

# PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR INCOMING STUDENTS



## ABOUT GWSH

● The Gdańsk Higher School of Humanities (Gdańska Wyższa Szkoła Humanistyczna - GWSH) is a non-public (private) academic school of university standing, established under a licence of the Minister of National Education and Sports in 1999. It is entered in the register of non-public higher schools under no. 142. We are one of the biggest non-public academic schools in the region of Pomerania, with over 4.000 students.

The education is provided at three faculties:

- Faculty of Pedagogy (offering bachelor's and master's studies),
- Faculty of Political Science – bachelor's studies,
- Faculty of European Studies – bachelor's studies.

● Post-graduate studies are offered as well, at present addressed mostly to teachers willing to improve their qualifications.

Studies of the first (bachelor's) and second (master's) levels are run under a full-time scheme or as weekend studies. The first level studies are all 6-term ones. All the master's studies last 4 terms. Most of our students study under the weekend scheme. Within the 3 faculties and 4 main lines of studies study (the Faculty of European Studies being divided into two lines: the one of European studies proper and that of management) we offer more than 20 specialisations, including:

- journalism and PR,
- political marketing,
- vocational counseling,
- rehabilitation pedagogy,
- early-school pedagogy with logopaedics,
- European administration,
- managing a European enterprise,
- logistics,
- sports management

and many more (for additional information see our Web site).



[www.gwsh.gda.pl](http://www.gwsh.gda.pl)

● Every year we add something new to the list to make it more interesting and valuable, considering students' interests and labour market needs. This document has been developed to give students from partner universities an overview of Gdańska Wyższa Szkoła Humanistyczna and its offer, as provided to Erasmus students.

Our efforts are supported by approximately 250 persons of academic staff and 40 persons of technical and administration personnel.

### ● MISSION

The Gdańsk Higher School of Humanities, as a school of a university standing, aims at satisfying the demand for education in the field of broadly termed social sciences. Besides providing its students with professional knowledge, it also finds important to develop social competencies of the students, social communication abilities in particular, and evoke civic attitudes with them. The objectives in question are reflected in the contents of the classes, topics of scientific conferences, interventions of guests invited to the School, selection of domestic and foreign partners cooperating with GWSH, activities of the Students' Council. Aware of the duties and responsibilities towards those who have entrusted it with the task of providing higher education to them, the School aims at providing education of a highest quality, while permanently adapting its curricula to the ever changing realities of the surrounding world, the labour market in particular.

### ● PREMISES

All faculties are located in the main building of the School, situated in the very heart of Gdańsk, in its oldest (historical) part. The area is referred to as the Bishop's Hill and is the most elevated place in the city centre of Gdańsk. The building of GWSH has a long and very interesting history which goes back to the beginning of the 19th century. At that time it housed barracks making up a part of the city fortifications. The campus has very good transport connections with all parts of the City thanks to good access from its premises to all kinds of municipal transport: bus, tram and train. Despite its vast capacity the main building is not sufficient to contain all the educational activities. This is particularly true about the weekend studies, whose popularity and intensity (up to 24 hours of classes during the weekend) makes it impossible to us to gather all the students here at the same time. For that reason certain classes are organised in other parts of the City as well.

### ● GRADES

Grades in Poland are given according to the following scale:  
Mark ECTS grades Points scored out of total points available (%)

5.0	A	>	90
4.5	B	>	85
4.0	C	>	80
3.5	D	>	70
3.0	E	>=	60
2.0	F, G	<	60



### ● APPLICATION PROCEDURE FOR ERASMUS STUDENTS

All students interested in studying in GWSH within the Erasmus Programme are asked to submit an application form. The deadlines for academic year 2009/2010 are:

15 July – for students willing to study during winter semester or the whole academic year;

15 December – for students willing to study during the summer semester

Applications are being assessed by the Vice-Rector for Education and Dean of the Faculty the student is aiming to study at. Each interested student will receive information about results of the application process within 3 working days after the deadline stated above.

Acceptation means that the student is obligated to develop a Learning Agreement – the document that will be the base for welcoming the foreign student in GWSH. The Learning Agreement has to be prepared using the list of lectures available to Erasmus students. The Learning Agreement has to be approved by all sides: the student, his/her home institution and the host institution. Failure to prepare and conclude the Learning Agreement means that the student can not undertake studies at GWSH. The Learning Agreement should be prepared as soon as possible, not later than within 35 days after receiving the information regarding approval of the application.

### ● ACCOMODATION

Renting a room or flat in Gdańsk is not an easy task especially when you look for a short term agreement. At present we do not have any student dormitories. Assistance is offered to those who look for a room/flat.

For the purpose of accommodation you have to be ready to spend at least PLN 500 per month (about 150 Euro) and it will be a core expenditure in your monthly budget. That amount allows you to rent a room in a flat and share it (the flat) with other people.

### ● ACADEMIC CALENDAR

The academic year in Poland begins on 1 October and normally ends at the end of June. It is divided into two semesters, each lasting for 15 weeks. The winter semester starts in October and lasts till mid February, with Christmas holidays of about ten days. The examination session usually lasts for two or three weeks, beginning in late January. The summer semester starts in mid February and ends in June, with a one-week break for Easter. Summer holidays last for three months - from the beginning of July to the end of September, but only for those students who passed all exams during the summer examination session (lasting about two-three weeks in June). The ones who did not succeed take the exam(s) in September.

### ● MEDICAL INSURANCE

The incoming students are asked to arrange medical insurance. In case of any health problems that will be a most important document to have with you. Medical insurance is also required by Polish law and you will have to be able to produce it to the local administration authority when registering your stay. EU students do not need to get any extra insurance (unless required by their home country regulations), but should take with them the documents that confirm their being insured in their home country.

### ● LANGUAGE

The basic language of tuition in GWSH is Polish. There are, however, some courses taught in English, their number supposed to grow every year. To learn more about the courses taught in GWSH please see the list of classes available. In each case of English being the language of the lectures it is clearly mentioned in the list.

### ● DOCUMENTATION

Overseas students are asked to bring their passport. EU students are allowed to take their national ID.

Each Erasmus student is expected to:

fill in and send to GWSH an application form (initially via fax or e-mail), conclude a learning agreement based on the list of lectures provided by GWSH,

produce three standard, colour passport photos,

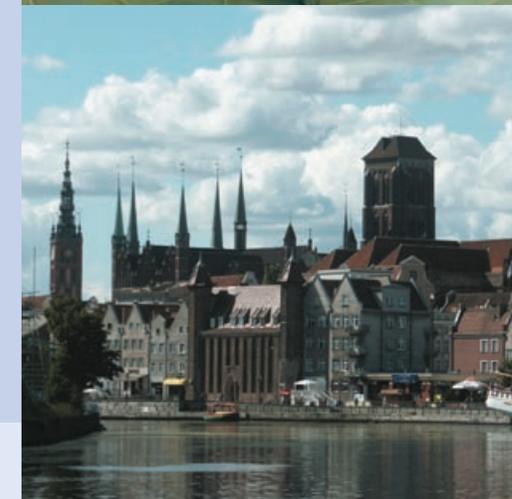
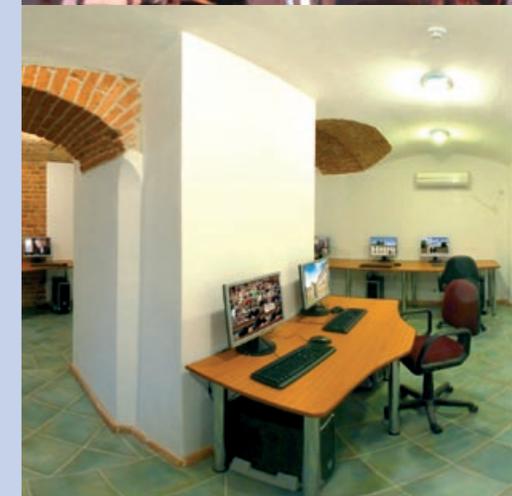
produce a photocopy of a student's passport or national ID card.

### ● FIRST DAYS IN GDAŃSK

Please let us know about the exact date, hour and place of your arrival at least a few days in advance. That is important for us to organize your stay in Gdańsk.

Usually we organize transportation for you to the place of your stay. Each student also gets a city map of Gdańsk.

You are strongly advised to take some Polish cash with you for the first days of your stay – not elsewhere, particularly not at small businesses, are plastic cards accepted. Coming to GWSH means that you will become our student for the time of your stay here. That means you will get a student card and student's record book. It is good to come a couple of days before the semester starts to have time to familiarize oneself with the City and the School itself.



## ● VISAS AND RESIDENCE PERMIT – wiza i pozwolenie pobytu

All foreign citizens – including undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral students – who intend to reside in Poland for a period longer than six months, are obliged to apply for a Temporary Residence Permit for a specified period of time.

That document will be issued by:

Pomorski Urząd Wojewódzki  
Wydział Spraw Obywatelskich i Cudzoziemców  
(Dept. Citizens Affairs and Foreigners)  
ul. Okopowa 21/27, Gdansk  
Ph: +48 58 307 73 34 , enter B, room no. 42  
Opening hours:  
Monday - Friday: 9:00 – 14:00, Tuesday: 11:00 – 18:00.

Instruction:

Students from EU/EEA countries - temporary residence permit If you are an EU citizen you can enter Poland with your ID document (a valid travel document e.g. passport, or another document certifying your identity and citizenship). For a stay up to 3 months no legalization of stay will be necessary. For stays exceeding 3 months, you will have to obtain a temporary residence permit (Karta pobytu obywatela UE). In case of students, the residence permit is issued for one year. The residence permit - once issued - will also entitle its bearer to take up work. This document will be issued by the Department of Citizens Affairs of the Voivodeship Office (province administration, in Polish Urząd Wojewódzki). Charge for issuing the residence permit is 30 Polish zloty (ca 7 Euro).

Documents that you will have to submit to the Voivodeship Office in order to obtain the residence permit:

- copy of the travel document (passport or other ID document)
- health insurance document
- official statement from Polish university accepting you as an Erasmus student (with information about the planned period of study)
- declaration about sufficient resources to cover the subsistence costs in Poland
- 2 photographs
- Application form (Wniosek o zezwolenie na pobyt, in Polish)

The Institutional Erasmus Co-ordinator at your host university will help you to obtain the residence permit.

If you are an EEA-country citizen, you are subject to the same conditions as the EU citizens. If you are a citizen of Switzerland you can enter Poland only on the basis of a valid passport.

See also the web site of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, international version, "ADVISORY FOR CITIZENS OF THE EUROPEAN UNION TRAVELLING TO POLAND AFTER MAY 1 2004" or the web site of the embassy/consulate of Poland in your country.

● **VISA - Students from non-EU/EEA countries** - If you come from a non-EU/EEA country, you can enter the territory of Poland on the basis of a valid passport and a visa (if required). You have to obtain the visa from the consulate of Poland in your country of residence. The short-term visa entitles you to stay in Poland up to 3 months, the long-term visa - to stay up to 1 year. In case of a study period longer than 3 months, you should apply for a long-term visa. The prolongation of visa in Poland is only possible in case of a force majeure or situation impossible to foresee in the time of applying for the visa in the consulate. The visa can be prolonged only once.

It is therefore necessary to apply for a visa in a consulate for the whole planned period of stay in Poland.

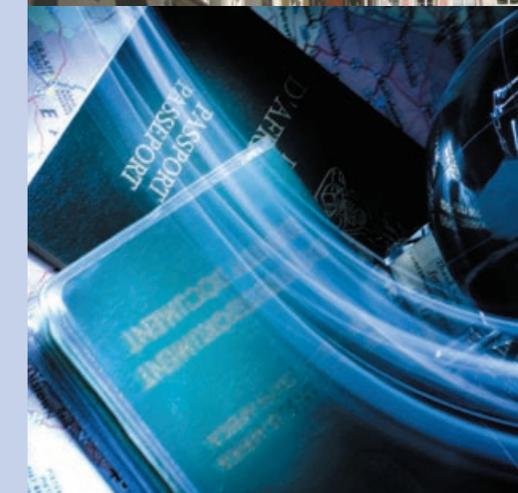
You need the following documents to apply for Polish visa:

- Passport
- visa application form
- current passport photographs
- official statement from Polish university accepting you as an Erasmus student
- official statement from your home university declaring the grant received

For details please contact the Polish Consulate in your country. Persons who have received a visa for the whole period of stay in Poland are not obliged to apply for a residence permit for their stay in Poland (information taken from [www.socrates.org.pl/erasmus/en/index.html](http://www.socrates.org.pl/erasmus/en/index.html))

Administrative fees:

- submission of the application (fiscal taxation) 5 zł
- each document attached to the application 0.50 zł
- each page of a document confirmed with the original 3 zł
- the Temporary Residence Permit 300 zł
- the residence card 25 zł



## ● MEDICAL CARE

### ● Students from EU/EEA countries

A student from a member country staying temporarily in the territory of Poland is entitled to free health care on the basis of the European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) or in particular cases on the basis of a special certificate. The student is obliged to present one of these documents (it is advisable also to have a copy) together with an identity document directly to the health care provider (this information is valid for public health care institutions). The student can benefit from free health services at health care providers who have concluded a relevant contract with the National Health Fund (NFZ/Narodowy Fundusz Zdrowia). Students can also purchase a health insurance policy in their home country.

### ● Students from non-EU/EEA countries

Non EU students should purchase health insurance in their home country, before departure. In the case of the ISIC or Euro<26 card, insurance is included in the card and it is not necessary to buy another one unless one wants to increase its scope or value. Erasmus students (having a local student's card issued by the host university) are usually allowed to consult doctors at academic medical care centres. According to state health regulations foreigners (except EU/EEA citizens, see above) have to pay for a medical consultation. The cost is then reimbursed by the health insurance company. Apart from the academic and public medical care systems there is also a well-developed private sector. For more information see:

[www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl) (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), and:

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

## ● PUBLIC AND UNIVERSITY HOLIDAYS – święta publiczne i uniwersyteckie – dni wolne

- |                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| ● 1 October                  | Inauguration Ceremony                   |
| ● 1 November                 | All Saints' Day                         |
| ● 11 November                | Polish Independence Day                 |
| ● 25-26 December             | Christmas                               |
| ● 1 January                  | New Year                                |
| ● One week in March or April | Easter                                  |
| ● 1 May                      | Labour Day                              |
| ● 2 May                      | National Flag Day                       |
| ● 3 May                      | Constitution Day                        |
| ● Thursday in May or June    | Corpus Christi                          |
| ● June -                     | September Summer holidays               |
| ● 15 August                  | Saint Mary's Assumption/Polish Army Day |

## CONTACT

Responsible for Erasmus exchange in Gdańska Wyższa Szkoła Humanistyczna is Marcin Bielawa. In any matters concerning you please contact Marcin.

Documents, such as application forms or learning agreements to be consulted should be sent to him.

Contact details:

e-mail: [erasmus@gwsh.gda.pl](mailto:erasmus@gwsh.gda.pl)

phone: + 48 58 306 54 78 ext. 18 or 19  
fax: + 48 58 306 63 93



## POLAND

### ● LOCATION

Poland is situated in the eastern part of Central Europe. It shares land borders with Germany, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania and Russia (Kaliningrad District). The northern border, 440 kilometers in length, is the Baltic Sea coast line.

The country is divided into 16 provinces (województwo), which are subdivided into 308 counties (powiat) and the counties – into 2489 communes (gmina, primary level units). The official language is Polish. Compared to other European countries, Poland is homogenous as regards nationality. It is estimated that no more than 3% of the total population is made up of national minorities. Poland is the seventh largest country in Europe. It has some 38 million inhabitants and 322 577 square kilometre. Warsaw is the capital city. The Vistula is the longest river (1047 km).

### ● POPULATION

The largest cities (with the number of inhabitants):

- Warsaw (1,7 mln)
- Łódź (0,8 mln)
- Kraków (0,76 mln)
- Wrocław (0,85 mln)
- Poznań (0,57 mln)
- Gdańsk (0,46 mln)
- Szczecin (0,42 mln)
- Bydgoszcz (0,36 mln)
- Lublin (0,35 mln)
- Katowice (0,31 mln)



### ● CLIMATE

Winter is usually cold and snowy (the average temperature for January is -2,5oC); summer is warm with showers and thunderstorms the average temperature for July is 17oC); spring and early autumn are very pleasant with moderate temperatures and lovely colours. Although in summer it can be hot and dry with temperatures reaching over 30o Celsius, in winter the temperature falls below zero (occasionally reaching -20o or more). Temperature varies in different regions of Poland. It depends on the height above sea level and the distance from the Baltic Sea. In the summer, for instance, temperatures are lower in northern Poland because of the Baltic Sea. The lowest temperatures are in the mountains and the highest in western and central Poland.

For current weather conditions search the Internet:

[www.pogoda.onet.pl](http://www.pogoda.onet.pl)  
[www.twojapogoda.pl](http://www.twojapogoda.pl)  
[www.weather.com](http://www.weather.com)

### ● TIME

The time zone is GMT plus 1 hour. When talking about time we very often say 13.00 or 20.00 instead of 1 or 8 pm. Twice a year the time changes: one hour forward in March, and one hour back in October.

### ● PLACES WORTH SEEING

We have quite a few natural regions – the mountains (Carpathian and Sudeten Mountains) in the south, the plains in central Poland, the lake district (Mazury) in the north-east and the Baltic Sea coast in the north. Every region and city offers unique places to visit.

The list below gives an idea of how varied they are.

● **Warsaw** - when visiting our capital city you should not miss the chance to visit the Old Town with its unforgettable Marketplace and the Royal Castle (both completely destroyed during World War II and carefully reconstructed afterwards). At Łazienki Park, a big romantic 18th century park close to the city centre, which was the summer residence of the last Polish king Stanisław August Poniatowski, there are lakes, the Palace on the Water, the amphitheatre, and the Monument to Frederick Chopin, where piano concerts are held in summer. Along the so-called Royal Track there are many historical buildings but also an elegant shopping street – Nowy Świat. Wilanów Palace and its gardens are also frequently visited by tourists and inhabitants of Warsaw. You can also visit the National Theatre and the Opera, the Palace of Culture, and much more... If you have more time, you can visit Melazowa Wola, where Chopin was born, or the primeval Kampinos Forest; both close to Warsaw.

● **Kraków** - the former capital of Poland (11th -17th century) and one of the most beautiful cities. You can visit the Wawel (the castle of Polish kings and the place where the legendary dragon of Kraków had its cave); the Jagiellonian University (founded in 1364 is the oldest institution of higher education in Poland and one of the oldest in Europe); St. Mary's Church (Kościół Mariacki) – a magnificent church next to the Market Square (the largest medieval square in Europe); and Kazimierz – an old Jewish district. Kraków is registered on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Every tourist will discover their own "magical" Kraków.





● **Wieliczka** - a medieval (and still working) salt mine with underground galleries, halls with works of art sculpted in salt, and lakes. Out of 300 km of underground routes, approx. 2 km is open to tourists. The biggest underground chamber has enough room for 500 people. A trip through the underground corridors takes about 2.5 hours. The salt mine is on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Wieliczka is located only 12 km from the centre of Kraków.

● **Gdansk** - thanks to its location at the delta of the Vistula river, the city was a centre of international trade in the 16th century. Gdansk witnessed historical events such as the outbreak of World War II and the establishment of Solidarnosc. The city is famous for the annual Dominican Fair, which takes place in August, at which time thousands of tourists visit Gdansk and neighboring Gdynia and Sopot. When you are in Gdansk we recommend you to take a walk along Długi Rynek and Długa Street, visit the Cathedral of the Virgin Mary (you can climb up the tower and admire the view of the city), the Townhall, Artus Court, and the Cathedral in Oliwa. Along the whole coastline (from Krynica Morska to Szczecin) is a stretch of sandy beaches popular among tourists all year round.

● **Malbork** - site of the largest medieval castle in Europe. It was built in the 13th century as the seat of the Great Master of the Teutonic Order. You need 4 hours to visit the entire complex consisting of several buildings.

● **Czestochowa** - with Jasna Góra, a fortified monastery and church, is the most venerated Polish sanctuary. Every year it attracts thousands of pilgrims.

● **Zakopane, Karpacz, Krynica or Wisła** - famous as places to go skiing in the winter, and for walking, climbing and hiking in the summer. In the South we have rocks in fantastic shapes, caves and valleys.

● **Biskupin** - an archaeological reservation. Excavations revealed a settlement built of wood over 2700 years ago. The Lusatian culture's fortified settlement was built on a swampy peninsula of about 2 ha..



● **Jura Krakowsko-Czestochowska** - with the Eagles Nest Trail, is a region of calcareous rocks with picturesque ruins of medieval castles.

● **Mazury** - the land of a thousand lakes amid old forests. If you like sailing, this is the place for you. We have over 900 lakes in Poland each with a surface area of more than 1 hectare.

● **National Parks** - there are 22 of them in different regions. Unforgettable views, plants, birds, fish and other animals of different species living at large, crystal clear streams, rivers, rushes... They all create attractive scenery for those who love contact with nature.

● **Tatra Mountains** - the only mountains of the Alpine type in this part of Europe. The whole Tatra Park range is part of a National Park. The expedition to Kasprowy Wierch, climbing up Giewont, Rysy (the highest peak of the Polish Tatry – 2499m), trips to Czarny Staw, or Morskie Oko (lakes), are all very popular among tourists.

These and many other wonderful places are waiting for you to discover them...

#### ● **MUSEUMS, THEATERS, MOVIES**

Every city has cultural centres. Theatres, museums (National Museums in Gdansk, Krakow, Poznan, Szczecin, Warsaw, Wroclaw), art galleries, concert halls, movies, libraries and sport facilities are everywhere. You can find pubs, clubs and discos in big and smaller cities. Most regions and cities have their own websites.



## ● CUSTOMS

Thanks to our ancestors we have a set of customs rooted in past centuries. Let's have a look at a few.

### February/ March:

Tłusty czwartek (Fat Thursday) - celebrated on the last Thursday of the carnival. On that day we bake, or more often buy and eat lots of delicious doughnuts with marmalade.

Ostatki - the last day of the carnival, just before the Lent. Many people, especially youngsters, go out in the evening.

### March/April:

Wielki Czwartek, Wielki Piątek, Wielka Sobota (Triduum Paschalne) (Eastern Thursday, Friday, Saturday) - during the very last three days of the Lent special ceremonies are held in churches. On Easter Saturday we bring food packed in small baskets to church to be blessed.

Lany poniedziałek (wet Monday) - the Monday after Easter. Children and adults pour water (sometimes perfumes or cologne) on one another, wish good health and give small gifts.

Prima aprilis (April Fools' Day) - on the 1st of April. You can be sure that somebody will try to pull your leg on this day!

### May/June:

Corpus Christi - you can see processions led by children scattering flower petals.

Sobótka - on St. John's night in June. In villages, towns and cities located by a river, lake or sea people gather at one place in the late evening to observe the spectacle of wreaths decorated with burning candles floating on the water. Local authorities often organise open air music concerts.

### November:

Wszystkich Świętych (All Saints' Day) - 1st of November. People go to cemeteries to light candles and pray for their relatives, friends or strangers who have passed away.

Andrzejką (St. Andrew's Day) - 30th of November. It is a very mysterious evening - people, especially young girls, pour hot, melted wax into a bowl of cold water, the shape of the congealed wax tells the future. Other fortune-telling games are played as well.

### December:

Mikołajki (St. Nicholas Day) - 6th of December. It's a sign of the coming Christmas. Supposing that you were good it is very probable that early in the morning you will find a gift in your shoes. They must be clean of course!

Christmas Eve - 24th of December. Before a solemn dinner we share a wafer with one another. During the whole evening we sing Christmas carols. The courses served are very special and usually associated with Christmas Eve exclusively. Every region has its own dishes. Some people go to church for a midnight mass.

## ● CUISINE

Our cuisine is varied. We have traditional dishes, such as schabowy (a pork chop), bigos (cabbage cooked with vegetables and meat), gołabki (chopped pork and rice wrapped up in a cabbage leaf, then cooked in a tomato sauce) or pierogi (pasta with mushrooms, meat or fruits) on the other hand, we do eat more and more salads and vegetables. For breakfast we usually have cereals, tea, coffee or milk, yoghurt, or toast, sometimes sandwiches or eggs. Many people have lunch in the early afternoon. Dinner, served in the late afternoon, is the main meal. Salads, potatoes, salad, rice or pasta with meat are often served. A piece of cake or fruit is a good dessert.

## ● POLITICAL SYSTEM

Poland is a republic governed by a president elected by popular vote for a five-year term. The bicameral National Assembly (Zgromadzenie Narodowe) consists of the Sejm and the Senate. The Prime Minister is appointed by the president and confirmed by the Sejm. Poland joined the NATO alliance in 1999. In accordance with the Constitution, the Republic of Poland is a Parliamentary Republic. The President, whose office is restricted to two five-year terms, is the Head of State. In July 1989 a joint session of the Sejm and Senate elected General Wojciech Jaruzelski as Poland's first President since 1952. Presidents have been elected by direct popular vote since 1990, as a result of which Lech Wałęsa became the first President elected by the nation. He was defeated in the next election and a representative of the left wing – Aleksander Kwasniewski was elected President. Since 2005 Lech Kaczyński has been the President of Poland. The Parliament (National Assembly) is the main legislative body. The 460 members of the Sejm (Lower Chamber) and 100 members of the Senate (Upper Chamber) are elected every four years. Every Polish citizen of 18 years of age and over can vote. The Government (Council of Ministers) is the main executive body. It is formed by the winning party (or parliamentary coalition) with the Prime Minister as its head.

## ● RELIGION

The majority of the population declares themselves to be Roman Catholics (about 90% of Polish people). There are also other religious groups among which orthodox and protestant are the most widespread (respectively 1,4% and 0,4% of the population). Freedom of conscience and freedom of religion are guaranteed by the Polish Constitution. The Church and the State are independent and autonomous. There is no official religion in Poland. The Roman Catholic Church is the biggest Church in Poland. The overwhelming majority (nearly 90.3%) of the population are Roman-Catholic if the number baptisms is taken into consideration (34.9 million baptised people). The Church has the right to run educational institutions, i.e. kindergartens and schools of all types according to canon law regulations and official principles scheduled in relevant Acts (e.g. the Act on the education system, or higher education Act).



## POLAND FROM THE FOREIGN POINT OF VIEW

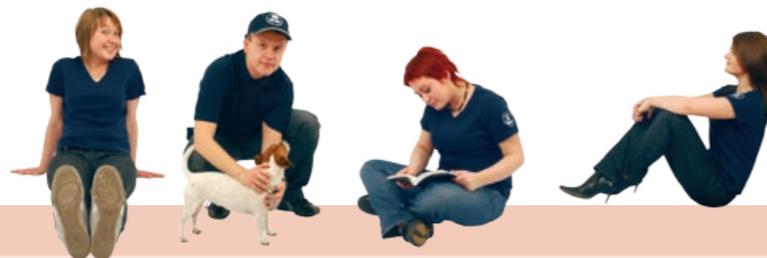
Here are some little differences which may puzzle or surprise foreigners in Poland. Some of these are still common:

- Paying for the toilet in some restaurants or bars.
- Trying to send a parcel in the post office may require a special kind of string.
- Having to be quiet in your flat after 10 p.m. but being allowed to start loud work again at 6 a.m.
- Flowers for every occasion (but always an uneven number!).
- Polish celebration of a name day.
- Christmas dinner is eaten on Christmas Eve often with the carp in jelly (delicious!).
- The direct translation of "I'm sorry, I'm afraid we haven't got any of that at the moment, try again tomorrow or would you like me to order some for you" in a shop is 'Nie ma' said in a tone of voice that makes you feel guilty for having even asked.
- Despite the fact that a handshake is a typical greeting in Poland, some men might kiss hands of women.
- Women (and sometimes men) who are close friends will kiss each other on both cheeks.
- Time of eating meals differs considerably from that in other European countries.

Thus, breakfast is eaten early in the morning, then at about 4 p.m. there is usually a two-course dinner (soup and the main course), finally supper is consumed at about 7-8 p.m. (it often consists of sandwiches or yoghurts). There is no lunch break at work.

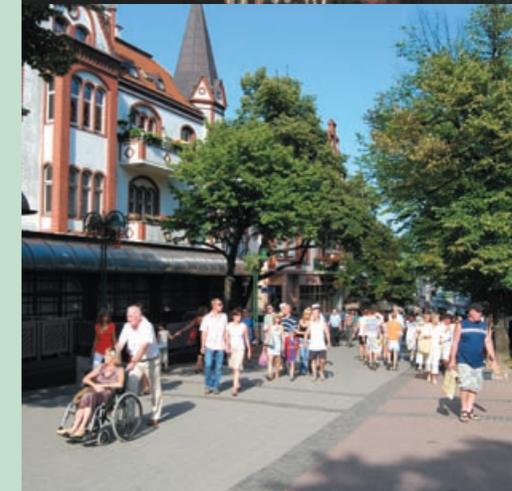
As it takes time to understand the different behaviour in a new culture and know how to react, here are some comments for newcomers:

- Poland is a very religious country and on a Sunday you will see huge crowds going to church, young as well as old.
- The month before Christmas is a holy time (advent) not a time for parties. Similarly, the time of Lent before Easter.
- You should cross a street at zebra crossings but watch out as cars sometimes do not seem to have to stop!
- Lectures at the university may start sometimes 15 minutes later (so-called 'academic quarter' acceptable BUT NOT BY EVERYONE among university students and teachers)
- Students usually wear formal clothes (often a white blouse/shirt and dark skirt/trousers) during university exams.
- English is still not so common in Poland (not in the countryside at least), German is more popular among middle-aged and older people.



## GDANSK, Sopot, GDYNIA

The Tri-city (or TriCity, also called Treble City, in Polish Trójmiasto) is an urban area consisting of three Polish cities: Gdansk, Gdynia and Sopot. They are situated adjacent to one another, in a row, on the coast of the Gdansk Bay, the Baltic Sea, in Eastern Pomerania (the Pomeranian Voivodeship), northern Poland. The Tricity metropolitan area has a population of over 1 million people. The name Trójmiasto was used informally or semi-formally only until 28 March 2007 when the "Tricity Card" (in Polish "Karta Trójmiasta") was signed as a declaration of the cities' cooperation. The history of Gdansk begins around 2500 BC, when settlement activity in the area of today's city started. Ten centuries ago, in March 997 the Slavonic name URBS GYDDANYZC was first recorded in "The Life of St. Adalbert" written in Rome by the monk John Canaparius. Gdansk, Sopot and Gdynia are very often called a Tricity with over 750 000 inhabitants and the Tricity agglomeration (with surrounded towns and villages) populations is over 1 000 000 inhabitants.



## ● GDANSK

Gdansk has played an important role in the history of neighbouring states and especially of Poland throughout its thousand-year history. Its convenient location, where Poland's principal river – the Wisła (the Vistula) – meets the Baltic Sea, has shaped the city's character and has made it one of the most lively centres of trade in this region of Europe.

Gdansk is a northern European city, which can be seen from its architecture, culture and science. When walking around the Old Town, you can still see frescos, monuments of kings (Kazimierz Jagiellonczyk, Zygmunt August, Jan Sobieski), created centuries ago. Previously, many German and Polish settlers had made their way to the town, as did the Flemish, the Scots, the Jews, the Dutch, the Italians, the French and the Scandinavians. Many famous people of various nationalities come from our city. Gdansk citizens included famous scientists, such as Jan Hevelius, the astronomer who was born and worked here; Daniel Fahrenheit, the inventor of the thermometer scale still used in America; Arthur Schopenhauer, the world famous philosopher – called the saddest Gdansk citizen.

Gdansk has always been a city attracting open minds due to its spirit of tolerance. Klaus Kinski, the famous actor, was born in Sopot. The Nobel Prize winner Gunter Grass comes from Gdansk and his books describe former and contemporary visions of the city. The idea of "Solidarnosc", the first free trade union in an Eastern European Russia-dependent country, which gave birth to a great social movement, was also born in our city. The 16th century is a golden period in the history of Gdansk. The town, a member of the Hanseatic League, became a marine and economic power, one of the most prosperous in Europe. At that time magnificent churches, public buildings, patricians' and rich burghers' houses were built. Gdansk twice became a Free Town. First, as a result of the Treaty of Torun (1466), then after the First World War, when the Treaty of Versailles (1919) established the Free City of Danzig (Gdansk) in 1920, under the auspices of the League of Nations, via the Commissioner General of the Polish Republic. The existence of the Polish minority among the German majority and the increase in the power of the Nazis (1934-1939) provided a background for confrontation. After World War II, which began with the attack by Hitler's Germany on Westerplatte, Gdansk was completely destroyed. After being reincorporated into Polish territory, Gdansk was carefully restored.

## ● SOPOT

Sopot is the summer capital of Poland, having a special atmosphere and artistic spirit. With what is the longest wooden pier in Europe and the Music Festival in Opera Lesna, it attracts lots of people from all over Poland and different countries of the world. They come to walk down Monte Cassino Street, relax, meet friends and enjoy the wonderful summer nights either at the seaside or in the numerous cafes, pubs and clubs.



## ● GDYNIA

The history of Gdynia starts in the 13th century. It was a small village owned by monks. In 1922 the Senate of the Republic of Poland passed a law to build a sea port, later open to merchant and navy ships. In 1926 Gdynia officially became a city. Nowadays, Gdynia is one of the fastest growing cities in Poland and it attracts many companies to the region, thanks to its good location.

## USEFUL INFORMATION

### ● POLISH CURRENCY

Polish currency is called złoty (zł) and grosz (gr) 1 zł = 100 gr

The coins:

1 gr, 2 gr, 10 gr, 20 gr, 50 gr, 1 zł, 2 zł, 5 zł

The banknotes:

10 zł, 20 zł, 50 zł, 100 zł, 200 zł

### ● COST OF LIVING

Depending on your life-style and habits you have different needs. Below you will find a list of sample prices of goods and services available in Poland. Please note that most of the prices are minimum prices.

1 Euro ~ 3,50 polish zloty (zł) (April 2008).

● milk (1l)	2.5 zł
● pasta (0,5 kg)	4 zł
● yoghurt	1.5 zł
● apples (1 kg)	3 zł
● mineral water (1,5 l)	2.0 zł
● chocolate	3 zł
● tea	2-10 zł
● beer (0,5 l)	2-8 zł
● coffee	5-10 zł
● chips	3 zł
● bread	2 zł
● cinema ticket	15-20 zł
● butter	5 zł
● theatre ticket	25-200 zł
● ham (1 kg)	20 zł
● haircut	15-80 zł
● cheese (1 kg)	20 zł
● Taxi (1km)	2 zł



### ● BANKS

There are many banks in Poland. They are usually open from Monday till Friday, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. You can open an account in Poland (usually only passport is needed) or get money directly from the account in your home country through a cash machine. If you decide to open a bank account in Poland and you do not speak Polish, we would advise you to ask a Polish colleague to accompany you. Credit cards are in common use in big cities. You can pay using card in shops, restaurants, pubs...

If you lose your card in Poland, you should immediately contact POLCARD in Warsaw (phone: 022/ 515 31 50 - 24 hours a day). If that fails however, you should contact your credit card supplier.

### ● MONEY EXCHANGE

If you wish to exchange euro (or other currency) to PLN you have at your disposal exchange desks at border crossings, airports, railway stations, travel offices, hotels and special exchange counters called "kantors". No commission fee is charged at kantors. However kantors placed at airport, railway stations have usually very low prices for customers, so if there is a need to exchange currency there try to exchange as little as possible. Traveler's check can be exchanged in most of banks, but not at private exchange counters. Cash machines (ATM) are very common.

### ● POST OFFICES

Post offices (Poczta or Poczta Polska) are located throughout cities, often with branches at main railway stations. Post offices are usually open five days a week from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Post-boxes are green (for local mail) and red (for any other destination in Poland and abroad). For domestic letters and postcards (up to 50g) you pay 1.40 PLN (information about the price – April 2008).

### ● MAKING PHONE CALLS

When you want to make a phone call you have to buy a magnetic telephone card. The cards are of 25, 50 or 100 units (cost respectively ...) and are available at kiosks and post offices. Public phones are located at many places - train stations, post-offices, universities, on the street.

### ● EMERGENCY TELEPHONES

Police: 997

Fire brigade: 998

Ambulance: 999

When calling by mobile phone in emergency dial: 112

### INTERNET CAFES

Every university has access to the Internet. Therefore, there should be no problem if you want to surf the web. You can also visit commercial Internet cafes, they are rather common especially in big cities. The prices for using the Internet in Internet cafes vary from 2 złoty to 3 złoty for an hour.

There is also a possibility to use mobile internet connection. That kind of services is served by mobile phones operator. There is also a free access to mobile internet connections in the Old town of Gdańsk



### ● SHOPPING

Generally, shops are open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday to Friday. Supermarkets are open seven days a week, often till late. There are also shops open 24 hours a day. Grocery shops are open from 6-7a.m. to 6-9 p.m. Local markets are popular places where you can buy food, vegetables and fruits of good quality.

### ● EATING OUT

Cities have a wide range of restaurants, bars, pubs, and fast food bars, from inexpensive to exclusive ones. Some restaurants specialize in national cuisine - Polish, Italian, French, Chinese and so on. Vegetarians will find good restaurants as well. Cafes, apart from tea and coffee, offer cakes and other sweet desserts.

### ● PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Every city (despite Sopot) has its own network of public transport. Tickets are available at kiosks and in some cities from drivers. Usually you also need a ticket for your luggage. Tickets must be punched just after you get on a bus. A valid ISiC card entitles you to reduced-price tickets (up to the age of 26). For details you should consult regulations on fares issued by a given city. Depending on the city, buses operate from 4 a.m. to 11 p.m., there are also night lines operating between 10 p.m. and 4 a.m. However, whenever you travel late at night we would advise you to take a taxi. Usually it is cheaper if you order a taxi by phone.

In Gdansk one reduced price ticket costs 1.40 zł for 45 minutes, full price is double. However if you know you will be using public transport many times within the day or weekend you can buy a 24 hours or 30 days ticket.

In Sopot you can use public transport as well. In that case you have to choose between operators from Gdańsk and Gdynia.



## PUBLIC TRANSPORT IN GDANSK

### ● Municipal Railway (SKM) [www.skm.pkp.pl](http://www.skm.pkp.pl)

This is an excellent means of transport for short trips across the Tri-City. The network provides easy access to most districts of northern Gdansk, Sopot and Gdynia. Tickets can be bought only at the Ticket Office at every station and must be stamped before entering the train in the yellow stamping machine on the platform. Late in the evening tickets are available directly from the ticket inspector at the head of the train.

A discount (37%) student ticket is valid only with a student card (to be shown during ticket control).



### ● Tram (Tramwaj) [www.ztm.gda.pl](http://www.ztm.gda.pl)

This is the most popular means of transport in Gdansk. The network provides excellent links between the north and south of the city. Moreover, its lines reach most districts. Tickets for trams and buses in Gdansk are priced according to the length of travel time they offer. The basic ticket is valid for a 10-minute journey; its multiple allows longer travel (for details see the table on the side). Switching trams or buses is allowed unless the time has expired. Therefore, for longer trips it is better to buy a ticket valid for the whole day (5 times the price). Tickets can be bought in every kiosk. Moreover, the tram driver sells a set of 3 basic tickets. Students have the right to use half-price tickets, yet a student card is requested during ticket control.



### ● Buses (Autobus) [www.ztm.gda.pl](http://www.ztm.gda.pl)

Buses are the main means of transport to more distant districts and the suburbs of Gdansk, Sopot and Gdynia. At night (from midnight up to 4 a.m.) they are the only means of public transport available (note: special night fare). Gdynia has its own tickets and therefore, it is impossible to use Gdansk time-tickets there. Moreover, in Gdynia there is no distinction in the value of the ticket as far as the time of travel is concerned. Each stamped ticket is valid for a single journey only.

Students have the right to use half-price tickets (again student cards are requested). Trolley-buses support the public transport network of Gdynia. The fare is the same as for buses.

In Sopot, both Gdynia and Gdansk tickets are valid, although the fares might differ. Only in buses going to Gdansk is it necessary to use time-tickets (for details see Trams). On other routes each punched ticket is valid for a single ride.

### ● Taxi [www.katalog.trojmiasto.pl/komunikacja\\_i\\_transport/taxi](http://www.katalog.trojmiasto.pl/komunikacja_i_transport/taxi)

A taxi is the best solution when returning from late-night parties. It is not too expensive (from Sopot to the dorm about 30 zł, from the Old Town 15 zł). When taking a taxi, it is better to phone one than to take one from a taxi rank – you get a cheaper rate.

## USEFUL LINKS

### ● Poland

- Poland.pl - [www.poland.pl](http://www.poland.pl)
- Poland.com - [www.poland.com](http://www.poland.com)
- GoPoland - [www.gopoland.com](http://www.gopoland.com)
- Visit.pl - [www.visit.pl](http://www.visit.pl)



### ● Important institutions in Poland

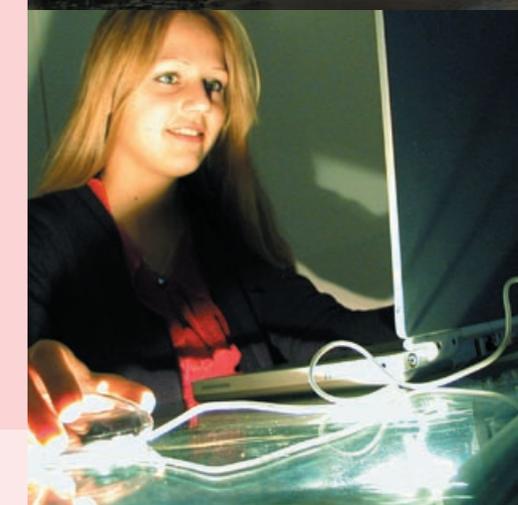
- Ministry of Health - [www.mz.gov.pl](http://www.mz.gov.pl)
- Ministry of Science and Higher Education - [www.mnisw.gov.pl](http://www.mnisw.gov.pl)
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Poland - [www.msz.gov.pl](http://www.msz.gov.pl)
- Bureau for Academic Recognition and International Exchange - [www.buwiwm.edu.pl](http://www.buwiwm.edu.pl)
- Polish Chamber of Physicians and Dentists - [www.nil.org.pl](http://www.nil.org.pl)

### ● Tricity (Gdansk, Sopot, Gdynia)

- Gdansk - [www.gdansk.pl](http://www.gdansk.pl)
- Gdansk-life - [www.gdansk-life.com](http://www.gdansk-life.com)
- Gdansk-online - [www.gdansk-online.eu](http://www.gdansk-online.eu)
- Wikipedia - [www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gdansk](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gdansk)
- Wikimedia - [www.wikimedia.org/wiki/Gdansk](http://www.wikimedia.org/wiki/Gdansk)
- Gdynia - [www.gdynia.pl](http://www.gdynia.pl)
- Sopot - [www.sopot.pl](http://www.sopot.pl)
- Trojmiasto.pl - [www.guide.trojmiasto.pl](http://www.guide.trojmiasto.pl)
- In your pocket - [www.inyourpocket.com/poland/city/gdansk](http://www.inyourpocket.com/poland/city/gdansk)

### ● Communication

- Polish Airlines LOT - [www.lot.pl](http://www.lot.pl)
- Gdansk Lech Walesa Airport - [www.airport.gdansk.pl](http://www.airport.gdansk.pl)
- Via Michelin - [www.viamichelin.com](http://www.viamichelin.com)
- Railway guide - [www.rozklad.pkp.pl](http://www.rozklad.pkp.pl)
- PKP Intercity - [www.intercity.pl](http://www.intercity.pl)
- Trams & buses guide - [www.zkm.pl](http://www.zkm.pl)
- Fast town railway - [www.skm.pkp.pl](http://www.skm.pkp.pl)
- Wikitravel - [www.wikitravel.org/en/Gdansk](http://www.wikitravel.org/en/Gdansk)
- Coastal shipping company - Żegluga Gdanska - [www.zegluga.pl](http://www.zegluga.pl)





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[www.gwsh.gda.pl](http://www.gwsh.gda.pl)