

SWOT Analysis of Frombork as a tourist town.

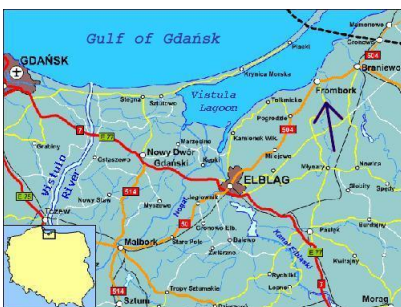
Frombork is a town in the province of Warmia and Mazury. The town is situated in the north of Poland, on Elbląg Heights, by the Vistula Lagoon. It is a small town with the population of ab. 2500 citizens. It was founded in the 13th century. In the early 16th century it was the residence of the astronomer Nicolaus Copernicus, who used it as a site for several of his observations. The town and its 700-year-old cathedral were badly damaged in World War II. After the war, the cathedral was reconstructed and is again a popular tourist destination. Frombork is known as “The Jewel of Warmia” because of its many historical sites. The Museum of Copernicus in Frombork holds exhibitions related to the astronomer, as well as to astronomy in general, and includes a planetarium. One of the biggest attractions is also the annual International Festival of Organ Music, held every summer.



STRENGTHS (S)

LOCATION

- It is surrounded by a very beautiful region - forests, hills and water (the Vistula Lagoon).
- Through the Vistula Lagoon it is connected with the Baltic Sea – sailing routes to other Polish Baltic resorts (on the Vistula Sandbar) or to Kaliningrad in Russia.
- Infrastructure is scarce but well-made and modern.
- Its proximity to Russia attracts visitors from Russia. Besides, Frombork used to be a German town before WW2, so still many Germans come to visit the place, especially in the summer time.



TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

- The most interesting places in Frombork that are popular with tourists:

- Cathedral Hill with the 14th cent. Cathedral
- Hospital of the Holy Spirit
- Museum of Nicolaus Copernicus
- Observation tower
- Planetarium
- Water Tower



- The biggest asset of the city are monuments connected with the life and work of Nicolaus Copernicus.
- Near the port there is an illuminated fountain (opened at night) and some benches. On one of them there is a sitting figure of Mikołaj Kopernik (Nicolaus Copernicus). The tourists often take a picture with him .



- Next advantage is a newly opened Astronomical Park. We can see there historical astronomical objects which are gathered in 7 pavilions. There's a possibility to watch the moon and stars. We can also see equipment from the years of 1883 and 1900s.
- In the town there's a possibility of hiring a guide in English or other languages (e.g. Russian, German).
- The Department of Tourism in the town hall seems to care about foreign tourists. The Web pages about the city, newsletters, information boards about the monuments are translated into German and Russian. Audio guides are available and they are specially customized for the deaf and blind people. There are also basic facilities for the disabled (not everywhere, though). We can also find information points, which tell us something more about the various sights.
- Hotel, guesthouses host numerous tourists from other countries. So some of the staff speak English, Russian, German and French.

OTHER ATTRACTIONS

- Not far away from Frombork there is 'Narusa horse farm' where visitors may come to relax and also try horse riding. You can get there by bus. The horse farm is foreigners friendly (the website is in a few languages including English).
- Being in Frombork one should notice 'Mister Automobile's path', which is situated entirely within the town. It is dedicated to the character (Mr Automobile) of the famous in Poland book series by Zbigniew Nienacki. Mr Automobile is a fictional art historian, journalist, renowned adventurer and historical detective. As a museum and government employee, Mr Automobile not only has to discover treasures, but protect them from thieves. His nickname comes from his fantastic (heavily customized) automobile. One of the books in the series is set in Frombork and the authorities used that fact to create a special route following his adventures. Tourists or the book fans can see all the places which appear in the book.

SEA ROUTE

- In Frombork there is a small tourist port and a fishing port. It is open all year round.
- During the summer season two ships "Monika" and "Anita" run regularly between Frombork and Krynica Morska (sea resort on the Vistula Lagoon). Thanks to them Frombork is also visited by people who are relaxing on the beaches of the Baltic Sea.
- In the port area there is a restaurant open all year round. We can eat there some Polish dishes.
- It's also a place where is a Maritime border crossing.



WEAKNESSES (W) :

MUNICIPALITY / AUTHORITIES

- The main problem is lack of money to implement various projects. On several occasions local events had to be cancelled because of that.
- The harbour isn't big enough - the marina can only take in a few boats/yachts at a time.
- Community centre is not working properly - according to one of the locals, "the community centre almost doesn't exist". Consequently, there is no one 'body' that would incite the cultural life in the town.
- Little promotion of the town in the region - scarce advertising.
- Lack or little investment into beaches, harbour and car parks.
- New Market – the newly modernised part of town, which could be the heart of it. Unfortunately there are – no local events which would attract people/tourists to this place.
- Inappropriate attitude of the authorities to the tourist business – this branch and its potential role for the local economy seems to be underestimated.

TOURIST ATTRACTIONS

- Many people visit only The Cathedral Hill, which is visible from a distance, because there are no proper signs directing to other sights or they are not advertised/promoted well enough.
- Disabled tourists don't have enough appropriate facilities, they have no possibility to see most of the attractions, because in most places it is necessary to use the stairs (no lift available).
- The lack of money to equip the rooms and to maintain the astronomical instruments in the museum.
- Because of little advertising and the distance from the centre of the town (2 kilometres from Frombork), the Astronomical Park - Museum of Mikołaj Kopernik is visited by few tourists, which also affects the poor development of the museum. Besides, astronomical observations in the park are only possible when there is good sky visibility.



- Hiring a guide spontaneously is impossible, it has to be done in advance.
- Visited sights/attractions are neither innovative nor modern (except for the Astronomical Park).
- The shows in Planetarium are only in Polish – no translation/subtitles for foreign tourists.
- Information signs and plates (for the tourist attractions) are mostly in Polish, sometimes in German or Russian, no English. As a result, foreign tourists find it difficult to get around.
- All the repairs and renovations are carried out during spring and summer months. It's a holiday season, so a lot of tourists don't have access to these places or the access is difficult.

FOOD

- Although the town is close to the sea, fish-based food is not very popular. There seems to be only one restaurant/bar serving fried fish which was closed during our visit. No local dishes are promoted.

ACCOMMODATION

- Even though there are quite a few hotels and guest houses, not all staff can speak foreign languages, so the contact with foreign tourists is quite limited.
- Not all the hotels/guest houses have the basic facilities for the disabled.
- The prices for the accommodation seem to be relatively high (as for the standard they offer)

OPPORTUNITIES (O)

Tourism in Poland is developing, lots of towns seem to notice the importance of this branch of industry and so does Frombork. A lot is already being done to promote its assets (although not enough, in our opinion) and there are further plans :

- The plan of creating interactive installations devoted to optics in the Astronomical Park (in a few years' time).
- In 2015, the main square in the town has been modernized and revitalised (new pavements, benches, flowerbeds, open-air gym etc.), which can encourage more tourists in the years to come.
- The city has plans to expand MARINA for sailors, which will be one of the largest attractions.
- At the beginning of 2015, Frombork was officially acknowledged as a health-resort spot – the conducted research confirmed that the water from this area can be used for health purposes. It provides a perfect opportunity for creating spa centres or sanatorium.
- Advertising – a well-thought promotional campaign popularizing the town and the region among the Polish.
- The city has many cultural events (even international), like the annual International Festival of Organ Music or the Regatta, which should be well-promoted not only in the region, but across the whole country, as they could attract more tourists.

THREATS (T)

- Frombork is located far away from main roads, not many tourists can get and stop there on their way.
- Public transport is very limited – there is no railway, public buses run regularly between Frombork and surrounding villages/towns, but they are not very frequent.
- If there are not many tourists coming to visit, the money invested in renovation and revitalization may never pay for itself.
- Generally poor financial condition of the municipality – there is scarcely any industry in the region, mostly agricultural areas, lots of green areas and lakes, not many chances for economic development.
- The community is getting older, young people willingly leave Frombork after graduating from school, most of them never come back and settle somewhere else.

