



## OUTCAN Info Sheet 2020

### Warsaw, Poland

#### LOCATION

**Country:** Poland

**Town:** Warsaw

**Entry/Exit requirements:** Blue; Red, Green Passport, NATO Travel orders (NTO). SOFA Stamp in Passport.

**Other info to Consider:**

- Embassy Posting
- Foreigners must register their stay in Poland within 48 hours of arrival if the stay is to exceed 14 days
- To stay longer than 90 days, Canadians must apply either for a Polish visa in Canada before arriving in Poland or for a temporary residence permit while in Poland and must have a valid reason for extending their stay, such as education or employment.
- Family (non-dependants) can visit and stay 90 days **without visa** (Schengen Area).

#### POPULATION

**Size:** 1.78 million people within the city, 3.1 million in the greater metropolitan area.

**Ethnicity:** over 97% Polish

#### LANGUAGE(S)

**Official language:** Polish

**Prevalence of French or English speaking:** Very limited. Some establishments will have an English-speaking employee; however, English is not spoken freely and commonly. Limited to no French.

#### COST OF LIVING

**Exchange rate to consider:** Polish Zloty (PLN). 1 CDN=2,9PLN (Nov 2020)

#### QUALITY OF LIFE

**Climate and potential for severe weather, natural disasters:**

- The climate is moderately continental, characterized by cold winters, with temperatures often below freezing (0 °C or 32 °F), and mild or pleasantly warm summers. Sometimes, cold waves from Siberia can occur, and the temperatures can drop to -20 °C (-4 °F) or below.

**Laws and Culture:**

- Penalties for possession, use or trafficking of illegal drugs are severe. Convicted offenders can expect lengthy jail sentences.
- It is illegal to consume alcohol in public places. If you are found intoxicated in a public area, you may be detained and could be taken to a sobering-up centre, where you may need to spend the night. You will be responsible for paying the cost of the stay.
- Penalties for drinking and driving are severe. The legal blood alcohol limit is 0.02 percent. Convicted offenders can expect heavy fines and jail sentences.
- If local authorities consider you a citizen of Poland, they may refuse you access to Canadian consular services.
- Riding a bike under the influence of alcohol is illegal and subject to detention and fines.

**Safety and Security:**

- You must carry an international driving permit. It must be obtained prior to arrival in Poland.

- Penalties for drinking and driving are severe. The legal blood alcohol limit is 0.02 percent. Convicted offenders can expect heavy fines and jail sentences.
- Foreigners may be required to pay traffic violation fines on the spot.
- Confrontations, which at times become violent, may occur between opposing fans at soccer matches. Exercise caution if attending a soccer match or if staying in the vicinity of sporting venues.

**Level of isolation:**

- There are two Canadian families posted to this location.
- May feel very isolated due to language barrier.

## HOUSING

- The Canadian Embassy will be supporting/assigning all housing needs.

## EMPLOYMENT

**Are there employment opportunities for spouses?** Due to tax and legal implications, spousal employment on the economy is not a realistic option.

- Limited, language barrier.
- There are very limited employment opportunities available through CFMWS, so families should plan to be single income for the duration of the posting.

**Op Tempo:** The op tempo will vary greatly depending on position. TD is possible.

## HEALTH CARE

**Access:** Satisfactory medical care is available in Poland.

- Highly accessible via private clinic (almost no wait times), public access very similar to Canada, incl. wait times.
- English services are available, French is very limited.
- All bills associated with the care of dependents are the member's personal responsibility and are to be claimed through PSHCP.

**Special needs:**

- Depending on language required (English/French), area of specialization and degree of support needed.
- It may be a wait before finding an appropriate match and at times may not be possible based on availability of English/French speaking providers or resources.
- It is highly advised that the family consult with Medical Screening Officer in Canada and / or the Canadian Element to ensure that the required services are readily available in either English or French before accepting a posting.

**Consideration for pregnancy / birth:** Health care for pregnancy and birth is available on the economy, private care.

**Dental:** Dental care can be accessed in town. You are required to pay up front, and you can then claim your expenses.

## SCHOOLING

- Schooling is typically at the American School of Warsaw (IB) for grades JK-12, The British School, Warsaw (IB) for grades JK-8, and Lycée Français de Varsovie for grades JK-12.
- British curriculum is only deemed compatible up to gr 8; access to British curriculum beyond gr 8 requires WG B approval.

**Curriculum vs. Canadian curriculum:**

- The curriculum varies depending on choice of school.
- None of them offers Canadian history or geography at the elementary level.

**Resources for special need children:**

- Access to special needs services is depending on the choice of school, language required (English/French), area of specialization and degree of support needed, it may be very limited.
- Consult with CEM and school prior to any commitments.

## CHILDCARE

**Things to Consider:**

- Local childcare is available, no guarantee that staff will be English or French-speaking.

## TRANSPORTATION

**Things to Consider:** Airport: Warsaw Chopin (WAW)

- You should carry an international driving permit.
- Penalties for driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs are severe.

**Public Transport:**

- Public transportation throughout the city by bus and tram.

## RESOURCES AND AMENITIES

**Is there a Military Family Services centre available in that location?**

- No, under MFS(E) Riga & Remote.

**Psychosocial / Mental Health Resources:**

- Not at post, MFS(E) SW for dependants only, CAF SW/Mental Health Team for member and family are located in Geilenkirchen, Germany. Padre is located in Belgium.

**Communications (e.g. Quality of Internet connection):** Very good service & very reasonable prices.

## ACTIVITIES

**Access to sports or other leisure activities:**

- Plenty of recreational activities and venues available in this area for the whole family.

**Availability of playgrounds:** Yes, many.

## RESTRICTIONS TO CONSIDER

**Are common law relationships recognized?** Yes

**Are same sex couples recognized?** Yes

**Medications that are illegal in the country:**

- Use without a prescription of narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances is illegal. Cannabis is illegal.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- **European Commission Country Reports (2019)**  
[https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2019-european-semester-country-reports\\_en](https://ec.europa.eu/info/publications/2019-european-semester-country-reports_en)
- **Canadian Travel Advisories**  
<https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/advisories>
- **CIA World Factbooks (One Pagers from US)**  
<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/pl.html>
- **Living Abroad (from Gov.UK)**  
<https://www.gov.uk/topic/help-british-nationals-overseas/europe>
- **Consumer Price Index (CPI)**  
<https://data.imf.org/?sk=4FFB52B2-3653-409A-B471-D47B46D904B5>

**For more comprehensive information, please feel free to reach out to the resources below;**

- MFS(E) Social Worker : [Chebat.Myriam@cfmws.com](mailto:Chebat.Myriam@cfmws.com) or [Myriam.Chebat@Forces.gc.ca](mailto:Myriam.Chebat@Forces.gc.ca)
- CAF Social Worker: [Martin.Laferrieresimard@forces.gc.ca](mailto:Martin.Laferrieresimard@forces.gc.ca)
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