

Item 17 of the Provisional Agenda

TOPONYMIC GUIDELINES FOR MAP EDITORS AND OTHER EDITORS

Administrative Division of Poland*

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Administrative Division of Poland

A new administrative division of Poland was introduced on the 1 January 1999. The previous two-stage administrative division gave way to a three-stage division comprising: **województwo** (voivodship), **powiat** (county), **gmina** (commune).

Since its introduction in 1999, the new administrative division underwent only minor modifications. In 2002, 7 new counties and 1 new commune were created, while 12 communes were eliminated. In 2003, 1 county was eliminated. Additionally, the boundaries of voivodships, counties and communes undergo each year insignificant changes. For instance, on the 1 January 2004 corrections were introduced to the boundaries between 4 voivodships, between 6 counties and between 16 communes. The names of several counties and communes were also changed (in 2004 the names of four communes were changed, e.g. from “Józefów” to “Józefów nad Wisła”), as were the names of their county seats.

At present Poland is divided into 16 voivodships, 379 counties and 2478 communes.

Administration in a voivodship is performed by local government and central government bodies. Most voivodships have one capital which is also the seat of the local government. There are two capitals in two voivodships – one holding the local government and the other the central government bodies. The voivodships bear names originating in the names of geographical and historical regions (13 voivodships) and from the names of major cities (3 voivodships).

There are two kinds of counties: 314 land counties and 65 urban counties (cities enjoying county rights). Cities enjoying county rights, also called town counties, were instituted for the country's largest cities. Counties have one seat each for their local governments, but in the case of cities with the status of town counties, this seat is also that of the land county neighbouring on it. In the majority of cases counties are named after the names of their seats; three counties bear names taken from the names of two of the county's principal cities while two have names originating in the names of geographical regions.

There are three kinds of communes: rural communes comprising exclusively rural land, urban-rural communes comprising urban areas and rural land and urban communes comprising urban areas exclusively. Each commune has one commune seat of authority, this being a village in rural communes, the commune seat in urban-rural and urban communes being a town or city. At present there are 1592 distinct rural communes, 579 urban-rural communes and 307 urban communes in Poland. The names of communes come from the names of their seats.

Cities and towns in Poland are those localities which have been granted urban rights or which have been awarded urban status. There are 886 towns and cities in Poland at present.

