

JEWISH MINORITY IN POLAND

Situation of religious minority		
1	Country	Poland
2	Name of religious minority	Judaism
3	Number of believers	4000 in religious communities; 25000-35000 of Jewish citizens
4	Regional/national distribution (are the believers dispersed or concentrated in one or more places?)	<i>Look at the map below the table</i>
5	Are believers organized in communities or similar structures?	<p>The religious life in Poland of Judaism's confessors is organised by the Union of Jewish Religious Communities in the Republic of Poland. It was established in 1993 with the aim of organizing the religious and cultural life of the members of the communities in Poland.</p> <p>The Union is a legal continuator of pre-war communities. It represents Polish Jews in the process of regaining pre-war possessions of Jewish citizens.</p> <p>The main goal of the Union's activities are charity and organizing religious and cultural life of the community members in Poland. ACPJ is supervised by the Committee of Welfare. It consists of eight Jewish's communities in Warszawa, Wrocław, Kraków, Łódź, Szczecin, Katowice, Bielsko-Biała and Legnica. The communities have got branches in smaller Jewish societies. They gather adults who are Jewish faith, Jewish nationality or origin, but are not believers other religions, who possess Polish citizenship and live on Poland's territory.</p> <p>The ACPJ in Poland is a member of many international organizations, e.g: The European Congress of Jews, The Foundation of Jewish's Heritage Protection in Poland, The European Board of Jewish Community.</p> <p>The activities of the Association are financed from their own resources, by the Ministry of Culture and Art or by private sponsors.</p> <p>The Jewish Religious Community is a very formal name. But this is not only a religious institution. It's an organizational unit, the basic unit of Jewish life.</p> <p>Krakow- the Jewish Community here is an orthodox unit that covers South-Eastern part of Poland. There are around 150 members.</p> <p>The main functioning synagogue is Remu Synagogue. There are also other in Krakow such as Tempel, Kupa, Isaac's, Popper's, Mizrachi.</p> <p>The New Cemetary is the only one still open in Krakow.</p>
6	Legal position/	The law from 20 February 1997 year regulates functioning

	status (is the religious minority recognised; has it equal status with the religion of majority?)	of the communes in our country. According to this law: “Jewish communes gather adult people who possess Polish citizenship and live on Poland’s territory.”
7	Are there any reasons which stop the religious minority enjoying freedom of worship in the country?	In Poland – in the lands where prior to World War II there lived over three million Jews, and where for centuries, until the Holocaust, there flourished the religious and cultural life of one of the largest Jewish population in the world - today, according to official data, there remains only a few thousand Jews. No one knows, however, the number of people who now, more than sixty years after the Shoah, are slowly discovering their Jewish roots that sometimes were hidden from them by their Holocaust-survivor parents or grandparents. These people, often very young, seek knowledge about their ancestors, their history, their culture, and particularly their value system – indeed, first and foremost, about their religion.
8	Is the religious minority visible to others?	There are many festivals and reviews of Jewish culture presented to mass public. They are organised annually in Kraków, Wrocław, Warszawa and other Polish cities. Numerous galleries, clubs, theatres and music bands present arts of Jewish artists. In Kraków the biggest and most active organization is Jewish Culture Center , which popularises Jewish culture and morals. JCC organizes exhibits, lectures, concerts, movie performances and promotions of books. The greatest event of Jewish culture in Kraków is Jewish Culture Festival , organized each year in July since 1988. It is made by remarkable representatives of various realms of art and culture. It became a place of meeting Jews and non-Jews from the whole world. The Festival lasts about 9 days. The crowd of people can listen to and admire the highest class of Jewish artists. The traditional final concert is organised to commemorate memory of all Jews, for whom Kazimierz was the safe home for ages. Szeroka Street is filled up with crowds of people and changes in the biggest stage of Jewish music in the world. The most outstanding artists from the USA, Israel, Europe and Poland perform in front of a huge audience. The honorary patron of the event is the President of Poland, Lech Kaczyński. The idea of the festival is presentation of the cultural, spiritual and material Jewish Heritage from Krakow and Galicja and building a dialogue over stereotypes and anti-semitism.
9	What influence does the culture of the minority have on the majority culture?	The term ‘Jewish Culture’ contains religion, history, language, traditions, knowledge, the way of living. Nowadays there are many possibilities to learn about rich Jewish culture, taking part in the festivals, visiting museums such as Stara Synagoga in Krakow. In April of each year, the March of the Living from Auschwitz to Birkenau to honor victims of the Holocaust, draws young people from Israel and elsewhere, as well as Poles, as marchers to mark two of the most significant dates: Holocaust Remembrance Day and Israel Independence Day. Christianity, which grew on a base of Judaism, inherited the whole tradition of the Old Testament. Both religions have the faith in One God and the common conception

		<p>of the world's redemption. The Decalogue in Christianity is a common foundation of moral teaching. Some elements of Christian liturgy also come from Jewish religion: psalm prayers,; the use of symbols such as 'bread and wine' in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, a candle (a lamp in the Old Testament), ash (a symbol of the penance), oil.</p> <p>Christians remember the Paschal feast which was consumed by Jesus as the Last Supper with his Twelve Disciples.</p>
10	<p>What influence does the majority culture of the country have on architecture of the minority's place of worship?</p>	<p>none</p>



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JEWISH COMMUNES AND THEIR BRANCHES IN POLAND