairman of the Professional Football Company: *For some time it has been customary for us to look for a convenient hotel and a training centre well in advance, which helped us again secure the base we like.*

Rafaël van der Vaart, member of the Dutch national team: *We've got an excellent hotel, can train at a nice stadium whose sward is actually well prepared, so we are satisfied that Cracow is our base during the Euro 2012.*

It was the new Wisła's Municipal Stadium with the European Championships record-breaking attendance of 23,000 spectators who on 6 June 2012 were observing the open to the public training session of the Dutch team.

Marc Van Bommel, the Oranje captain said: *As Dutch representatives we are honored to play in the European Championships. However, we do not arrive only to compete. We would also like to support local communities, and that is why we want to donate to kids from Bronowice something which was an asset when we were young: a safe playground. While practicing sports, kids are taught how to cope with both wins and losses. They learn they have to help one another to hit the target. Those skills will come useful in future.* On 5 June 2012, the Holland's representatives inaugurated the soccer pitch called Orange Cruyff Court at Cracow – Bronowice. A project was accomplished thanks to the *Johann Cruyff* foundation with financial contribution of the Dutch national team and thanks to the Commune of Cracow represented by the Managing Board of Sport Infrastructure.

The Italian Football Association (Federazione Italiana Giuoco Calcio, FIGC, Federcalcio) chose the Turowka Hotel housed in a former medieval castle at Wieliczka - famous for the salt mine - that in 1978 was entered on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Training sessions were scheduled at the stadium of Cracovia, the oldest Polish sports club. On 5 June 2012, despite the rain, the open to the public training of the Squadra Azzurra had an attendance of 12,000. A warm welcome from the Cracovian fans was noticed by **Demetrio Albertini**, Deputy President of the FIGC, who thanked directly to the fans in the stadium: *I would like to thank the administration of Cracow City and all of you who are here to welcome our players. A great welcome, indeed. Your enthusiasm helps us compete in this great European tournament, play well and amuse ourselves*, and so it was.

Not far from the stadium, at the Rotunda Centre of Culture, arranged was an interactive centre FIGC Casa Azzurri. Casa Azzurri is a project realized before the World Championships in France in 1998, and is an opportunity for promoting, developing and the communication of a brand, a business partner and local authorities through promotional activities, culinary events, presentations in the press and meetings with business people. The Centre of Culture houses restaurants, a bar, a hall with a large screen to follow the tournament matches as well as a multifunction interactive room for the public.

The Fan Zone arranged for the Euro 2012 in the Commons [Blonia] of a capacity of approx. 30,000 was visited by almost 130,000 fans. Then, there were also the Fan Zones, respectively, at Wieliczka (the base of the Italian national team) with approx. 40,000 visitors as well as in front of the Commercial centre Galeria Krakowska with about 500 visitors a day.

During the European Championships, Cracow had about 300,000 guests coming over- 250,000 of them stayed there for more than one day (tourists). The remaining 50,000 only passed through (visitors). In June, Cracow was a favorite hunting ground for the British (30%), Germans (11.2%) and the Irish (10.8%), whereas as far as home tourists are concerned, there were approx. 50,000 of them (mainly from the neighboring Silesian region -42%).

METHODS

The survey was performed by **Bogdan Gheorghe**, M.Sc., in Cracow, from 9-19 June 2012, under research supervision of Associate Professor **Leszek F. Korzeniowski**, under the project commissioned by the Polish Institute in Rome and entitled 'The effect of EURO 2012 in Poland. The case analysis of Cracow and the work under the grant from the *Bronisław Czech* University School of Physical Education in Cracow were performed in the period in which the EURO 2012 group stage games were played.

The survey was mainly aimed at explaining the effect of EURO 2012 upon visiting Cracow as well as at evaluating the town's preparation for the event, the operation of the public services, commercial services and accommodations base.

There were 150 foreign respondents – 115 (78%) of them were men and 24 % (22%) women. Most respondents were Englishmen (19%), Dutchmen (15%), Spaniards (14%) and Italians (13%).

SURVEY RESULTS

While analyzing the significance of the European Championships in view of visiting Poland (Fig. 1) it can be noticed they were of importance for 113 (75.4%) respondents in choosing their tourist destination.

Taking into consideration the effect of EURO 2012 upon the choice of Cracow it can be noticed they were of importance for 98 (65.4%) respondents in choosing their tourist destination.

Knowing that the capital city of Malopolska [Little Poland region] hosted the national teams of England, Holland and Italy, one may notice that this was either important or every important for 77 (51.3%) respondents when they were deciding about their arrival at Cracow.

It is known that Cracow did not host a soccer event, but it was, instead, a significant organizer of concomitant events, fan zones, concerts, and it gave a possibility of watching soccer training sessions. According to 133 respondents (89 %), the city was prepared well, very well or even perfectly (Fig. 2).

Like most big Polish cities, Cracow enabled fans to follow soccer matches on large outdoor screens in the so-called fan zones. The largest group of respondents (48 people, viz. 32%) chose the largest *fan zone* arranged in the Commons (Blonia), 36 people (24%) chose a smaller, roofed fan zone at the very centre nearby the Main Station, 39 people (26%) – preferred cozier restaurants and pubs, whereas 27 (18%) decided to stay at a hotel.

The straight majority of tourists participating in the survey (102 people, viz. 68%) deemed that the fan zone may be seen as a good alternative to a stadium, 36 (24%) took the opposing view and 12 people (8%) did not take a stand on this issue.

In the opinion of foreign tourists, passengers' transports from Cracow to other centers in Poland were good, very good or even excellent (79%), instead 83% took the same view in the case of transports to other European centers.

According to 59 (39%) respondents, the passenger transport services from Cracow to other centers in Poland were good; 45 (30%) assessed them as very good and 15 (10%) –as excellent, which means that the assessment result was positive in the opinion of 119 (79%) respondents. Instead, 31 (31%) respondents took the opposing view.

According to 57 (38%) respondents, the passenger transport services from Cracow to other European centers were good; 41 (27%) assessed them as very good and 27 (18%) –as excellent, which means that the assessment result was positive in the opinion of 125 (83%) respondents. Instead, 25 (17%) respondents took the opposing view.

Tab. 1 Replies from the respondents, in numbers and in %

	Specification	def. poor	poor	good	very good	excellent
1.	Passengers' transports from Cracow to other centers in Poland	10 (7%)	21 (14%)	59 (39%)	45 (30%)	15 (10%)
2.	The passenger transport services from Cracow to other European centers	3 (2%)	22 (15%)	57 (38%)	41 (27%)	27(18%)

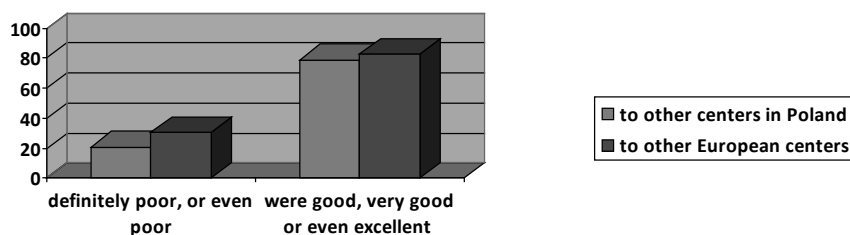


Fig. 1 Passengers' transports from Cracow

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According to 51 (34%) respondents, quality of the public services (transport, firemen, police, marshals, information) were good; 66 (44%) assessed them as very good and 24 (16%) –as excellent, which means that the assessment result was positive in the opinion of 141 (94%) respondents. Instead, 9 (6%) respondents took the opposing view.

According to 33 (22%) respondents, quality of hotel services were good; 75 (50%) assessed them as very good and 30 (20%) –as excellent, which means that the assessment result was positive in the opinion of 138 (92%) respondents. Instead, 12 (8%) respondents took the opposing view.

The survey of the attractiveness of Cracow was aimed at finding out whether the capital city of the Malopolska [Little Poland] Region (e.g. the Wawel Castle, the St. Mary Church, Botanical Garden, cruises on the Vistula River or Kosciuszko Mound) was of interest for tourists. According to 37 (25%) respondents, Cracow as a tourist attraction were good; 71 (47%) assessed them as very good and 33 (22%) –as excellent, which means that the assessment result was positive in the opinion of 141 (94%) respondents. Instead, 9 (6%) respondents took the opposing view.

According to 37 (25%) respondents, satisfaction with the places of entertainment (cinemas, theatres, bars, restaurants, discos, concerts) were good; 45 (30%) assessed them as very good and 45 (30%) –as excellent, which means that the assessment result was positive in the opinion of 142 (95%) respondents. Instead, 8 (5%) respondents took the opposing view.

Generally, Cracow was assessed as follows: mark well - 18 respondents (12%), very good - 63 (42%) and excellent - 66 respondents (44%), which means a positive evaluation from 147 (98%) respondents. A failing grade came from 3 (2%) people.

Tab. 2 Replies from the respondents, in numbers and in %

	Specification	Def. poor	poor	good	very good	excellent
1.	Quality of the public services	1 (1%)	8 (5%)	51 (34%)	66 (44%)	24 (16%)
2.	Quality of hotel services	6 (4%)	6 (4%)	33 (22%)	75 (50%)	30 (20%)
3.	Cracow as a tourist attraction	4 (3%)	5 (3%)	37 (25%)	71 (47%)	33 (22%)
4.	Satisfaction with the places of entertainment	3 (2%)	5 (3%)	45 (30%)	52 (35%)	45 (30%)
5.	The general opinion about Cracow	1 (1%)	2 (1%)	18 (12%)	63 (42%)	66 (44%)

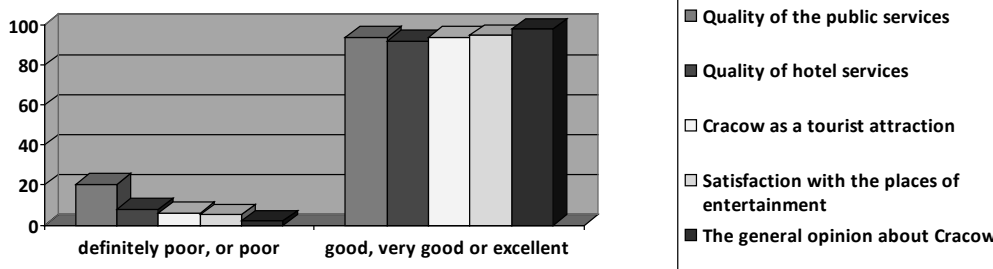


Fig. 2
The opinion about Cracow

Replying to the question how foreign tourists were welcomed to Cracow, according to the straight majority - 130 people (87%) Cracow's inhabitants are hospitable, 12 people (8%) took the opposite view, and 8 respondents (5%) took no stand on this issue.

When asked if they would recommend Cracow as a city, 100% of respondents said yes.

CONCLUSIONS

Euro 2012 must have been an investment in Poland's future. The four EURO 2012 hosting towns –Danzig, Posen, Warsaw and Breslau - met the expectations and organized a great event.

Cracow – a city left out in the decision on hosting the EURO 2012 tournament – became a leading player, a great protagonist and a beneficiary from EURO 2012. Cracow was chosen by the national teams of England, Holland and Italy as its training base. Cracow was visited by 200,000 tourists, and 131,000 of them visited a fan zone. The open to the public trainings session of the Dutch national team was attended by 24,000 spectators (the most attended open to the public training session in Poland and Ukraine).

EURO 2012 in Cracow is highly appreciated also in the survey performed by the company *Partners in Business Strategies sp. z o.o.*, in which positive opinions were obtained from 97% of Poles and 85% of foreign tourists (75% felt safe). More than 90% of all fans-tourists declare their will recommend Cracow to their acquaintance. **When Bogdan Gheorghe asked the question: Cracow? 100 % of respondents answered Good choice!**

In the queue stand other events – FIVB World Cup in 2014, Handball Championships [2016], European Soccer Championships in 2020, Winter Olympic Games in 2022 or 2026 [Poland and Slovakia], but first of all, the X FIEP Congress in 2015!

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