

Legends Consulting Country Fact Sheet



POLAND

CURRENCY: ZLOTY / EURO IS PENDING

Introduction

The relationship between the people of Poland and America has always been warm and cordial. Even during the time of the cold war, Poles and Americans were tightly knit most likely due to the large number of Polish emigrants which settled predominantly in up-state New York, various regions of the Midwest, and most prominently in the Chicago area. In fact, Chicago has the second largest concentration of people of Polish ancestry outside of Warsaw, the capital of Poland.

Poland officially joined the European Union in May of 2004. It is considering becoming a part of the Eurozone, which requires that member countries use the Euro exclusively, but has not yet joined. It is still moving toward membership in the Eurozone and uses the Euro but also continues to use the Polish Zloty as well on the street.

Business

Although Polish people know how to be very formal when appropriate, generally, they are not fancy. While doing business in Poland, especially outside of Warsaw, there will most always be tea, coffee, and sweets served at meetings in the morning and afternoon. And, rather than going out to lunch, the boardroom table will be quietly transformed into a buffet of local fare for a midday feast while business guests are out on the factory floor. While the Polish people are quite hospitable and it is possible that business guests may be entertained into the evening, it is rare that business professionals in Poland will rearrange their personal time to accommodate a business guest's business schedule. Business hours are usually 7:00 AM until 4:00 PM and evenings, weekends and holidays are generally reserved for relaxation.

Traveling and doing business in Poland is pleasant and most natives, especially those of the younger generations, speak very good English. However, as in any foreign country, natives truly appreciate it when one attempts to speak a little Polish.

Travel

Travel to major Polish cities in Poland from the United States is quite easy with non-stop flights from Chicago and Newark airports. Connecting flights to major Polish cities from many European hubs provides many more options with Frankfurt, Germany having perhaps the most connecting flights.

There are numerous travel options while traveling within Poland. The train and roadway systems connect even the most remote villages adequately. However, the infrastructure of the country is still in need of major upgrades. Air travel between cities is actually quite affordable for an American executive and if one is traveling with nominal baggage this option should be seriously considered. Although renting a car is an option, the added insurance is disproportionately expensive and hiring a car with a driver is



often nearly as affordable. If one insists upon traveling by train, it is doable and generally a company will arrange for one of their own employees to help business guests to and from the train station and the factory.

Although visiting most any area of Poland is quite safe, it is prudent to remain "Streetwise," while traveling by foot, train, bus, or air. The dress is generally business-casual most of the time. However, a conservative coat and tie for men and simple business suit for women is recommended at least for initial business meetings. Whether visiting Poland for business or pleasure, conservative solid colors are the *de rigueur*. Trendy, sporty, flashy, colors and prints are sure to make one stand out, especially on men. Short pants are rarely seen worn in Poland and although blue jeans are becoming more common for the younger set, generally speaking, one would be wise to leave them at home.

Demographics

The Poles are proud of their history, their culture, their contributions to the world, and the fact that they are an extremely progressive emerging market in Eastern Europe with very impressive economic growth in spite of all the struggles in the world economy. Historically, the geographical location of Poland has always been a prominent area of trade since it sits at the cross roads of the East and West and the Poles are pleased to finally be able to capitalize on this now that they are not under the control of oppressive governments.

Polish people are highly educated and although not, "Chit Chatty," they like to engage in discussions about history, the arts, business, and politics.

Views toward foreigners

Americans, while in Poland, are welcomed openly with gracious hospitality. A person wandering the streets of Poznan who becomes a little disoriented and asks young couple for directions to the main plaza might very well be escorted on the tram to the city center by these new friends rather than simply giving directions to find the city center.

The Polish people really do like Americans, but often struggle with American politics.

Economic Overview and selected data

(The information below is taken directly from the CIA World Factbook: www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/)

Poland has pursued a policy of economic liberalization since 1990 and today stands out as a success story among transition economies. It is the only country in the European Union to maintain positive GDP growth through the 2008-2009 economic downturn. GDP per capita is still much below the EU average, but is similar to that of the three Baltic states. Since 2004, EU membership and access to EU structural funds have provided a major boost to the economy. Unemployment fell rapidly to 6.4% in October 2008, but climbed back to 11.8% for the year 2010, exceeding the EU average by more than 2%. Inflation reached a low of about 2.6% in 2010 due to the global economic slowdown but has since climbed and is expected to remain around 3%, and close to the upper limit of the National Bank of Poland's target rate. Poland's economic performance could improve over the longer term if the country addresses some of the remaining deficiencies in its road and rail infrastructure and its business environment. An inefficient commercial court system, a rigid labor code, bureaucratic red tape, burdensome tax system, and persistent low-level corruption keep the private sector from performing up to its full potential. Rising demands to fund health care, education, and the state pension system caused the public sector budget deficit to rise to 7.9% of GDP in 2010. The PO/PSL coalition government, which came to power in November 2007, has planned to reduce the budget deficit in 2011 and has also announced its intention to enact business-friendly reforms, increase workforce participation, reduce public sector spending growth, lower taxes, and accelerate privatization. The government has moved slowly on most major reforms, but has sped up privatization.

Selected Statistical Data - Poland

GDP (purchasing power parity) - \$721.3 billion (2010 est.) - Country comparison to the world:[21](#)

GDP (per capita) - \$18,800 (2010 est.) - Country comparison to the world:[65](#)

GDP – composition by sector – Agriculture: 4%, Industry: 32%, Services: 64%

Labor Force – 17 million (2010 est.)

Unemployment Rate – 11.8% (2010 est.) – Comparison to the world: 126

Inflation Rate (consumer prices) - 3.5% (2010 est.) – Comparison to the world: 72

Industries - machine building, iron and steel, coal mining, chemicals, shipbuilding, food processing, glass, beverages, and textiles

Exports: \$160.8 Billion (2010 est.) – Comparison to the world: 28

Exports – Commodities: machinery and transport equipment 37.8%, intermediate manufactured goods 23.7%, miscellaneous manufactured goods 17.1%, food and live animals 7.6%

Exports – Partners: Germany 26.1%, France 6.9%, Italy 6.8%, UK 6.4%, Czech Republic 5.9%, Netherlands 4.2% (2009)

Imports: \$167.4 Billion (2010 est.) – Comparison to the world: 24

Imports – Commodities: machinery and transport equipment 38%, intermediate manufactured goods 21%, chemicals 15%, minerals, fuels, lubricants, and related materials 9%

Imports – Partners: Germany 28.1%, Russia 8.5%, Italy 6.6%, Netherlands 5.7%, China 5.2%, France 4.6%, Czech Republic 4% (2009)

Chief of State- President Bronislaw KOMOROWSKI (since 6 August 2010)

Head of Government- Prime Minister Donald TUSK (since 16 November 2007);

Area - Comparative: slightly smaller than New Mexico

Coastline - 440 km

Natural Resources - coal, sulfur, copper, natural gas, silver, lead, salt, amber, arable land

Population - 38,441,588 (July 2011 est.) country comparison to the world:[34](#)

Median Age - 38.5 years

Urbanization - urban population: 61% of total population (2010)

Major Cities – population - WARSAW (capital) 1.71 million; Krakow 756,000 (2009)

Ethnic Groups - Polish 96.7%, German 0.4%, Belarusian 0.1%, Ukrainian 0.1%, other and unspecified 2.7% (2002 census)

Religions - Roman Catholic 89.8% (about 75% practicing), Eastern Orthodox 1.3%, Protestant 0.3%, other 0.3%, unspecified 8.3% (2002)

Literacy - definition: age 15 and over can read and write total population: 99.8%

Government Type – Republic

This Country Fact Sheet is designed to provide a very general overview and a broad perspective on the country as a whole. This paper is purposed as a starting point for those interested in doing business in or with the county described. More in-depth information for specific commercial and business utilization is available to our clients and/or on request.

For more complete information or for specific questions please contact us at: inquiry@legendsconsulting.net.

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