



# **Stereotypes of Poland and Poles**



# Stereotypes

Every nation has got their own customs, habits and stereotypes. They are characteristic for each country. Stereotypes describe common models of behavior, habits, ways of life or specific characteristic. Poland as a country also has got some stereotypes.

Many people, when they hear the word „Poland” associate it with beautiful girls, vodka, Pope and Wałęsa. Unfortunately Fryderyk Chopin and Maria Skłodowska-Curie are French for them, Mikołaj Kopernik-German. In fact they are Poles. In characters of the Poles we can find faults as well as virtues.



# In the shadow of communism

Lots of foreigners consider Poland to be a poor communist state with wild beasts on the roads.. It is true that it is geographically close to Russia, which is Poland's neighbour, indeed, but you should not forget that Russia is an enormously big country and its European part constitutes only a small fraction of its total territory. Since Poland became a member of the European Union, it has become even closer to the Western world.

# **The biggest stereotypes**

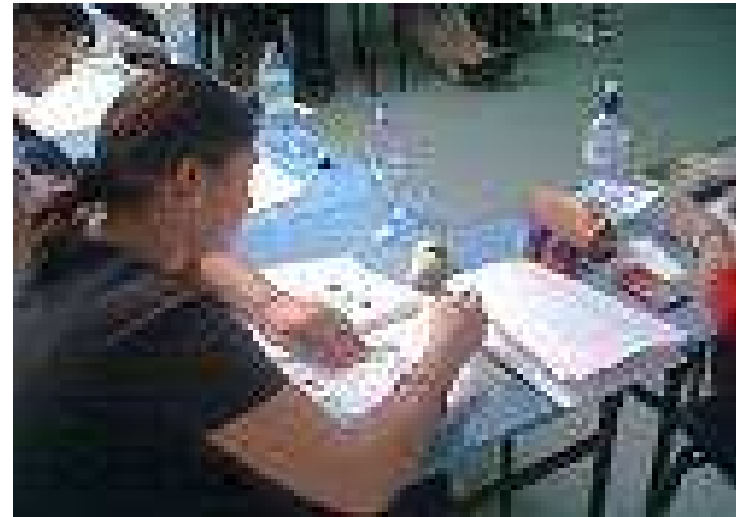
- **Poles do not speak foreign languages**
- **Poles never smile, but complain a lot**
- **Poles are intolerant and full of anti-Semitism**
- **Poles abuse alcohol**
- **Organised crime and car theft are part of everyday life**



# Poles do not speak foreign languages

Generally speaking, it is not Poland's best feature. According to the latest surveys only 8 percent of Poland's citizens officially admit to the ability of speaking any foreign language.

The situation has been improving and learning foreign languages has become very fashionable in Poland. Language schools and university courses are besieged by thousands of young applicants eager to study and make use of their abilities. Believe it or not, Poles have dealt with the problem more effectively than Italians or Spaniards, for whom mastering a foreign language at any level is much more difficult.



# Poles never smile, but complain a lot

The older part of Polish society who grew up and lived under a communist system always complain. Many of them do not believe in any improvement of their situations. On the other hand, **Poles always can laugh at themselves and have been known for the brilliant comedies and cabarets.**

The first years of capitalism brought quick changes and instability that were completely new challenges for lots of people. Many of them were left disappointed with the new system and... keep complaining. Although the Poland's economy is still developing and the population grows richer and richer, Poles are accustomed to complaining. Over half of Polish citizens believe that even joining the European Union did not improve their living conditions.

On the other hand, **young people are more similar to their Western European peers – they hardly complain, and they smile a lot.**





# Poles are intolerant and full of anti-Semitism



As far as anti-Semitism is concerned, this is a common trend that was not invented here in Poland. It is prohibited by law and is not officially followed. People admitting Jewish origins are treated equally to any of the other minority groups mentioned above and have exactly the same rights. Moreover, the Polish Government tries to improve the relationships with Jews. Since re-establishing diplomatic contacts with Israel in 1987, a lot of effort is being made to create a better understanding of Poland to Israeli youth visiting the country on Holocaust anniversaries. Young people come





# Poles abuse alcohol

Undoubtedly, the culture of drinking alcohol is highly developed in Poland. Its roots go back to the times of monarchy and nobility, who in the 17th century even had the slogan "eat, drink and loosen your belt". This way of spending time is still very popular in Poland. However, do not suppose that you will see Polish streets full of overweight or drunk people. Poles often go to bars and pubs - they are the most frequent places to meet friends.



Traditionally, the most popular alcoholic drink was **vodka**, but today more people, especially younger generations, choose **beer** - and beer is now really good in Poland





# Organized crime and car theft are part of everyday life

Poland is said to be extremely dangerous country, which is a hard exaggeration. But the truth is that nowadays you may be robbed or killed anywhere you go irrespective of the latitude or political status of the country you are visiting (even in St. Peter's Square in Rome). Crime and terrorism have become one of the greatest world menaces and everyone should be aware of it.



# Nice thoughts about Poland



## Beautiful girls

Many tourists are delighted with Polish girls. Their kind of beauty is unearthly. Many Poles are blondes with pale velvet skin and blue eyes. It is an original type which has descended from old times. Prototypes of Poles were Slavs. Slavonic girls were slender with long blond hair. Brunettes, dark-haired women and ginger-hair women are also very pretty. Come to us and see them with your own eyes.

## Hospitality

Polish heritage is hospitality. A Polish proverb fully shows our relations to visitors: „A Guest at home-God at home “. Poles are very polite, kind and obliging. If you come to us we put on the table all the food we have. It doesn't matter that you are not able to eat it. A visitor should feel like a part of the family in every Polish home.



# What do people say about Poland?

- „The hotels should be better. It's a pity that nice service which can speak English is a rarity”
- „There is need to build more motorways”
- „That is one of few countries which have beautiful mountains, forests, lakes, sea and cities with interesting monuments. The prices are much lower compared with other European countries. Poland is perfect for tourists”
- „I don't like the fact that there is much drunkenness in Poland and racism, people are not tolerant”
- „Sometimes I don't asked for help but it doesn't matter - Poles tell me where to go and what to do”
- „Pacts, systems and corruption are omnipresent”
- „Teaching level in Polish high schools occupies the second place in Europe”