

Multicultural Poland



National and ethnic minorities in Poland:

We distinguish nine national minorities in Poland

- ⇒ Belarusians,
- ⇒ Czechs
- ⇒ Lithuanians
- ⇒ Germans
- ⇒ Armenians,
- ⇒ Russians,
- ⇒ Slovaks,
- ⇒ Ukrainians,
- ⇒ Jews,

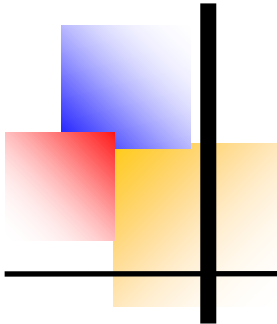
and four ethnic minorities:

- ⇒ Karaites,
- ⇒ Lemkos,
- ⇒ Romas,
- ⇒ Tatars

Polska



In addition, in the areas of the Pomeranian Voivodeship live Kashubians, a community using the regional language.



Lemkos

Lemko people is an ethnic minority inhabiting the Low Beskids and western ends of the Bieszczady Mountains. This minority is an integral part of our nation. It is one of the four legally recognized minorities ethnic groups in Poland.

Lemkos profess to the Orthodox and Greek Catholic religions. Representatives of this minority speak the Lemko language. Lemkos divide the celebrations into the annual and family celebrations, among the family customs the most celebrated were: baptism, marriage, wedding and funeral. The traditional male costume is the *czuha* – coat made of brown cloth with a large collar. The Lemko often wears a shirt with *lajbik*. In other words, it is a richly decorated waistcoat made of azure cloth.

Women's costumes are extremely colorful. These include shirts with colorful flowers. Skirts are usually dark. The indispensable element of the shirt has become a corset, which is usually made of black velvet or colourful cloth. It is often decorated with flowers embroidered with colorful beads.

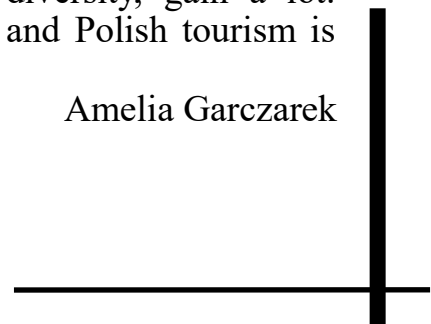
Lemkos divide their customs into annual and family. The annual customs i.e. *Weczirki* and *Swiatyj Weczer*, the Feast of the Jordan, Easter or Pentecost and *Kupała*. In *Wecziriki*, or *Wieczornice* – they spent their evenings together at work, especially in autumn and winter. During these meetings houses were visited by various groups of carol singers. *Swiatyj Weczer* is Christmas Eve, which was associated with many divinations and magical activities. During the Feast of the Jordan a rite of water consecration was celebrated on a memorial of the Lord's Baptism, Jesus Christ, in the Jordan

Easter - precedes Lent during whose ceremony The Great Week was inaugurated by *Kwitna Nedila*.

At Pentecost called by the Lemkos – *Rusala*, fields were celebrated by processions. And in *Kupała* – day of Saint John- healing herbs were collected, which then had power of fullness.

Thanks to Lemko People, we can learn to dance and sing and attachment to tradition. Poles, by accepting their diversity, gain a lot. Thanks to their presence, we become more tolerant and Polish tourism is becoming more attractive.

Amelia Garczarek



Tatars



Tatars are considered to be the most exotic and interesting ethnic minority in Poland. Polish Tatars lived in the lands of The Grand Duchy Lithuanian from the end of the 14th century. Their ancestors were emigrants or fugitives from the areas of the Golden Horde and Crimea. The Tatars lost their knowledge of their native language in Poland, the rest believe in the Muslim religion. They live in the voivodships: Podlasie, Mazovian and Pomeranian. Tatars are favoured by language, customs and culture.

Traditional women's tatar costume consists of velvet, claret hat (fes) of a white shawl, a long, linen shirt, long dress with wide sleeves, wide, puffy pants, a breastplate, a pink belt, or green cape. The male outfit differs from women's outfit because it consists of: sheep fur cap (winter), round pointed cap (in summer), long shirt, wide harem pants with a red or green belt, velvet vest, bedspreads with short or long sleeves and a long caftan.

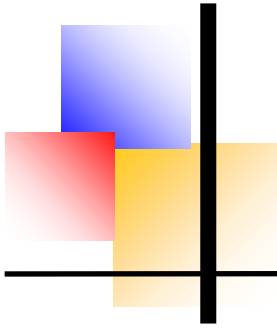
Tatars also have their celebrations such as: Kurban Bajram is a joyful celebration - it lasts 4 days and this is the time when family and friends meet together. On the tables appear traditional Tatar dishes: the dumplings, kibiny, czebureki, pieriekaczewnik and sweets.



Sabant is the Plow Festival in the literal meaning. This event combines rituals of agricultural works and beautiful customs, dances, songs, balls of the Tatar nation with elements of the Muslim religion. We can learn new customs from the Tartars, get to know their history and customs. In addition, we should be inspired by their respect for past, own roots and respect for seniors.

Thanks to the fact that ethnic minorities live in Poland, we gain linguistic wealth, we learn empathy, we acquire new skills and experiences that enrich us and teach tolerance.

Oliwia Straszewska



Romanies

The Romanies, commonly called gypsies, live in most countries in the world. About 17,000 Romanies live in Poland. The most inhabited voivodships are: Małopolskie and Dolnośląskie. The Romanies use their own language which is also used by over 35 thousand people in Poland.

The head of the family is a man, while the woman occupies a lower position. In Poland, the Roma culture is known primarily from its rich musical and divination achievements

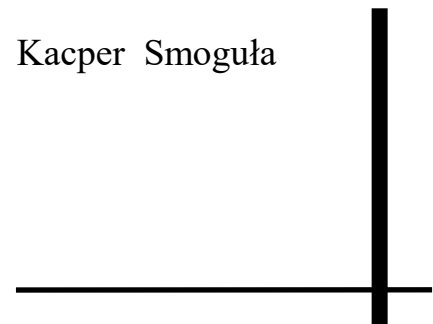
Every year, international Roma culture festivals take place in Gorzów Wielkopolski (International Gypsy Team Meetings "Romane Dyvesa") and in Ciechocinek (International Roma Song and Culture Festival).

Most members of this minority belong to the Roman-catholic church- but there are also believers of other religions.

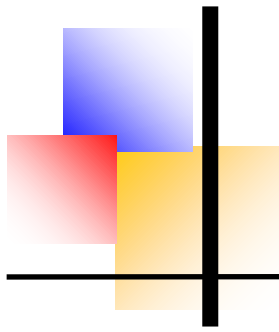
Traditional Roman outfit is a long flowing skirt and shawl overhung across women's shoulder. The Roma cuisine likes hot spices and the most common dish is boiled chicken and broth.

It is worth breaking stereotypes thinking about Romanies and looking at them closer. We've learned a lot from them. The Romanies gave us their amazing music and dance. We should take an example from their extraordinary respect for family values. We should get inspiration of respect they show each other. The Romanies are a good example that you can survive and be faithful to culture.

Kacper Smogula



Kashubians



Kaszubi (kashubia, Kaszëbi) – a group of people inhabiting Gdańsk Pomerania and the eastern part of West Pomerania, originating from the eastern group of the West Slavic Pomeranian tribes.

Kashubians is the primeval name of the Slavs on the Baltic coast. Today Kashubians are considered to be Poles or Kashubians-Poles. Their own language distinguishes them-officially recognized as the regional language, culture and consciousness of " their place on the earth".

Griffin is considered as the emblem and symbol of Kashubians, i.e. a mythical animal, deriving from antiquity. The Kashubian coat of arms presents it in black on a yellow background (optionally gold). The capital of Kashubia is Gdańsk today. There he has his main residence which is the most powerful organization in the region- Kashubian-Pomeranian Association. It was created in 1956, and today it has over 7,000 members.



The Kashub language has a regulated legal statute and is recognized as a regional language. In Kashub, you can speak in public and there is a possibility to speak in front of the commune authorities, alongside the Polish language. There are several schools in Poland where children learn Kashubian. Since September 1, 2009, the University of Gdańsk at the Institute of Polish Philology has launched the teaching specialization of the Kashubian language.

Kashubians are a group in an unusual way attached to the traditional rhythm of time, living in accordance with the cycle of the calendar year and celebrating incoming seasons and celebrations. However, they are similar to those recognized as nationwide.

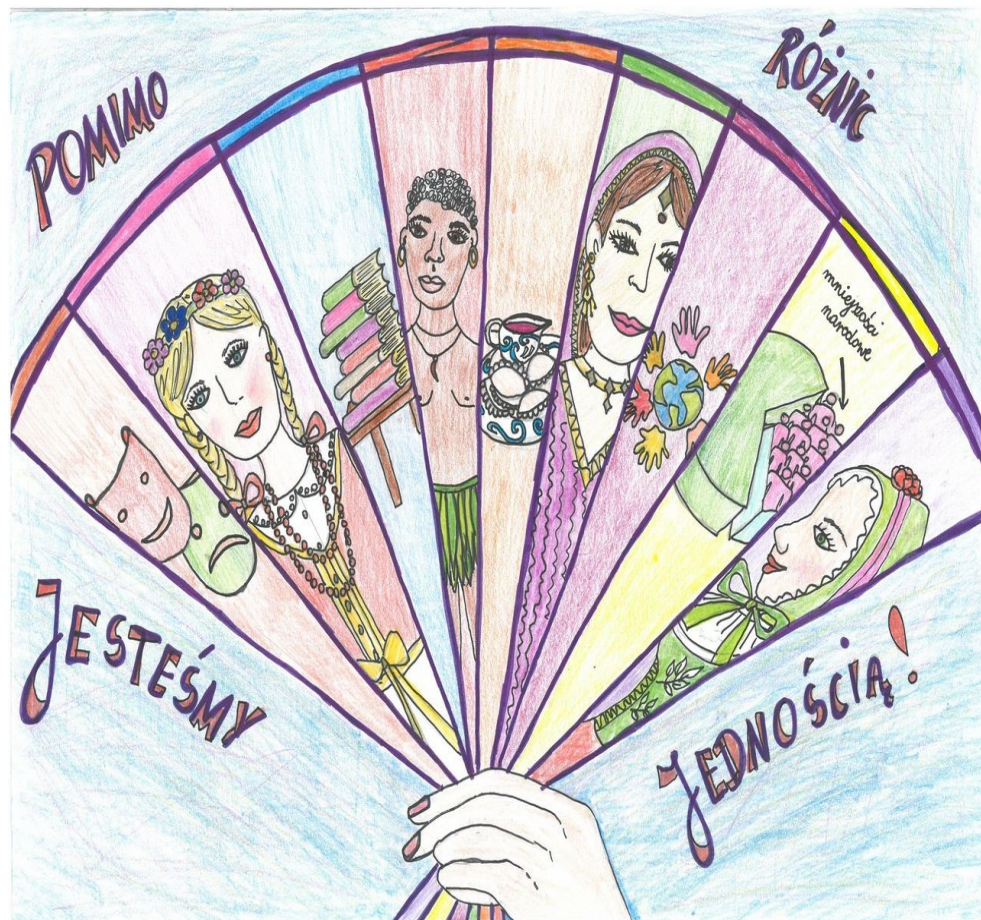
This minority has created a characteristic embroidery in which seven colours are used. These colours are: blue (in three shades - from light blue to dark gray), black, red, green and yellow. They are very tolerant and empathetic. This is due to centuries-old attempts to germanize this minority and fight for their identity towards the German and Polish nation.

Kashubians can accept a man as he is. They do not pay attention where a man comes from and what the colour of the skin he or she has got. We should admire and learn this attitude from them. Respect their dissimilarity and accept it.

Multicultural Poland

Poland is a country of many cultures. It is a country that, thanks to coexistence, within its territory, national and ethnic minorities is constantly gaining and deriving from this interdependence full of handfuls.

The diversity teaches us tolerance. Thanks to diversity there is a dynamic exchange of ideas and diffusion of cultures and customs, which will certainly fruit.





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