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## Practicalities - Voluntary Service in Poland

- **Accommodation:** the volunteers will be accommodated in apartments located near the city center, in order to facilitate their daily commute, 10-20 minutes away by bus from the schools and from the coordinating organization's headquarters. The apartments will have all the necessary equipment.
- **Allowance:** each volunteer will receive **120 EUR** per month to use for their own purposes
- **Food:** each volunteer will receive **120 EUR** per month for the food
- **Travel costs:** each volunteer will be reimbursed up to **275 EUR** for their travel costs after the arrival and after presenting the boarding passes and bus/train tickets/invoices
- **Insurance:** each volunteer will be enrolled in Cigna insurance
- **Local transportation:** each volunteer will get a monthly ticket for a local transportation in the big part Silesian area (more than a dozen cities)

## What you should know about Poland

### General information

The Republic of Poland is one of the largest countries in Central Europe, bordering Russia, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Germany.

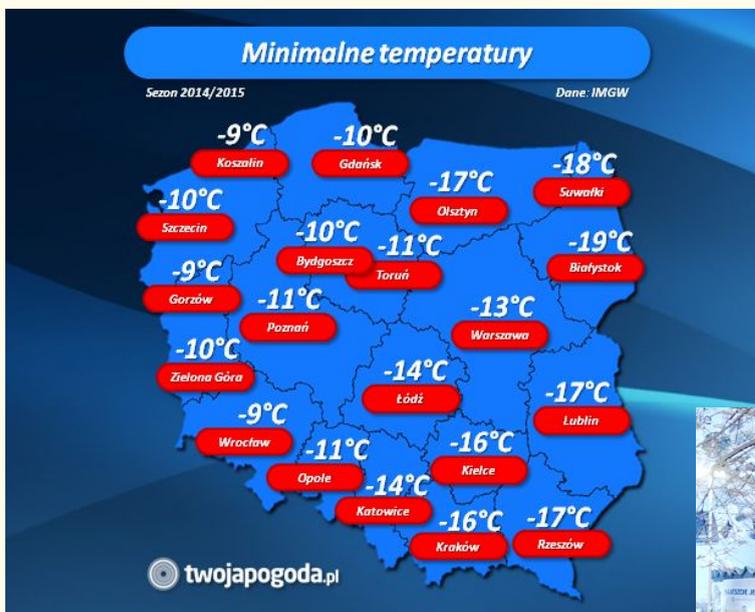




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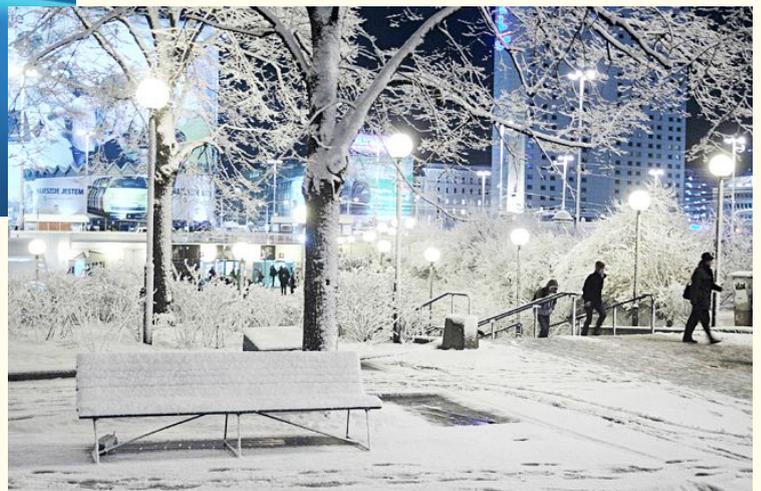
In the north, Poland has an access to the Baltic Sea and along the southern border there are Sudetic and Carpathian Mountain ranges. Rysy is the highest mountain peak (8200 feet / 2448 meters above sea level). The longest rivers which cross the country north-ward are the Vistula (1073 km in length) in the centre, and the Odra (853 km) which flows along Poland's western border. The capital city is Warszawa (Warsaw), which is located in the centre. Other big cities include: Kraków (Cracow), Łódź, Gdańsk, Katowice, Wrocław, Poznań. The Polish currency is złoty (1 EUR = 4.27 PLN).



Climate

Poland has a climate characterized by relatively cold winters (sometimes even minus 10 or 15 degrees) and warm summers (up to 30-35 degrees maximum). It means that you absolutely have to take warm clothes and shoes with you for the winter. As for the summer, warm and sunny weather is normal; however, you have to bear in mind that July and August are the months when

Poland gets the most rain and thunderstorms, so don't forget to pack an umbrella. Poland is in the Central European time zone and is thus one hour ahead of standard GMT in the winter months and two hours ahead from April to October.





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## The “must-see” places

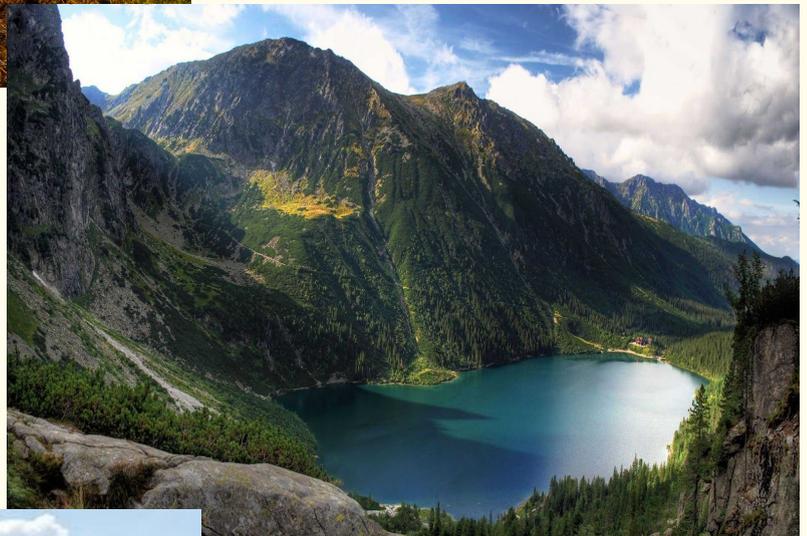
Poland’s biggest cities: **Kraków (Cracow)** → **Warsaw, Gdańsk, Wrocław and Poznań** are the most popular destinations among tourists from Poland and from all around the world. They all offer many historic places and monuments to visit as well as cozy cafes, restaurants with Polish cuisine (but not only!), parks, museums, concerts, international festivals and great meeting points for young people. You might want to consider them while planning road trips around Poland.



**Mountains:** Sosnowiec is located in the South of Poland, so you will only need an hour or two to reach the ← mountains called **Beskid Śląski**. The well-known towns worth seeing there are Wisła and Ustroń which offer many attractions all year long.

But the absolute must-see of Polish mountains is **Zakopane**, the winter capital city of Poland located in the **Tatra mountains** (Carpathian range) →

There, you can meet people from the mountains called **Górale**, listen to many mystical legends and try a special type of cheese called **oscypek**. If you come in the winter, you can, of course, go skiing or watch



a ski-jumping competition on **Wielka Krokiew**.



30 km from Sosnowiec lies the area called ← **Krakow-Czestochowa Upland**, one of the most beautiful places in Poland. The place of origin of our culture.



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**Baltic Sea:** The most popular city near the sea is Gdańsk, which is a part of a three-city metropolis called *Trójmiasto* which includes: Gdańsk, Gdynia and Sopot. There, you can enjoy long walks on the beach, beautiful sunsets and many attractions. Although remember, the Baltic Sea is located in the North of Europe, so it is not the warmest one and the weather there is not always sunny. Also, while there, you may visit the **Słowiński Park**



**Narodowy** (National Park)→ where you will find a moving dune which may make you feel as if you were on a desert.  
**Warmia i Mazury (Masuria):** It's a complex of



natural lakes located in the North of Poland, near the border with Russia and Lithuania. There, you will find the **biggest lake in Poland - Śniardwy**. The most popular cities there are: **Olsztyn, Mikołajki and Giżycko**. They offer, of course, the opportunity to sail and practice water sports, but they also provide many other attractions for the tourists.

**Poland's sad history:** An absolute must-see for those, who are interested in history is the **Auschwitz Museum** (in Oświęcim 40 km from Sosnowiec) which was the place where during WWII the Nazis located their biggest concentration camp. Many cities in Poland also have museums dedicated to this topic, such as: **Schindler's Factory**, (Fabryka Schindlera) in Cracow, **POLIN museum in Warsaw** or the **Museum of WWII** in Gdańsk and many others.





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## Cuisine



← *Bigos* (made from cabbage)



*Pierogi* (dumplings)→



← *Placki ziemniaczane* (potato cakes)



*Gołębki*→  
(cabbage, meat and rice)



← *Ryba po grecku* (Fried fish and braised vegetables)



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### Everyday use products (average prices)

1EUR=4.16PLN

Milk (1 liter) - 2.40PLN  
Loaf of Fresh White Bread (500g) - 3-4 PLN  
Rice (white), (1kg) - 3PLN  
Eggs (regular) (10) - 4-5 PLN  
Local Cheese (1kg) - 16 -25PLN  
Chicken Breasts (1kg) - 15 - 16 PLN  
Apples (1kg) - 2.60PLN  
Tomato (1kg) - 4-7 PLN  
Potato (1kg) - 1.60PLN  
Water (1.5 liter bottle) - 1.80PLN  
Domestic Beer (0.5 liter bottle) - 3.00PLN  
Imported Beer (0.33 liter bottle) - 4.00PLN

### Customs and habits

**Meals:** Breakfast - around 7-9 a.m., scrambled or cooked eggs, cereal, sandwiches, sausages... + tea or coffee; Lunch - around 1-3 p.m., two dishes (soup+main dish) or only main dish (usually potatoes in various forms+meat+salad); Dinner - around 6-8 p.m.; usually something light

**Hugs:** many foreigners are surprised that to say *Hello* the Poles (if they know each other well) usually give each other a hug instead of a kiss, so be prepared for that.

**Alcohol:** contrary to popular belief, the Poles don't drink as much vodka, for a regular get-together with friends we prefer beer or wine.

**Sport:** 3 disciplines that everybody is familiar with: football, volleyball and ski jumping. Don't be surprised if you get invited to watch the competition together in a bar or at home.

**Eating together:** prices in restaurants are usually too high for the regular Poles, so we prefer to invite each other to our houses to eat home-cooked meals.

**Mentality:** Poland is a very homogeneous country and, although more and more foreigners come to live here, we still are not that accustomed to having them here. However, we always try to be hospitable and generally, we are curious about other cultures.

**The 'How are you' thing:** pay attention because that is very important; a Polish equivalent of 'How are you?' or 'Ca va?' is *Co słychać?* [tso suyhatch], but we only ask that question if we want to know how a person is doing, no matter if good or bad. Thus, it is very much possible that if you ask: 'How are you?' the response might be: 'Oh, I haven't got much sleep last night and I'm very tired...'

**Shopping:** in Poland shopping centers are usually open **until 9 or 10 p.m.**; however, supermarkets may be open until 11 p.m. and some smaller shops even offer their services 24h a day. What is more, gas stations are open 24h a day, every day - even Sundays and during holidays (Christmas, New Year, etc.).



*For sure, you will notice a lot more specific behaviors yourselves during your EVS. Don't hesitate to ask about them, we will be more than happy to try to explain them to you. It would also be an occasion to get to know your cultures better by exchanging information.*

### Emergency numbers

**112** - universal emergency number for cell phones

**997** - police

**998** - fire brigade

**999** - ambulance

### Sosnowiec, Katowice and Tychy in short

These three cities will be the place of your EVS. They are a part of the Silesian Metropolis municipal association, in the South of Poland. It consists of many middle-size cities which, in a way, function together as a big one. Also, public transport in these cities is well organized, so people can move around the area very easily. Some people might also find it unusual that when they leave one city, the other begins, there is no rural area.

**Sosnowiec:** the coordinating organization, **Active Women Association** is located there as well as 3 out of 4 schools involved in the project. The volunteers will also be accommodated there. It is an industrial city which has around 200 000 citizens. It used to be known for its numerous mines and factories; however, almost all of them have been closed in the last few years, so Sosnowiec began changing its image. For example, many mines are now museums or were adapted to serve as local attractions and facilities. In summer you can chill out on the beach near the *Stawiki* lakes and in the winter you can ski on *Środula* hill. One of the curiosities about this city is that on its territory you may find the Three Emperors Corner tripoint which was a border between Germany, Russia and Austria-Hungary during the times of occupation.

**Katowice:** the capital city of Silesian voivodeship with around 300 000 citizens. It is where all main faculties of the Silesian University are located and thus many students, also foreigners, live and study there. That is why, the city offers numerous facilities where youngsters, but not only, can spend their free time. Owing to its famous sports arena *Spodek*, Katowice is very often a host city of different sports tournaments, concerts and festivals. What is more, in Katowice you may attend many events organized especially with the foreigners in mind (like linguistic cafes or Erasmus parties). All students particularly enjoy spending time on *Mariacka* Street where you can find many bars and cafes.

**Tychy** - The Wild School is located there. The volunteers will also be accommodated there or in Katowice. Tychy is one of the largest cities in the Silesian voivodeship, lying in its center.

An additional advantage is the small distance from two airports in Pyrzowice and Balice - just an hour's drive. But Tychy is above all green - parks, squares and historical forests famous for the extraordinary richness of fauna and flora, constitute more than half of the city's area.

The multitude of open air sites, as well as the close location of the Paprocański Lake and many ponds, are ideal conditions for rest, respite and relaxation in the beautiful "natural setting".

Numerous bicycle paths, forest trails, outdoor gyms are conducive to active rest, are a place for walks, exercises, bike rides, horse riding, Nordic walking and many other activities.

Tychy is famous for the oldest brewery that has been producing the best beer in Poland since the 17th century. Tyskie Browary Książęce not only invites you to a tasting, but also to explore the walls of its historic complex.

The Citizen Brewery also encourages visitors to explore the 19th-century architecture. There are also numerous cultural events.

Other architectural curiosities include the unique example of socialist real estate construction, which is the Anna housing estate.

More info about Tychy can be found in the link below

<http://umtychy.pl/informacje>

### Necessary items

Here's a checklist of all the items which you have to take with you to Poland:

- warm clothes and shoes for the winter (the temperatures: from + 30 degrees Celsius in the summer to -20 degrees Celsius in the winter)
- shoes and jacket for rainy days
- photo camera
- umbrella
- computer/phone
- some food/sweets/drinks or any other items that are typical for your country (to show us something about your culture)
- few traditional recipes
- passport or identity card
- 2 sets of bedding

### Useful information :)

**In case you forget anything, you can buy everything you need in many shops and galleries open till the evening every day.**

### Travel

The nearest airport is Katowice-Pyrzowice - somebody will certainly come pick you up from the airport. If you come to Cracow - Balice (80 km from Sosnowiec), you can buy a bus transit from the airport directly to Katowice, from where you will be picked up. However, we are aware that more cheap flights are available to Warsaw. In that case, here is some information on how to get from Warsaw airports to Sosnowiec:

*One of our former volunteers lives there, so if she's available, she will come welcome you at the airport and help you get to the train to Sosnowiec.*

- Chopin Airport: after the landing, go to the train station; find a red ticket machine (located either on the airport, on the train station or inside the train) and buy a normal 20-minutes ticket for the 1st zone (3.40PLN); board only the train S3 and go to *Warszawa Centralna* (Warsaw Central Railway Station) - about 20 minutes from the airport; there, on a blue screen find the platform, from which your train to Sosnowiec will depart (you will find it by looking at the hour of departure) and somebody will be waiting for you at the train station in Sosnowiec

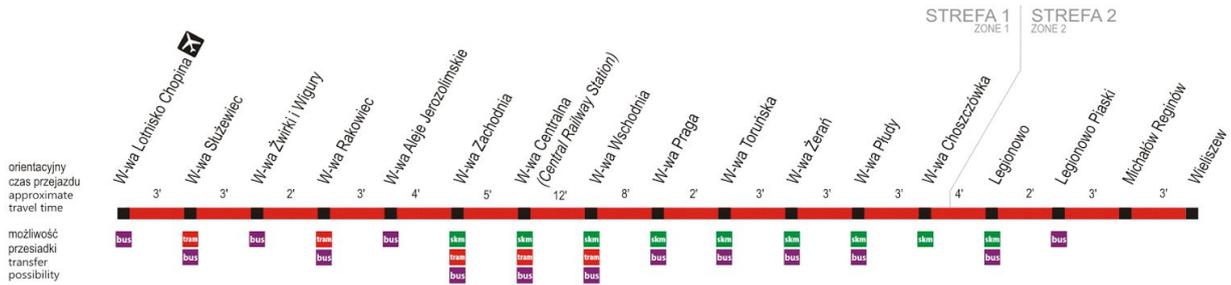


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## S3

### W-wa Lotnisko Chopina - Legionowo Piaski / Wieliszew



- Modlin Airport (the tickets for the bus will be bought for you beforehand, you just have to print them): after arriving go outside and look for pink Modlinbus which will take you to the Warsaw city center; the stop is near the Palace of Culture and Science which is just a walking distance from the Warsaw Central Railway Station; then, do as in the case of Chopin Airport





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**IMPORTANT!** Do not throw away neither the boarding pass nor the bus or train tickets!!! After you arrive, we must collect them and include them in our documentation. Without them, we will not be able to reimburse your travel costs.

**Useful Polish words and phrases**

English	Polish	Pronunciation
Hello/Bye	Cześć	/cheshtch/
Good morning/afternoon	Dzień dobry	/tzen dobry/
Good evening	Dobry wieczór	/dobry vyetchoor/*
Thank you	Dziękuję	/tze koo yeah/*
Yes/No	Tak/Nie	/tak/ /nye/
Please/You're welcome	Proszę	/proshe/
How are you?	Co słyhać?	/tzo suyhatch/*
My name is...	Mam na imię...	/mam na imye/
Nice to meet you	Miło cię poznać	/miuo tche poznatch/*
One ticket, please	Proszę jeden bilet	/proshe yeden beelet/*
How old are you?	Ile masz lat?	/eele mash lat/*
Good bye	Do widzenia	/do veedzenya/*

\*\* read 'ee' like in the word 'bee', 'oo' like in the word 'cook' and 'tch' like in the word 'cherry'