

POLAND

IN THE EUROPEAN UNION



BOSZ

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IN THE EUROPEAN UNION



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*TWENTY YEARS
THAT HAVE CHANGED POLAND*

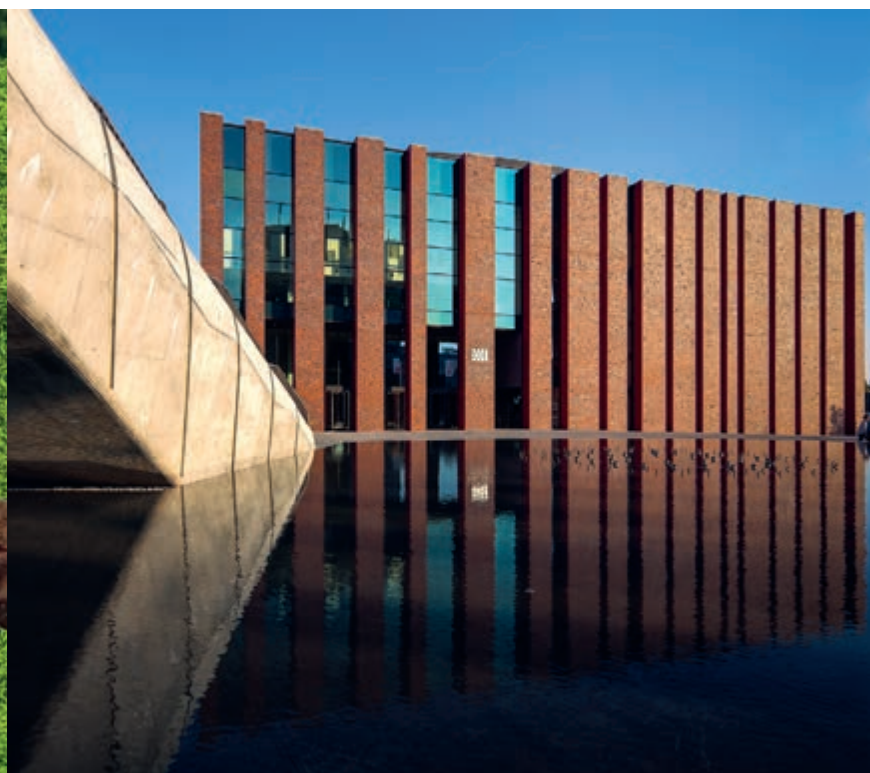


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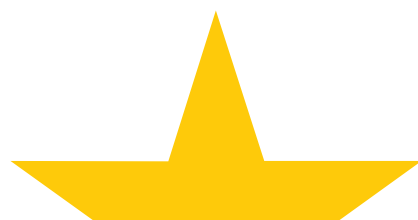
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**TWENTY YEARS
THAT HAVE CHANGED
POLAND**

WHY DO WE NEED PHOTO ALBUMS? Probably to browse through them and realise how much our life and the world around us have changed.

1 May 2024 marks the twentieth anniversary of Poland's accession to the European Union. Has it been long enough to weigh up the historical consequences of that decision? Although some are of the lofty opinion that Poland joining the EU could be compared to its Christianization from over a thousand years ago, we cannot deny that twenty years is a short period in the history of a nation. After all, centuries had passed since the Baptism of Poland before the country, under the reigns of Casimir III the Great, started to resemble Western European countries in social and economic terms. Another fundamental decision that shaped Polish history – to enter into a close relationship with Lithuania – brought tangible effects only after two hundred years, with the Union of Lublin.

So it might seem that when confronted with the history of a country and nation, twenty years is really not that long.

Two Decades of Poland in the European Union: an Unusual Time in Polish History

However, it is not merely the length of the period that we scrutinise, but also the grandiosity of changes that it involved. So let us ask ourselves the question: what has happened over the twenty years of Poland's EU membership? After all, it has been an unusual and exceptional time in its turbulent history. Unusual in three ways.

First of all, within a thousand years, the land inhabited by Polish people was constantly affected by brutal invaders and devastating wars. The physical existence of the nation was in jeopardy at least twice: at the time of the Swedish Deluge, nearly half of the population perished, and during the Nazi occupation, one in six citizens was killed, and the rest were faced with a looming vision of forced transformation into slaves deprived of all rights or exiles into the far-away, extremely uninhabitable region of Siberia. Due to two world wars, a vast part





Whoever recalls Poland from twenty years ago and compares it to the present day, has no doubt that there has been a gigantic transformation. The country has undergone swift and thorough modernisation and is now clearly much more up-to-date than it used to be. Twenty years ago, visitors coming to Poland from the wealthy Western European countries were under the impression that it is not only poorer but in many respects also less advanced... To put it bluntly – although not always aptly – in some areas, it was even underdeveloped. They saw the tragically underinvested universities,



Main library
of the Kazimierz
Wielki University
in Bydgoszcz





“Spodek” International
Congress Centre with the
Sports and Entertainment
Arena in Katowice



Łódź Fabryczna
railway station
in Łódź





Rędziński Bridge
on the Oder River
in Wrocław





Pomeranian Kayak
Routes – the Motława
and Martwa Wisła
Route in Gdańsk





Siklawka Waterfall
in the Tatra
Mountains

Baltic Sea







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Białołęka Cultural
Centre in Warsaw

Imperial Castle –
“Zamek” Culture
Centre in Poznań







Izrael Poznański
Palace in Łódź









Twenty Years That Have Changed Poland