POLAND

SUPPLEMENT

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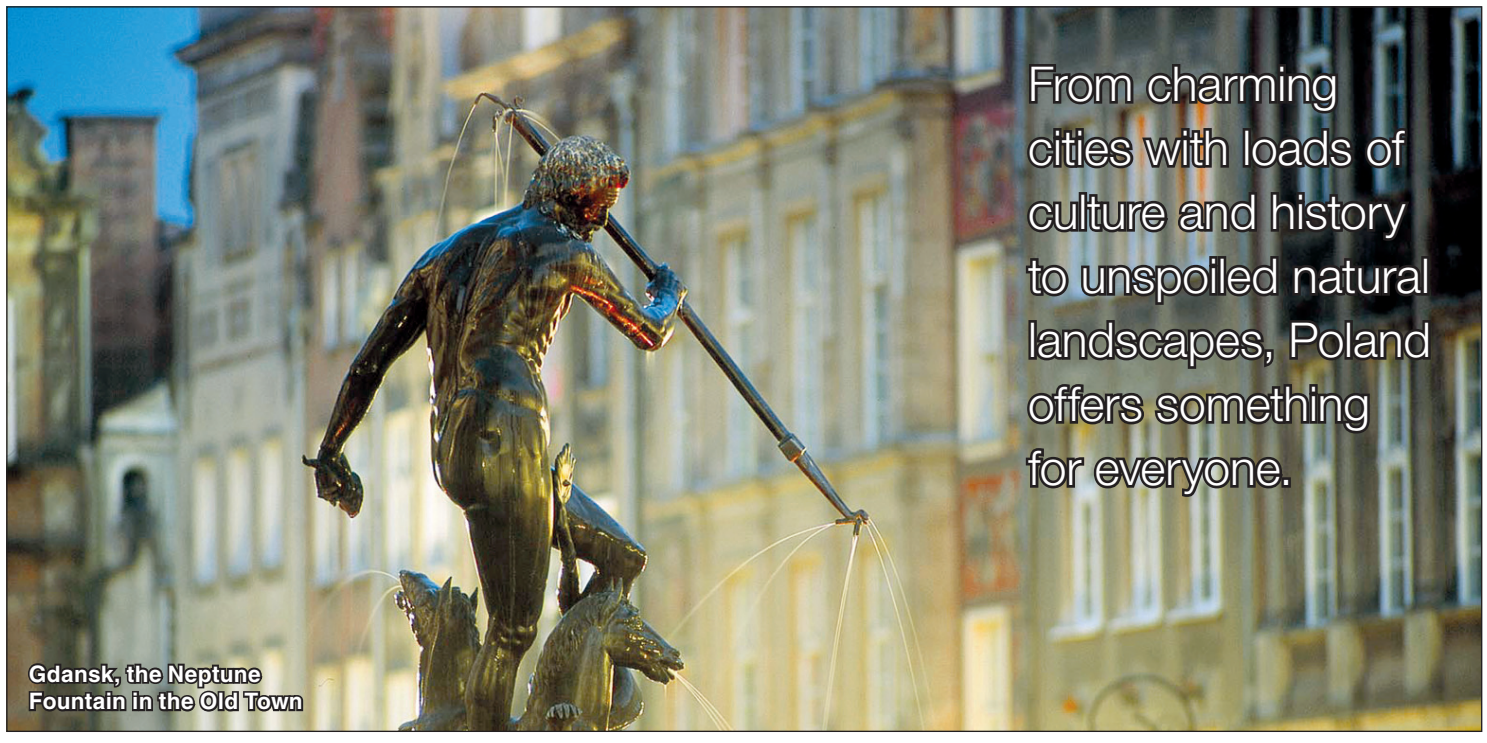
A magical land in the heart of Europe



Gdansk, the Neptune Fountain in the Old Town

In Poland, a country in central Europe located between Germany and Ukraine, you can find everything: mountains, beaches, mysterious lakes, deep forests and world-class historic monuments. The climate is temperate and the people are warm and hospitable. Polish cities provide loads of culture while villages and small towns offer the opportunity to get away from the bustle of modern life. All this comes with a backdrop of natural landscapes that are wild, untouched, more diverse than in most countries in the world and easily accessible.

History has left a huge and precious cultural heritage, a great number of historical buildings: castles, palaces, manors and charming tenement houses. Visiting them is likely to be an exciting experience for lovers of history, architecture, painting, sculpture or applied arts.

Poland lies in the heart of Europe — geographical center of the continent is right here. Warsaw, the capital of Poland, is not far from other European cities. Paris and London are only two hours away by plane, Vienna, Berlin or Prague not much more than an hour. Polish airports have connections with more than 30 countries, operated by 25 airlines including British Airways, SAS, Air France and Lufthansa.

Poland is known as a host country of international congresses and business meetings. More and more foreign guests enjoy the rich variety of spa services. Whatever your tastes and interests are, there is always something to do in Poland.

Warsaw

Warsaw is a fascinating city with its magical atmosphere. While walking around the city it is hard to believe that it was almost razed to the ground during World War II. The key landmark of Warsaw's historical heritage is the Royal Castle, meticulously rebuilt after destruction during WWII. The Warsaw Mermaid is a symbol of the city — her statue near the Vistula River is keeping city safe.

The nearby Old Town, with its medieval layout and beautiful stylish houses, draws tourists to small tea houses, restaurants, souvenir shops, museums, galleries and street artists' open-air displays. The Royal Castle Square and Old Town Square attract crowds especially during artistic events and musical groups' performances.

The Royal Route leads along historical houses, manors and magnificent palaces from Royal Castle Square to the real treasure of Warsaw — the elegant Lazienki Park with 18th-century palaces, gardens and pavilions. The statue of the ingenious Polish composer Fryderyk Chopin is located in the park. There are many statues of Chopin all around the world, including one in Shanghai's Zhongshan Park, but the one in Lazienki Park is known worldwide to all music lovers. The best opportunity to enjoy magnificent Chopin's music is The International Fryderyk Chopin Piano Competition, which is held every five years in Warsaw.

Many changes have occurred in the city over the recent years, it's becoming more modern and dynamic. The best example is Copernicus Science Centre, which conducts modern science communication through interactive exhibitions addressed to different groups of people.

Some people come to Warsaw to see the social-realist architecture. The most famous example is the Palace of Culture and Science, built in the 1950s. A wide panorama of Warsaw can be seen from the palace's 30th floor.

Cracow

Cracow was Poland's capital in the Middle Ages and during the Renaissance. The city was never destroyed so people can still enjoy its mysterious and magnetic atmosphere. Often mentioned as one of the most beautiful European cities, listed on UNESCO's World Heritage List, Cracow is a favorite tourist destination in Poland. Awarded European City of Culture in 2000, Cracow has a strong influence on Polish culture. The excellent Jagiellonian University is counted among the oldest European universities. The magnificent Main Market Square, the real heart of the city, is the largest medieval market square in Europe. Nowadays it's a favorite place of all kinds of street artists and traveling musicians. There are magnetic cafes, restaurants, bars, galleries, museums and shops in almost every historic townhouse. In the center of the market square there is the Cloth Hall (Sukiennice), in which you can buy luxury jewelry or amazing handcrafts. Next to Cloth Hall stands a magnificent Gothic St Mary's Church, which houses the biggest and one of the most beautiful medieval altars in Europe — carved in lime wood by Veit Stoss.

Goldwasser, luxurious Polish liquor with pieces of pure gold

The Royal Castle on the Wawel Hill towers over the city. Worth seeing are Renaissance arcades and the Royal Chambers with a collection of tapestries. The Wawel Cathedral, which is part of the whole complex, is not only a magnificent historical church, but also the national Pantheon. Cracow is also known as "A City of Dragon," because of its legendary and mysterious dragon, which lived under Wawel Hill. The Great Dragon Parade is held here every year.

Not so far from Cracow there is a place that can not be missed — Wieliczka Salt Mine. It is one of the world's oldest salt mines still in operation, 25 million tons of salt have been mined over the last 1,000 years. The main attraction is the underground museum gallery, created by the nature with elaborately shaped salt crystal, chambers and shrines, salt statues and lakes. An underground sanatorium was established because of the specific microclimate. Underground restaurant gives an opportunity to enjoy meal 125 meters below ground level, you can even organize a wedding there.

Tri-City

Gdansk, together with Sopot and Gdynia, is called Tri-City. It is one of Poland's biggest attractions, especially in the summer.

Since 2004 Gdansk is the twin city of Shanghai, however the cooperation between the two regions goes back many years, to year 1951 when first joint venture company was settled in Shanghai. It is called Chipolbrok, Chinese–Polish Joint Stock company.

Soak in the atmosphere of the old city by walking along the streets of Old Town. While enjoying the walk, don't forget to stop at the statue of Neptune at the top of Neptune Fountain. According to a legend, Neptune helped to create the famous Gdansk liquor Goldwasser, a delicious herbal alcohol that contains small pieces of pure gold.

In August you can't miss Dominican Fair, which is one of the biggest and the oldest cultural events in Poland, and one of the oldest in Europe (history goes back to 13th century). At the Dominican Fair you can buy almost everything — amazing piece of art, traditional handcraft, delicious food or luxury jewelry.

Gdansk is also known for its high quality amber. Amber from Baltic Sea is known worldwide for the highest quality and in folk medicine it is appreciated for magical and healing properties. Amber has been collected on the shores of the Baltic Sea since at least 1st century BC. Today it's used to produce breathtaking, exclusive and elegant jewelry, such as necklaces, bracelets, earrings. It's also used to produce astonishing small handcrafts.

Sopot and Gdynia host luxurious casinos. The Tri-City is also famous for its seafood. Baltic Sea has all kinds of fish, like herring, cod, salmon, eel, turbot and flounder.

Young Poles show their support for the EU on the Europe Day Parade.

Many sound reasons to invest in Poland

Poland's development potential is based on the achievements of Polish companies and scientists. In recent years it is giving optimistic views for the future. Poland is one of the few countries that didn't suffer during the recent years of European slowdown, thanks to reasonable political decisions and investments in high intellectual capital.

In December 2011, Polish President Bronislaw Komorowski visited China. He attended the Investment Forum in Shanghai and promoted Poland as one of the fastest growing country in European Union. According to the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) World Investment Report 2011, Poland ranked the 6th best country for investment surpassing countries such as the US and Germany .

In his speech, given at the forum, President Komorowski mentioned seven important reasons which should attract Chinese investors to focus on allocations in Poland. Those advantages are size of the domestic market, respectable international position as the prime destination for FDI in Europe, bright prospects for the long lasting economic growth, active and dedicated local administrations eager to cooperate with Chinese provinces (for example Gdansk and Shanghai), a stable and transparent financial sector as well as very attractive offer for those who intend to buy Polish treasury bonds. The last reason is the personal values and business oriented approach of the Polish people, which makes them so similar to the Chinese people from Shanghai. That is the corner stone of the successful development of China and Poland. President Komorowski also stressed that Chinese declarations to increase direct investments in Poland and trade exchange between both countries are very important for the mutual cooperation.

President of Poland, Bronislaw Komorowski, and his wife walk along the Bund in Shanghai.

Today Poland has Europe's youngest population — almost half of the citizens are less then 35 years old and nearly 5 percent of all Poles are university students. Numerous local and foreign corporations are attempting to hire highly skilled Polish employees. According to Frost&Sulivan's Country Industry Forecast, Poland is becoming a prime location for research and development investments. Multinational companies such as ABB, Delphi, GlaxoSmithKline, Google, Hewlett-Packard, IBM, Intel, LG Electronics, Microsoft, Motorola, Siemens and Samsung have set up research and development centers in Poland.

Polish universities are permanently updating their offer of studies fields, every year new specializations are presented to the students. For example, one of the best Polish universities — Cracow's AGH-University of Science and Technology is offering studies in fields like biomedical engineering and medical physics.

Investments in disciplines like power engineering, biocybernetics, biomedical engineering have been growing rapidly recently. Not only Polish future depends on it but also the future of the whole modern world.

The Nalecz Institute of Biocybernetics and Biomedical Engineering of Polish Academy of Sciences is one of the few places that successfully does a research on the fields mentioned above. The Institute's research corresponds with the world's recent scientific discoveries. Biocybernetic and biomedical engineering are interdisciplinary fields. They are related to biology, physics, computer engineering, medicine, etc. Interdisciplinary fields are getting more popular in recent years, they are also being regarded as a comeback to the roots of science. Like in the times of Nicolaus Copernicus, to succeed, a scientist can't just be a biologist, physician or a doctor. Today such disciplines like biocybernetics are proof that the science is getting more and more interdisciplinary again.

Increasingly more Chinese companies are finding Poland an excellent location for investment and recent discovery in scientific fields make Poland even more attractive. Discoveries related to medicine are not only important for Polish people but also can help with diagnosing and treatment of patients all over the world.

President Komorowski declared his full support for any attempts of Polish entrepreneurs doing business in China. It's hard or even almost impossible to predict where the Poland will be in 20 years from now but strengthening economic relations and cooperation between Poland and China, growing numbers of Polish research centers and discoveries made by Polish scientists let us hope for the bright future.

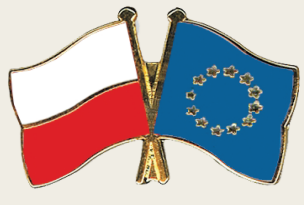
Poland breathes optimism into the European Union

JULY 1, 2011 saw Poland, one of the newest members of the EU, take over the Presidency of the EU Council. This is an important function fulfilled by each Member State for a period of six months. The country holding the Presidency sets the tone of both the EU's internal and external policy, giving it direction and setting future goals.

Although Poland was taking over the helm of the EU during a turbulent period, with the world financial crisis threatening to destabilize the continent's economy, it began the Presidency with a significant dose of optimism and enthusiasm. And it had solid grounds to do so. Poland is one of only four European countries to register steady economic growth throughout the ongoing world financial crisis. The entrepreneurial abilities of its people combined with reasonable policies enforced by its government allowed Poland to successfully brave the turbulent environment and continue its impressive development.

Those same qualities have been a trademark of Poland in the European Union ever since it joined the organization in 2004. The competence and ingenuity of Poles did not go unnoticed by Brussels. On July 14, 2009, Professor Jerzy Buzek, former prime minister of Poland, was elected to one of the highest positions in the European Union — President of the European Parliament — with the largest majority of votes in history. His tenure, which ended in January this year, has been widely complemented by politicians, journalists and common citizens alike.

Poland has used its time to steer the EU wisely, spreading its optimism to the crisis-stricken region. Its positive attitude was best reflected in the memorable speech delivered by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Poland, Radoslaw Sikorski, in Berlin. His discourse was a strong voice of a self-confident European country and as such was taken very seriously by EU leaders. Regardless of the course the EU adopts in the coming years, Poland has already established itself as a key player in the united Europe.



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Polish students at a graduation ceremony

Students at a Polish ballet school

Great schools in Poland

Poland has a lot to offer students coming from other countries as there are more than 440 public and private higher education institutions in the country. Five percent of Poles are university students.

You don't need to speak Polish to study in Poland as most of the universities offer either entire programs or a rich portfolio of courses in English. It is possible now to get education in English in fields ranging from mining and medicine to music and art, at all levels — bachelor, master and PhD.

Poland is an excellent country to come and study — it is stable, safe and located in central Europe. Polish people are known for their hospitality and friendly attitude to foreigners. It is also worth noting that Poland is one of the least expensive countries in the European Union.

Why Poland?

Poland, the largest country among the newest members of the European Union, has one of Europe's youngest population. Out of 38 million Poles 2 million are university students. Poland's education market has been the most dynamically developing in the Europe during the last 10 years. The number of higher education institutions has increased five times while the number of students quadrupled. Each year almost 500 thousand young people begin their education at universities and colleges. Studying in Poland offers a wonderful opportunity to get to know the rich culture of the country, to see splendid historical monuments and to enjoy some of Europe's largest and most unspoiled natural habitats.

Polish academic traditions reach back to the 14th century and one of Europe's oldest universities can be found here. The Jagiellonian University of Cracow was established in 1364.

There are now about 310 privately owned universities and colleges in Poland and 138 state schools of higher learning. Thanks to the high level of competition, the cost of studying is lower than in other European countries.

Students who decide to study in Poland in English can do so at one of the more than 100 institutions. These include universities, higher schools of engineering, agricultural academies, business schools and numerous other higher vocational colleges and teacher training colleges. Strong focus is placed on fundamental and applied research, as well as on creative and artistic work.

Artistic Schools

Poland can be proud of many great artistic schools, such as music conservatories or academies of art. The Fryderyk Chopin University of Music in Warsaw is the oldest and the largest music school in Poland and one of the largest in Europe, the history of the university goes back to year 1810. The second music conservatory worth mentioning is The Academy of Music in Cracow, which was found in 1888. Academy includes such faculty as Faculty of Musical Composition, Interpretation, Analysis and Education, Instrumental Faculty and Faculty of Vocal and Drama. Krzysztof Penderecki, a Polish composer, is one of the most notable alumni of the Academy.

The Jan Matejko Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow is the oldest Polish fine-arts academy, it was established in 1818. The Academy of Fine Arts in Katowice was established in 2001 after 54 years of being a branch of Fine Art Academy in Cracow. The academy is famous worldwide for its graphic department.

The Leon Schiller National Higher School of Film, Television and Theatre in Lodz is the most noble academy for future directors, photographers, camera operators, actors and TV staff in Poland. Since its founding in 1948, the Film School in Lodz fulfilled a dream of a place which would serve the purpose of education, as well as the center of film life. Among alumni of the school there are such honorable directors as Krzysztof Kieslowski, nominated for an Academy Award, Andrzej Wajda, Academy Award and Palme d'Or winner and Roman Polanski, Academy Award and Palme d'Or winner. The Ludwik Solski Academy for the Dramatic Arts in Cracow and the famous Puppet Theater Faculty in Wroclaw also attract candidates from all over Poland.

Technical Universities

AGH University of Science and Technology in Cracow, The Warsaw University of Technology, The Gdansk University of Technology, to name a few, are some of the leading institutes of technology in Poland. Every year thousands of people not only from Poland, but also from other European countries apply to study at these institutions.

Nicolaus Copernicus (1473–1543), the first in modern times to develop a heliocentric theory of the Solar System, and Maria Sklodowska-Curie (1867–1934), who discovered polonium and radium in 1898, are world-famous Polish scientists. Nowadays Polish scientists are responsible for such breakthroughs as: the discovery of the practical implementation of blue laser, development of the technology for manufacturing the smallest synthetic diamonds in the world, construction of an artificial heart and designing nano-crystals for the purpose of 3G mobile telecommunications. Aleksander Wolszczan, Polish astronomer graduate of the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Torun, was the first to prove of existence of a planetary system in the Universe outside our Solar System. Today's Polish universities continue the glorious traditions of their predecessors. Warsaw University is ranked first in the Top Coder international IT ranking, outperforming such great institutions as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Medical Schools

Costs of studying medicine in Poland are among the cheapest in the EU, while the level of education is similar to any other European country.

Jagiellonian University Medical College is the oldest medical school in Poland. The Jagiellonian University's Faculties of Medicine and Pharmacy are acclaimed as one of the largest medical academies in Poland. The school was established in 1364. It is currently ranked first among Polish medical schools. The Medical University of Gdansk and the largest in Poland, The Medical University of Warsaw, also welcome international students.

Euro 2012 in Poland

Euro Championship stadiums

On April 18, 2007, the Union of European Football Associations chose Poland and Ukraine to host the UEFA European Football Championship in 2012. Together with FIFA's World Cup, this event is the most important soccer competition on the European continent and takes place every four years. Euro 2012 in Poland and Ukraine will be the 14th such tournament.

With less than four months to the start of the first match of the UEFA Euro 2012 on June 8, Poland is busy getting the infrastructure ready for the championship.

The draw for the UEFA Euro 2012 qualifying competition took place in Warsaw on February 7, 2010. Fifty-one teams entered to compete for participation in the finals in Poland and Ukraine. The qualifying process began in August 2010 and concluded in November 2011. Only 16 teams qualified for the finals: Croatia, Czech Republic, Denmark, England, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Ireland, Russia, Spain, Sweden and Ukraine.

Every four years, the three-week Euro attracts a multitude of spectators, therefore, host countries must meet stringent standards outlined by UEFA. The most important element of these international sporting events are the sophisticated stadiums with a capacity of up to 60,000 people. They should be equipped with modern facilities for the competing teams and spectators, journalists and VIP delegations. Host cities must have infrastructure capable of handling throngs of visitors. This encompasses upgrading public transportation systems, ensuring enough hotel rooms, building modern training centers for the participating teams, not to mention connecting the host cities with convenient highways and railways. Public safety is also a prime focus.

The four Polish cities that will host Euro 2012 matches are Warsaw, Wroclaw, Gdansk and Poznan. Two cities will play a complementary role: Cracow and Chorzow. The host cities have already built new state-of-the-art football arenas. The recently completed National Stadium in Warsaw is an exquisite sports venue with a usable area of 32,000 square meters, which can accommodate more than 58,000 visitors. Apart from the turf pitch and the surrounding stands, the building boasts the largest conference room in the Polish capital, capable of hosting 1,800 people, a parking lot for 1,700 cars, restaurants, offices, shops and a large fitness club. The stadium is home to the Museum of Sports and Tourism and will be a viable business undertaking years after Euro 2012. The complex is located in the proximity of the financial center, on the bank of the Vistula River, forming a scenic view.

Apart from building world-class stadiums, Polish cities have laid solid foundations for modern infrastructure such as new roads and hotels; Gdansk, Poznan and Wroclaw are completing brand-new airport terminals. Warsaw recently opened a second terminal at its Okecie Airport and will also launch a new airport north of the city in June this year. Being a large and fast developing country in the European Union, Poland is building a network of major highways spanning the country from the seaport of Gdansk in the north to the Czech Republic in the south, from Warsaw via Poznan toward the German border near Berlin, and from Cracow via the Upper Silesian industrial area and Wroclaw toward Germany, to name just a few. Furthermore, major railways are being upgraded for speed and capacity to be ready for 20 Pendolino high-speed trains to start operation between major Polish cities from 2014.

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1. Mermaid statue in Old Town Market in Warsaw

2. Euro Championship cup

3. Street of Poznan's old town

All materials are provided by the Consulate General of the Republic of Poland in Shanghai