

OFFICIAL NAME: Republic of Poland

CAPITAL: Warsaw

SYSTEM OF GOVERNMENT: Unitary Multiparty Republic

AREA: 312,612 Sq Km (120,700 Sq Mi)

ESTIMATED 2000 POPULATION: 39,223,300



LOCATION & GEOGRAPHY: Poland is located in Central Europe. It is bound by the Baltic Sea to the north, Germany to the west, Lithuania to the northeast, Belarus and the Ukraine to the east as well as the Czech Republic and Slovakia to the south. The country is mostly part of the Great European Plain while north of the Polish Plateau there are lowlands of clay and sand as well as the Baltic Sea coast which is flat and contains numerous lagoons. To the south, the plateau rises to the Carpathian and Sudetes Mountains. Around 30% of the land area is covered by Pine, Beech and Birch forests while patches of tundra are found along the Baltic Sea coast and steppe covers the Polish Plateau. The principal rivers are the Wisla or Vistula and Oder or Odra. Major Cities (pop. est.); Warsaw 1,642,700, Lodz 833,700, Krakow 745,100 (1994). Land Use; forested 28%, pastures 13%, agricultural-cultivated 47%, other 12% (1993).

CLIMATE: Poland has a continental climate with severe winters and mild summers. Rainfall mostly occurs during the summer months and the average annual precipitation varies from 500 mm (20 inches) to 1,220 mm (48 inches) depending on the region. Average temperature ranges in Warsaw are from -5 to 0 degrees Celsius (23 to 32 degrees Fahrenheit) in January to 15 to 24 degrees Celsius (59 to 75 degrees Fahrenheit) in July.

PEOPLE: The principal ethnic majority are the Poles who account for almost 99% of the population and are predominantly of west Slavic origin. Other ethnic minorities include Ukrainians, Belarussians, Germans and Jews.

DEMOGRAPHIC/VITAL STATISTICS: Density; 122 persons per sq km (317 persons per sq mi) (1991). Urban-Rural; 61.4% urban, 38.6% rural (1990). Sex Distribution; 48.7% male, 51.3% female (1990). Life Expectancy at Birth; 66.1 years male, 75.3 years female (1991). Age Breakdown; 25% under 15, 21% 15 to 29, 24% 30 to 44, 15% 45 to 59, 11% 60 to 74, 4% 75 and over (1990). Birth Rate; 13.4 per 1,000 (1992). Death Rate; 10.3 per 1,000 (1992). Increase Rate; 3.1 per 1,000 (1992). Infant Mortality Rate; 14.2 per 1,000 live births (1992).

RELIGIONS: Mostly Christians with 95% of the population Roman Catholic while the remainder are Eastern Orthodox or Protestant.

LANGUAGES: The official language is Polish which is spoken and understood by nearly all of the population.

EDUCATION: Aged 25 or over and having attained: no formal schooling 2.8%, incomplete primary 12.7%, primary 44.9%, secondary 33.9%, higher 5.7% (1978). Literacy; literate population aged 15 or over 98.7% (1988).

MODERN HISTORY - WWII TO 1993: In July 1945 the Polish Government of National Unity, which was dominated by the communist Polish Workers' Party (PPR), was formed and Poland's present day boundaries were established. In 1947 the PPR won parliamentary elections and banned all opposition parties. In 1949 the Socialists and PPR united to form the Polish United Workers' Party (PZPR). The PZPR then embarked on socialist policies of industrial nationalization and the establishment of collective agricultural farms. In 1956 anti-government demonstrations and strikes, although crushed by troops, brought Wladyslaw Gomulka to power as head of the PZPR communist party which resulted in the abandonment of compulsory collective farms. In Aug. 1968 Gomulka sent Polish troops to participate in the invasion of Czechoslovakia. In 1970 violent suppression of strikes and riots resulted in Gomulka being ousted and replaced by Edward Gierek. In Oct. 1978 Polish Cardinal Karol Wojtyla was elected as Pope John Paul II and in June 1979 visited his homeland. In 1980 Stanislaw Kania replaced Gieredk as head of the PZPR after thousands of workers went on strike demanding economic and political reforms. In 1981 Wojciech Jaruzelski replaced Kania after economic problems increased and in December Martial Law was imposed until July 1983. In Oct. 1984 Father Jerzy Popieluszko, a pro Solidarity priest, was abducted and murdered. In 1988 strikes and riots took place in protest of economic austerity measures which resulted in the announcement in Apr. 1989 of the planned introduction of market economy, the legalization of Solidarity and constitutional changes. In July, Jaruzelski was elected President and in Aug. 1989 Solidarity's Tadeusz Mazowiecki was elected as the first non-communist Prime Minister and formed a Solidarity coalition government. In Nov. 1990 Lech Walesa who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1983 was elected as the country's new President. In Jan. 1991 Jan Krzysztof Bielecki of the Liberal Democratic Congress succeeded Mazowiecki as Prime Minister and in Oct. 1991 parliamentary elections were held following their postponement from May 1991. In Dec. 1991 Jan Olszewski was elected the new Prime Minister under a center-right coalition government. Also in the same month associate membership negotiations with the EU were successfully completed. In 1992 the government announced plans for a controversial "pact for state enterprise" with the unions, in which the employees of privatized enterprises would receive 10% of the shares for free while 60% would be available for Polish citizens through national investment funds. On June 4, 1992 following rumors of a planned coup and allegations of corruption Prime Minister Olszewski government was dismissed and Pres. Walesa chose Waldemar Pawlak of the Polish Peasant Party (PSL) as Olszewski's successor, although an alliance of the Christian National Alliance (ZChN), Democratic Union (UD), Liberal Democratic Congress and three

other parties formed a coalition and appointed Hanna Suchocka as the country's first women Prime Minister. The new government introduced a jobs program that included retraining, increased public works and incentives for investment in certain sectors as the country's unemployment soared above 2.5 million. In Nov. 1992 the Parliament (Sejm) passed a plan to increase sales taxes and reduce expenditures, following which the IMF approved a US \$700 million economic aid package. In Dec. 1992 some 300,000 miners went on strike in protest to low wages and on Dec. 31, 1992 the government signed an agreement with the strikers for additional state subsidies. Also in 1992 the government signed a treaty with Ukraine while relations with Latvia and Lithuania also improved. In Feb. 1993 Prime Minister Suchocka narrowly succeeded in passing her austerity budget in the Parliament following stiff opposition from the Solidarity parties, although on March 18, 1993 the Parliament voted to suspend the government's plan to privatise some 600 state enterprises. In April 1993 the Parliament agreed to allow the government to continue its privatization program, although in May 1993 the Solidarity unions led strikes by teachers and health workers that led to a vote of no confidence. On May 28, 1993 Prime Minister Suchocka resigned and Pres. Walesa announced elections for Sept. 19, 1993. On Sept. 18, 1993 the last Russian troops left Poland on the 54th anniversary of the Red Army's invasion. In Oct. 1993 the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development announced the approval of US \$1 billion loan to support the country's privatization program. On Oct. 14, 1993 Waldemar Pawlak of the PSL formed a coalition government with the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) and survived a vote of no confidence on Nov. 10, 1993.

CURRENCY: The official currency is the Zloty (Zl) divided into 100 Groszy.

ECONOMY: Gross National Product; USD \$87,272,400,000 (1993). Public Debt; USD \$47,200,000,000 (1993). Imports; Zl 340,183,000,000,000 (1993). Exports; Zl 257,568,000,000,000 (1993). Tourism Receipts; USD \$4,500,000,000 (1993). Balance of Trade; Zl -98,630,000,000,000 (1994). Economically Active Population; 17,356,00 or 45.1% of total population (1993). Unemployed; 15.0% (1993).

MAIN TRADING PARTNERS: Its main trading partners are the former USSR, Germany and other former communist East European countries.

MAIN PRIMARY PRODUCTS: Cereals, Coal, Copper, Fish, Iron Ore, Lead, Livestock, Oil Seed, Potatoes, Sugar Beets, Sulfur, Timber, Zinc.

MAJOR INDUSTRIES: Agriculture, Chemicals, Fishing, Food Processing, Forestry, Iron and Steel, Machinery, Mining, Petroleum Refining, Ship Building.

MAIN EXPORTS: Chemicals, Clothing, Coal, Foodstuffs, Iron and Steel, Machinery, Motor Vehicles, Non-Ferrous Metals, Ships and Boats.

TRANSPORT: Railroads; route length 26,228 km (16,297 mi) (1990), passenger-km 50,373,000,000 (31,300,000,000 passenger-mi) (1990), cargo ton-km 83,530,000,000 (57,210,000,000 short ton-mi) (1990). Roads; length 401,000 km (249,170 mi) (1990). Vehicles; cars 5,261,000 (1990), trucks and buses 1,137,000 (1990). Merchant Marine; vessels 698 (1990), deadweight tonnage 4,441,877 (1990). Air Transport; passenger-km 3,478,584,000 (2,161,491,000 passenger-mi) (1990), cargo ton-km 10,479,000 (7,177,000 short ton-mi) (1990).

COMMUNICATIONS: Daily Newspapers; total of 72 with a total circulation of 6,085,000 (1992). Radio; receivers 10,895,500 (1993). Television; receivers 10,087,000 (1993). Telephones; units 4,419,000 (1993).

MILITARY: 283,600 (1993) total active duty personnel with 65.5% army, 6.7% navy and 27.8% air force while military expenditure accounts for 2.5% (1993) of the Gross National Product (GNP).