



# FOREIGN RESEARCHERS' GUIDE TO POLAND



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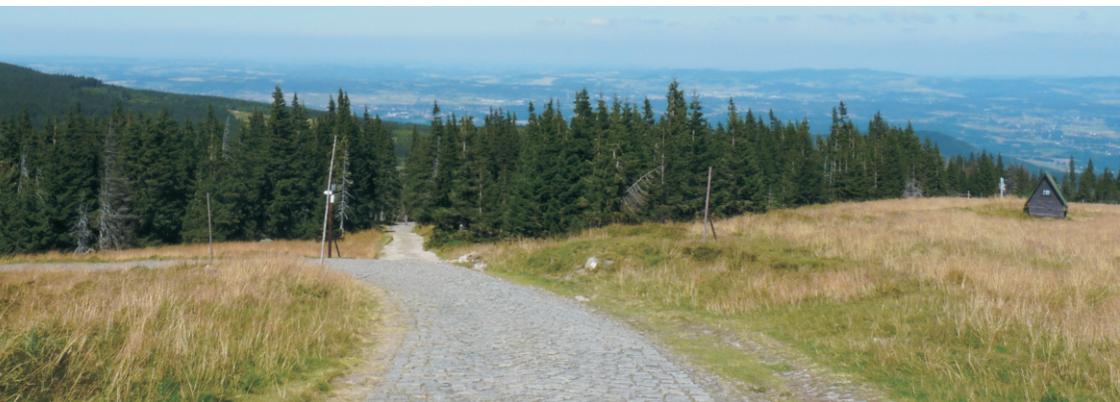
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**More details and updated information on various aspects of research and stay in Poland as well as job offers at Polish institutions can be found at EURAXESS Poland website [www.euraxess.pl](http://www.euraxess.pl)**

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# Polish Network of EURAXESS Services Centres



## FOREIGN RESEARCHERS' GUIDE TO POLAND

Poland 2011



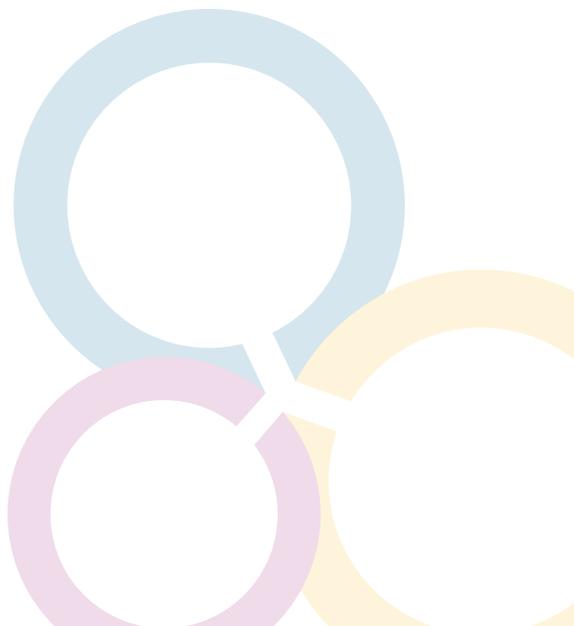
Ministry of Science  
and Higher Education  
Republic of Poland



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Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to invite you to Poland to meet those who devote their lives to discovering the world, who constantly develop their skills and acquire knowledge. I encourage you to visit the country whose long history and tradition in science, created by such eminent world-class scholars and scientists as Nicolaus Copernicus, Jan Hevelius and Marie Skłodowska-Curie, has led to the establishment of creative and durable foundations for the effective and dynamic development of science in our own times.

Recent investments in Polish R&D infrastructure have been so far-reaching that they are deeply changing the scientific landscape of our country. Thanks to state and EU funds new and well-equipped laboratories, R&D and educational centres are being established in Poland and today it is possible to conduct the most advanced and extensive research. This sector of science is becoming ever more competitive and focused.

A complex reform of both science and higher education which is now being implemented in Poland is a significant stimulant to development in both those fields. Modern acts of law constitute clear-cut and quality-oriented financing procedures and allow for more effective distribution of funds among R&D entities. They also establish a proper ground for cooperation between science and business. The changes introduced in the Polish system of science and higher education aim at supporting talented and aspiring researchers who already achieve valuable scientific success.

The essence of a scientific community is its mobility. Cooperation between institutions and scientists as well as the continuation of careers in various R&D entities release new energy for further research. Mobility gives immense possibilities to exchange experience and strengthen scientific potential. For many years it has been an inseparable element of scientific work and it constitutes a fundamental concept of the European Research Area. Given the benefits of the mobility of scientists, Poland opens its doors to those who wish to expand their scientific potential. Our country is open also for those who not only conduct research projects but also want to experience the unique tradition, culture and natural environment of Poland.



Prof. Barbara Kudrycka  
Minister of Science and Higher Education

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'B. Kudrycka'.



## ABOUT THE GUIDE

EURAXESS is a unique initiative providing access to a complete range of information and support services for European and non-European researchers. EURAXESS offers access to job market, assists researchers in advancing their careers in another European country and supports scientific organisations in their search for outstanding research talent.

This EURAXESS Guide has been prepared for foreign researchers who intend to come to Poland with an aim of starting or continuing their scientific career. The brochure is financed by the European Commission as a part of the EURAXESS T.O.P. project and by the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

The Guide briefly presents the research sector in Poland, describes necessary formalities to be completed before and after your arrival in Poland. It also gives you insight into various aspects of everyday life in our country.

This paper Guide focuses on the most relevant issues related to the country as a whole. More specific information concerning different regions of Poland can be found online on the Polish EURAXESS Portal in section "Services". It contains 10 Regional Guides providing practical information and advice on your everyday life in a given region. The section "Services" is also a comprehensive source of information related to various aspects of life in Poland presented from the perspective of a foreign researcher.

Should you need more customised assistance, please do not hesitate to contact one of the Polish centres. The Polish team is a part of nearly 500 staff working in around 380 centres and local points in 38 countries. We hope that this publication will answer your questions concerning your stay in Poland.

Anna Wiśniewska  
Co-ordinator of the Polish Network of  
EURAXESS Services Centres



## BASIC INFORMATION



The **Republic of Poland** is located in Central Europe. It covers an area of 312,679 sq km and has a population of nearly 38,204,000 (end of 2010). The capital of Poland is **Warsaw**. The official language is **Polish**. Poland's currency is the **zloty (PLN)**.



Poland is a young **parliamentary democracy** and a recently established but rapidly developing **market economy**. It is a member of a number of international organisations: the **European Union** (since 2004), **NATO**, UN, OSCE, ICRC, OECD, WTO, and many more.

### GEOGRAPHY



Table Mountains (Photo: [www.poland.gov.pl](http://www.poland.gov.pl))

Polish flora is particularly proud of huge oak trees, several hundred years old, which grow in various places throughout the country. The biggest animal of Polish fauna is **European bison** living in large herds on the Wolin Island and in the Białowieża Forest, the largest natural forest area in Europe (included in the **UNESCO** World Heritage List).



Fig.1. Poland and neighbour countries  
(Source: Oficyna Drukarska)

**Poland is situated in the heart of Europe**, between the Carpathian Mountains and the Baltic Sea. A point near Warsaw is the geometrical centre of Europe. In terms of area, Poland ranks 63rd in the world and 9<sup>th</sup> in Europe. Despite the fact that Poland is a lowland country, with area below 300 m above sea level covering 91.3% of its total area, the distinctive feature of the country is its **varied landscape**. It has beautiful mountains, extensive lake lands, primeval forests, mysterious caves, mighty rivers and the Baltic Sea.

<b>Highest point</b>	Rysy Peak in the Tatra Mountains, 2,499 m above sea level
<b>Lowest point</b>	Żuławy Wiślane, 1.8 m below sea level
<b>Longest river</b>	Wisła (Vistula), 1,047 km
<b>Largest lake</b>	Śniardwy, 11,383 ha
<b>Deepest lake</b>	Hańcza, 108 m
<b>Largest island</b>	Wolin, 265 sq km
<b>Longest peninsula</b>	Hel Sandbar, 34 km
<b>Biggest waterfall</b>	Wielka Sikława, 70 m
<b>Largest cave</b>	Wielka Śnieżna, 22 km (difference in height: 814 m)
<b>Oldest mountains</b>	Sowie (Owl) Mountains formed 2.7 billion years ago

## CLIMATE

Poland has a **moderate climate**, in between marine and continental climates. Six seasons of the year are distinguished in Poland: autumn, early winter, winter, early spring, spring and summer. Weather conditions in the summer period vary: summer may be hot and dry in one year, and wet and cool in the next year. The average temperature in summer usually ranges from +16°C to +20°C but may also reach +30°C. Likewise, winters in Poland are characterised by weather conditions varying considerably between years. The average temperature in winter ranges from -6°C to 0°C. The warmest month is July and the coolest month is January.

### *Did you know?*

Today Polish research institutes have four active polar research stations: one in Antarctica and three in the Arctic.

## TIME ZONE

GMT + 2 (summer time), GMT + 1 (winter time: between the last Sunday in October and the last Saturday in March).

## POPULATION

In terms of population size, Poland has the largest population of the countries which joined the European Union on 1 May 2004. The country ranks **6<sup>th</sup> in Europe** and **34<sup>th</sup> in the world**. Polish society is the youngest in Europe, with about 30% of Poles under 25 years of age. In terms of nationalities, contemporary Poland is a very **homogenous society** (98% Polish). National minorities account for 3.26% of the total population (as compared to 35% in 1931), the largest ones being Germans, Belarusians and Ukrainians.

## RELIGION

Poland is a predominantly **Catholic country**, about 90% of its population are baptised into the Roman Catholic faith. Other denominations: Greek Catholic – about 150,000 members; the Orthodox faith – ca 700,000 followers; Protestantism – almost 160,000 followers.

## CUSTOMS and LIFESTYLE

Polish customs and lifestyle have developed as a result of the intermingling of cultures of many nationalities living in the Polish territories for several centuries, and under the influence of the Western and Eastern worlds. This is illustrated, for example, by popular dishes in Polish cuisine: Ukrainian beetroot soup or borscht, beans à la Bretagne (stewed with meat in tomato sauce), Jewish-style jellied carp or Russian dumplings.



Polish folk pattern (Photo: [www.poland.gov.pl](http://www.poland.gov.pl))

Poles cherish traditions and maintain close relations with their immediate and more distant relatives. Since Poles are also very hospitable and open to new acquaintances, you should not be surprised when your Polish colleagues invite you to their place for a family dinner or supper. Once you have come, you should, however, be prepared to see a table laden with food and drinks.

**Did you know?**

The heliocentric model of the solar system, with the Earth as a planet revolving around the Sun, was constructed by Nicolas Copernicus (1473-1543), a Polish astronomer born in Toruń.

Poles greet each other by saying *dzień dobry* (good morning or good afternoon, the same Polish phrase for both) or *dobry wieczór* (good evening) in a formal way or by *cześć* (hi, hello) among friends. Often when greeting each other and always when giving their best wishes, those who are on familiar terms kiss each other on the cheek (usually 3 times). Poles address each other by their first names when they know each other well. Otherwise, they address each other by *Pan* (Mr.) or *Pani* (Mrs./Ms.) followed by the surname or, in a less formal way, by the first name. Women may be kissed by men on the hand as part of a greeting ritual, though this tradition is gradually disappearing, in particular among younger generations. However, it is still customary for men to step back to let women go through the door first.



Traditional ornamented Easter eggs  
(Photo: [www.poland.gov.pl](http://www.poland.gov.pl))

Poles are attached to their traditions and celebrate ceremonially various holidays, in particular Christmas, Easter, the Corpus Christi Day and the All Saints' Day. Christmas is a special occasion for every Pole. Traditionally, Poles spend these days at home with their closest family. A decorated Christmas tree, gifts, 12 fasting dishes (each to be sampled), the table set for all expected guests plus one unknown lost wanderer, and singing carols jointly – are all indispensable elements of a cherished tradition. Among public holidays, the most important ones are the Independence Day and the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May which is the Constitution Day, when official celebrations and

concerts are organised. Poles love celebrating various occasions; thus, you will find dates such as the Mother's Day (26 May), the Women's Day (8 March) or the Children's Day (1 June) marked in the calendar. Moreover, Poles celebrate their name days, and birthdays are usually celebrated as a popular occasion until young people turn 18 and enter adulthood.

More information:

Official website of Poland [www.poland.gov.pl](http://www.poland.gov.pl)

## ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISION

In accordance with a three-tier administrative structure (introduced in 1999), the territory of Poland is subdivided into **16 provinces** (*województwo*), **379 urban and rural counties** (*powiat*) and **2,479 communes** (*gmina*), which are subdivided into rural, urban-rural and urban communes. A city with a population of over 100,000 has the county status.

## POLITICAL SYSTEM

The governing principles of the Polish State are laid down in the **Constitution of 2 April 1997**. It guarantees all citizens the respect and protection of political rights and civil liberties by public authorities. Poland is a precursor of European constitutionalism. In 1791 the Sejm of the Republic of the Two Nations (Poland and Lithuania Commonwealth) adopted the organic law, later on called the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May Constitution, which was **the first one in the Old Continent and the second one, next to the US Constitution, in the world.**



The Sejm building, Warsaw  
(Photo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

The Republic of Poland has a **parliamentary system of government**. In accordance with the Constitution, power is divided between the **legislature** (Parliament composed of Sejm and Senate), the **executive** (President, Prime Minister and the Council of Ministers) and the **judiciary** (independent judicature: common courts of law, administrative courts). The Constitution also provides for the participation of **local authorities** in governance at all levels of the administrative division of the country.

### **Did you know?**

The first three women in Poland began their university studies at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow in 1894. Women were granted voting rights in 1918, and equal access to public functions in 1921.

The **President** is the Head of State, the highest representative of the Republic of Poland and the guarantor of the continuity of state authority. The President is the highest executive authority, ensures observance of the Constitution, and safeguards the sovereignty and security of the State. The President is elected by universal suffrage for a five-year term and may be re-elected only for one more term.

The **Government** or the **Council of Ministers**, including the Prime Minister, is formally appointed by the President and approved by a vote of confidence of the Parliament. The Council of Ministers is in charge of current national policies; ensures the implementation of Acts of Parliament through the adoption of secondary legislation; co-ordinates and monitors the work of government administration; ensures internal and external security of the State and public order; protects the interests of the State Treasury; adopts a draft State budget and manages its execution; and concludes and terminates international agreements.

The Council of Ministers is represented in the territory of the Republic of Poland by **voivods** (*wojewoda*) who are the heads of government administration within 16 voivodships. **Local government** bodies at each level of the administrative division are elected by universal, direct and equal suffrage. Local authorities adopt local legislation, establish their own budgets and supervise their execution, and introduce local taxes and charges.

More information:

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Polish Parliament: Sejm [www.sejm.gov.pl](http://www.sejm.gov.pl) and Senat [www.senat.gov.pl](http://www.senat.gov.pl)  
 Official website of the President of Poland [www.president.pl](http://www.president.pl)  
 Council of Ministers [www.kprm.gov.pl](http://www.kprm.gov.pl)  
 Official promotional website of Poland <http://en.poland.gov.pl>

## ECONOMY



Photo: Polpharma SA, the largest Polish manufacturer of generic drugs and pharmaceutical substances

Following the fall of communist regime in 1989, Poland began to transform its inefficient and indebted, centrally steered economy into a free market economy.

As a result of consistently implemented economic policy, Poland soon joined the group of developing economies of the world. The rapid economic growth was confirmed by the accession of Poland to the **Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)** in November 1996, and to the **World Trade Organization (WTO)** in 1995.

Since Poland's accession to the **European Union on 1<sup>st</sup> May 2004**, its economic situation has been improving significantly. According to the statistics, Poland's GDP rose by 6.6% in 2007 and by 4.8% the next year, which was the highest increase among other EU countries. As of 2008, despite the global recession, Polish economy registered the fastest growth in Central Europe, making Poland 6th most prosperous economy on the continent. The end of 2010 saw further real economic growth which amounted to 4.2%, with GDP of USD 476 bn (U.S. Department of State).

### Did you know?

Ignacy Łukasiewicz (1822-1882), a Polish pharmacist, is the father of petroleum industry and the inventor of paraffin lamp. He was the first in the world to distil pure paraffin and the one who established a crude oil mine near the town of Krosno (which is still in operation).

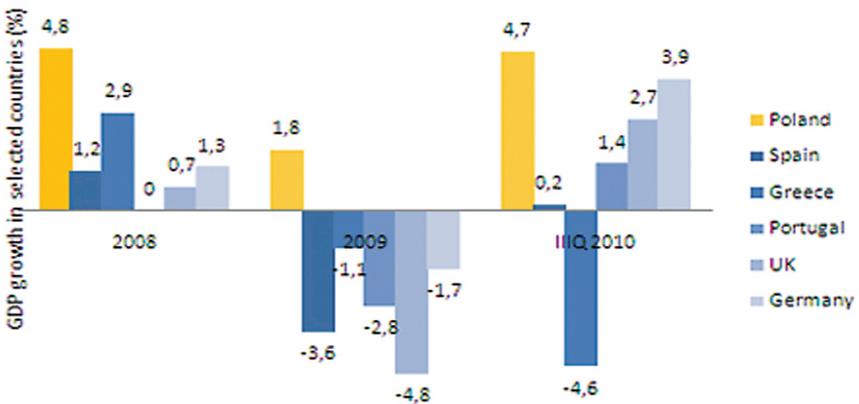


Fig.2. GDP in selected EU countries 2008 – 2010 (Source: Eurostat)

The highest percentage of Poland's GDP is accumulated in the services sector (67.3%) while industry and agriculture account for 28% and 4.6% of GDP, respectively.

Poland's membership in the EU also strengthened its international relations, which resulted in circa 80% of its exports and 60% of its imports reaching or coming from other EU countries (2010). Polish exports have been showing an upward trend from 34.4 bn euro in 2000 to 103.4 bn euro in 2010. Poland's mostly exported goods include: motor vehicles, machinery, iron, steel, glass, pottery, furniture, garments, electronics, chemicals, and medicines, as well as natural resources: coal, wood, copper, lead, salt.

Following 2004, foreign investors began to perceive Poland as an important business partner, thanks to its stable economic situation, competitive labour costs, varied industry, geographical location and its well-educated professionals who speak foreign languages. The most foreign funds are invested in: transport and logistics, manufacturing, automotive industry, pharmaceutical and healthcare sector, machinery, aviation, road infrastructure and electronics. A considerable increase has also been observed among foreign outsourcing companies, as well as research and training centres setting up their branches in Poland.

All these positive changes have had a great influence on the situation on the Polish labour market. According to the Central Statistical Office (GUS), the rate of registered unemployment has dropped from 20% (in 2005) to 13% in January 2011, which places Poland vis-a-vis other EU Member States. The rate of inflation is also close to the EU average (3.8% in January 2011) and salaries have been rising quite rapidly.

More information:

Ministry of Treasury [www.msp.gov.pl/portal](http://www.msp.gov.pl/portal)

Ministry of Finance [www.mf.gov.pl](http://www.mf.gov.pl)

Polish Information and Foreign Investment Agency [www.paiz.gov.pl](http://www.paiz.gov.pl)

National Bank of Poland (NBP) [www.nbp.pl](http://www.nbp.pl)

Central Statistical Office (GUS) [www.stat.gov.pl](http://www.stat.gov.pl)

## HISTORY



Annual performance of the Grunwald Battle  
(Photo: [www.poland.gov.pl](http://www.poland.gov.pl))

The origins of the Polish state date back to as early as the 10<sup>th</sup> century. The tribes living at that time on the West Slavic lands, had been united by the tribe Polanie, forming a State under the rule of the Piasts. The first duke in the dynasty was Mieszko the first who accepted Christianity in 966. Mieszko's son, Boleslaw Chrobry, was crowned as the first king of Poland in 1025 and Gniezno became the first capital of Poland. Between 1047 and 1050, the capital was moved to Krakow.

The following 300 years were the time of pagan rebellions, civil wars and conflicts with neighbour countries. Peace and prosperity came along in 1385

when Polish queen Jadwiga married Grand Duke of Lithuania Władysław Jagiełło. The two countries united for 200 years under the reign of the Jagiellonian dynasty had become powerful enough to fight the Teutonic Order which had been tormenting Poland and Lithuania for about 100 years. The famous battle of Grunwald fought in 1410 (the greatest battle of the Medieval period) put an end to the power of the

Teutonic knights and brought fame to the Jagiellonian dynasty. The reign of the Jagiellonians (15<sup>th</sup> – 16<sup>th</sup> cent., known as the 'Golden Age') was a period when culture, arts and science flourished in Poland. It was a period of the development of the **Kraków Academy** (the second oldest university in Central Europe, next to the one in Prague, currently named Jagiellonian University), the Polish literary language (Mikołaj Rej, Jan Kochanowski) and science (**Nicolas Copernicus**). It was also the time of the so-called Noble's democracy (two-chamber parliament), the development of rural economy, internal market and growing exports.

At the end of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the capital was moved from Cracow to Warsaw. The Republic of the Two Nations became a state of religious tolerance. Following the end of the dynasty's reign in 1572, Poland became an elective monarchy tormented by wars and epidemics. The situation improved temporarily following the victories of king Jan III Sobieski, including the relief of Vienna besieged by the Turks.

The following decades saw the decline of the Polish state due to internal chaos and an aggressive policy pursued by the neighbouring empires Russia, Prussia and Austria. The countries eventually divided Poland's territory (Three Partitions of Poland: 1772, 1793 and 1795) and Poland disappeared from the map of the world for over 100 years. During that period, King Stanisław August Poniatowski attempted to implement reforms and restore Polish statehood (the **National Education Commission of 1773**; the Constitution of 3 May 1791), and the nation managed to rise several times in struggle to regain autonomy (Kościuszko Insurrection of 1794, November Rising of 1830-1831, January Rising of 1863-1864).

#### **Did you know?**

Following the successive partitions of Poland (18<sup>th</sup> c.), Poles found it difficult or even impossible to continue their education in their own country; thus, many of those who later became outstanding Polish scholars emigrated after completion of secondary school to take up university studies and research career abroad.

Poland regained independence on 11 November 1918 following the First World War, and the power in the country was given to Józef Piłsudski. The development of the devastated country was hindered by successive crises, hyperinflation and Polish Bolshevik and Polish-Ukrainian wars. The period of stabilisation was interrupted by the outbreak of World War II. In September 1939 Poland was invaded by Nazi Germany and by the Soviet Union which divided the territory of Poland (Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact).

In the occupied territories, despite terror (Nazi concentration camps and deportations to the Soviet Union: Katyń), Poles created an underground resistance movement (the Home Army and Underground State) and formed a government in exile - first in France and later in the UK. Despite all of these efforts, over 6 million Poles were killed during the war (3 million were Polish Jews).



Celebrations of the Independence Day  
(Photo: [www.poland.gov.pl](http://www.poland.gov.pl))

After WW II, as a result of an agreement among the allied parties, Poland found itself in the Soviet sphere of influence. Its borders were finally fixed in Potsdam in 1945, whereby the country lost 20% of its pre-war territory.

The communist domination in Poland lasted for more than 40 years. Restrictions enforced by centrally-steered economy, censorship and constant invigilation sparked numerous protests. This resulted in the creation of independent Solidarity movement in 1980 led by Lech Wałęsa. This marked the beginning of the collapse of the Soviet bloc and political sweeping through Central Europe.

**Did you know?**

In December 1932, Polish mathematicians Marian Rajewski, Henryk Zygalski and Jerzy Różycki, cracked the code used by the German **ENIGMA cipher machine**, thus contributing to many military successes of the allied forces during World War II.

The year 1989 and the first free elections to the Polish parliament gave birth to the fall of communist sovereignty and the establishment of the Republic of Poland. Economic reforms began and Poland started to restructure its political system. Since then the country has joined many international organisations, including the European Union on 1 May 2004.



More information:

Official promotional website of Poland [www.poland.gov.pl](http://www.poland.gov.pl)



Warsaw Uprising of 1944  
Photo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs



Malbork - the largest gothic fortress in Europe,  
the seat of the Teutonic Order 1309-1457  
Photo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

## RESEARCH IN POLAND

### R&D FRAMEWORK

One of the main objectives of the government policy is to transform the country into a sustainable society with competitive and dynamic economy based on knowledge triangle composed of education, research and innovation. The challenges linked with Poland's membership in the European Union as of 1st May 2004, including the structural funds and shift of priorities within particular functions of science and higher education sectors, required taking up numerous modifications within the Polish R&D structure and financing system.



Dr Beata Frączak with her son, Foundation for Polish Science  
(Photo: Magdalena Wiśniewska Krasieńska)

Years 2010 and 2011 have marked the next phase of crucial changes in the area of Polish science and higher education, which are to increase participation of Poland's R+D sector in the European Research Area. A new reform of Polish science developed by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education came into force in October 2010.

A package of six legislative acts titled “**Building upon knowledge: Science reform for Poland's development**” presents a clear distribution of powers and tasks in the research sector and modifies rules of financing research institutions and rules of their research quality assessment.

**Reforms of the Polish higher education system**, which are scheduled to become effective on 1 October 2011, aim to introduce an efficient system of higher education management with enhanced autonomy of

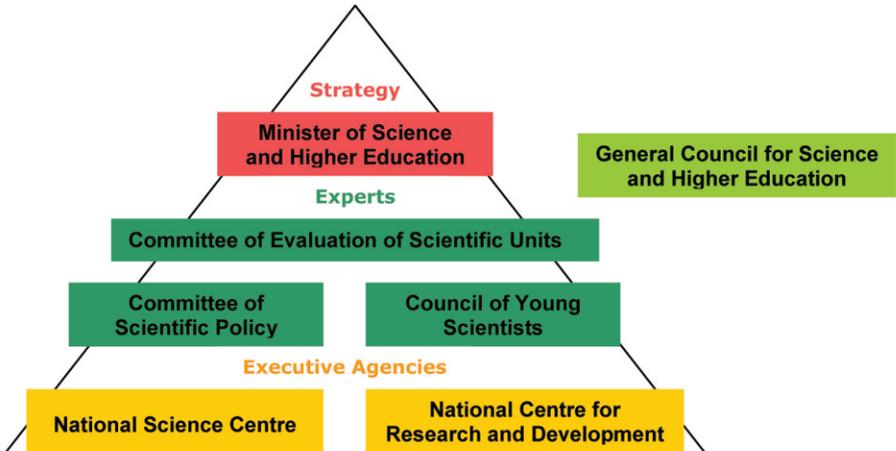


Fig.3. Decision and Advisory Bodies

higher education institutions (including specification of educational programmes), dynamic academic career model and better integration with social and economic environment.

Moreover, the objective of selecting **National Leading Scientific Centres (KNOW)** via an open competition is to establish elite units conducting unique research projects combined with advanced interdisciplinary training.

This comprehensive strategy focuses on the development of young generations' scientific career, enhanced cooperation between science, education and business, increased quality of conducted research and didactics as well as on expanded autonomy and responsibility of research environment and higher education institutions.

**In Poland the Minister of Science and Higher Education** is responsible for the development and implementation of research policy, coordination of scientific activities at the national level, financial plan regarding science budget, funding of statutory activities of research units and large research infrastructure and construction investments, as well as promotion and financing of international cooperation in the area of research. One of the tools developed for these purposes are **Ministry's special programmes** which allow to allocate funds directly to science development and additional tasks, such as supporting international mobility of researchers (Mobility Plus), encouraging Polish scientists to participate in the European Research Council's competitions (Ideas Plus) and supporting research promotion carried out by outstanding young scientists, results of which are published in JRC or ERIH (Iuventus Plus). A new activity is the **National Programme for the Development of Humanities**.

**Did you know?**

Maria Skłodowska-Curie (1867-1934), together with her husband Pierre, named the first chemical element they discovered "Polonium" after her homeland Poland ("Polonia" in Latin).

The Minister is **supported by four newly created opinion-making and advisory bodies**. The **Committee of Scientific Policy** advises the Ministry on strategic issues related to research and innovation policy, state budget for research, national and foreign investments, new legislation regulations as well as issues related to cooperation between Polish and European scientific research. Comprehensive evaluation of R&D activities quality and proposals for research categorisation are conducted by the **Committee of Evaluation of Scientific Units**. Depending on that evaluation, statutory funds are allocated according to the category granted by the Minister. Another advisory body is the **Council of Young Scientists**. The Council prepares opinions on project development initiated by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education as well as issues its own proposals in accordance with ideas and interests of young scientists.

More: [www.nauka.gov.pl](http://www.nauka.gov.pl)



**National Centre for Research and Development (NCBiR)** was established in July 2007 with an aim of managing and implementing scientific and innovative state policy. NCBiR's tasks relate most of all to financing applied research and development projects as well as to supporting research commercialization and other forms of transferring scientific research results to economy. The Centre's initiates and executes strategic programmes in the area of scientific research and development. In addition, in order to further strengthen the cooperation between research and business sectors, NCBiR co-finances actions conducted by private

sector units and other entities, thus encouraging entrepreneurs to invest in research and development activity.

**More:** [www.ncbir.pl](http://www.ncbir.pl)



National Science Centre (NCN) started to operate at the beginning of 2011. Its mission is to further decentralise the system of financing science in Poland as well as to transfer the following competences to scientific community: decisions regarding directions of basic research development, priorities of scientific disciplines specification, announcement and arrangement of calls for proposals and decisions made as to financing particular activities. One of Centre's flagship tasks includes initiatives focused on the development of scientific staff, with special emphasis placed on supporting persons starting their scientific careers (20% of the Centre's budget). The structure and procedures of this executive agency are based on standards established by the European Research Council.

**More:** [www.ncn.gov.pl](http://www.ncn.gov.pl)

## SCIENTIFIC AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS

In 2008 employment rate within the research and development activity was 119,682 persons, including over 97,000 research staff. Women accounted for about 32% of the total research staff number. In 2007/2008 Poland had 32,900 doctoral students and 51% of them were women. Over 92 of doctoral students are enrolled in higher education institutions and others in the institutes of the Polish Academy of Sciences and R&D institutes. In the same year, 1,937,400 students (56.4% women) attended Bachelor's and Master's degree programmes at public and non-public higher education institutions.

Higher education institutions are one of the most dynamically developing centres of social life in Poland, which plays a major role in the development of national research potential. Within the last twenty years, this sector experienced quantitative transformations, including development of non-state higher education and a five-fold increase in the number of admitted students. Research is carried out by 195 higher education institutions (out of 462 entities 129 of which are state universities). They are located in all major Polish cities. Some of those cities boast about long-term academic traditions, having developed strong academic communities. Most of the institutions are supervised by the Minister of Science and Higher Education, others – by relevant Ministries (i.e. the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of National Defence).



Photo: University of Warsaw

**More:** [www.nauka.gov.pl/higher-education](http://www.nauka.gov.pl/higher-education)

**Did you know?**

The Jagiellonian University in Cracow (1364) is the second oldest university in Central Europe, next to Charles University in Prague.

**Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN)**, established in 1951, is an independent research institution with units across the country. PAN as a research centre currently comprises of 79 research establishments (institutes and research centres, research stations, botanical gardens and other research units) and auxiliary scientific units (archives, libraries, museums, and foreign PAN stations). It organises and integrates research community and prepares expert opinions for public institutions. The Academy has a number of actively working external research stations: in Brussels, Paris, Berlin, Rome, Vienna and Moscow.

**More:** [www.pan.pl](http://www.pan.pl)

**Research institutes** are state institutions operating as separate entities in terms of their legal basis, organisational arrangements and funding mechanisms. They are supervised by various sector ministries which conduct R&D work in line with the needs of the national economy and social life. Among 123 units, there are research institutes, central laboratories and research and development centres which focus their activities on conducting applied research and development activities. The General Council of the Research Institutes is their representative body.

**More:** [www.rgib.org.pl](http://www.rgib.org.pl) (*only in Polish*)

**Development units** include about 700 business entities active in the area of R&D. Beside their principal activity, they also conduct experimental development aimed at application of already existing knowledge gained through conducting basic or applied research or through practical experience. The knowledge is applied to produce or significantly improve new materials, devices, products, processes, systems or services. The companies cooperate with national research units, such as universities and research institutes. However, their investments in research activities are rather low.

**Did you know?**

Andrzej Tarkowski (born in 1933), a Polish embryologist, is the pioneer of research in the embryology of mammals. His research created theoretical and practical foundations for the achievements of biology and medicine in the 20th century: in vitro fertilisation, cloning and the discovery of stem cells.

## **R&D FUNDING**

Poland belongs to the group of the EU Member States with the lowest level of investment in research and technology development. The expenditure on R&D amounted to 0.61% of GDP in 2008. The structure of research funding in Poland (focused on financing basic research from budget funds) requires qualitative changes, including increased spending of the economic sector on applied research, as well as development and implementation activities. In Poland GERD amounts only to 33.1% (0.18% of GDP) and is one of the lowest percentage in the European Union where the average R+D spending is 54.1%.

However, the situation is slowly improving following Poland's accession to the European Union. The structural funds received for conducting modern research and development of scientific infrastructure as well as for the modernization of the higher education sector amount to about EUR 4.1 billion for the years 2007-2013. Additional support for innovation research through closer cooperation with the industry is provided by the Polish Agency for Enterprise Development (*PARP* [www.parp.gov.pl](http://www.parp.gov.pl)). Thanks to the available resources, the total budget for research activities reached about 0.9% of Poland's GDP in 2010.

The recent transformation of Poland's financial mechanism from – statutory funds towards an increase in the number of open calls – will influence the modernization process of the Polish scientific research. It is assumed that by 2020 about 50% of the available funds will have been acquired through open competitions.

In Poland there is a limited access to financial sources other than the state budget. Among non-governmental organisations, the following two should be mentioned:



**Foundation for Polish Science (FNP)** established in 1991 as an independent, self-financing, non-profit, non-governmental organization. The Foundation provides support to individual

researchers and research teams and finances investment projects which foster Polish science development. FNP also undertakes activities facilitating the transfer of research results to industry. Among others, it awards grants, scholarships and prizes, including the **FNP Award** which is considered the most prestigious research award in Poland. In recent years, the Foundation has also been significantly involved in supporting international research co-operation, and in activities facilitating exchange of ideas between scholars and helping young scientists to become more independent in their research work.

More: [www.fnp.org.pl](http://www.fnp.org.pl)



Agnieszka Butwin, laureate of the Ventures Programme of the Foundation for Polish Science  
(Photo: Tomasz Sorówka, Studio 22)



**Polpharma Scientific Foundation** was established in 2001 by a private company Polpharma SA which is currently the largest Polish manufacturer of generic drugs and pharmaceutical substances. In accordance with the founders' intention, the Foundation supports pharmaceutical and medical science development by financing and

initiating scientific research and practical solutions, providing scholarships and awards and promoting knowledge among representatives of scientific, social and business environments. From the beginning, NFP has been organising an annual competition for the Polish research society with an aim of financing original ideas which contribute to the development of medicine and pharmacy.

More: [www.polpharma.pl/en/foundation](http://www.polpharma.pl/en/foundation)

## INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

### EU Framework Programmes for Research and Development

Poland officially joined the European **Framework Programmes (FP) for Research and Technological Development** in 1999. Under the FP5 (1998-2002) 1,323 Polish teams received funding amounting to 152 million euro and in FP6 (2002-2006) 1,876 teams received around 217,000 million euro. One of the key results of their participation was creation of Centres of Excellence in Poland – strong research teams which actively participate in international research co-operation. As a result of the preparations for the 7<sup>th</sup> FP (2006-2013), Polish Technology Platforms have been created to integrate and mobilise Polish industry.

Polish teams and individual researchers are actively involved in the Maria Curie Actions programme has been financed as part of the EU Framework Programmes since 1996. As a result of institutional research and training projects, Polish teams and individual researchers are involved in the transfer of knowledge between European and world's research institutions and the training of junior researchers. Maria Curie fellowships have enabled many foreign researchers to come to Poland where they implement their research ideas jointly with Polish researchers.



The implementation of the EU Framework Programmes in Poland is supported by the National Contact Point for EU Research Programmes, a unit at the Institute of Fundamental Technological Research of the Polish Academy of Sciences.

### EUREKA and EUROSTARS

Since 1995 Poland has participated in the EUREKA initiative which aims to increase the innovativeness, productivity and competitiveness of European industry, so that it is able to fight to maintain its position in the key areas on the world's markets. The EUROSTARS programme was established as a common initiative of EUREKA and the European Union and its objective is to develop innovation through supporting small and medium companies significantly involved in research activity. In Poland the institution responsible for the programme is the National Centre for Research and Development.

### COST

Poland joined the COST Programme, the European Programme of Cooperation in the field of Scientific and Technical Research, in 1991. COST is an institutional structure maintained jointly by 34 European countries and Israel (as a co-operating country) which aims primarily to organise multilateral co-operation in the area of research and technology between its member states. The implementation of the programme in Poland is the responsibility of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

## NATO Science programme

The Science for Peace and Security Programme offers grants to scientists in NATO, Partner and Mediterranean Dialogue countries to collaborate on priority research topics, which include NATO priorities and additional Partner country priorities. Grants are also offered to assist the academic community in Partner countries to set up computer networking infrastructure and to optimize their use of electronic communication. The implementation of the programme in Poland is the responsibility of the Ministry of Science and Higher Education.



Polish Polar Station Hornsund in Spitsbergen  
(Photo: Marek Szymocha)

## ENTRY AND RESIDENCE

### General information

On 21 December 2007 Poland joined the Schengen zone of free movement of persons within the zone, which automatically cancelled customs control on the German, Czech, Slovak and Lithuanian borders. As a result, visa procedures, including rules and regulations for third country citizens, have been unified in the large part of the European territory. In order to adjust Poland's visa procedures to the common European visa policy (Visa Code), Poland lifted the visa requirement for visits shorter than 3 months towards the countries which signed with Poland agreements on the visa-free movement of persons<sup>1</sup>. However, these visa exemptions do not apply as far as work, other paid activities and residence are concerned. Lifting the control on the internal borders within the Schengen zone intensified, at the same time, customs control on the external borders – in case of Poland these are Russian, Belarusian and Ukrainian borders.

**Visas to Poland** are issued by Polish consulates abroad.

If you have to **legalise your stay** in Poland, you need to visit a voivodship office (*urząd wojewódzki*) competent with respect to your place of residence in Poland.

**Temporary registration** can be done in a commune / municipal office in the town or district of your residence in Poland.

### I. Information for EU + Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland citizens:

In order to cross the border of Poland, you only need either a **valid travel document** (e.g. passport) or other **document certifying your identity and citizenship** (e.g. identity card).

**Members of your family** who are third-country citizens (non-EU citizens) may also stay in Poland up to 3 months on the basis of their **valid travel document** ONLY.

After coming to Poland, if you rent a room/flat/house, you need to register your (and your family) stay at a commune office (in towns) or municipal office (in districts of bigger cities).\*

You may stay in Poland for the **first three months** on the basis of either of these documents (ID or passport). **BUT:** If you intend to stay in Poland for **more than three months**, you need to legalise your stay.\*\*

### II. Information for third-country citizens (citizens of countries not included in point I):

**Before coming to Poland**, you are required to apply for a **visa** – a permit to enter or stay within the territory of Poland (as stated above, nationals of third-countries may not need a visa in certain cases). Different types of visas are issued by a Polish diplomatic or consular unit located in your home country and they are simply placed in your passport. If you come to Poland with you family members, you need to include their details in the visa application form. You should also enclose documents confirming family relationships. You may stay in Poland legally **until your visa expires**. However, if you intend to extend your stay, you are required to legalise your stay.\*\*

<sup>1</sup>The list of the countries which signed the bilateral agreement with Poland is available at the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs website [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl)

### There are two most popular types of visas:

**1) type C Schengen visa** – issued by a Schengen zone country for a total period of 3 months counted within any 6-month period;

#### Your application for this type of visa should include, among other things:

travel document, confirmation of the purpose of your visit in Poland (e.g. employment contract, invitation), confirmation of financial resources sufficient to stay in Poland (with your family members) for the intended period of time (e.g. an employment contract), and your photograph. You should contact a Polish consul in your country to find out exactly what documents you need.

#### **NOTE: Exemption from paying a visa fee applies to:**

- persons coming to Poland to conduct research,
- PhD students,
- children of up to 6 years of age.

**2) type D national visa** - entitles you to stay in the territory of Poland for a period of at least 3 months but usually no more than 1 year. **While applying, you need to provide, among others:** purpose of your visit and a document confirming your medical insurance in Poland.

**NOTE:** As of 5 April 2010 holders of the national D visa **are permitted** to enter the other Schengen countries for the total period of 3 months within any 6-month period if they meet the above-mentioned Schengen zone requirements (valid travel document, sufficient financial resources).

\* Temporary registration in the commune/municipal office should be carried out within 4 days following your arrival in Poland. Knowing the place of your accommodation, you should register yourself (and your family members) in the commune/municipal office in the town or district of your residence. If you rent a room/flat/house, you need to provide your tenancy agreement and your travel document (visa). However, if you stay at a hotel or academic hotel, registration is carried out by the owner of the place. When your registration is completed, you receive a **PESEL number** (after about 2 weeks).

\*\* In order to legalise your stay in Poland, you need to apply to the voivodship office (*urząd wojewódzki*) in the voivodship (province) of your intended residence in order to receive a residence permit. There are 3 types of the permit but due to formal requirements, the most popular type is the **residence permit for a specific period**. As far as **members of your immediate family** are concerned, you must also provide their details in the application form as well as documents confirming family relationships.

**NOTICE:** The decision of the voivodship office will be issued within 45 and 90 days after the application, therefore, if you want to prolong your stay, you must apply early enough (45 days before the expiry date of your visa in case of third-country citizens).



## PESEL number

When you register your stay in the commune office or municipal office\* in the town or city of your residence, you receive this number (PESEL - personal number of Public Electronic System of Population Evidence). This number simplifies certain formalities in Poland, such as opening a bank account, renting a car, visiting a doctor, etc. The assigned number will be sent to you within 3 weeks by regular mail or you can collect it personally from the office.

More information:

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Office for Foreigners [www.udsc.gov.pl](http://www.udsc.gov.pl)  
Ministry of Foreign Affairs [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl)  
Mazovian Voivodship Office [www.mazowsze.uw.gov.pl](http://www.mazowsze.uw.gov.pl)



## WORKING IN POLAND

According to the Polish law, researchers of any nationality who come to Poland to conduct research in **state-owned research institutions, do not need a work permit. BUT if you are a third-country citizen** who comes to Poland for scientific or research purposes, **you need to possess a visa** (see chapter "Entry and Residence").

### EMPLOYMENT CONTRACTS

The Polish labour system allows for several types of work contracts to be concluded between an employer and an employee:

1. **a regular employment contract** (*umowa o pracę*) - regulated by the Labour Code; may be concluded for a definite or indefinite period of time;

2. **civil law contracts** - regulated by the Civil Code, which differ from the above contract mainly in that they specify a piece of work to be done within a defined period of time, quite often without stating working hours; it allows the contracting parties to adopt more flexible employment arrangements, but does not provide for the same entitlements as a regular employment contract, for example as regards annual holiday leave or types of insurance.

**The most popular types of civil law contracts are the following:**

- *umowa zlecenie* concluded for the performance of a specified activity
- *umowa o dzieło* concluded for the submission of a specific result

All types of contracts should be concluded in a written form. Among other things, they determine the parties of the contract or agreement, its type, the starting and ending dates, the type of work or results to be achieved, the remuneration for the specified type of work. In the case of the regular employment contract, the revenue earned is charged with all labour costs and taxes. The Polish flexible forms of employment mentioned above are not mutually exclusive, and jobs may have features of one or more of them.

### WORKING TIME

In Poland working time is regulated in the Labour Code and in general cannot exceed 8 hours per day, which gives an average of 40 hours in a five-day working week. Weekly working time cannot exceed 48 hours including overtime (January 2011). Usually work starts between 8.00-9.00 in the morning and finishes at 4.00-5.00 in the afternoon.



Joanna Ortyl, laureate of the Ventures Programme of the Foundation for Polish Science  
(Photo: Krzysztof Sordyl)

## NATIONAL HOLIDAYS

The dates given below are non-working days. This means that most shops, banks, post offices and government institutions are closed. Public transport, including trains and coaches, run less frequently according to a public holiday timetable.

<b>1<sup>st</sup> January</b>	New Year
<b>6<sup>th</sup> January</b>	Wise Men religious holiday
<b>March or April</b>	Easter Sunday and Monday
<b>1<sup>st</sup> May</b>	Labour Day
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> May</b>	Constitution Day
<b>May/June</b>	Corpus Christi (first Thursday of the ninth week after Easter)
<b>15<sup>th</sup> August</b>	Feast of the Assumption
<b>1<sup>st</sup> November</b>	All Saints' Day
<b>11<sup>th</sup> November</b>	Independence Day
<b>25 &amp; 26<sup>th</sup> December</b>	Christmas and Boxing Day

More information:

Ministry of Labour and Social Policy [www.mpips.gov.pl](http://www.mpips.gov.pl)

## TAXATION

### Personal Income Tax (PIT)

In general terms, a natural person residing in Poland (usually it means a stay of at least 183 days of the calendar year) is a taxpayer in Poland and is liable on their globally-earned income, regardless of the place where remuneration is received. In case of shorter stays (less than 183 days), only the income coming from Polish sources, is subject to taxation in Poland. The detailed regulation is included in International Agreements for the Avoidance of Double Taxation signed by Poland with over 80 countries. It is recommended to search for the agreement by a country of origin as it is available in the native language version. The Polish version is available on the Ministry of Finance web page, and the Agreements of other countries are available on the relevant ministry's websites of a given country.

Poland's fiscal policy is the responsibility of the **Ministry of Finance**.

All tax issues are settled by **tax services offices** located in each town and city.

According to the Polish law, an employer, regardless of the type of a work contract or fellowship, **is obliged** to calculate and make advancement of monthly tax payments for income earned by a physical person due to an employment or service relation. In general terms, the gross remuneration is subject to the following obligatory labour cost charges (some of them are shared between the employer and employee): healthcare, sickness, accident charges, and disability and old-age pensions.

Calculation of income tax according to income thresholds 2011 (Source: Polish Information and Foreign Investment Agency)

<b>Annual income up to PLN 3,091</b>	0%
<b>Annual income below PLN 85,528</b>	18 % minus amount decreasing the tax PLN 556.02
<b>Annual income exceeding PLN 85,528</b>	PLN 14,839.02 + 32 % of surplus over PLN 85,528

In each voivodship in Poland there is a **tax services office for foreigners** which you may contact personally. Each year before the end of April tax payers in Poland are obliged to settle their tax payments through submitting PIT forms to an appropriate tax services office of the place of their residence. Persons leaving Poland before the end of a given calendar year should settle any tax liabilities before their departure.

## Value Added Tax (VAT)

The most important of the indirect taxes is the value-added tax (**VAT**), which is **23%** for most goods and services. Other rates (for years 2011 – 2013):

- **8%** - applies to specific goods and services, e.g. goods related to health protection, groceries, hotels services, folk art commodities,
- **5%** - applies to some farm produce supply;

Polish tax provisions also provide for some exemptions from VAT. Among the activities subject to such exemptions are financial, educational, health and cultural services. However, the exemption excludes the deduction of input VAT related to the exempt transactions

More information:

Ministry of Finance [www.mf.gov.pl](http://www.mf.gov.pl)

Polish Information and Foreign Investment Agency [www.paiz.gov.pl](http://www.paiz.gov.pl)

# INSURANCE AND HEALTH CARE

## SOCIAL SECURITY

In Poland persons working on the basis of the **regular employment contract** are obliged to pay **four types of social security contributions**: pension insurance, disability pension insurance, sickness and maternity insurance, and work accident and occupational disease insurance. Persons working on the basis of a **civil law contract** are required to pay **only selected** types of social security contributions, depending on the type of contract.

The national welfare policy in Poland is the responsibility of the **Ministry of Labour and Social Policy**.

The Social Security Institution (**ZUS**) acts as its executive agency.



### I. Information for EU countries + Norway, Iceland, Lichtenstein and Switzerland:

Since Poland is a member state of the European Union and the European Economic Area (EEA)<sup>2</sup>, its social security scheme is coordinated in accordance with other member states' schemes. It means that the EEA is covered by uniform rules, which prevent a situation when an employed person moving within a territory of several EEA countries is subject to social security legislation of more than one country or none of the countries. Thanks to such a system, all insurance premiums paid in different countries are summed up. As a result, a retired person receives a pension which consists of contributions calculated proportionally by each country where s/he worked.

**A1 form** - it is a uniform European document which confirms that your social security is covered in another EEA country. The standard form can be obtained from your employer in your home country and its validity is certified in the national social security institution. The A1 form is available in each EEA language.

#### European coordination of social security schemes in practice:

- if you are not insured in your home country, you have to pay social security contributions in Poland.
- if you work in Poland, you can still pay social security contributions in your country, if you bring the **A1 form** with you.
- if you are employed in your country and you are seconded to a Polish institution for a period of time **not exceeding 12 months**, you will still pay social security contribution in your home country. In this case you need to bring the A1 form to Poland with you.
- if you are seconded for a period **exceeding 12 months**, you have to contribute towards social security scheme in Poland.

### II. Information for third-country citizens:

Citizens of countries other than the EEA member states and Switzerland, who come to work in Poland, have to make full social security contribution (which is subtracted from your salary) according to the Polish Social Insurance System

<sup>2</sup>EEA unites the EU member states and Iceland, Lichtenstein and Norway

**III. PhD students** of any nationality who are not employed in Poland may contribute to the Polish social security scheme on a voluntary basis.

More information:

Social Insurance Institution (ZUS) [www.zus.pl](http://www.zus.pl)  
Ministry of Labour and Social Policy [www.mpips.gov.pl](http://www.mpips.gov.pl)

## HEALTH INSURANCE

The national health insurance system is based on a number of general rules which are applicable unless specific legislation or international agreements provide otherwise.

According to general rules, **persons working in Poland on the basis of an employment contract, regardless of their nationality, are subject to compulsory health insurance**. All resulting insurance payments are made by employers each month.

In principle, **members of the employee's immediate family** are entitled to **free medical services** provided that they are registered to be covered by the employee's health insurance. Health insurance is also obligatory for undergraduate and postgraduate students, including doctoral students; contribution for them is paid by the institutions where they are enrolled.

**I. Nationals of the EEA countries and Switzerland** covered by health insurance who stay in Poland temporarily are entitled to free medical services on the basis of the **European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)** or an equivalent certificate. If you do not hold such a document, you will be required to pay for the services provided.

**II. Arrangements for nationals of third countries** are laid down in relevant bilateral inter-government agreements.

The national health policy is the responsibility of the **Ministry of Health**.

The main institution responsible for the management of public funds for health care, and the pillar of the entire health insurance system, is the **National Health Fund (NFZ)**.

### **In an emergency**

Insured persons have access to medical rescue services guaranteed by the relevant legislation. In order to call an ambulance, you should dial **999**, accessible throughout the country, or the emergency number **112**.

## MEDICAL SERVICES

### Public medical services

The Polish state health care system is based on the principles of equal treatment and equal access to healthcare services. Public healthcare services are available to persons covered by the national health insurance. This means that an insured person has a free access to medical services listed in the relevant legislation. Free medical services are also provided to the insured patients by private units which concluded contracts with the **National Health Fund (NFZ)** – the main institution responsible for the management of public health care in Poland. These institutions are marked with the **NFZ logo**. Detailed information about the contracted institutions may be obtained from the voivodship office of the National Health Fund.



#### **Did you know?**

The international designations of blood types **O**, **A**, **B** and **AB** were introduced by a Polish microbiologist, serologist and immunologist Ludwik Hirszfild (1884-1954) who also discovered the inheritance mechanism of blood types and the **Rhesus (Rh) factor**.

In addition, every insured person may choose a medical doctor for primary health care (**general practitioner**) from among the medical staff who are covered by, or have concluded, a relevant contract with the National Health Fund. If you want to use a more specialised services such as hospital treatment, medical rehabilitation, or do a more specialised tests, your general practitioner needs to give you a referral. It is not required, though, in the event of emergency or for certain medical services provided by e.g. an ophthalmologist, oncologist, dermatologist, gynaecologist or psychiatrist. Despite having the referral, sometimes you have to queue for your appointment or treatment as there are waiting lists and patients are admitted by order of application.

**If you want to use free medical services**, you need to present a relevant document which confirms that your contributions are paid - a valid insurance registration card (*legitymacja ubezpieczeniowa*) – for employees, or a valid student identity card – for students. An electronic health insurance card, like those available in many other EU countries, will be used as a proof of health insurance coverage in the future.

### Public medical services

In Poland you can also choose to be covered by non-public health insurance. In this case, you pay monthly premiums individually to a selected medical services provider. There is a number of private medical companies offering different insurance packages adjusted to your requirements. They usually run a network of healthcare centres, clinics or hospitals, which offer various medical specialisations.

You can also use private medical services on ad hoc basis (without being insured). An average fee for a single visit is rather high (on average PLN 80 – 100), yet private healthcare providers ensure quick access to medical treatment and short waiting time.

**Medicines** in Poland may be purchased only in pharmacies (*apteka*), some of them are open 24 hours. You should also note that most prescriptions for medicines are valid for 30 days

***Did you know?***

**Vitamin studies** as an area of science as well as the term “**vitamin**” itself were established by Kazimierz Funk (1884-1967), a biochemist of Polish origin, who also discovered the B1 vitamin (thiamine).

More information:

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Ministry of Health [www.mz.gov.pl](http://www.mz.gov.pl)

National Health Fund [www.nfz.gov.pl](http://www.nfz.gov.pl)

## EDUCATION

### SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

**Education is compulsory** in Poland for children and young people **between 6 and 18 years of age**. The school year usually starts on 1 September and ends in the last week of June. In addition to a two-month summer holiday break, pupils in primary and secondary schools have short breaks of several days during Christmas and Easter and a two-week winter break.

In Poland the Ministry of National Education is responsible for the development and implementation of educational policy at **primary and secondary levels**.

**Higher education institutions**, however, are supervised by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education, still they enjoy extensive autonomy.

### Primary and secondary education

Children of 3 to 5 years of age may be enrolled in a public or non-public **nursery school** depending on the decision of their parents. At the age of 6, children are required to attend one-year preparatory classes organised by a nursery school or a primary school. Upon completion of the preparatory year, they are admitted to a 6-year primary school. The next level is a **3-year lower secondary school** where pupils take a final written test. The choice of an upper secondary school is determined by the results of the final test and learning achievements in the lower secondary school. At the upper secondary level, pupils may continue their education in a **3-year general secondary school**, a 3-year specialised secondary school, a 4-year technical secondary school or a 2-year basic vocational school. Programmes in the first three types of schools lead to a compulsory state examination, called "**maturity examination**" (*egzamin maturalny* or *matura*), which gives access to higher education. Higher education institutions set thresholds of points received at the *matura* examination which provide basis for admission to their degree programmes.

#### **Did you know?**

The National Education Commission established in 1773 was the first ministry of public education in Europe. It was created as a result of the decision of the Pope to abolish the Jesuit Order which had organised education in Poland.

### Higher education

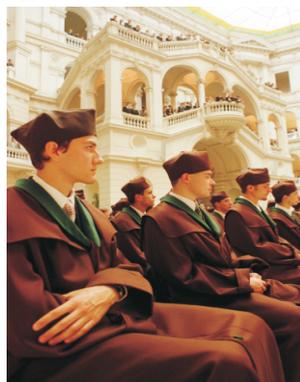
In Poland there are currently (2010) **more than 460 higher education institutions** – ca 130 public schools (with about 67% of the total number of students) and about 330 non-public institutions. Only full-time programmes at state-owned higher institutions in Poland are free of charge. Students of other (part-time and extra-mural) programmes and of all programmes at non-public units must pay a tuition fee. The academic year officially begins on 1 October, lasts 30 weeks, and is divided into the winter and summer semester which end with an examination period. Depending on the level, higher education programmes last between 3 and 6 years:

- **1st level:** Bachelor's degree (first-cycle) programmes, which last between 6 and 8 semesters, leading to the degree of *licencjat*, or between 7 and 8 semesters, leading to the degree of *inżynier*. The duration and awarded degree depend on the field of study.

- **2nd level:** Master's degree programmes which are open to holders of the Bachelor's degree and last 3 to 4 semesters (second-cycle programmes), and Master's degree programmes which are open to holders of the secondary school certificate and last between 9 and 12 semesters (long-cycle programmes). In both cases, students are awarded the degree of magister or an equivalent degree, depending on the field of study.

- **3rd level:** 4-year doctoral (third-cycle) programmes open to holders of the Master's degree or an equivalent degree.

**Non-nationals** working or studying in bigger cities may send their children to international schools and nursery schools or bilingual establishments where the language of instruction is, for example, English, French or Spanish. Full degree programmes taught in English have been more and more popular.



Polish students  
(Photo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

#### **Did you know?**

Polish students of Warsaw University are at the very top of the list in the international IT programming contests such as TopCoder organised by the largest American IT companies and ACM International Collegiate Programming Contest.

## **ACADEMIC DEGREES and TITLES**

In addition to the above-mentioned degrees (*licencjat*, *inżynier*, *magister* and equivalent degrees which are also called “professional titles”), two academic degrees and one academic title are awarded in Poland. The **academic degrees** are *doktor* (doctoral degree) and *doktor habilitowany* (post-doctoral degree, often translated as doctor habilitatus or habilitated doctor). A doctoral degree is awarded to a person who holds the Master's degree or an equivalent degree, has passed doctoral examinations as required by the board of a given unit awarding the degree, and has prepared and defended a doctoral thesis. The proceedings leading to the award of a postdoctoral degree are open to a person who holds the doctoral degree, has significant scientific or artistic achievements. The **academic title** of *profesor* is conferred by the President of the Republic of Poland. An institution responsible for establishing procedures of awarding the above-described degrees and title is the **Central Commission for Academic Degrees and Titles**.

## **RECOGNITION OF QUALIFICATIONS**

**ENIC-NARIC** Poland is a national information centre operating within the **Ministry of Science and Higher Education**. The centre is responsible for the recognition of foreign credentials for both academic and professional purposes.

The **National Academic Recognition Information Centres** (NARIC) were developed by the European Commission with an aim of improving recognition of foreign qualifications in the EU countries, the European Economic Area (EEA) countries, Switzerland and Turkey. The NARIC network is a part of the **ENIC Network** (European Network of National Information Centres) which was established by the Council of Europe and UNESCO to deal with academic recognition and mobility.

In order to use a **document confirming your formal qualifications** (a certificate or diploma) in a country other than the one where they were awarded, you need to follow recognition procedures applied in the host country. A foreign diploma (degree) may be recognised in Poland pursuant to different procedures, depending on the country in which it was awarded and on the purpose of recognition.

Different regulations apply to diplomas awarded in the EU Member States and the countries with which Poland has concluded a bilateral agreement on mutual recognition of qualifications. In all other cases, qualifications may be recognised as equivalent to Polish ones only on the basis of the so-called nostrification procedure.

Foreign qualifications may be recognised for the purpose of admission to further studies or academic career (academic recognition) or for the purpose of practising a profession (professional recognition).

Like all other EU Member States, Poland has its own national legislation regulating academic recognition. In addition, qualifications are recognised for academic purposes in accordance with the guidelines laid down in the Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European region, which was ratified by Poland in 2003 and entered into force on 1 May 2004.

In the case of **professional recognition**, the recognition of qualifications obtained in the so-called regulated professions should be distinguished from the recognition of qualifications in other professions. A regulated profession is a profession which may be practised only by those who have fulfilled qualification requirements and other conditions laid down in separate legislation. Within the European Union, the regulated professions are subject to EU Directives. Qualifications in non-regulated professions are recognised by the employer.

More information:

Ministry of National Education [www.men.gov.pl](http://www.men.gov.pl)

Ministry of Science and Higher Education [www.nauka.gov.pl](http://www.nauka.gov.pl)

EURYDICE Information on education systems and policies in Europe

[http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/index\\_en.php](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/index_en.php)

## LEARNING POLISH

It is estimated that Polish is the mother tongue for ca 46 million people, including mainly those living in Poland and the so-called Polonia (Polish communities abroad) scattered in various parts of the world. Naturally, Polish is also one of the official languages of the European Union.

The Polish language belongs to the group of West Slavic languages. Polish vocabulary has been influenced primarily by dialects and other Slavic languages (Russian, Czech, Ukrainian), but also by Latin, German, Italian, French and English. Within the Polish language there are several rural and urban dialects which might differ, especially in terms of intonation and vocabulary.

What is also interesting, there are two regional 'languages' in Poland – Kashubian, spoken in the northern part of Poland and Silesian, used in the south. Some specialists refer to them as dialects while others



Photo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs

consider them separate regional languages owing to their unique features.

Polish is a grammatically and phonetically rich language, with a number of rules and exceptions. It has 10 vowels and 35 consonants some of which include sounds which are pronounced in almost or exactly the same way causing spelling mistakes.

If you want to learn Polish, there are various language courses, for individuals and groups, offered by most large academic public and private centres. The programmes are tailored to individual needs and often enriched with "practical training", for example: walking tours around the city combined with practising the language in shops or museums. There are also summer courses organised for both adults and children.

***Did you know?***

Esperanto, the first international language, was created by Ludwik Zamenhof (1859-1917), a Polish medical doctor from Białystok.

## DAILY LIFE IN POLAND

### SAFETY

In Poland the Police, Fire Service and Ambulance Service form an integrated aid system. In addition, residents in many cities, towns and communes are looked after by Commune and Municipal Guard officers who co-operate with the above-mentioned services. Moreover, there are specialised services in the country, including: **GOPR** (*Górskie Ochotnicze Pogotowie Ratunkowe*: **Voluntary Mountain Rescue Service**), **TOPR** (*Tatrzańskie Ochotnicze Pogotowie Ratunkowe*: **Voluntary Tatra Mountains Rescue Service**) and **WOPR** (*Wodne Ochotnicze Pogotowie Ratunkowe*: **Voluntary Water Rescue Service**), which – together with a mobile phone operator, Plus – are part of the Integrated Security System.

Emergency aid telephone numbers **accessible in all parts of the country**:

<b>General emergency number:</b>	<b>112</b>
<b>Ambulance Service:</b>	<b>999</b>
<b>Police:</b>	<b>997</b>
<b>Fire Brigade:</b>	<b>998</b>
<b>Municipal Guard:</b>	<b>986</b>



Photo: Warsaw Metropolitan Police

More information:

Ministry of Interior and Administration: [www.mswia.gov.pl](http://www.mswia.gov.pl)  
National Police Headquarters: [www.policja.pl](http://www.policja.pl)

### CURRENCY

Polish currency is **złoty** (zł, PLN). One zloty is divided into 100 *groszy* (gr). Banknotes are available in the following denominations: 10, 20, 50, 100 and 200 and coins: 1, 2, 5, 10, 20 and 50 gr and 1, 2, 5 zł are in the circulation. In Poland you can only pay in zlotys. Poland is to join the EURO zone in the future but the final date is not defined.

Currencies may be exchanged in numerous exchange offices (*kantor*) or in banks. Currency exchange points are usually located in city centers, at railway stations, airports, in shopping centres, some hotels and in places with higher numbers of tourists.

Official current exchange rates are set by the National Bank of Poland (*NBP*). You can check currency exchange rates at the NBP website [www.nbp.pl](http://www.nbp.pl). They are also published daily by newspapers and on various websites.



Polish banknotes and coins  
(Photo: Monika Kornacka)

## BANKING

As mentioned above, you can only use the Polish money to pay for products and services. You can also pay with various types of payment **cards** (credit, debit, etc.) in almost every shop. Thanks to the well-developed e-services, **cheques** are not popular in Poland. They are naturally accepted by banks, but are virtually never used as a method of payment in trade. **Traveller's cheques** are accepted by banks in Poland on the same terms as elsewhere: to cash cheques, you need to present your passport. You should also remember that the bank will charge a commission (ca 1.5%) on the transaction. In Poland the most popular are Visa, MasterCard and American Express cards.

**The Polish banking system** offers an easy access to services through a large number of branch offices of individual Polish as well as foreign banks. Polish banks offer electronic services that meet world class standards in terms of both the range of services and transaction security. Most Polish banks have efficient and safe "home banking" systems. Low charges for transactions, or even no charges paid, and the access to your bank account from any place in the world, are additional advantages of this type of communication between the bank and the client.

If you plan to **open a bank account** in Poland, you need to remember that individual banks may have different requirements as regards the documents to be submitted by foreigners. In most banks, you need a residence card and the PESEL number (see "Entry and residence" chapter) when submitting your application; however, there are also banks which will open a bank account on the basis of your passport or national identity card.

**Cash machines** are widely available 24 hours a day 7 days a week. When using cash machines, remember that you will usually be charged commission for withdrawing money from a cash machine of a bank other than the one which has issued your card.

More information:

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National Bank of Poland, Banks in Poland [www.nbp.pl](http://www.nbp.pl)

## TRANSPORT

Thanks to the country's location, you can reach Poland by plane, train, coach, car or even by ferry. A flight to Warsaw takes e.g. 2 hours from London, Paris and Brussels and ca. 1 hour from Berlin, Vienna or Prague. Currently, Poland has 10 international airports in: Bydgoszcz, Gdańsk, Katowice, Kraków, Łódź, Poznań, Rzeszów, Szczecin, Warszawa and Wrocław.



Photo: LOT Polish Airlines

## Railway

**Note:** some of the airports operate only a limited number of destinations. The country offers a wide choice of direct flights to many European cities and has good connections with all continents.

The dense network of rail routes is operated by the Polish National Railways (*Polskie Koleje Państwowe, PKP*) and by *Przewozy Regionalne* company (ang. regional transport). The fastest and most comfortable service is offered by the PKP Intercity (IC) and Express (EIC) trains which run daily between the biggest cities in Poland and beyond its borders (*EuroCity* (EC) trains), including Berlin, Prague, Vienna or Amsterdam. There are also several local companies which provide suburban or short-distance services.



Photo: PKP Intercity

Train **tickets** may be purchased from cash windows at all railway stations and in some travel agencies. You can also buy tickets online or from train conductors on board (in this case, the price will include an extra charge of PLN 5), paying in cash or – in all *PKP Intercity* trains – with a card. **Children of up to 4 years of age** (of any nationality) travel by train in Poland free of charge. Polish as well as foreign **school and university** students of up to 26 years of age are entitled to a 51% reduction off the full fare, provided that they hold a valid pupil or student identity card **issued in Poland** (to be shown at the train conductor's request). **PhD students** up to 35 years old will also be entitled to the 51% discount as of January 2012. Cheaper family tickets are another available and frequently chosen option, particularly attractive during the summer

More information:

Polish National Railways [www.pkp.pl](http://www.pkp.pl)

PKP Intercity website [www.intercity.pl](http://www.intercity.pl)

PKP Information Centre: (+48) 19 757 or (+48) 22 19 436 (prices according to operator's fees)

### **Did you know?**

Until 2005 Ernest Malinowski (1808-1899), a Polish engineer, was the originator and builder of the world's **highest railway** (built in Peru in 1876). At present, the highest railway is in Tibet.

## Buses

In Poland public transport services are provided by a number of state-owned as well as private companies. The best-known enterprise is still PKS (*Przedsiębiorstwo Komunikacji Samochodowej*), initially a state-owned enterprise, nowadays mostly comprising of private local companies which operate throughout the country. The companies provide long-distance cross-country journeys as well as suburban and local services. **Tickets** may be purchased at bus stations or directly from bus drivers before the journey. **Timetables and ticket prices** are available at PKS companies websites of each region/city or at private company's websites.

## Public urban transport in Poland

Public urban transport in Poland is well developed: you will find urban and suburban buses in all cities and towns, trams in larger cities, though metro only in Warsaw. Daytime buses and trams run more-or-less between 5 a.m. and 11 p.m. Only in the biggest cities you can find night buses. The choice of night routes is much more limited and in some cities the fares are higher.

**Timetables** are displayed at each bus stop and may also be found at websites of each public urban transport provider. All means of public transport in a given city or town use the same type of **tickets** which can be purchased from news-stands, ticket machines or in some shops and post-offices. All cities and towns have full-fare tickets (*bilet normalny*) and reduced-fare tickets (*bilet ulgowy*), the latter for persons entitled to discounts (e.g. Polish pupils and university students up to 26 years old, PhD students and pensioners).

**Foreign school and university students** are also entitled to discounts: on the basis of a valid Polish pupil/student identity card - if they are enrolled at Polish schools, and - if they are enrolled at schools in their home countries – on the basis of a **valid international document** - International Student Identity Card (ISIC) or the EURO26 Student card for school and university students. Public transport is free for children of up to 4 years of age and persons who are at least 70 years old. Sometimes an additional charge is paid for the transport of luggage or animals.

## Travelling by car

Poland has right-hand traffic. When driving a car or any other vehicle in Poland, you are required to hold a driving license, a vehicle registration document and a document confirming that you are covered by civil liability insurance (Green Card). Your vehicle should be equipped with a warning triangle, a fire extinguisher and a first-aid kit.

You are **not allowed** to use your mobile phone while driving, unless you have a headset or hands-free set. **Drivers are required to use dipped or daytime headlights also during the day all year round.** All passengers (except visibly pregnant women, taxi drivers and persons holding a medical exemption certificate) are required to have their **seat belts fastened** both at the front and back seats. Children of up to 12 years of age and less than 150 cm tall may travel only in a child safety seat.



Cracow public transport  
(Photo: Miejskie Przedsiębiorstwo  
Komunikacyjne S.A.)



Photo: Maciej Kornacki

Maximum speed limits in Poland:

Built-up areas:

- 50 km/h between 5.00 and 23.00
- 60 km/h between 23.00 and 5.00



Outside built-up areas:

- motorways 140 km/h
- expressways 120 km/h
- other roads 90 km/h

## Car accident procedures

If you are involved in a road accident, you are obliged to follow certain safety procedures. **If it is a minor car collision**, you should call the police and move your car so that it does not block the traffic. However, **if you are involved in a car accident resulting in casualties**, you are obliged to call an ambulance and the police and you must stay on the scene until they arrive. You must also switch on hazard warning flashers in your car. According to the Polish law, it is mandatory to provide first aid to victims – if you have taken a special training course – or at least to do what you are capable of in terms of securing the place of accident and helping the victims.

## Driving license

Driving licenses issued by the **EU Member States** are recognised in Poland until the validity date given on the document. EU nationals residing in Poland permanently are not required to change their driving license, though they are entitled to have the Polish driving license. **Third-country nationals** holding a driving license issued in accordance with the Convention on Road Traffic of 1968 may drive vehicles on Polish roads on the basis of their document. Those who have obtained a permit for residence in Poland are required to change their document for a Polish driving license within 6 months. Nationals of the countries which are not parties to the Convention should also hold an international driving license during a tourist trip in Poland. Once a residence permit has been issued, both documents cease to be valid and the holder should apply for the Polish driving license. To obtain it, applicants may be required to take a partial state examination.

**More: Car rental:** [www.staypoland.com](http://www.staypoland.com)

### *Did you know?*

Jan Szczepanik (1872-1926), called 'Polish Edison' is the author of 50 inventions and several hundred patented technology solutions in the areas of colour photography, television, colour weaving, etc. He features as a character in two short stories by Mark Twain.

## ACCOMMODATION

It is advisable, before your arrival to Poland, to check whether the inviting institution or company will provide you with accommodation. Many higher education institutions and research institutes have their own accommodation facilities for their staff. Some of them have concluded contracts with hotels and thus their visitors can benefit from various discounts. Information on accommodation arrangements can be obtained from departments of international cooperation at a given institution.

If you need to find a place to stay by yourself, you can either stay in a hotel, guest room or a youth hostel or you can rent an apartment. Apartments and houses for sale or for rent are advertised in newspapers, on the Internet and in real estate agencies. In case of renting, you usually need to pay a returnable deposit which amounts to a 1- or 2-month rental price. In most cases you are also obliged to pay electricity, water and gas bills according to consumption rates, as well as Internet and TV bills.

More information:

Short-term accommodation (hotels, guest houses, etc.):

- [www.travelpoland.com](http://www.travelpoland.com)
- [www.staypoland.com](http://www.staypoland.com)
- [www.poland4u.com](http://www.poland4u.com)
- [www.polhotels.com](http://www.polhotels.com)

Long-term accommodation:

- real estate database [www.mls.dospon.pl/en/index.asp](http://www.mls.dospon.pl/en/index.asp)
- real estate agency with branch offices in all parts of Poland [www.wgn.pl](http://www.wgn.pl)

## EATING OUT

Poland has plenty of restaurants, bars and inns which offer both national dishes and regional specialities. In most cities and towns, you will find a wide choice of restaurants offering Italian, French, Jewish or Chinese food as well as Arabic or Mexican specialties. Streets are full of cafés and summer gardens where you can chat over a cup of coffee and sweet dessert, as well as have a snack or regional beer. It is popular in Poland to go out in the evening to a club or pub, where you can enjoy your time while listening to the music in an often original interior.



Photo: [www.poland.gov.pl](http://www.poland.gov.pl)

Restaurants are open seven days a week, usually between 10.00 and 23.00 or late night, and Polish pubs only close once the last client has left. In smaller towns, except tourist resorts, they open later and close earlier. Bills do not normally include a service charge. In restaurants where you are served by a waiter, tips usually range between 5 and 10%, depending on the standard of the place. In most places you can pay with your credit card.

## LEISURE TIME

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Photo: [www.poland.gov.pl](http://www.poland.gov.pl)

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## Sports

In Poland you can go in for almost every sport, no matter whether you are a beginner or an advanced athlete. The most popular summer sports include cycling, sailing, canoeing as well as team games. Sport centres and clubs in cities and towns offer opportunities for playing basketball, handball, squash or tennis, as well as for doing aerobics or practising yoga. Indoor swimming pools can be found in all bigger cities and tourist resorts.



Tatras Mountains  
(Photo: [www.poland.gov.pl](http://www.poland.gov.pl))



Polish seaside  
(Photo: [www.poland.gov.pl](http://www.poland.gov.pl))

Another popular discipline is horse riding – horse enthusiasts may pursue their hobby both in wild corners of the country and in areas near cities or towns where they will find numerous horse riding clubs and stud farms. Moreover, rock climbing, caving or even hang-gliding and parachute jumping are now gaining in popularity. Polish winters, on the other hand, create good conditions for downhill and cross-country skiing, snowboarding, iceboating or skating.

## TOURISM

You will find almost anything you like in Poland: from Alp-like mountains, wide beaches, clean lakes and vast forests to world-class monuments and bustling city centres. The greatest attraction of the country is its varied, unspoilt and unrestrictedly accessible nature – even though there is a large number of protected areas, including 23 national parks - 7 of these in the UNESCO List of Biosphere Reserves, and numerous landscape parks. That is why Poland is a paradise for active tourists, offering a wide range of touristic attractions.



Tenement houses in the Old Town in Poznań  
(Photo: [www.poland.gov.pl](http://www.poland.gov.pl))



One of the castles on the Trail of Eagle Nests  
(Photo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

The best season for this type of holiday in terms of weather conditions is between May and September, or between December and March for those who enjoy winter sports. Numerous seaside and mountain resorts are ideal destinations for all-year-round holidays. Those who prefer less active leisure, however, may spend a couple of days in Polish high-standard spa resorts located in most picturesque regions of our country. The choice of accommodation facilities offered is very wide: from standard hotels of worldwide chains in each bigger city, modern hotel complexes including tennis courts and swimming pools to small guest houses and little cosy mountain hotels, camping sites and rural agrotourist farms.

***Did you know?***

Bronisław Malinowski (1884-1942), a Polish anthropologist, changed the style of work in anthropology: from work based on reading and analysis of texts to field work (long-term and deep immersion in the community being studied).

## Polish seaside

The Polish Baltic coast, with wide sandy beaches and varied shoreline is among the longest in Europe. It features a number of popular sea resorts, historic sites as well as charming fishing villages and wild unspoilt areas. A unique spot on the Polish sea coast is the narrow Hel Peninsula which is a popular windsurfing place famous for its beautiful beaches. The Polish seaside is also a fantastic place for evening strolls along its promenades and piers full of small cafés and restaurants, after which you can sit on the beach and admire probably the most enchanting sunset you have ever seen in your life.



Sunset at the Baltic Sea  
(Photo: Monika Kornacka)



Europe's longest wooden pier in Sopot  
(Photo: [www.poland.gov.pl](http://www.poland.gov.pl))

## Land of a Thousand Lakes



Masuria lakes (Photo: Office of the Marshal of the Warmia and Masuria Voivodship, [www.votemazury.org](http://www.votemazury.org))

Masuria, the northern part of Poland, is literally a land of several thousands of water basins surrounded by wild forests, which form a post-glacial landscape. This region is a paradise for sailors, canoeists, anglers, water sports enthusiasts as well as for visitors who love peace and tranquility. One of the lakes is the largest lake in Poland – Śniardwy (113 sq km), often called a small sea. Tourists are also encouraged to visit the Suwałki region, a less frequented region to the north of Masuria which is the kingdom of beavers. Bird lovers are invited to the Biebrza Valley, a river pool with extensive peat bogs, best preserved in Europe and inhabited by over 470 bird species and the largest herd of elks in Poland.

### **Did you know?**

The Masurian Lake District is considered one of 5 most beautiful places in Europe. The region is among 28 world candidates in the “New 7 Wonders of Nature” international competition organised by the Swiss New7Wonders Foundation (voting closes in mid-2011) [www.votemazury.org](http://www.votemazury.org).

## Mountains

The south of Poland is surrounded by the Carpathian and Sudety Mountains which offer perfectly maintained hiking routes with unforgettable views of the snow-capped highest peaks in Poland. The Tatra range is also an area where you can see the highest waterfall in Poland, Wielka Siklawa (70 m), and several dozen post-glacial lakes, including the largest one, Morskie Oko (34.9 ha), and the Five Lakes Valley. In the Pieniny range you can take a rafting trip through the picturesque ravines of the



One of picturesque ponds in the Tatra Mountains (Photo: [www.poland.gov.pl](http://www.poland.gov.pl))

Dunajec River, or travel on horseback across the Bieszczady Mountains being home to bears, lynxes and eagles. The Świętokrzyskie Mountains, one of the oldest mountain range in Europe formed 650 million years ago, are another attraction in Poland, famous for the Paradise Cave, the most beautiful cave in Poland.

The southern region is also famous for its health resorts (Rabka, Busko Zdrój or Szczawnica) and ski resorts (Zakopane with surrounding areas, Szklarska Poręba and the whole Kłodzko Valley) as well as for its unique folk art and regional dialect of the indigenous inhabitants.



Traditional outfits of the Polish highlanders  
(Photo: [www.poland.gov.pl](http://www.poland.gov.pl))

## Monuments

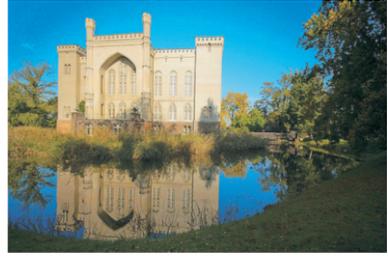
In addition to the Poland's natural beauties, the country offers an equally wide range of man-made monuments, making your sightseeing tour a valuable history lesson. Tourists will not regret visiting the following places: Gdańsk with the largest old town in the country and the Marian Basilica, the largest brick Gothic sacred temple in the world; Wrocław, a city situated at the Oder river, with 12 islands and 42 bridges, called Venice of Central Europe; medieval castles at Bytów or Golub-Dobrzyń which host international knight tournaments; or the Trail of Eagle: ruins of several dozen fortified castles from the 14th and 15th centuries. Throughout the country, sightseeing routes will lead you to noble residences (Łańcut, Kórnik), baroque palaces and manor houses, and sacred temples erected by groups of various religious denominations and nationalities: cathedrals (Gniezno), monasteries, wooden churches from the 15th and 16th centuries, synagogues (Tykocin), Orthodox churches (Ulucz) and historic mosques (Bohoniki).



Old Town market square in Cracow  
(Photo: [www.poland.gov.pl](http://www.poland.gov.pl))



Kazimierz Dolny, a small medieval town located at the Vistula River  
(Photo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs)



Castle in Kórnik  
(Photo: Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

***Did you know?***

Wrocław has the only manually operated gas street lamps in Poland, which are still used in the oldest historical quarter of Ostrów Tumski.

Open-air museums with wooden cottages reconstructed with all their details are another tourist attraction.

Many of the Polish historical sites have been included in the **UNESCO World Cultural Heritage List**:

1. Historic centres of Warsaw, Cracow, Zamość and Toruń
2. Wieliczka salt Mine
3. Auschwitz Birkenau concentration Camp (Oświęcim)
4. Kalwaria Zebrzydowska monastic complex
5. Wooden churches of southern Poland
6. Centennial Hall in Wrocław
7. Castle of the Teutonic Order in Malbork
8. Mużakowski Landscape Park in Łęknica
9. Evangelical churches of peace in Jawor and Świdnica

More information:

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Poland's official promotional website <http://en.poland.gov.pl>  
Poland's official travel website [www.poland.travel/en-gb](http://www.poland.travel/en-gb)

## English – Polish GLOSSARY

account – rachunek	dean - dziekan
advance payment – zaliczka	degree – stopień naukowy
agreement/contract - umowa	delayed departure – opóźniony odjazd
airplane - samolot	departure – odjazd (train), odlot (airplane)
airport – lotnisko	diploma – dyplom
ambulance – karetka pogotowia	doctoral studies – studia doktoranckie
attention – uwaga	document – dokument
attachment - załącznik	driving licence – prawo jazdy
bank statement – wyciąg bankowy	employment contract – umowa o pracę
boarding card/pass – karta pokładowa	enterprise – przedsiębiorstwo
bonus - premia	entrance – wejście
bus - autobus	exit – wyjście
bus stop – przystanek	extension number – numer wewnętrzny
car - samochód	faculty; department – wydział
residence card – karta pobytu	for rent – do wynajęcia
cash – gotówka	for sale – na sprzedaż
city guard – straż miejska	hospital – szpital
city hall – urząd miasta	industry – przemysł
closed – zamknięte	invoice – faktura
compartment - przedział	kindergarten – przedszkole
currency – waluta	Leave, day off - urlop
customs – odprawa celna	lecture – wykład
danger – niebezpieczeństwo	lift - winda
data – dane	marshal's office – urząd marszałkowski
Master's degree - magister	restaurant – restauracja
medicine – lek	review – recenzja
mobile phone – telefon komórkowy/komórka	salary – pensja/wynagrodzenie
no entry – zakaz wstępu	schedule – harmonogram
no smoking – zakaz palenia	scholarship - stypendium
occupied – zajęte	school – szkoła
open – otwarte	seat – miejsce
out of order – nieczynne/uszkodzone	secondment – oddelegowanie
overtime – nadgodziny	sick leave – zwolnienie lekarskie
password - hasło	staff – personel/kadra
PhD student - doktorant	street – ulica
platform - peron	take-away – na wynos
Police - policja	tax services office – urząd skarbowy
Police station – komisariat policji	ticket – bilet
post office – poczta	ticket office – kasa biletowa
promotion – awans	tip – napiwek
public prosecutor's office – prokuratura	to book a ticket- rezerwować bilet
railway station – dworzec kolejowy	to buy a ticket – kupować bilet
registration - zameldowanie	train – pociąg
researcher/scientist – badacz/naukowiec	work permit – pozwolenie na pracę
residence permit – zezwolenie na pobyt	workshop – warsztat naukowy

## USEFUL WEBSITES

### HELP

Polish Network of EURAXESS Services Centres	<a href="mailto:mobility@kpk.gov.pl">mobility@kpk.gov.pl</a>
European EURAXESS portal for foreign researchers	<a href="http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess">http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess</a>
EURAXESS Poland portal	<a href="http://www.euraxess.pl">www.euraxess.pl</a>
Foreign Embassies	<a href="http://www.msz.gov.pl">www.msz.gov.pl</a>

### RESEARCH

Ministry of Science and Higher Education, recognition of foreign qualifications	<a href="http://www.nauka.gov.pl">www.nauka.gov.pl</a>
National Centre for Research and Development	<a href="http://www.ncbir.pl">www.ncbir.pl</a>
National Centre for Science	<a href="http://www.ncn.gov.pl">www.ncn.gov.pl</a>
Polish Academy of Sciences	<a href="http://www.pan.pl">www.pan.pl</a>
Conference of Rectors of Academic Schools	<a href="http://www.krasp.org.pl">www.krasp.org.pl</a>
Polish Rectors Foundation	<a href="http://www.frp.org.pl">www.frp.org.pl</a>
Foundation for Polish Science	<a href="http://www.fnp.org.pl">www.fnp.org.pl</a>
Polpharma Foundation	<a href="http://www.polpharma.pl/en/foundation">www.polpharma.pl/en/foundation</a>
Science & Scholarship in Poland	<a href="http://www.naukawpolsce.pap.pl">www.naukawpolsce.pap.pl</a>
Information Processing Centre	<a href="http://www.opi.org.pl">www.opi.org.pl</a>

### ADMINISTRATION

President of the Republic of Poland	<a href="http://www.prezydent.pl">www.prezydent.pl</a>
Sejm of the Republic of Poland	<a href="http://www.sejm.gov.pl">www.sejm.gov.pl</a>
Senate of the Republic of Poland	<a href="http://www.senat.gov.pl">www.senat.gov.pl</a>
Chancellery of the Prime Minister	<a href="http://www.kprm.gov.pl">www.kprm.gov.pl</a>
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	<a href="http://www.msz.gov.pl">www.msz.gov.pl</a>
Ministry of Finance	<a href="http://www.mf.gov.pl">www.mf.gov.pl</a>
Ministry of National Education	<a href="http://www.men.gov.pl">www.men.gov.pl</a>
Ministry of Interior and Administration	<a href="http://www.mswia.gov.pl">www.mswia.gov.pl</a>
Ministry of Labour and Social Policy	<a href="http://www.mpips.gov.pl">www.mpips.gov.pl</a>
Ministry of Health	<a href="http://www.mz.gov.pl">www.mz.gov.pl</a>
Social Security Institution	<a href="http://www.zus.pl">www.zus.pl</a>
National Health Fund	<a href="http://www.nfz.gov.pl">www.nfz.gov.pl</a> (mostly in Polish)
Polish National Police	<a href="http://www.policja.pl">www.policja.pl</a>
Poland in the European Union	<a href="http://www.polandEU.gov.pl">www.polandEU.gov.pl</a>

### POLAND

Official promotional website on Poland	<a href="http://www.poland.gov.pl">www.poland.gov.pl</a> <a href="http://www.poland.pl">www.poland.pl</a>
Polish Tourist Organisation	<a href="http://www.pot.gov.pl">www.pot.gov.pl</a>
Poland in Your Pocket city guide	<a href="http://www.inyourpocket.com/poland">www.inyourpocket.com/poland</a>
Polish Information and Foreign Investment Agency	<a href="http://www.paiz.gov.pl">www.paiz.gov.pl</a>
Yellow Pages Poland	<a href="http://www.yellowpages.pl">www.yellowpages.pl</a>
National Bank of Poland, banks in Poland	<a href="http://www.nbp.pl">www.nbp.pl</a>
Multimedia platform in Poland	<a href="http://www.warsawvoice.pl">www.warsawvoice.pl</a>
Official travel website	<a href="http://www.poland.travel/en">www.poland.travel/en</a>
Fryderyk Chopin Airport	<a href="http://www.lotnisko-chopina.pl">www.lotnisko-chopina.pl</a>

## ABOUT EURAXESS

**The Polish Network of EURAXESS Services Centres** (previously ERA-MORE Network) is a member of the European EURAXESS network, an initiative of the European Commission and European countries, established in 2004 as an element of the emerging European Research Area. At present, it is composed of over 200 centres located in 37 European countries which aim to support the international mobility of researchers and their families.

The centres in each country provide researchers with information and assistance concerning various matters related to their departure from a home country and their stay and work in a foreign country.

In Poland there are 10 centres located in different regions at higher education institutions or research institutes. They are coordinated by the EURAXESS Services Centre in Warsaw which is located in the National Contact Point for Research Programmes of the EU.

**Foreign researchers** who are interested in coming to Poland or who already entered Poland may contact one of the Polish centres to obtain information concerning:

- formal and legal requirements related to entry and stay in Poland,
- employment, working conditions and taxes,
- health insurance and social security,
- health care and child care,
- education, language courses, recognition of qualifications,
- organisation and financing of research in Poland,
- grants, scholarships and research jobs,
- social and cultural life

**Polish researchers** who wish to gain experience in research work abroad will obtain information about international mobility opportunities for scholars and related formalities and administrative matters that need to be taken care of before leaving Poland.

As a part of our services intended for **Polish institutions**, we offer assistance with formalities and legal matters related to the recruitment of foreign researchers.

The EURAXESS Poland Portal is an instrument supporting the work of the Polish network of mobility centres. It includes detailed and updated information as well as practical advice for foreign and Polish researchers coming to or leaving Poland. The Portal is also a valuable source of research job vacancies, fellowship programmes and grants available in Poland and across Europe. Each European country involved in the EURAXESS initiative has their national Portal for mobile researchers.

[www.euraxess.pl](http://www.euraxess.pl)



**EURAXESS European Portal is run by the European Commission. The Portal is divided into four sections:**



**EURAXESS Jobs** is a stress-free recruitment tool **free of charge**. It contains a wealth of constantly updated information on job vacancies, funding opportunities and fellowships for researchers. **Researchers** of any nationality **can post their CV online** and search for available positions. Research institutions both within and outside the EU can **post job vacancies** and search for CVs of researchers.



**EURAXESS Services** is the new face of the ERA-MORE Network, an initiative of the European Commission and European countries launched in 2004. The centres provide researchers and their families with information and assistance concerning various matters they face when moving to, or living in a foreign country.



**EURAXESS Links** is a networking tool for European researchers abroad, currently for those who are in the **USA, Japan, China** and **Singapore**. It provides interactive web services in order to keep them linked among themselves and with Europe.



**EURAXESS Rights** provides all information regarding the European Charter for Researchers and the Code of Conduct for the Recruitment of Researchers, adopted by the EC in 2005. The Charter describes rights and duties of researchers, as well as research and funding institutions. The Code aims at ensuring equal treatment of all researchers in Europe and increases transparency in their recruitment.

### Human Resources Strategy for Researchers

The "HR Strategy for Researchers" supports research institutions and funding organisations in the implementation of the Charter & Code in their policies and practices

Research institutions and funding organisations that have been acknowledged by the European Commission for having made significant progress in implementing the Charter & Code are awarded the 'HR Excellence in Research' logo.



HR EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH

<http://ec.europa.eu/euraxess>

## Coordinator:

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