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Wrocław is a city located at the junction of three countries which history has inextricably bound together. It is a city of encounters, a city that unites. Here, in a sense, the spiritual cultures of East and West meet.

John Paul II

WROCLAW



Andrzej Luc

In the year 2000, Wrocław, the largest and most intriguing city in southwest Poland, will celebrate its one-thousand-year anniversary.

Wrocław is the capital of Lower Silesia, one of Poland's most populous regions, and lies at the intersection of transcontinental routes linking Scandinavia with Southern Europe and Western Europe with Ukraine.

Picturesquely situated on the Odra River, Wrocław is known as the city of a hundred bridges. Its remarkable history, reflected in its architectural and artistic heritage, and its rapid development over the last decade combine to make Wrocław one of Central Europe's most exciting cities. The municipal authorities have been seeking challenges to propel the city towards

new avenues of development. Mayor Bogdan Zdrojewski is confident that the World EXPO, which the city would like to host in 2009, will be such a challenge for the twenty-first century.

■ A CITY OF BUSINESS

Wrocław's strength is a tradition of economic diversity that goes back to the nineteenth century. The city authorities, aware of this crucial advantage Wrocław has to offer, are open to and originate new and interesting business initiatives. For instance, a modern technology park that will provide premises for high-tech firms is under construction in a convenient location near the

Dresden-Wrocław-Kraków highway. International engineers and business people often mention the city authorities' supportive attitude and willingness to accommodate their needs.



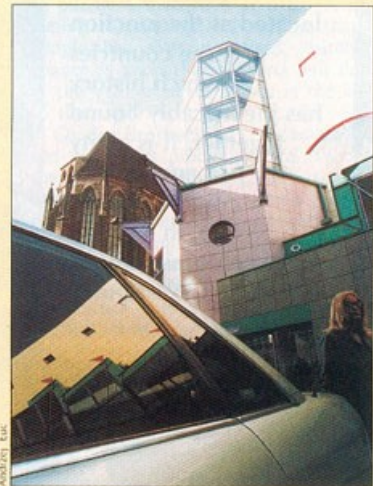
WROCLAW

Area: 293 sq. km
Population: 637,000
340 km to Berlin,
400 km to Vienna,
280 km to Prague

Sponsored City Profile



St. John the Baptist's Cathedral



Old and new side by side

One Thousand Years is Just the



Those who came to Wrocław in the early nineties as apprehensive newcomers now feel at home here. The dynamism of investment in the city is best reflected by the statistics. In September 1999 there were about 5,600 commercial law companies registered in Wrocław, compared with only several dozen in the early 1990s. Of these companies, 1,900 possess foreign capital. In the 1990s, foreign companies invested over US \$700 million in the city. Swedish, British, German, American, and French enterprises have been among the largest investors, and such corporations as Volvo, ABB, Cadbury, and Cussons have opened plants here. Wrocław is also a city of young people. Its fifteen institutions of higher education, including the University and the Technical University, turn out thousands of graduates annually, in all fields of expertise.

■ THE TOWN SQUARE AND VICINITY

The recently restored Old Town Square—one of the largest of its kind in Europe—is emblematic of contemporary Wrocław. Several dozen restaurants, cafes, and clubs offer excellent food, drink, and entertainment late into the night. The historic townhouses around the Square and in the sur-

rounding streets and arcades house the offices of large banks and companies as well as numerous hotels. Even the great flood of 1997 did not impinge on the city's dynamic development. With the aid of substantial relief programs, the city has been able to repair the damage and at the same time modernize the municipal infrastructure.



Centennial Hall fair and exhibition center

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■ AT THE CROSSROADS OF EUROPE

Wrocław's history profoundly reflects the political and religious events that have shaped the countries of Central Europe during the last millennium. Over the course of the past ten centuries, the city has repeatedly changed hands among the neighboring sovereign states, and its name changed from Wratislavia to Breslaw to Breslau to the present-day Wrocław. The year 1945 proved the most tragic in its annals. In the last months of World War II the city suffered severe damage as a result of heavy fighting between the German and Soviet armies. Subsequently, following the Yalta



Barbara Hendricks in concert at the Wratislavia Cantans festival

Beginning

agreements, the entire German population was forced to leave the city, and Wrocław was repopulated by Poles driven from their homes in Poland's eastern territories, which were taken over by the Soviet Union.



- Late 10th century**—Wrocław is part of the early Polish state
- 1000**—establishment of one of Poland's first bishoprics in Wrocław
- 1335**—the city is part of the Kingdom of Bohemia
- 1526**—Wrocław becomes part of the Habsburg Empire
- 1742**—the city is taken over by Prussia (becoming part of Germany in 1870)
- 1945**—incorporation into postwar Poland
- 1980**—most powerful bastion of the Solidarity movement outside Gdańsk

The diverse architecture and cultural heritage of the city testify to its long history. Among the most splendid historical buildings are the Gothic Town Hall and Cathedral, the Baroque university with its magnificent Aula Leopoldina hall, and a unique group of buildings in the early twentieth century International Modern style, the best-known of which is the Centennial Hall designed by the renowned architect Max Berg. The National Museum owns an unequalled collection of Silesian art ranging from the Gothic period to the twentieth century. Adjacent to the museum, a special rotunda houses the Raclawice Panorama, a giant canvas depicting the battle between Polish and Russian troops at Raclawice in 1794.

■ A CITY OF OPENNESS AND DIVERSITY

After the war, Wrocław's new inhabitants forged an open and tolerant community that has welcomed unconventional artistic and social initiatives. The Laboratory Theater founded by Jerzy Grotowski, a leading figure in twentieth-century theater, was located here from 1965 to 1984. Every September since 1966, Wrocław's many



Mayor Bogdan Zdrojewski (left) with the Belgian royal couple sightseeing in Wrocław



The Old Town Square on a summer night



Kurt Masur (left), music director of the New York Philharmonic, at Wrocław University

religious communities have opened their houses of worship to host the concerts of the Wratislavia Cantans, a great international festival of oratorio and cantata music. In the 1990s, an international music festival known as "Understanding" was established here under the patronage of the renowned Silesian-born German conductor Kurt Masur, music director of the New York Philharmonic. Twice during the last decade, Wrocław has hosted meetings of the Taizé Community based in France. It was also the site of the 46th International Eucharistic Congress, during which a huge ecumenical convention attended by Pope John Paul II was held in the Centennial Hall. Over a dozen festivals, art shows, and scholarly conventions take place in the city annually, drawing thousands of visitors from across the world.



Grzegorz Hunko/RZECZPOSPOLITA

Rafał Bubnicki

The Blue Sun arcade

Web site: WWW.WROCLAW.PL

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