

## Questionnaire Situation of a religious minority

Country:	<b>Poland</b>
Name of religious minority:	<b>The Evangelical Church of The Augsburg Confession in Poland</b>
Number of believers:	There are about 80.000 confessors in the country; about 500 confessors in Cracow. Evangelical - Augsburg Confession is the largest Protestant body in the country.
Regional, national distribution within the country (e.g. are believers dispersed or concentrated in one or more places?):	There are 6 dioceses in Poland. The biggest number of believers lives in the South of Poland called Cieszyn Silesia, also in Wroclaw and Katowice. The others are Warsaw, Masuria, Pomerania -Wielkopolska dioceses.
Are believers organized in communities or similar structures?	The bishop is a spiritual leader of the Church. Today the Bishop of the Church is The Rt. Revd. Janusz Jagucki. The Church Synod, whose tenure lasts for five years, guards all the Church rights and obligations. The Synod takes decisions on all the vital Church issues, puts forward the aims of its activity and protects its orthodoxy. The Consistory with the seat in Warsaw holds the highest administrative and executive power. The church has 189 congregations, 130 parishes, 150 chapels. The church is served by 169 pastors and other workers. The congregations are self-governing and each has its own parish council.
Legal position/ status (e.g. is the religious minority recognized and is there equal status with the religion of the majority?):	The attitude of the State to the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession is reflected in The Statute signed by the Polish Parliament on the 13th May 1994. The minority is recognizable and has the equal status with the religion of majority.

Are there 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-

The history of the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession Poland is closely connected with the Reformation movement which was started in Germany by pastor Martin Luther. Evangelical sermons were already preached in 1518 in Gdansk and Jawor in the Lower Silesia region. At the very beginning Reformation ideas were adopted by scholars and middle-class and a little bit afterwards by the nobility. In some regions of our country they also appealed to a great number of country folk.

During and after World War II the ranks of pastors, teachers and other church leadership were diminished by persecution, imprisonment and death. The church properties were taken over for other purposes.

By slow and painful steps, the Evangelical Church of the Augsburg Confession in Poland has been reshaped into an active body, demonstrating the tenacity and strength of its people's faith. Nowadays followers of the religion have their freedom of belief slightly restrained. The discrimination can be visible in schools because Lutheran students don't attend religion lessons. In public schools the Roman Catholic religious education is part of the curriculum.

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Is the religious minority visible to others? When yes, how?

There are some organisations formed to help people not taking into account their faith. One of them is Polish Diakonia, which aim is to support people in need. The Centre for Mission and Evangelism is a voluntary organization which takes care not only of organizing missions. Its goals are also schooling (e.g. Bible School), training, promoting voluntary work. The church is a member of the Lutheran World Federation (since 1947).

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What influence does the majority culture of the country have on the religious minority?

Taking holy orders by women in the Roman Catholic Church is not allowed in Poland. It can somehow influence situation in other churches. The Lutheran Church in Poland does not ordain women (although it is allowed in other Lutheran Churches in Europe).

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What influence does the culture of the religious minority have on the majority culture of the country?

There are some famous Lutherans in Poland, e.g. Marshal Józef Piłsudski, general Władysław Anders, Jerzy Buzek (ex-Prime Minister and the President of the European Parliament)) and Adam Malysz (ski- jumper).

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What influence does the majority culture of the country have on the architecture of the religious minority's places of worship?

The architecture of a single church depends on the epoch in which it was built.

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