TOPONYMIC FACTFILE

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The Permanent Committee on Geographical Names

POLAND

Country name	Poland
State title	Republic of Poland
Official language	Polish
Country name in official language	Polska
State title in official language	Rzeczpospolita Polska
Script	Roman
ISO-3166 country code (alpha-2/alpha-3)	PL/POL
Capital in official language	Warszawa
English conventional name of capital	Warsaw

Introduction

Poland has existed as an independent state from the 11th up to the late 18th century and again since 1918, with the exception of 1939-45. In size it is slightly larger than Italy, and it has international boundaries with seven other countries (Belarus, Czechia, Germany, Lithuania, Russia (Kaliningrad), Slovakia and Ukraine) and a coastline on the Baltic Sea.

Geographical names policy

PCGN advice is to follow the geographical names as used on official sources from Poland. Poland has published its own Toponymic Guidelines for map and other editors[1], which includes detailed guidance on language, names, minorities and source materials. Official mapping is produced by the Head Office of Geodesy and Cartography and the Military Intelligence Directorate of the General Staff of the Polish Army, official maps and data being available at https://www.geoportal.gov.pl/.

There is more detail on the standardization of geonames in Poland here: http://ksng.gugik.gov.pl/english/sopgn.php.

The NGA Geonet Names Server is also a good source for names in Poland.

Language

Polish (*polski* ISO 639 code: pol) is the official language. A West Slavic language most closely related to Czech or Slovak and rather more distantly to Russian, Serbian, Bulgarian and other Slavic languages, Polish has half a dozen dialects, most named after historical regions. The Kashubian (Polish: *kaszubski* ISO 639 code: csb) dialect is sufficiently distinct to be commonly regarded as a separate language, closely related to Polish. Kashubian is spoken in a small part of Pomorskie province. In the 2011 census,

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[1] This link contains information about the contents of the Toponymic Guidelines. Contact PCGN for a copy of the publication itself (not currently available online).

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some 108,000 people recorded speaking Kashubian as a mother tongue and Kashubian-language place names may be used alongside the Polish name[2].

In 2011, Poland reported to the UN Group of Experts on Geographical Names (UNGEGN) that 740 geographical names for localities and their parts in minority languages (374 Kashubian names, 310 German names, 30 Lithuanian names, 25 Belarusian names, and 1 Lemko name) were introduced in 39 communes in five voivodships. The 2005 *Act on national and ethnic minorities and on the regional languages* lays down that traditional names in a minority language for localities, physiographic objects and streets may be used as "additional names" alongside geographic names established in the Polish language. Contradictory to names in Polish, names in minority languages are not official names but only "additional names" ("auxiliary names"). Minority language names may also appear on road signs.

Orthography

Polish uses 23 letters of the Roman alphabet, excluding Q, V and X. Nine additional characters are formed using four distinct diacritics, some of which are unique to Polish. There are seven digraphs which form distinct sounds (their usual IPA[3] value is shown in square brackets): *cz* [t͡ʂ]and *rz* [ʐ], which are distinctively Polish, and *ch* [x], *dz* [d͡z], *dź* [d͡ʑ], *dż* [d͡ʐ] and *sz* [ʂ]). In common with other Slavic languages, the letter F is rare in Polish and unlikely to be found in place names.

Kashubian has additional diacritics, but its spelling is not fully standardised. They are not listed here.

Inventory of additional characters

Upper-case character	Unicode encoding	Lower-case character	Unicode encoding
Ą	0104	ą	0105
Ć	0106	ć	0107
Ę	0118	ę	0119
Ł	0141	ł	0142
Ń	0143	ń	0144
Ó	00D3	ó	00F3
Ś	015A	ś	015B
Ź	0179	ź	017A
Ż	017B	ż	017C

Alphabetical order
The order of letters is the same as in English except that letters with diacritics are sorted directly after their counterpart without.

Capitalisation
Upper-case letters are used in Polish less often than in English and generic geographical terms included in place names may be written entirely in lower-case, without the initial capital letter that would be usual for names in English. Place names have lower-case initials when used as adjectives, for example the administrative division names (see page 4). PCGN recommends that the presentation used on Polish official sources be followed. [4]

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[2] https://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/docs/26th-gegn-docs/WP/WP23_Minority%20place%20names%20in%20Poland.pdf

[3] The International Phonetic Alphabet can be found at the International Phonetic Association website.

[4] Note that the US NGA GEONet Names Server follows the English-language convention of capitalising each element of place names, regardless of local language convention.

State title

The Polish word *rzeczpospolita* is normally translated as "Republic" but is used only in reference to Poland (1918-39 and 1945 to present), or to refer to the Lithuania-Poland Commonwealth of the 16th to 18th centuries. In referring to other countries, the word *Republika* is used in Polish to mean 'Republic'.

Transnational features

Some geographical features (rivers, mountains etc.) are shared between Poland and one or more neighbouring countries. On a map, they should be labelled in the appropriate language on each side of the boundary, with no preference given to either name. Most of these do not have an English conventional name in common use (shown in italics in 4th column where they exist). Where they do exist, English conventional names can be used alone for transnational features, or included in brackets after the local name(s).

Polish name	Name in neighbouring country/countries	English conventional names (if any)	Feature type
Kanał Mazurski	Russia = Канал Мазурский (*Kanal Mazurskiy*)	*Masurian Canal*	Canal
Puszcza Białowieska	Belarus = Белавежская пушча (*Byelavyezhskaya pushcha*)	*Białowieska Forest*	Forest
Uznam	Germany = Usedom		Island
Zalew Szczecinski	Germany = Stettiner Haff or Oderhaff		Lagoon
Zalew Wiślany	Russia = Калининградский залив (*Kaliningradskiy Zaliv*)	*Vistula Lagoon*	Lagoon
Sudety	Czechia = Sudety Germany = Sudeten		Mountains
Tatry *or* Tatry Wysokie	Slovakia = Tatry *or* Vysoké Tatry	*Tatra Mountains or High Tatra*	Mountains
Pomorze	Germany = Pommern	*Pomerania*	Region
Bug	Ukraine = Західний Буг (*Zakhidnyi Buh*) Belarus = [Заходні] Буг (*[Zakhodni] Buh*)	*Bug (or Western Bug)*	River
Narew	Belarus = Нараў (*Naraŭ*) Russia = Нарев (*Narev*)		River
Nysa	Germany = Neisse (Neiße) Czechia = Nisa		River
Odra	Germany = Oder Czechia = Odra		River
San	Ukraine = Сян (*Sian*)		River
Cieszyn	Czechia = Tesin Germany = Teschen		Town

English conventional names

There are not many conventional English language names for places in Poland, though some exist for transnational features as noted in the table above. The following are still common. See also the administrative divisions table below for a list of province names in English. (Note that it is not appropriate post-1945 to use old German-language names such as Danzig or Stettin.)

Polish name	English conventional	Remarks
Warszawa (city)	Warsaw	
Sląsk (region)	Silesia	Former province in the south-west.
Góry Świętokrzyskie	Holy Cross Mountains	Literal translation sometimes used in tourist guides.

Administrative structure

Since 1 January 1999 Poland has been divided into sixteen first-order administrative (ADM1) provinces or "voivodships", though the latter word exists only as an English calque of the Polish *województwo.* Many of these are loosely based on historical regions, though usually with significantly different boundaries. They bear some resemblance to the ADM1 units of 1950 to 1975, but from 1975 to 1998 there were 49 much smaller ADM1 units, usually named after towns. The usual Polish short names for the provinces are lower-case adjectives[5], not nouns, and notably the word *województwo* is often omitted. Three are named after towns. Noun forms can be used for some, but these would more often refer to the historical regions.

Each *województwo* is divided into *powiaty* (singular: *powiat*), usually translated as "district" or "county". There are 380 in total. A *powiat* can be urban or rural. The Polish name is typically the word *powiat* followed by a lower-case adjective, nearly always derived from the name of its capital.

For further details see *List of Identifiers and Names of the Units of Territorial Division of the* Country: http://eteryt.stat.gov.pl/eteryt/files/wykaz_identyfikatorow_i_nazw_jednostek_podzialu_terytorial nego_kraju_01012015.pdf [not currently available, contact PCGN for details].

Voidvodships: First-order Administrative Divisions (ADM1s) of Poland

Usual Polish adjectival form (PCGN Recommended form)	Noun (not in common use)	English name (not in common use)	ISO 3166-2 code	No. of powiat (urban+ rural)[6]	Administrative centre (PPLA)	Latitude and Longitude of province capital
Dolnośląskie	Dolnośląsk	Lower Silesian	PL-02	4+26	Wrocław	51 07N 17 02E
Kujawsko-pomorskie	Kujawy-Pomorze	Cujavo-Pomeranian	PL-04	4+19	Bydgoszcz & Toruń	53 07N 18 00E 53 00N 18 36E
Lubelskie		n/a	PL-06	4+20	Lublin	51 15N 22 34E
Lubuskie	Lubusz	n/a	PL-08	2+12	Gorzów Wielkopolski & Zielona Góra	52 44N 15 14E 51 56N 15 30E
Łódzkie	n/a	n/a	PL-10	3+21	Łódź	51 46N 19 27E
Małopolskie	Małopolska	Lesser Poland	PL-12	3+19	Kraków	50 04N 19 56E

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[5] These are sometimes presented with a lower-case initial, but appear with an upper-case initial in e.g. *List of Identifiers and Names of the Units of Territorial Division of the* Country: http://eteryt.stat.gov.pl/eteryt/files/wykaz_identyfikatorow_i_nazw_jednostek_podzialu_terytorialnego_kraju _01012015.pdf [not currently available, contact PCGN for details] so PCGN has followed this form as the recommendation for UK products.

[6] Full details shown in the Toponymic Guidelines of Poland http://ksng.gugik.gov.pl/english/files/topon_inte.doc.pdf (though Warsaw appears in the rural counties list in this document)

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Mazowieckie	Mazowsze	Masovian (1)	PL-14	5+37	Warszawa	52 15N 21 01E
Opolskie		n/a	PL-16	1+11	Opole	50 40N 17 55E
Podkarpackie		Sub-Carpathian	PL-18	4+21	Rzeszów	50 02N 22 00E
Podlaskie	Podlasie	n/a	PL-20	3+14	Białystok	53 08N 23 10E
Pomorskie	Pomorze	Pomeranian (2)	PL-22	4+16	Gdańsk	54 21N 18 39E
Śląskie	Śląsk	Silesian (3)	PL-24	19+17	Katowice	50 15N 19 01E
Świętokrzyskie	Święty Krzyż	Holy Cross	PL-26	1+13	Kielce	50 52N 20 38E
Warmińsko-mazurskie	Warmia-Mazury	Warmian-Masurian	PL-28	2+19	Olsztyn	53 47N 20 29E
Wielkopolskie	Wielkopolska	Greater Poland	PL-30	4+31	Poznań	52 24N 16 56E
Zachodniopomorskie	Zachodniopomorze	West Pomeranian	PL-32	3+18	Szczecin	53 25N 14 33E

1. Or Mazovia.

2. The traditional region of Pomerania (Pomorze) included most of Pomorskie, Zachodniopomorskie and an area further west which is now in Germany, but not Kujawsko-pomorskie.

3. The traditional region of Silesia included most or all of the provinces of Dolnośląskie, Opolskie and Śląskie.

Useful references

- Toponymic Guidelines of Poland: https://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/ungegn/docs/26th-gegn-docs/WP/WP27_Toponymic%20Guidelines%20of%20Poland.pdf
- Official geoportal of Poland: https://www.geoportal.gov.pl/
- BBC Country Profile: https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-17753718
- CIA World Factbook: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/pl.html
- FCDO Travel Advice: https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/poland
- International Organization for Standardization (ISO): www.iso.org
- ISO Online Browsing Platform (OBP): https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/
- Languages: www.ethnologue.com; www.omniglot.com
- List of authorized crossings-points at land, sea and air borders of Poland with other EU countries: https://www.gov.pl/web/netherlands/list-of-authorized-crossings-points-at-land-sea-and-air-borders-of-poland-with-other-eu-countries
- US Board on Geographic Names GEOnet Names Server (GNS): http://geonames.nga.mil/gns/html/