



EUROPE: POLAND

What is making news in your country when it comes to spa and wellness?

In Poland, there are about 600 different spa & wellness facilities: spa hotels, medical spas, healing resorts, thermas (hot springs); but only a bit more than 150 facilities are luxurious and ranked as 4 and 5 star spa & wellness hotels.

Only in the last two years, mainly due to EU support, more than 90 new hotel spas have been built (some of them have hosted the players of the UEFA Euro 2012 Championship).

According to Deloitte Consultants in Poland, the value of the spa market itself has increased by 29% and today it is estimated that the whole spa market is worth approximately 252 million euros.

What is happening in your country when it comes to wellness tourism and/or medical tourism?

In 2012, Poland was visited for health reasons by around 600, 000 foreign tourists. They spent over 195 million euros (50% more than in 2010). Revenues from this segment accounted for approximately 3.9% of total tourism revenues. (Source: Institute of Tourism)

The Polish spa & medical market is the most attractive for our German neighbours (more than 70% of all foreign visits), because spa services are much cheaper than in Western Europe (about 50% less). Only in 2012, our spa hotels and healing resorts were visited by 420,000 Germans.

The remaining 30% were guests from Norway, Netherlands, Russia, and the United Kingdom, France, Ireland, Italy, Sweden.

Please give us one sentence to describe the latest development in your country for each of these spa categories:

What is happening with spa hotels?

In Poland the majority of the new spa hotels are relatively small (50-90 rooms), but in the last two years more and more large and luxurious conference and leisure facilities (over 200 rooms) have been built. The most spectacular facilities are: Czarny Potok Resort & Spa (256 rooms, total cost 43 million euros; opened in 2012), Narvil Conference & Spa Hotel (330 rooms, total cost over 24 million euros, opened in 2012), The Arlamow Hotel (213 rooms, total cost 83 million euros, opening 2013/2014), The Double Tree by Hilton Warsaw (347 rooms, 43 million euros, opening spring 2014).

What is happening with destination spas?

A lot of spa hotels are located in beautiful places: by the sea, lakes and in the mountains. Unfortunately, they can't be called as destination spa, because they don't offer wellness activities in every aspect of their business. Only few of them are trying to implement destination spa philosophy, for instance: Gleboctek Vine Resort & Spa, Palac Sulisław (Ayurveda & Joga SPA), Klekotki Sento Spa, Mera Spa & Hotel Sopot, ProHarmonia Wellness Residence.

What is happening with hot springs spas?

The Hot Springs (Thermaes), where geothermal water is used, are the real hot spots. Thermaes are very popular, no matter where they are located. During last 10 years as many as 12 new facilities have been built across Poland (18 is the total number of existing hot springs). For example, in 2012 in central Poland, thermaes with a pool area of 1500 square meters was opened (8,6 mln euros). There are other six projects in the pipeline in different parts of Poland.

What is your country's position on investing in the spa/wellness arena in 2013?

In 2007-2013, Poland received almost 2 billion euros from EU support for the development of Polish tourism. Approx. 2.8 thousand different investment projects were completed, including hotels, swimming pool complexes and leisure centers. This year, the Polish Tourist Organisation has also started work on a project promoting the Polish spa market and healing resorts in the world.

Looking back at the past four decades of spa and wellness, what would you consider "a defining moment?"

New technologies undoubtedly have changed our world. We are able to exchange information faster via emails and social networks. Surrounding cheap technology also revolutionized the world of spa & wellness, which refers mainly to massage, wellness programs and tranquility. New non-invasive treatment technologies (IPL, RF, Endermologie etc.), aesthetic trends, and dermocosmetics broke into the spa world and offer guests both beauty & well-being. They have become a key element of the spa menu pushing the frontiers of spa & wellness in the aesthetic medicine and cosmetology.

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