



TOWARDS “GLOCAL” ADMINISTRATION

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Public Administration in Poland

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INFORMATION SOURCES

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GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF POLAND

Situated at the very geometrical center of Europe, where Western Europe meets Eastern Europe. The width of the country from north to south is 649 km, and from west to east 689 km. Surface area is 312,685 km², while territorial sea is 8.7 thousand km². Poland is 63rd country in the world and 9th in Europe as far as the area is concerned..

Location of the country in the center of Europe and parallel plan of its geographic regions cause that the climate of Poland has transitory character of the temporary zone, and because different kinds of air mass meet here (mainly polar sea air of the Icelandic low with Eurasian polar continental air) frequent weather changes and considerable fluctuations in the length of seasons are caused.

Despite the domination of lowlands Polish landscape is varied; geographic regions are parallel to each other and the surface is richly shaped.



Along the Baltic Sea there is a strip of lowlands, which in the south changes into the strip of lake districts.

Southern Poland is the area with the uplands domination to change into the mountain range running along the border of the country.

The population of Poland is 38.7 million. This is equivalent to 9.7% of the area and 10.4% of the total population of the current European Union.

It borders seven countries: Russia, Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Germany.

Poland is divided into 16 administrative units, which shape and size depend on historic, cultural, economic and geographic factors.

Territorial organization of Poland

Territorial structure

After the Second World War, the territory of Poland was divided into 17 voivodships, 330 powiats and, on the primary level, 704 cities and 2993 gminas.

On 1 I 1955, the gminas were liquidated and replaced by 8790 gromads.

During 1955—1972 gromads were being liquidated with a trend of creating new powiats being adopted simultaneously. As a result, at the end of 1972, there were 390 powiats and 4315 gromads.

On 1 I 1973, 2365 gminas were created, replacing the liquidated gromads; As of 31 XII 1999, there were 2489 gminas.

On 1 VI 1975, powiats were eliminated and the existing 17 voivodships and 5 separated cities were replaced by 49 voivodships, which existed until 31 XII 1998.

On 27 VIII 1990, 254 regional offices were created, being auxiliary entities of local (voivodship) bodies of the general government administration. On 31 XII 1998, there were 268 local offices which were liquidated 1 I 1999.

On 1 I 1999, a new fundamental three-tier administrative division of the country was introduced, the entities of which are: gminas, powiats and voivodships. A total of 308 powiats and 65 cities with powiat status as well 16 voivodships were created. This change did not effect gminas, of which there were 2489.

Auxiliary entities in gminas are, i.a., village administrator's offices. As of 31 XII 1999, there were 40057 such offices.

From 1 January 1999, a new administrative division of Poland was implemented. The country is divided into 16 voivodships.

Self-government

Self-government in Poland now operates on the three levels:
voivodship (province, region),
powiat (district, county)
and gmina (commune, municipality).

Councils elected every 4 years at every level, carry out local governments. Local government is financed partly by local taxes and partly by central government taxes.

Communes of fewer than 40,000 inhabitants elect councils on a first-past-the-post system; larger communes have a proportional party-list system.

Following the administration and local authorities reform introduced at the beginning of 1999 a new local government system was called into being. The system is composed of three authority levels: communal, county, and provincial.

The reform aimed at increasing the management efficiency and operational effectiveness of local authorities, which are better representatives of the local community interests than central authorities. The administrative reform was backed by the reform of public finance. This secured stable sources of income, adequate to the entrusted tasks, to all agencies of the local government. The sources of income generated by the local authorities are:

- Share in the personal and corporate income tax collected;
- Income on own property and organizational entities formed by the local authorities;
- Earmarked allocations and subsidies from the state budget;
- Bequests, legacies, donations, and interest plus dividends.

Table 1. Territory of Poland: agricultural land by voivodship

	Total territory in sq km	Agricultural land area as % of total territory
POLAND - voivodships	312 685	59.0
Dolnośląskie	19 948	58.6
Kujawsko-Pomorskie	17 970	64.6
Lubelskie	25 115	68.4
Lubuskie	13 984	39.8
Łódzkie	18 219	69.3
Małopolskie	15 144	58.2
Mazowieckie	35 597	67.3
Opolskie	9 412	62.0
Podkarpackie	17 926	52.7
Podlaskie	20 180	59.7
Pomorskie	18 293	50.0
Śląskie	12 294	50.5
Świętokrzyskie	11 672	62.5
Warmińsko-Mazurskie	24 203	54.0
Wielkopolskie	29 826	63.6
Zachodniopomorskie	22 902	48.7

Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistical Purposes (NTS) - selected information

Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistical Purposes came into force by a Decree of the Cabinet of July 13, 2000 (NTS) (Journal of Law, No 58, item 685). NTS nomenclature is a five-level hierarchical classification, used in processes of gathering information, carrying out statistical surveys and disseminating them in spatial cross-sections.

NTS nomenclature is generally based on the present territorial division of the country, while, in some special cases (in different countries at different levels) - for assuring the minimal level of comparability with regional level in countries of the European Union - are established units which have not direct equivalent in the binding territorial division (in Poland it relates to level 3).

Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistical Purposes (NTS) divides Poland into territorial, hierarchically connected units on five levels, of which:

- 3 were defined as regional levels;
- 2 were defined as local levels.

Regional level includes:

Level 1 - area of the whole country,
 Level 2 - voivodships,
 Level 3 - sub-regions.

Local level includes:

Level 4 - poviats,
 Level 5 - gminas.

Names of levels and territorial units on these levels are as follows:

Table 2. Names of levels and territorial units in Poland

No of the level	Names of the level units	Number of units
1	country	1
2	voivodships	16
3	sub-regions	44
4	poviats and cities with poviat rights	308+65
5	gminas, including municipal gminas which are cities with poviat rights	2489 65

Population of Poland

The population of Poland is 38.7 million. The rural population is 38.1% of the total population (14 744 000 persons), with 7 371 000 men, and 7 373 000 women. The share of the rural population varies regionally, from 20.2% in Śląskie voivodship to 59.0% in the Podkarpackie voivodship.

Table 3. Population of Poland in 1998

	POPULATION		
	Total	Per 1 km ²	In rural areas as % of total population
POLAND - voivodships	38 659 979	124	38.1
Dolnośląskie	2 985 381	150	28.3
Kujawsko-Pomorskie	2 098 018	117	37.9
Lubelskie	2 241 952	89	53.6
Lubuskie	1 020 345	73	35.2
Łódzkie	2 672 823	147	35.1
Małopolskie	3 206 630	212	49.4
Mazowieckie	5 064 950	142	35.8
Opolskie	1 091 077	116	47.5
Podkarpackie	2 117 341	118	59.0
Podlaskie	1 223 944	61	42.2
Pomorskie	2 179 104	119	31.2
Śląskie	4 894 230	398	20.2
Świętokrzyskie	1 327 859	114	54.3
Warmińsko-Mazurskie	1 460 432	60	40.4
Wielkopolskie	3 346 045	112	42.4
Zachodniopomorskie	1 729 848	76	30.2

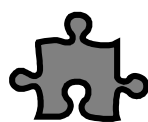
Rural areas have a much higher percentage of children under 14 and of people over 70 than urban ones. Also a traditional rural family pattern tends to be multigenerational. Households with 5 or more members constitute 29.7% of the total number of rural households and only 12.2% of urban ones.

As compared to towns-rural areas have a much higher percentage of children and the young people. Therefore, it is of crucial importance to ensure an appropriate education system and to create new jobs in rural areas.

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION IN POLAND

According to the constitutional law of 2 April 1997 the constitutional system of the Republic of Poland is based on a division and balance between the legislative power, the executive power and the judicial power.

The legislative power rests with **Parliament (Sejm - Lower Chamber and Senate - Higher Chamber)**, the executive power rests with the **President** and the **Council of Ministers**, and the judicial power rests with courts and tribunals.



10 On the central level the administrative tasks are performed by the central offices according to the act on the division of the competencies in the central administration and the act on the changes of some laws, so called “competency law”.

Public administration in Poland is divided into two separate branches: **government administration**, which is the administration of the state, and **local self-government administration**.

Voivodship’s level administration



1010 Public administration in the voivodships (**province, region**) is composed of central government bodies: **voivode (governor)** (representative of the Council of Ministers in the voivodship), who is responsible for general administration and administrative bodies, and locally elected authorities.

The **voivode**, as head of the voivodship, is appointed and dismissed by the Prime Minister on the recommendation of the minister responsible for matters of public administration (currently this is the Minister of the Interior and Public Administration).

The voivode has, as a legal substitute, one or two deputy voivode(s), appointed by the Prime Minister on the recommendation of the voivode. Besides acting as the government's representative, the voivode is the main representative of the government (state) administration in the voivodship.

Since 1 January 1999 there has been a **dual structure** of public administration at voivodship level. It consists, on the one hand, of **voivodship self-governments** that have independent legal identities, their own budgets, and extensive powers in

the area of economic policy. On the other hand, the **state-appointed voivode** is responsible for ensuring that national policies are implemented and enforced within the voivodship and that state institutions operating in the region perform their functions appropriately. He thus ensures the unitary character of the Polish State.

The voivode is accountable to the central government. At the same time, he is answerable to his superiors for the operations of those services for which he has direct responsibility, in particular law enforcement and public safety. The voivode also has to ensure that the decisions made by voivodship self-governments are in compliance with state laws.

Table 4. Voivode - state administration in the voivodship

VOIVODE ADMINISTRATION
Voivode
First Vice-Voivode, Second Vice - Voivode
Chiefs of Voivodship services, inspections and guard
General Director of Voivodship Office
Directors of Departments

The **voivodship self-government** is represented by the **Voivodship Assembly (Council) (Sejmik)** which is a governing and controlling body as well as the **Board**, with the executive powers, headed by the **Marshal** (Board Chairman). The Voivodship Assembly is elected every four years in general, by direct elections in a secret ballot. The Voivodship Assembly appoints its Marshall. Upon the Marshall's motion the Assembly elects the remaining members of the Voivodship Board. They may be elected from outside the Voivodship Assembly.

The voivodship authorities are charged with elaborating a regional development strategy in the voivodship, focusing in particular on:

- Boosting economic activities;
- Enhancing competitiveness and innovation in the voivodship economy;
- Preserving cultural and environmental structures for future generations;
- Maintaining and enhancing spatial management;
- Preserving Polish cultural values and promoting the development of national, civic and cultural awareness of its inhabitants.

The voivodship authorities implements regional development policy focusing in particular on:

- Creating conditions for economic development and enhancing labour markets;
- Maintaining and developing social and technical infrastructure at the voivodship level;
- Obtaining financial resources and financial engineering: public and private finance for public utility actions;
- Supporting and enhancing the education of the voivodship's inhabitants;
- Ensuring the rational utilization of natural resources and management of the natural environment in a sustainable manner;
- Supporting research and strengthening links between research and the economy, encouraging technological progress and innovation;
- Supporting cultural developments and the preservation and rational utilization of the cultural heritage; and
- Promoting advantages and opportunities for regional development.

Table 5. Authorities at the voivodship level of administration in Poland

LEGISLATIVE	EXECUTIVE
Vivodship Assembly (Council)	Voivodship Board
Chairman	Marshal (Chairman)
1-3 Vice-Chairmans	1-2 Vice Marshals
Voivodship Assembly Councilors - 30 members in voivodships up to 2 000 000 residents and 3 councilors for every 500 000 residents up.	3-5 members of Board

Poviat - second level of administration



Poviats - Counties (Districts) represent the second level in the local government structure. An elected **Council** governed the district (which performs governing and controlling functions) and the **Board** (with executive power) headed by the **Starosta (Board Chairman)**.

The **secretary** and the **treasurer** of the poviat, who are county employees, also participate in meetings of the board.

The poviat level performs public tasks going beyond the commune level in the following areas:

The largest poviat, in term of area is białostocki (2987 km²) in the Podlaskie Voivodship and the smallest is tyski (157 km²), located in the Śląskie Voivodship.

- Transport and public roads;
- Secondary schools,
- Public safety and health,
- Social care,

- Cultural heritage;
- Sports and tourism;
- Property management;
- Spatial planning and construction;
- Water management;
- Environmental protection;
- Agriculture, forestry and in-land fisheries;
- Counteracting unemployment and boosting labour markets;
- Maintenance of public utility buildings;
- Promotion;
- Co-operation with NGOs;
- Carrying out poviat services, inspectors and guards.

The largest poviats, in terms of population is warszawski (containing the Capital City Warsaw – 1615,4 thous.) in Mazowieckie Voivodship, and the smallest is sejnenski (22,0 thous.) in Podlaskie Voivodship.

Within the entrusted tasks the counties also fulfill the duties previously resting in the competence of the governors, i.e. issuing passports or dealing with matters related to changing citizenship.

Table 6. Authorities at the district level of administration in Poland

LEGISLATIVE	EXECUTIVE
County (district, powiat) Council	Poviat/County Board
Chairman	Starosta/Chairman
1-2 Vice-Chairmans	Vice Starosta
Poviat/County Councilors 15 in counties up to 40 000 residents and up to 39 in the rest counties	3-5 members of Poviat/County Board.

Gmina - basic level of administration



Gmina (Commune, Municipality), i.e. communal self-governments, were restored in 1990. There are 2,489 communes in Poland.

Local administration at the communal level operates under the Law on Local Self-Government of 1990. The Law on the Organisation of Self-Government of the Capital City of Warsaw of 25 March 1994, as amended in 1995, governs the commune of Warsaw.

The largest gmina, in term of area is Pisz (635 km²) and the smallest urban gminas is Górowo Iławeckie (3 km²), located in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodship.

The largest gmina, in terms of population is Warszawa Centrum (910,1 thous.) in Mazowieckie Voivodship, and the smallest is Krynica Morska (1,3 thous.) in Pomorskie Voivodship.

According to the Law on Local Self-Government, the tasks of the local self-governments are twofold, including genuine self-governing tasks and delegated tasks executed by local authorities on behalf of the state. Depending on the type of task, different rules govern acts of local self-government and the responsibilities of appeal authorities in administrative procedures.

The Constitution contains a general presumption in favour of local self-government competence. It stipulates "*local self-government shall perform public tasks not reserved by the Constitution or statutes to the organs of other public authorities*".

The general rule of the 1990 law is that the commune satisfies the collective needs of its community, in particular in the following areas:

- Territorial planning, property administration, environmental protection;
- Communal roads, bridges, squares, streets, traffic management;
- Water supply, sewage, waste removal;
- Local public transport;
- Public health protection;
- Social assistance;
- Communal housing;
- Education up to the primary school level;
- Culture;
- Sport;

- Marketplaces and halls;
- Parks and green areas;
- Communal cemeteries;
- Public order and fire protection;
- Maintenance of structures of public utility.

The **commune** has two organs: the **Council** and the **Executive Board**. The Council is elected every four years in direct, equal, and secret elections. The number of members ranges from 15 to 100, depending on the size of the communal population (*from the year 2002 see Table 6*). The Council decides on the most important matters, notably economic and financial issues. The Council elects a president and up to three deputy presidents.

The Executive Board is elected by the Council and has between four and seven members, depending on the size of the commune. They include:

- **The head of the commune (wójt - voit)** in rural areas, the **mayor (burmistrz)** in towns of less than 100,000 inhabitants, or the **city president** in towns with more than 100,000 inhabitants. They may be elected from outside the Council;
- The deputy head(s), deputy mayor(s) or deputy city president(s), who also may be non-members of the Council; and/or
- Other members, who must be elected from among members of the Council.

The President of the **Executive Board** is elected separately; substitutes are elected on the president's recommendation. Members of the board may not be employed in government administration. The **secretary** and the **treasurer** of the commune, who are communal employees, also participate in meetings of the board.

The Executive Board acts in a collegial manner, but its president and or other persons to whom he delegates power take individual decisions in the area of public administration.

Rural communes consist traditionally of a number of villages. To preserve the identity of each village, a sub-communal division is maintained in each village. It consists of three bodies: a general assembly, a head (soltys), and a council head. The latter two are elected in direct and secret elections. In towns, it is possible to set up boroughs with an organisation similar to that of villages.

A law of 1990 regulates the financial basis of the activities of local self-government on a temporary basis. Besides revenues from civil law liabilities and profits from their enterprises, communes may gather local taxes (real estate property tax,

agricultural tax, and tax on means of transport), and some charges and duties (notably stamp duty). They also benefit from some state taxes (15 per cent of the individual profit tax, and 2 per cent of corporate tax), and have a right to state subsidies.

The competencies of communes include all public matters of local importance, which are not legally attributed to other bodies. In particular they cover:

- Spatial management, land management and environmental protection;
- Schools and kindergartens;
- Communal roads, bridges, squares and traffic;
- Water supply, sewage systems, waste treatment and management, sanitary systems, dumps, electricity supplies, heating provision and gas supply;
- Local public transport;
- Medical services (outpatient clinics and health centers, plus hospitals in urban communes),
- Sports, recreational and sport facilities;
- Communal green areas and forests;
- Maintenance of communal buildings of public utility.

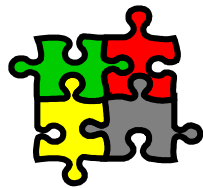
Table 7. Authorities at the commune's level of administration in Poland

LEGISLATIVE	EXECUTIVE
Commune Council	Commune Board
Chairman	Voit/Mayor/President
Vice-Chairmans	Vice Voits/Mayors/Presidents
Commune Councilors: 12 in communes of 5000 resident and less and up to 60 in communes (cities) over 200000 residents	Members of Commune Board: 3 persons in communes up to 20 000 residents, 3-5 in the rest.

POMORSKIE VOIVODSHIP – WEJHEROWO COUNTY

Situated at the mouth of the Wisła river by the Baltic Sea, the Pomorskie Voivodship has the surface area of 18,000 km², which makes up 5,9% of the surface area of the entire country. Over 2 million inhabitants, 69% of which reside in cities and towns, occupy it. A Voivodship's characteristic feature is the population concentration in the Gdańsk-Gdynia-Sopot Tricity.

Gdańsk, the capital of the region, is well known world-wide because of the Solidarity movement in 1980 under the leadership of Lech Wałęsa. The movement gave rise to democratic changes in Poland and other Eastern European countries.



The **Pomorskie Voivodship** belongs to the most industrialized regions in Poland. Its share in Polish gross national product is 6%. To the major sectors of the economy belong: sea economy in the broad sense of the word (sea trade, shipbuilding, fishing, etc.), oil and chemical industry, engineering industry, building industry, food industry, furniture industry, electrical and power industry, clothing industry and trade and services.

Two special economic zones contribute to the economic attractiveness of the Voivodship, namely Żarnowiec-Tczew and Słupsk, which constitute a set of convincing incentives for foreign investors. Colleges and universities of the Voivodship cause that it proudly boasts about the professionalism and openness of its human resources to new ideas. As far as the number of private companies per 1000 inhabitants is concerned, the Voivodship has the fifth place in Poland.



Agriculture is also an important sector of the economy. The factor that greatly contributes to its development is the fact that the Voivodship has a better than average agribusiness infrastructure as about 75% of all arable land belongs to private owners.

Each day eco-tourism plays more important role in the Pomorskie Voivodship. Though, our region has also an especially interesting offer for more traditional tourists. This is related to the rich cultural heritage and architectural attractiveness of the cities and towns, especially of Gdańsk and Malbork, but also to the possibility of enjoying beautiful and huge beaches, as well as lakes with clean water that are hidden among the covered by forests hills.

Territorial organization of voivodship pomorskie

Capital Gdańsk

Number of land counties 15

Number of municipal counties 4

Number of communes 119

The territorial and administrative reform split the Pomeranian region into 15 counties. In addition 4 cities were granted county rights. The counties are further split into the total of 123 communes, including 25 **urban**, 81 **rural**, and 17 **mixed rural-urban** communes.

The cities enjoying county rights, i.e. Gdańsk, Gdynia, Słupsk, and Sopot form a separate group of administrative entities



Wejherowo County lies at the northern part of Voivodship. The County of Wejherowo with its office in Wejherowo comprises the towns of: Reda, Rumia, Wejherowo, and the communes of: Choczewo, Gniewino, Linia, Luzino, Łęczyce, Szemud, and Wejherowo.

The County covers the area of 1280 square kilometers, and:

- 170 thousand inhabitants,
- 55 councilors,
- over 100 employees at County administration,
- 17,6% of unemployment rate,
- 11 066 small business units.