



## Protesters take action over ACTA

### Thousands make their voices heard in Poland's cities

Thousands took to the streets in cities across the country this week to demonstrate public anger over a controversial anti-internet piracy law.

In Krakow some 10,000 protestors gathered in the city centre in a spontaneous protest, while a further 5,000 rallied in Wroclaw. The central town of Kielce saw arrests made as cars were vandalised and demonstrators clashed with the police.

Earlier in the week computer hackers broke into a number of official websites, including those of the prime minister, the government and the foreign ministry, in a series of cyber attacks that took many of the websites offline.

The focus of the anger was the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA), which the government signed on Wednesday night. ACTA aims to harmonise intellectual property rights for a variety of products including music and films, but has been accused of shackling the freedoms of information and expression on the internet.

Banners carried in the demonstrations stated "no to censorship" and called for a "free internet" and showed the general public's feelings towards the decision.



Protesters hit the streets of Warsaw to show their anger over the agreement

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Jaroslav Kaczynski, leader of main opposition party Law and Justice (PiS), joined the debate by calling for a referendum on ACTA. Mr Kaczynski said the party would soon set its proposal for a vote before parliament.

The scale and passion of the protests caught the government off guard, but it stood by its decision to sign the agreement. "We believe that theft on a massive scale of intellectual property is not a good thing," said Radek Sikorski, the foreign minister, in a television interview.

The government also claimed ACTA posed no threat to internet freedom.

"Now we have signed the agreement we should make the effort to clarify it and to dispel the myths surrounding ACTA," Michal Boni, the minister responsible for digitalisation, told the radio station Trojka.

"We need to show that the government has no intention of restricting freedom on the internet," he continued.

The minister added that the government will attempt to "clarify" the ACTA issue before the agreement goes before parliament for ratification.

#### NATIONAL

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#### More in favour of marijuana

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The research, carried out by the Mazowsze Addiction Prevention Centre, claims that 48 percent of 13-15 year-olds are now in favour of making the drug legal.

The statistics show a huge increase compared to 2010, when only 27 percent were behind the move.

#### REGIONAL

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#### Five years for drunk skier?

A drunk skier hit a woman on a slope on Chelm mountain in Myslenice last Saturday, sending the woman to hospital with injuries to her limbs and back. The 23-year-old male had 0.12 percent alcohol in his blood and had been showing off on the slopes with a friend, skiing at high speed. He now faces a possible five years in prison.

#### BUSINESS

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#### Bringing on the budget

Today will see Poland's politicians vote on the country's latest budget and already there have been huge disputes.

With political opponents calling for 370 amendments to be made, PiS MP Beata Szydlo has hit out at the draft's second reading claiming it to be "unrealistic".

"These budget proposals are unrealistic and you know this very well," she said.

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**From the editor**



In the run up to the budget, this week saw a number of articles in the press regarding the country's economy.

Of course the proposals have come in for a hefty amount of criticism from rival parties (that is their job after all) with the Palikot Movement describing them as nothing more than a "hasty patchwork".

Jan Lopata of coalition party Polish People's Party (PSL) states this budget is "unique" due to current economic circumstances. Refusing to use the word "crisis" he pointed to Europe's "anxiety" and highlighted the fact that Poland's economy is continuing to develop.

And he's right of course - or at least that's what we're being told.

Only this week the president flew to Davos with the intention of promoting Poland and encouraging the rest of the world to invest in the Warsaw Stock Exchange.

Using all the right words and sounding very confident, Komorowski bigged Poland up and will no doubt come away feeling very satisfied with himself indeed.

So with the country in such good shape, why this week are we reading about the country's hospitals being forced to cut down on the number of ambulances they buy due to a lack of funds?

Last week brought the grim news that 300 schools face closure this year already and now we learn that the health service has to compromise its fleet of vehicles. Maybe it's just me that's confused here but it's like reading news from a third-world nation, not a European country that its neighbours are supposed to be looking up to.

Whatever the truth, something doesn't read right and it's no wonder the public feel they are being given the middle finger.

**Quotes of the week**

"We will not buckle to blackmail." Prime Minister Donald Tusk referring to the recent hacking of government sites in protest over ACTA.

"Under Donald Tusk, civil liberties are being violated." Law and Justice (PiS) MP Joachim Brudzinski on the recent signing of the controversial agreement.

"This agreement is not as dangerous as young people seem to think it is ... It was 20 years after the invention of the car that it was decided there was a need for the highway code." Foreign Minister Radek Sikorski justifies the government's stance on ACTA.

**Have Your Say**

**Re: Auschwitz historian hoax**

If this story is true then Mr Mieczyslaw Boyko and anyone else involved ought to be damned ashamed of themselves.

What kind of low-life would use a hoax linked to something as tragic as the Second World War in order to help promote their own product.

A shameless and sad act.

*D.M. - Scotland*

**Re: Tusk tops list**

So Mr Donald Tusk was the most slagged-off politician last year eh? Well, quelle surprise. Is anyone actually shocked by this?

There are a lot of candidates to be honest but the Prime Minister is always going to come first as he's the one everyone can focus their anger on. Seeing as the President rarely says anything, he's hardly going to get a hammering is he?

And with all this recent carry on surrounding ACTA that's been going on this week, it seems that the criticism aimed at Tusk is only going to continue and even get worse. If not by the media, then certainly by the protesters and the average man on the street.

*Kevin - Krakow*

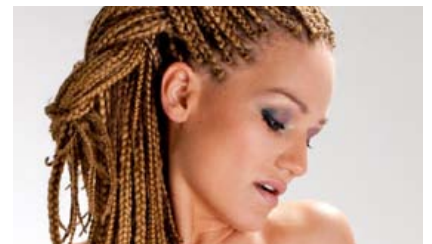
**This week in history**

**1913 (29.01)** - Teatr Polski is opened in Warsaw. The initiative of playwright and director Arnold Szyfman, the theatre was burned down during Nazi occupation and its archives were lost. It was built once again to its original shape post-war.

**1948 (28.01)** - The execution of 21 Nazis is carried out following the Auschwitz Trial. In total 41 people were tried, including head of the Auschwitz women's camps Maria Mandel and SS-doctor Johann Kremer.

**2006 (28.01)** - 65 people die and more than 170 are injured after the Katowice Trade Hall roof collapses. At the time, the hall was full of people from right across Europe due to an exhibition. It is believed the collapse was caused by heavy snow.

**The NPE weekend QUIZ**



This week ladies and gentlemen we've got a double invitation to give away for the fantastic Marika who will be performing at Warsaw's Hard Rock Cafe on February 14.

Known for her reggae and dancehall roots, Marika mixes the two perfectly with her lush brand of pop, and her concerts are a guaranteed good time for all. For those of you unfamiliar with the singer, this is the perfect opportunity to check her out.

To be in with a chance of winning, just tell us the name of her solo album which was released back in 2008.

A big congratulations to George Szyman who won last week's prize. Send your answers to the usual address: editor@newpolandexpress.pl



WYP Sp. z o.o. • Ul. Paderewskiego 1 • 81-831 Sopot  
 tel. +48 58 555 9818 • tel/fax. +48 58 555 0831 • nwe@nwe.pl

**Publisher:** WYP Sp. z o.o.

**Editor-in-Chief:** Steve Sibbald  
 (editor@newpolandexpress.pl)  
**Chief Writer:** Steve Sibbald

**Staff Writer:** Matt Day

**Nationwide & Sports:**

Graham Crawford  
 (graham.crawford@newpolandexpress.pl)

**Events:** Klaudia Mampé  
 (events\_poland@inyourpocket.com),  
 Vaughan Elliott, Łukasz Jankowski

**Graphic Designer:** Tomáš Haman  
 (tomas.haman@inyourpocket.com)

**Sales Director:** Malgorzata Drzasczcz  
 (gdr@newpolandexpress.pl)

## MP in 'darkie' incident

**A** Law and Justice (PiS) politician made headlines this week after allegedly referring to black MP John Godson as a 'little darkie'.

The incident took place at a parliamentary meeting during which Marek Suski is believed to be caught on microphone using the word 'murzynek'.

According to Gazeta Wyborcza, the politician is heard saying "Well, you and your little darkie vote with you, even though he had..." to which a female voice replies "Do you want to go to..."

Mr Suski has since expressed his irritation over the matter stating that he is not ashamed by it. "This was a private statement and I would prefer it to remain private. It's a trivial issue and has been sensationalised," he said.

When asked if he apologised for the comment he replied he did "if [Mr Godson] feels offended".

Asked for his views, Mr Godson of the Palikot Movement (RP) claimed, "I'm not offended, because it depends on the context. It's a matter of intelligence levels. Some are well educated, others are not."

The PiS MP was involved in another controversial incident a few weeks ago. As gay politician Robert Biedron argued about treating animals as 'partners', Mr Suski shouted out "civil partners".

When told that his joke was "out of place" by Mr Biedron, he replied, "in your case yes".

## Hunt on for missing baby

**P**olice in the town of Sosnowiec have launched a massive hunt after a six-month old girl was snatched from her pushchair.

The girl, called Magda, disappeared on Tuesday afternoon after her mother, perhaps due to an attack, lost consciousness. When the woman came to she found the pushchair empty and raised the alarm.

Police have called for witnesses in the desperate hunt to find the missing girl, but at press time have had little luck. The mother, who said she was attacked from behind, has been unable to provide information on the kidnapper other than he was tall and wore a hood.

"We've been unable to create an image of the attacker because we have no information," said Miroslaw Miszuda, from the Sosnowiec prosecutor's office. "The mother has been unable to provide a description so we don't have anything to go on."

He added that police were examining CCTV footage, which appears to show a man following the mother but it was unclear whether he was the kidnapper.

Police also examined the statements of Madga's parents and said they were both "credible".

Investigators have so far been unable to find a motive as to why anybody would want to kidnap the girl, and the possibility that she was snatched to be held to ransom is dwindling as more

time passes with no communication from those who took her.

Magda's father said since his daughter went missing he had received scores of offers of help from friends and strangers.

"Friends call me and ask me what they can do they do to help, but also strangers contact me through the internet," he said. "They organise themselves into groups of five or six cars, ask me where to go [to look] and print fliers. It's good they do this because I can't sleep and have to have something to do."

In an effort to find the missing girl, authorities have offered a PLN 10,000 reward, and that amount is set to grow following public donations.

The television news programme Kontakt 24 said donations from individuals and companies may have raised the reward kitty to between PLN 50,000 to PLN 100,000.

"People keep coming to the station and saying they want to donate money to the reward for information on the missing girl," Pawel Warchol from Sosnowiec police told news channel TVN 24. "At the moment we've set the reward at PLN 10,000 but the situation is changing all the time."

When she went missing, Madga was wearing a beige combination suit and was covered in a pink blanket. Police have asked anybody who was near ul. Legionow 18 on January 24 and saw somebody with a baby to contact them immediately.

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## Government trips 'Unsafe'

Visits by members of the government and senior figures in the armed forces over the last few years have been poorly organised, unsafe and lacking in security, the Supreme Chamber of Control found this week.

In a report covering the years 2005 to 2010, and including the Smolensk disaster, the chamber found fundamental failings in the planning and execution of foreign trips.

The chamber also concluded that the plane carrying President Lech Kaczynski should not have tried to land at Smolensk airport on April 10, 2010.

Among those criticised in the report are the president's office, the defence ministry, the Government Protection Agency and the now defunct 36th Special Air Transport Regiment, which was responsible for VIP flights.

"The institutions involved in the preparation and implementation of the visits failed to clearly designate tasks, principles of co-operation and responsibilities," stated the report, adding that "the state committed errors because in Poland there were no coherent procedures to follow".

It also said that along with the April 10th flight to Smolensk, a flight taken by Prime Minister Donald Tusk to the same airport three days earlier contravened procedures as the town's airport was not on official air force registers.

Not mincing its words, the report attributed many of the failings to problems with 36th Special Air Transport Regiment stemming from poor training, equipment and organisation. But the chamber said the defence ministry and various governments should shoulder much of the blame as they both failed to improve the unit.

"Unfortunately neither the defence ministry nor successive government managed to develop a coherent policy for the transport of the country's most important people," said the report, explaining they had all failed to address the problems of the 36th.

The Government Protection Agency (BOR), the equivalent of the USA's Secret Service, was also found wanting in key areas. The chamber found that it had failed to carry out effective risk assessments of locations to be visited by government members, and this had compromised their protection.

## Streets become rivers of blood

Residents in the northern town of Koscierzyna were left horrified this week after streams of blood flowed down the streets next to two schools.

According to TVN24, police, ambulance workers and maintenance men rushed to the scene on Tragutta Street as worried inhabitants looked on in shock.

Authorities later confirmed that the blood had come from a local meat-processing plant and had risen up from manhole covers and drains.

"The blood was flowing down the street next to two schools in great amounts. It occurred just next to a nearby meat factory. Taking into account the welfare of the youngsters close by, this situation is appalling," wrote one reporter for Kontakt 24.

Police received the emergency calls at 12.40 on Monday afternoon and whilst stating that the incident was harmless,

claimed they would be investigating the matter further.

"Duty officers rushed to the scene as the incident was classed as an emergency," said Janusz Matrejek, a spokesman for Koscierzyna's District Police Headquarters. "We now need to determine exactly where this liquid came from and who is responsible for it."

Whilst the blood has since been cleaned from the streets and the residents informed that the matter is harmless, many are still unhappy.

However Robert Fennig, president of the Municipal Enterprise Infrastructure (KOS-EKO) claimed that such incidents are common occurrences.

"This is the type of sewage that comes from such activities and these things do occur," he said, before going on to stress that the situation has now been brought under control.

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## IN BRIEF

## Poles poised for Oscars

There was good news for the Polish film industry this week as it was announced that Agnieszka Holland's 'In Darkness' has been nominated for an Academy Award for the Best Foreign Language Film.

According to daily Fakt, the director of the Second World War flick has been shortlisted for this year's Oscars (due to take place on February 26) and faces competition from Canada's 'Monsieur Lazhar', Belgium's 'Bullhead', Iran's 'A Separation' and Israel's 'Footnote'.

Janusz Kaminski has also been nominated in the cinematography category for his role in WWI movie 'War Horse' (directed by Steven Spielberg).

## Satellite set for space

Poland looks likely to see its first satellite in space very soon, according to reports this week.

The 'PW-Sat' is one of nine satellites that will be launched on February 9 as part of a European Space Agency project which aims to test how to pull satellites back out of orbit, writes Gazeta Wyborcza

Roughly the size of a Rubik's Cube, it was built by students at Warsaw's University of Technology in collaboration with the Space Research Centre.

"If all goes well, this will be the first Polish satellite to ever be in space," Maciej Urbanowicz, one of the students involved with the project, told TOK FM.

"All of them are different sizes, the smallest is about the size of a phone and the largest is as big as a bus."

## Internet arrests

Forty people have been arrested in connection with downloading music illegally from the internet. Reports state that the arrests all took place in the central town of Otwock (15km southeast of Warsaw) and concern not only downloading the songs, but making them available for others to do the same.

"This was carried out by officers from Otwock and is designed to warn all Internet users about paragraph 1 of Article 116 of the Act on Copyright and Related Rights," a spokesperson for the Metropolitan Police told newspaper Fakt.

## Underage drunk driver

Police in Lublin were shocked this week to find that the driver of a speeding car they were pursuing was a drunken 14-year-old boy.

The incident occurred on Sunday night after the teenager decided to take his parents' Fiat Uno for a spin without their knowledge. However when he saw the police car, he put his foot down in order to escape, states daily Fakt. The chase lasted only a short time though and ended when the boy crashed into a wall.

He was duly arrested by the officers before being returned to the care of his parents. The car is currently being repaired.

## More in favour of marijuana

A new report has shown that almost half of high school students wish to see marijuana legalised.

The research, carried out by the Mazowsze Addiction Prevention Centre, claims that in total 48 percent of 13-15 year-olds are now in favour of making the drug legal.

The new statistics show a huge increase compared to the summer of 2010, when only 27 percent were behind the move.

According to reports in Rzeczpospolita, one of the main factors behind the shift in views has been controversial politician Janusz Palikot.

Last week, the leader of the Palikot Movement (RP) invited members of the Free Hemp Society into the Sejm to smoke a joint to test new laws which give prosecutors a choice over charging people found in possession of soft drugs "for personal use" or not.

Although reports in Super Express state that Mr Palikot in fact only lit marijuana-scented incense sticks, it is believed his stance has helped lead to a change in opinions.

"Support like this shows a response to the psychological effect of information saturation," says director of the Addiction Prevention Centre, Mariusz Jędrzejko. "Palikot has shown that social engineering and publicity can help shape elections."

However, the reports claim that despite the rise in support, many teenagers have little knowledge of the drug and only one in five had read any specialised texts regarding the issue.

In addition to more youngsters agreeing with legalisation, the research shows that 72 percent of high school students did not believe the drug to be addictive. This figure was closely echoed by higher education students, at 78 percent.



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## WITHOUT RHYME OR REGION



I was sitting on a tram yesterday when a young man climbed on board wearing the mask of the V for Vendetta comic character that represents the hacker movement. It's an eerie mask, and quite an appropriate one, as the character was a deeply ambiguous figure, a vigilante attacking authority in a post-1984 London.

I feel deeply ambiguous about the ACTA protests, too. I like YouTube as much as the next person, and while I don't download

films and music myself, I can understand the attraction. It's clear that a generation of people have grown up with free digital access to anything they want, whenever they want it. If somebody then tells them that this is going to change, I can understand they might be upset. This is the only explanation of the source of their self-righteous fury. "It's an attack on freedom of speech and a democratic society," one protester in Lodz commented.

There's another side to this, though. I know of a band who released a CD after years of hard slog which instantly ended up online for free. They made next to

nothing and eventually gave up trying to get anywhere. A significant part of this is the bedroom theivery of those wearing the V for Vendetta masks.

I know of a small publisher who publishes books and magazines for learners of foreign languages. Every single publication ends up online moments after publication, scanned from cover to cover. The publisher is clinging onto existence while outraged teens in masks parade the streets demanding freedom of speech. Sorry, I'm not buying it. Time to grow up and learn. You want stuff? You pay for it.

## MAZOWIECKIE

### A2 nears completion?



The A2 motorway between Lodz and Warsaw is making good progress, with several of the five sections approaching the finishing touches, with only road furniture to be installed and bridge tests already underway.

The construction is divided into five stretches, with highly uneven results. Worst of all is the stretch near Zyrardow, which was hit hard by the shenanigans involving the Chinese contractor. In some places earthworks are still underway there.

Closer to Warsaw, though, things look rosier. The 7km stretch from Konotopa to Pruszkow is almost complete. "On Wednesday we tested one of the longer bridges at the Konotopa junction connecting the motorway with the S8. On Thursday we're testing the load bearings on the bridges at the Pruszkow junction. Results so far are good," commented Bozena Wielgo of Budimeks. The company assured reporters there is no chance they will not be ready in time for the Euros.

However, the central section is still under a massive question mark and may well not be ready by the end of May. So far the constructor has been enjoying the mild winter, enabling progress to be made. This week, though, temperatures are expected to fall well below zero, even into the teens, making construction work much harder.

## Infant attack

A five-month-old infant was allegedly hit during a drunken argument between his parents in a flat on ul. Goscieradowska this Monday evening. At around 11am the baby's grandmother called police as she was worried about her grandson, who was caught in the middle of an argument between 27-year-old Sylwia P. and her partner, 29-year-old Krzysztof J.

Police arrived in minutes and found the child with a reddened face. The mother claimed that during their row, the child was hit on the head by its father. Both parents were extremely drunk, with about 0.25 percent alcohol in their blood. The infant was taken to hospital and the parents to the drunk tank. They have since been charged with exposing their child to serious harm with potential loss of life, which carries a maximum sentence of up to five years in prison.

## Weapons cache seized

Radom police discovered an illegal arsenal of weapons in a house near the city this Thursday. Officers from the criminal division in Zakrzewo arrested a 57-year-old man in connection with the offence.

"In the garage, in a metal chest and also in the man's car, police found firearms, an air pistol, shotgun cartridges, ammunition of all varieties as well as telescopic sights," Justyna Leszczynska, press officer for Radom police told reporters. The man faces up to eight years in prison.



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## MALOPOLSKIE

## Sweden macht frei



Anders Hoegstroem, the Swedish man convicted of ordering the theft of the Arbeit Macht Frei sign from the entrance of the Auschwitz-

Birkenau concentration camp, was released from a Swedish prison this week after serving a sentence of two years and eight months. Speaking to the Swedish media, he proclaimed his innocence and complained about the conditions he was held in while remanded in Poland.

"I behaved stupidly, and I did play a role in this. But if people think I took the sign myself, they should know that I never met the people who carried out the theft." He told reporters that he confessed to inciting the theft only in order to get back to Sweden.

He claimed that the remand conditions where he was held before facing trial in Krakow were bad, that meals consisted of pasta with grated cheese and his bedclothes were soaked with urine. "It was a little strange, it seemed like it had been agreed in advance who was guilty," Hoegstroem's lawyer told Swedish TV.

The theft of the Arbeit Macht Frei sign took place on Dec 18th 2009, sparking international outrage. Five Poles were arrested soon after, but they had already chopped the historic sign into three pieces, presumably for shipping to Sweden. The five were all sentenced to jail sentences ranging from 18 months to two years six months.

## Five years for drunk skier?

A drunk skier hit a woman on a slope on Chelm mountain in Myslenice last Saturday, sending the woman to hospital with injuries to her limbs and back. The 23-year-old male had 0.12 percent alcohol in his blood and had been showing off on the slopes with a friend, skiing at high speed. He now faces a possible five years in prison.

Just how easily accidents can happen is shown in a [video](#) submitted to TVN's Kontakt site. In it, a skier comes to a halt in the middle of the piste and is then struck by a speeding snowboardist. Luckily no one was hurt in the incident.

Emergency services in Zakopane are bracing themselves for the winter holiday period during which the packed slopes deliver as many as 150 patients a day with all sorts of injuries, mostly fractures, using up to 250kg of plaster of paris.

## POMORSKIE

## No to church



Archbishop Glodz's plans for a [new church](#) on ul. Wielkopolska hit a stumbling block when Gdansk City Hall voted to halt his application for planning permis-

sion until plans for the space become clearer. The application has fallen under a cloud since it emerged that Gdansk president, Pawel Adamowicz, sold the plot, valued at PLN 2.8 mln, to the Church for only 1 percent of its value. In the ensuing row, the president was stripped of his right to sell land at reduced prices.

"It's a sign that there's no freedom of worship in the city," complained Law and Justice (PiS) boss Wieslaw Kaminski. "As Archbishop Glodz rejected the design for the church, we feel it's pointless proceeding with the plan, but it shouldn't be taken to mean that we're opposed to the building of a church on the site," explained Maciej Krupa of Civic Platform (PO).

## Fahrenheit compromise

Polish and German rail bosses have agreed the running times of the planned Eurocity connection between Gdansk and Berlin - to be named Fahrenheit. German bosses wanted the train to run in the middle of the day, the Poles favoured leaving early in the morning and returning late in the evening.

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Ultimately, the two sides settled on a variant giving a day tripper from the Tricity the chance for an extended lunch in the German capital before heading home. Fahrenheit will leave Gdansk at 06.50, arriving in Berlin at 13.12, the return trip will begin at 15.50, reaching Gdansk at 22.00.

Eventually, the connection from Gdansk to Berlin will run via Szczecin, but there are problems with the unelectrified track from Szczecin onward.

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## LUBELSKIE

## Double killing orphans six



Six children were left orphaned this Monday, after a family row led to the father killing his wife before turning the gun on himself. The tragedy took place late

on Monday evening in Poloski, near Terespol.

Following a row at around 11pm, 41-year-old Mariusz M. left the family home and fetched a home-made gun from the farm's utility building. The man had no permission for the weapon due to a previous conviction for poaching.

He returned to the family home and shot his wife Dorota, aged 40, who died instantly. Seeing what he'd done, he then shot himself in the head. He was still alive when police arrived at the house, after one of the children raised the alarm, but died later in hospital.

Beata Syk-Jankowska, press officer for Lublin Regional Prosecutors, told reporters, "We need to look into all the circumstances of the incident." Police do know that the couple were separated, but that Mariusz M. visited the family home regularly. Police had twice been called to deal with incidents of Mariusz M. behaving violently towards his family.

The six children, with ages ranging from 2 to 20, have been taken into care, where they are receiving help from psychiatrists.

## Sixth floor murder convictions

Lublin Regional Court sentenced two men to 12 and four years for murdering Maria M. by throwing her from a sixth floor balcony. A third has also been sentenced to four years for inciting the crime.

It was during a drunken party on March 6th last year that the victim argued with Anna C., the hostess. During the row Anna C. reportedly shouted, "Throw her out the window!" which Piotr C., her husband, aided by Lukasz P., promptly did.

They pulled Maria M. onto the balcony and, despite fierce resistance, threw her from the sixth floor. She died instantly, most of her internal organs completely destroyed in the impact.

## Learner driver costs rise

Anyone thinking of taking driving lessons in the Lublin area will have to dig a little deeper as costs rise up to PLN 200 per course, Maciej Kulka, who runs a driving school in the city, explained to reporters from Gazeta Lublin.

"The situation today is dramatic. Last year I paid PLN 50,000 more for petrol than I did in 2010. And it was for the same number of litres. There are rises in other schools, too. It's not price fixing. There's just no other way. Life is expensive."

## ZACHODNIOPOMORSKIE

## Lithuanian hit and run



A policeman trying to carry out a routine inspection was involved in a hit and run incident in Chojno this Tuesday. He noticed the vehicle failing to halt at a STOP sign and stepped out into the road. The car slowed briefly, before accelerating and hitting the officer and then speeding away.

Police responded by rapidly setting up roadblocks and even calling in a helicopter to track the miscreant. "The car was abandoned in woods, we continued the chase, and a man was arrested soon after," Przemyslaw Kimon for Zachodniopomorskie police told reporters.

The car involved in the incident had Lithuanian number plates and the driver faces up to 10 years in prison. The police officer

was taken to hospital with a leg injury, but his condition is stable and not life-threatening.

## Road chaos heats up

As many as 60-70 streets in the centre of Szczecin are to be dug up this year in a major investment in the city's heat generating system costing PLN 100 mln. In total 6km of pipes are to be changed in the centre of the city and on the left bank of the Oder.

"The old pipes were made of concrete with an insulating layer inside that, then the metal inner pipe. They were laid in the '70s and had a life expectancy of 30 years. We're exchanging them for ones with double the life expectancy," explained Mariusz Majkut for Szczecin's Heat Generating Company (SEC).

Mariusz Kadziolka, for Szczecin City Hall, assured that the work has been coordinated with other road works planned by the city. "We wanted to carry out work along al. Niepogleglosci this year, but as SEC is planning to do work there in 2013, so we've put our plans off till then."



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# Bringing on the budget

Today will see Poland's politicians vote on the country's latest budget, and already there have been huge disputes.

With political opponents calling for 370 amendments to be made, Law and Justice (PiS) MP Beata Szydlo has hit out at the draft's second reading claiming it to be "unrealistic".

"These budget proposals, ladies and gentlemen, are unrealistic and you know this very well," she said.

However, reports on TVN claim that Finance Minister Jacek Rostowski has hit back at the party stating "I would like to apologise to members of Law and Justice. I

always thought this was the most populist PiS party to be represented in the Sejm. It turns out I was wrong. I'm very sorry."

But the draft has also come under fire from the Palikot Movement (RP), which has called for 201 amendments alone.

RP's Slawomir Kopycinski criticised it as a "stagnation budget" and "cowardly", claiming that it "hit the pockets of polish drivers".

Following on from calls last week by the Democratic Left Alliance (SLD) that the Institute of National Remembrance (IPN) be abolished, RP has also asked for a cut for the amount of funding proposed by the budget.

# President promotes Poland

President Bronislaw Komorowski this week urged world business leaders to invest in Poland.


Speaking at the Davos World Economic Forum currently being held in Switzerland, Mr Komorowski presented the country as "A world of opportunities at your fingertips" and promoted the Warsaw Stock Exchange, according to TVN24.

"One year ago at Davos, it was said that Poland was an economically strong organism," said the president. "And it is clear that my optimism remains true.

GDP grew by over four percent last year, decreasing our budget deficit and the number of companies registered on the Warsaw Stock Exchange rose to 426."

He also pointed to a "healthy foundation for the Polish banking sector" and claimed that the country "stands out positively in comparison with other EU nations".

"If I come away having been able to increase the amount of trust towards Poland, then I will consider this trip to have been a success," he said.




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What's going on in Poland?



NBP OFFICIAL CURRENCY RATES 27/01/2012		
Currency	Symbol	Mid-rate
Canadian Dollar	1 CAD	3,2131
Czech Koruna	1 CZK	0,1679
Danish Krone	1 DKK	0,5680
Euro	1 EUR	4,2223
Hungarian Forint	100 HUF	1,4349
Japanese Yen	100 JPY	4,1801
Norwegian Krone	1 NOK	0,5516
Pound Sterling	1 GBP	5,0551
Russian Ruble	1 RUB	0,1060
Swedish Krona	1 SEK	0,4748
Swiss Franc	1 CHF	3,4966
US Dollar	1 USD	3,2163

### IN NUMBERS

7.7%

The country's industrial production growth in December last year compared to 12 months ago, according to the Central Statistics Office (GUS).

PLN 4.28

Euro exchange rate earlier this week - the strongest rate since September last year, according to Rzeczospolita.

### BUSINESS IN BRIEF

**Tax hike on ambulances**  
Hospitals and rescue stations are being forced to buy less ambulances due a rise in taxation, claims Dziennik Gazeta Prawna. It reports that customs prices have raised the price by PLN 28,000, in order to make up for unpaid excise for the years 2007 and 2008. The paper states that ambulances, which cost between PLN 120,000 - 300,000, are

not classed as ordinary vehicles and that with hospitals now needing to restrict their purchases, companies selling them will also be affected.

**Rising fuel prices**  
There was bad news for drivers this week as it was revealed that there was "no possibility" of reducing excise duty on petrol and diesel.

According to TVN24, Deputy Finance Minister Jacek Kapica stated that the current increase in fuel prices were down to world oil prices and exchange rates.

"The excise tax in both gasoline and diesel is steadily increasing," he told reporters. "This is something over which the government has no direct influence."

**SOMETHING FOR THE WEEKEND from In Your Pocket**



Coming to Poland last year there were plenty of things I knew nothing about – the three partitions of the country, for example, or the existence of a little thing called smalec. But none proved to be so egregious to my new Polish acquaintances as the fact that I did not know who celebrity Polish chef Magda Gessler was. “Really? You’ve really never heard of her?” asked one baffled friend.

Really. Gessler was an unknown quantity to me before arriving in Warsaw, but it didn’t take long to learn. After all, you can’t go more than a few blocks in this city without encountering a Gessler establishment. And considering how prolific Gessler has been in the past few months – she’s been profiled in the New

York Times, opened three restaurants in one night in Lodz and has a new cookbook hitting shelves -- I probably wouldn’t be able to make the same claim of ignorance today.

Ardent Gessler fans credit her with modernizing Polish cuisine and raising the standard of service since her return to Poland in 1989 after years living abroad. And I agree; eat at a Gessler restaurant like U Fukiera or Polka and you get a satisfying meal (who else could describe pork knuckle as “elegant” on their menu?) and better-than-average service. But in my opinion two of her newest contributions to the Warsaw restaurant scene, MG Eat and Słony, take the Gessler brand in a welcome and modern new direction.

The first, MG Eat, offers “fast” healthy food like large salads, deli sandwiches, soups and smoothies. There’s even a rare

frozen yogurt machine for folks with a sweet tooth that are trying to behave. The concept is a smart one since there’s a dearth of healthy on-the-go options, and the food itself is tasty and well executed. I’ve heard plenty of complaints about the prices, but the place is a hit.

Gessler’s second newcomer, Słony, forsakes the usual heavy-handed décor (if you’ve been to Gessler’s Ale Gloria or Polka you know of what I speak) for a sophisticated snack bar concept aimed at adults. The menu has a variety of small dishes, and a glass case in the middle of the restaurant houses a selection of canapés to choose from – wouldn’t the French die to see lard and pickles on a canapé? I thought it was creative and different, two words I’ve never used to describe Gessler’s more staid ventures. It’s worth a night out in Warsaw to get re-acquainted with the new Magda Gessler.

**Gdansk**

**27.01 Friday - BIFF**

Żak, Al. Grunwaldzka 195/197, tel. (+48) 58 345 15 90 ext. 117, [www.klubzak.com.pl](http://www.klubzak.com.pl) ▶ Concert starts at 19:30. Prices were undecided at the moment. Please check our website for updates.

**Gdynia**

**02.02 Thursday - Boogie Chillii**

Blues Club, ul. Portowa 9, tel. (+48) 58 621 09 43, [www.boogiechilli.com](http://www.boogiechilli.com) ▶ Concert starts

at 19:30. Tickets 30zł. Available at Blues club box office (Open 15:00 - 02:00) and before the concert.

**Warsaw**

**31.01 Tuesday - Bracia**

Hard Rock Cafe, ul. Złota 59 (Złote Tarasy), tel. (+48) 22 222 07 00, [www.pepsirocks.pl](http://www.pepsirocks.pl) ▶ Concert starts at 21:00. Tickets 32/42zł. Available at [www.ticketpro.pl](http://www.ticketpro.pl), Empik, ul. Złota 59 (Open 10:00 - 22:00, Sun 10:00 - 20:00).

**Lodz**

**27.01 Friday - James Harries**

Pub Lumumbowo, ul. Piotrkowska 53, tel. (+48) 12 429 11 55 ▶ Concert starts at 19:00. Ticket prices were undecided at the moment. Please check our website for updates.

**Sopot**

**28.01 Saturday - Kora**

Pick&Roll, ul. Zamkowa Góra 3-5, tel. (+48) 58 555 85 60, [www.pickandroll.pl](http://www.pickandroll.pl) ▶ Concert starts at 20:00. Tickets 70zł. Available at Aquapark, ul. Zamkowa Góra 3-5 (Open 09:00 - 20:00).

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## Gdansk

**29.01 Sunday** - Laika Fatien

Baltic Philharmonic, ul. Ołowianka 1, tel. (+48) 58 320 62 62, [www.filharmonia.gda.pl](http://www.filharmonia.gda.pl)

This concert brings Johannes Hevelius year in Gdańsk to a close. For the occasion the Baltic Philharmonic will host a concert by Paris jazz diva Laika Fatien. This will be her first performance in Poland and she is sure to present her classic jazz combined with her Sephardic Jewish cultural influences.

► Concert starts at 19:00. Tickets 60-110zł. Available at Baltic Philharmonic's box office (Open 10:30 - 18:00, Tue 09:30 - 16:00. Mon, Sat, Sun four hours before performance).

## Lodz

**28.01 Saturday** - Balkan Evening

Atlas Arena, ul. Bandurskiego 7 (Łódź Kaliska), tel. (+48) 12 429 11 55, [www.atlasarena.pl](http://www.atlasarena.pl)

The Theatre Buffo group will conjure up the atmosphere of the Balkans; not only in song but also with scenes presenting the history of those countries. There will be colourful costumes, great voices bringing us the songs of Bregovic, Balan and Hadjidakis. ► Event starts at 18:30. Tickets 40-110zł. Available at Atlas Arena box office (Open 08:00 - 18:00) and [www.ticketpro.pl](http://www.ticketpro.pl).

## Krakow

**30.01 Monday** - KlezmaFour

Hard Rock Cafe, Pl. Mariacki 9, tel. (+48) 12 429 11 55, [www.hardrockcafe.pl](http://www.hardrockcafe.pl)

The band members here are spread between Warsaw, Lublin and Białystok, but it's Lublin where they first teamed up. The region has a strong klezmer tradition and the band mix this with a punk rock energy and Balkan rhythms. Having won two awards at the 2010 International Joods Muziekfestival in Amsterdam, they followed that success by hitting the road touring the USA and Canada, where they performed along with Balkan Beat Box. ► Concert starts at 20:00. Tickets 25/35zł. Available at Hard Rock Cafe (Open 10:00 - 24:00).

## Warsaw



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**29.01 Sunday**

National Stadium Grand Opening

National Stadium, Al. Zieleniecka 1, tel. (+48) 22 450 67 10, [www.stadionnarodowy.org.pl](http://www.stadionnarodowy.org.pl)

After a number of false dawns, it seems like the brand new national stadium might actually be opening. Come along and enjoy a festival of lights and music from 2pm to 8pm. The concerts will start at 3pm with Polish-Ukrainian project VooVoo&Haydamaki. Next up will be popular Polish acts Zakopower, Coma, T. Love and Lady Pank. Te fireworks go off at 20:00 and the first 40,000 first visitors will get a special souvenir ticket. Well worth the effort and the wait. ► Event starts at 14:00. Admission free.

**01.02 Wednesday** - Best of Roma

The Music Theatre ROMA, tel. (+48) 22 628 89 98, [www.teatroma.pl](http://www.teatroma.pl)

For 13 years the Roma Theatre group has been serving Polish audience with premieres of world famous musicals like *Miss Saigon*, *Grease*, *Cats*, *Dance of the Vampires*, *The Phantom of the Opera* and recently *Les Misérables*. The director of most of these shows is Wojciech Kępczyński. He has worked with the biggest theatre creators, from Cameron Mackintosh to Roman Polański, and is also respected by top composers like Andrew Lloyd Webber and Michel Schönberg. For this evening the Roma theatre artists will sing and dance parts of their most popular shows one more time. And I was expecting a tribute to Francesco Totti, typical. ► Event starts at 19:00. Tickets 60-130zł. Available at Roma's box office (Open 10:00 - 19:00, Sun 13:00 - 18:00, or until show time).

## Wroclaw

**31.01 Tuesday** - Giulia y Los Tellarini

Impart Art Centre, ul. Mazowiecka 17, tel. (+48) 71 343 29 62, [www.impart.art.pl](http://www.impart.art.pl)

Two 'accidents' brought this group into being. First, Italian vocalist Giulia Tellarini met musicians Maik Alemany, Jens Neumaier and Alejandro Mazzoni. They liked this girl with an accordion so much they formed a separate band to support her voice. Second, their album 'Eusebio' found its way into the hands of Woody Allen. He must have liked it, because the number 'Barcelona' is the main musical motif running through 'Vicki Cristina Barcelona'. ► Concert starts at 19:30. Tickets 120/90/60zł. Available at [www.ticketpro.pl](http://www.ticketpro.pl) and Empik, Rynek 50 (Open 09:00 - 21:00, Sun 12:00 - 21:00).

**28.01 Saturday** - Mitch & Mitch

Firlej, ul. Grabczyńska 56, tel. (+48) 71 795 66 67, [www.firlej.wroc.pl](http://www.firlej.wroc.pl)

Mitch&Mitch call themselves a 5-person duo, never a dull moment with these crazy pranksters. Founded in 2002, they released their first album 'Luv Yer Country' a year later and in 2006 '12 Catchy Tunes (We Wish We Had Composed)'. This is a compilation of covers and rather good. In 2007 they played music for 'The Lost World' movie at Silent Movies Day where they expanded to a 10-piece. Ever since they have performed as a big band with brass section and vibraphone. Good stuff. ► Concert starts at 20:00. Tickets 20/30zł. Available at Empik, Rynek 50 (Open 09:00 - 21:00, Sun 11:00 - 21:00).

**27.01 Friday** - Russian Anthem

Impart Art Centre, ul. Mazowiecka 17, tel. (+48) 71 343 29 62, [www.impart.art.pl](http://www.impart.art.pl)

This musical show is dedicated to Sergey Shnurov's famous band, Leningrad. Shnurov often refers to his alcohol fuelled musings and expletive strewn music as 'The New Anthem of Holly Russia', it has been described as 'anarchy and dirt with catchy melodies.' The show is not a performance by a tribute band but a history told through the lyrics of Leningrad's songs. The night's main vocalist, Mariusz Kiljan, plays a desperate young vodka-swilling Russian and the music presents a manifesto about yet another lost generation of Russians. ► Event starts at 19:00. Tickets 35zł. Available at Empik, Rynek 50 (Open 09:00 - 21:00, Sun 12:00 - 21:00) and before the event.

## National Stadium opens at last

Warsaw's National Stadium will finally hold its first mass event this weekend. All the necessary licenses were in place this Friday bar permission from the fire brigade, and even they had stated they had no problems with the condition of the pitch area with regards to public safety. As a result, Sports Minister Joanna Mucha will win her bet with reporters and not have to jog round the outside of the stadium.

This means the National Stadium will open at the fourth time of asking. The inaugural match against Germany that was to have been played last autumn went ahead in Gdansk, in a stadium which had problems of its own.

The bet was made by Mucha earlier in the week during a press conference. Pressed by reporters as to whether she thought the opening event would take place this weekend, the minister made the offer, demonstrating her confidence that the stadium would finally open. "I bet you, the opening will go ahead, and if it doesn't, I'll run round the perimeter of the stadium, round the Palace of Culture, round whatever you like," she told reporters.

All week, though, the arguments, last minute rush for licenses and general chaos continued. It started on Monday

when Warsaw City Hall turned down the application to hold Sunday's inaugural concert, as expected. At the same time as they refused the application, they stressed they would carry out another inspection later in the week and, all things considered, would issue a new decision.

Sanepid, which oversees health and hygiene matters, issued a positive decision, the police also gave a conditional okay, however building inspectors and the fire service pointed out a list of areas where the stadium was not up to scratch. "If the organisers can deal with those issues, then there's nothing stopping us from issuing our approval for the event on Friday," Ewa Gawor, director of the Office of Safety and Crisis Management at Warsaw City Hall, told reporters.

Meanwhile, Przegląd Sportowy is reporting this week about a potential problem for Smuda in assembling his squad prior to Euro 2012, in which Poland will play all their group matches in the National Stadium. While Smuda has forced through an early finish to the Polish league, with matches ending on May 6th, in other leagues, such as France and Turkey, where key players are based, games will go on to May 20th.

## Radwanska's curse recurs

Agnieszka Radwanska was knocked out of the Australian Open at the quarter final stage this week - the fifth time she's failed to progress at this stage of a Grand Slam. Despite a strong start in her match against Viktoria Azarenka, the Krakow player slumped to defeat in three sets. She now flies on to the next tournament accompanied by rumours of a change of trainer.

Against Azarenka, Radwanska competed fiercely in the first set, eventually

taking it on the tie-break 7-6. The second set, though, was a disaster, as the Belarus player blew Radwanska away 6-0 in a mere 26 minutes. Radwanska rallied at the start of the third, briefly holding onto Azarenka's coat tails, but then she flopped again, going down 6-2.

Now, it seems that both Radwanska sisters have decided on a change of trainer, with the Pole, Tomasz Wiktorowski, being dumped in favour of the Croat Borja Bivic, who used to train Jelena Dokic.

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### SPORTS BRIEFS

#### Szczesny's no twit!

Arsenal keeper Wojciech Szczesny has apparently tweeted his last, it was reported this week. Szczesny has long been a fan of Twitter, using the medium to tweet various sarcastic messages regarding opponents. This week though, the keeper tweeted, "It's time for me to grow up, delete Twitter and focus on football."

The reference to "growing up" may well be in

response to the scandal after he used Twitter to describe his team colleague Aaron Ramsey as, "Looking like a rapist," a comment which he was rapidly forced to apologise for.

#### Kowalczyk crushes Bjoergen

Justyna Kowalczyk left all her rivals trailing in her wake in the 10km cross-country skiing sprint event at Otepaeae in Estonia last Sunday. The victory was so

decisive even the Norwegian media were describing it as a "Crushing victory" over their national heroine, Marit Bjoergen.

The win leaves Kowalczyk in second place in the World Cup competition, a mere 62 points behind Bjoergen. It was Kowalczyk's 19th World Cup victory, but it will be a long time before she catches Bjoergen in that category - the Norwegian has 49 victories under her belt.

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## Flavours of Ireland

The annual Flavours of Ireland evening of delicious Irish food and drink, accompanied by Irish music and Dancers, will be held in Warsaw on 2 February, Sheraton Hotel. Special performers will be The 'McCague Brothers' over from Ireland, joined by local Polish friends. Tickets cost 280zloty. For more information, contact the Irish Chamber of Commerce in Poland at [dorothy.hansberry@hansberrycompetition.com](mailto:dorothy.hansberry@hansberrycompetition.com)

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Contact: [thomasromainvmn@gmail.com](mailto:thomasromainvmn@gmail.com)

## Polish language lessons

I am an American looking for inexpensive Polish language lessons. Speak words but cannot speak in sentences. Maybe trade for English lessons.  
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# Community Groups: Place free listings for your community groups here. Email [editor@newpolandexpress.pl](mailto:editor@newpolandexpress.pl)

## Free conversation lessons

Free conversation lessons take place at KLUB DIALOGU, Krakowskie Przedmieście 13/156 (entrance from Tokarzewskiego) every Saturday at 11:00 am and 12:10 pm.  
Please call: 22-498-1010  
or email us: [info@klubdialogu.pl](mailto:info@klubdialogu.pl) if you are interested

## Church of England in Poland

We welcome Anglicans, Episcopalians and all others interested, to celebrate the Eucharist every Sunday morning at 10.30 am. Join us for light refreshments after the service to learn more about the activities of our church.  
Place: Res Sacra Miser Chapel, ul. Krakowskie Przedmieście 62, Warsaw.

## The Sikh Community

The Sikh Community of Warsaw meets each Sunday at the Sikh Gurudwara in Rashyn, Ul Na Skraju 56. All are welcome. Kirtan starts at midday and langar is served after the Bhog at about 1400. For more information contact 22 868 4541. The Sikh faith is about equality, honesty and standing up to oppression. Anyone visiting the Guru's house is welcome, in return for due respect and consideration of the Sikh faith.

## Role Playing Game in Warsaw

International English-speaking group in Warsaw, mostly foreign professionals, play tabletop Dungeons & Dragons fortnightly. No experience necessary but fluent English proficiency is required. Have a good time. Play some games. Meet new friends. Open your imagination. More info: Facebook group: <http://tiny.cc/zaffa> or [CreativeCowboy\[at\]yahoo\[dot\]com](mailto:CreativeCowboy[at]yahoo[dot]com)

## Poland Tartan Army

A new Poland Tartan Army Facebook group has been created. If you are a fan of Scottish football and our national team please join the group by visiting Facebook and conducting a search for Poland Tartan Army. If anyone, who is not a part of Facebook, is interested in this idea then please email [murraymaw@hotmail.com](mailto:murraymaw@hotmail.com) to register your interest.

## HASH HOUSE HARRIERS

We are a Polish and Expat social group who organise a walk/run in a forest, park or around the city, followed by a few beers (or whatever takes your fancy!). We meet at the Marriott hotel on alternate Saturdays at 2pm. "Hash House Harriers" is an international group, which was originally established in Malaysia 70 years ago. All are welcome. For details, call Martin at 502-052-958. Email [warsawh3@gmail.com](mailto:warsawh3@gmail.com) or [www.warsawhash.pl](http://www.warsawhash.pl)

## International Women's Group

Meetings are held twice a month on the SECOND Monday at 10.30 (for location see our newsletter or website) and on the FOURTH Monday of the month at Restauracja Tapa y Toro located in the Zlote Tarasy Shopping Mall (ul. Zlota 59) from 10:00 - 11:00.  
For more information see [www.iwgwarsaw.eu](http://www.iwgwarsaw.eu) or contact us at [iwgwarsaw@yahoo.com](mailto:iwgwarsaw@yahoo.com)

## International Rotary Club

International Rotary Club - Warszawa Wilanow is the only English speaking Rotary Club in Warsaw. Visiting Rotarians are warmly welcomed to join the weekly meetings held at the Polonia Palace Hotel, Al. Jerzolimskie 45. Tuesday's at 12:00, except the last Tuesday of each month when the meeting is at 19:00. For more information: +48 601 897 731

## Gospel Baptist Church

Services are held in Polish and English languages: Sun. 11:00, Thurs. 19:00. For more information contact: Pastor Paul Sock, mob. 0500-270-990, e-mail: [paulesock@yahoo.com](mailto:paulesock@yahoo.com) [www.gbc-ekb.com](http://www.gbc-ekb.com).

## GAA in Warsaw

Cumann Warszawa.Poland's first and only GAA club is up and running and is looking for players of all levels, all nationalities and both sexes. We offer weekly training, competitive games and regular social events as well as fresh oranges at half time.  
Contact Eoin at 0518-425-587 or [cumannwarszawa@gmail.com](mailto:cumannwarszawa@gmail.com)

## Expat meetings

Meeting English speakers in Warsaw just got a whole load easier. We don't teach you Salsa, we make you pay for your own drinks, but we do promise to give you the premier multi-cultural event of the week at Warsaw's very own Professional Wednesday Meetup.

Contact - [asamu@sniper-rook.co.uk](mailto:asamu@sniper-rook.co.uk) or 691535566

## Toastmasters club

Toastmasters club (Polska) invites all to master Public Speaking. Weekly meetings are held every Wednesday at 19.00 in the Warsaw Stock Exchange building (1st floor, Catalyst room), ul. Książęca 4. Guests are most welcome with no obligation apart from a short introduction. For details check [www.toastmasters.org.pl](http://www.toastmasters.org.pl) or call Etan 696-292-451

## Poznan International Church

Every Sunday at 10:00  
Contact details: [www.international.pl](http://www.international.pl). It's simple at P.I.C.. Come and experience God through current music and relevant teaching. Grow in your relationship with God and others by making friends and joining a small group. Serve God and people by being generous with the gifts God has given you. Go and make a difference in the world by sharing the love of Christ.

## CFM (Christian Fellowship Ministries)

Kościół Chrześcijański (evangelical/Pentecostal)  
Location: Aleja Prymasa Tysiąclecia 74B (Wola, Warsaw)  
Services in Polish and English:  
Wednesday 19.30 hrs and Sunday 11.00 & 18.30 hrs  
Every Saturday evening at 20.00 hrs: Film, Concert & Drama or other activities  
Website: [www.thedoor.pl](http://www.thedoor.pl)  
Phone: 784 653 666 (Pastor Jan-Willem van Dam)  
Email: [info@thedoor.pl](mailto:info@thedoor.pl)

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