

## Youth-Led Initiatives Take Center Stage at 2023 Cross-Border Cooperation Congress Lublin, Poland - October 12, 2023

In the heart of Lublin, Poland, the 12th Cross-Border Cooperation Congress unfolds against the backdrop of Russia's aggression in Ukraine. Lublin, declared the European Youth Capital for 2023, becomes a focal point for global youth engagement, addressing urgent challenges in a world marked by political turmoil, social upheaval, economic uncertainties, and technological revolutions.

The essence of Lublin as the "City of the Young" extends beyond a mere slogan; it's a commitment to providing a home for youth voices to be heard, regardless of origin. As the youth of Lublin and counterparts from Europe and even as far as Indonesia convene, their collective mission is apparent.

The Congress revolves around:

**Crafting Inclusive Cities:** A reflection on the role of cities in fostering social inclusion and cohesion.

**Sharing Bright Ideas:** Young minds share innovative practices from local initiatives, promoting social cohesion within their communities.

**Dialogue for Progress:** Moving beyond rhetoric, the Congress fosters meaningful conversations among young people, local governments, NGOs, academia, culture, and businesses.

**Building an International Network:** Motivated individuals collaborate globally, translating insights into actionable solutions to address pressing challenges.

The heart of the Congress lies in a three-day, solution-oriented workshop. Day 1 involves exploring and understanding core problems, leading to Day 2's detailed analysis of root causes and potential solutions. Day 3 culminates in shaping comprehensive recommendations ready for presentation to local governments, organizations, and institutions.

Recommendations that have emerged include:

**Living Conditions:** Addressing the challenge of increasingly expensive housing, creating more youth-friendly spaces, and ensuring physically safe environments for the young population.

**Development Opportunities:** Expanding vocational and practical education, incorporating youth fundraising and management education into curriculums, and integrating NGOs into the educational system.

**Free Time:** Developing a dedicated app for youth information and event discovery, promoting local activities, and encouraging youth participation in NGOs. Also, launching networking and leadership programs to nurture vital skills.

**Youth Engagement and Policies:** Increasing employment opportunities for disadvantaged youth within the government, ensuring equal participation in mandatory youth councils, and facilitating access to decision-making processes, encouraging political involvement among the youth.

In a world dominated by conflicts, the Cross-Border Cooperation Congress stands as a breath of fresh air, empowering young activists with the skills and support needed to build trust and cohesion. It's a call to action, recognizing that youth possess the vision, energy, and creativity required to build a brighter future. The Congress, with a robust online presence and multilingual interpretation, ensures global participation in this crucial conversation.

The 2023 Cross-Border Cooperation Congress is not merely a conference; it's a global platform where diverse individuals unite to discuss, develop, and implement solutions for building youth-friendly cities and addressing multifaceted challenges, including ongoing conflicts and their far-reaching implications.