



OUTCAN Info Sheet 2020

Elblag, Poland

LOCATION

Country: Poland

Town: Elblag

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

Other info to Consider:

- Multi National Division-North East (MND-NE) (NATO)
- Security within the MND-NE facility is very high. Members must undergo ID checks by an MP at the gate and once inside should display their pass at all times.
- 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: Urban area: over 400,000

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, and mild or pleasantly warm summers. Sometimes, cold waves from Siberia can occur, and the temperatures can drop to -20 °C 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:

- 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 near sporting venues.

Level of isolation:

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

HOUSING

- Approximately 700 new apartments and houses have been built in Elblag and the surrounding area. These are available for either sale or rent. The apartments are in the range of 45-86 sqm and have underground parking. They are within walking distance to the center of Elblag and to MND-NE.
- Houses are generally of a good standard, equipped with a completed fitted kitchen, patio and/or balcony, storage room and secure parking
- Help with finding suitable accommodations is available through MND-NE.
- It is imperative that members do not secure any type of housing without obtaining prior approval from CFSU(E) Housing Officer.

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, including 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

- There are no international schools in the region.
- Dependent Education has conducted a search and has been unable to find an education facility in Elblag that meets the parameters of the Canadian Armed Forces.
- An education recce is underway to investigate the possibility of creating a list of compatible schools for Elblag using schools in Gdansk, which is approximatively an hour's travel one way from Elblag by train.
- Dependent Education has determined that postings for families with school age children to this location would be considered as a prohibited posting by CEM. This would include any children who would be starting school throughout the duration of the posting.

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:**

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

Public Transport:

- Very accessible public transportation throughout the city.

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:**

- MND-NE personnel will have access to gym facilities (weight room, exercise equipment, pool), albeit situated a short walking distance from the HQ.
- 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
- **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 or Myriam.Chebat@Forces.gc.ca
- CAF Social Worker: Martin.Laferrieresimard@forces.gc.ca
- MFS(E) Riga Remote: + 371 231 16 869, MFSE.Rigaremote@cfmws.com
- MFS(E) Regional Office: +49 (0) 2451-717-173, MFS.Europe@cfmws.com