

Questionnaire

Situation of a religious minority

Country:	Poland
Name of religious minority:	Orthodox Church
Number of believers:	Around 550 000 people but according to different sources there are 400.000 to 1.200.000 of Orthodox believers
Regional, national distribution within the country (e.g. are believers dispersed or concentrated in one or more places?):	The people who are members of the Orthodox Church live mainly in Podlasie (Eastern border of Poland), but concentrations of them are located in the rest of the country too.
Are believers organized in communities or similar structures?	The Orthodox church in Poland has got six dioceses and a separate chaplain
Legal position/ status (e.g. is the religious minority recognized and is there equal status with the religion of the majority?):	The Orthodox Church has equal status with the religion of the majority (Roman Catholic Church).
Are the reasons which stop the religious minority enjoying freedom of worship in the country? If yes, what are the reasons... -legal reasons -social reasons -other reasons	Sometimes there are cases of discrimination of people who are members the Orthodox Church. A significant example of this was after II World War situation: Orthodox faith believers were brutally forced to leave their familial houses. The operation was called "Akcja Wisla" what means: "Vistula Action". There are also minor examples: once a Polish editor deleted a transmission from the important Orthodox mess from the public television.

<p>Is the religious minority visible to others? When yes, how?</p>	<p>This religious minority is latterly visible to others, because the Orthodox Church music is very popular. There are many festivals and concerts of Orthodox Church music. The most famous one is International Orthodox Music Festival in Hajnowka held each year (Podlasie region).</p>
<p>What influence does the majority culture of the country have on the religious minority?</p>	<p>Roman Catholic faith influences this religious minority through everyday habits. For example, traditional food at Christmas Eve more resembles Roman Catholic tradition than the Orthodox one.</p>
<p>What influence does the culture of the religious minority have on the majority culture of the country?</p>	<p>Orthodox Church music has become very popular among Roman Catholics . Also the Orthodox icons have become discernible and treasured. In 1996 a charity organization “Eleos” was founded to help all people in need.</p>
<p>What influence does the majority culture of the country have on the architecture of the religious minority’s places of worship?</p>	<p>Orthodox temples are usually beautifully ornamented and keep their own style of architecture that is recognizable all around Europe.</p>