

[History of Scouting and Guiding in Poland](#)

Kategoria : [English](#)

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Historia ZHP po angielsku

Begining

Polish Scouting and Guiding started in 1910. The first troops in Poland were organised on 22 May 1911 in Lvov (now in Ukraine). More and more troops of Scouts and Guides were being organised all over Poland, which at that time was still partitioned among Austria, Prussia and Russia. When the First World War broke out in 1914 the contacts became very difficult because of the fighting taking place on the territory of Poland. Throughout this period, before and during the First World War, Polish Scouts and Guides co-operated very actively with all those who worked and fought for the independence of Poland.

Period of the independent second republic

A new epoch for Polish Scouting and Guiding began when after the First World War Poland became independent again and the war with communist Russia was won. In 1918 the nation-wide organisation the Polish Scouting and Guiding Association (ZHP) was formally established. As it was no longer necessary to fight for the existence of the Country, peaceful work in more and more numerous troops was conducted.

In the late 1920s and early 1930s the Cub Scout and Brownie movement developed. In the 1930s work on the programme for Rovers and Rangers started and more and more Rover and Ranger troops were organised. In 1930 the decision was made to establish within ZHP a separate Guide Organisation and a Scout Organisation. Starting with the 1st World Scout Conference in 1920 and the 2nd World Conference of Girl Scouts and Girl Guides in 1922, representatives of Polish Scout and Guide leaders attended all important Scout and Guide world events. ZHP was one of the co-founders of both WOSM in 1922 and WAGGGS in 1928.

II WW

When World War II broke out ZHP did not suspend its activity and became an underground movement with the additional aim of fighting with the occupant. „Grey Ranks” (ZHP’s war cryptonym) became well known and earned high respect of Polish society. Scouts and Guides helped the weak, the poor, the homeless, children in need in different ways. They participated in the Resistance Movement all over Poland and fought in the Warsaw Uprising in August and September 1944. But they never gave up their Scout and Guide activities, though they had to adjust them to the war reality.

Stalinist period

When in 1944 the Red Army and the Polish Army created in Soviet Union from soldiers kept in camps advanced into the territory of Poland, the new communist regime was gradually established. But as it was not very strong at the beginning, it allowed Scout and Guide troops, which were organised spontaneously, to work in their own way. Till 1948 it was possible to practise almost „real” Scouting and Guiding, though it was more and more difficult because of political pressure. During the school year 1948/49 the political pressure became so strong that most of leaders left the Association and many troops were dissolved. Finally in 1950 ZHP was suspended and an organisation for children with a few elements taken from Scouting and Guiding was organised in schools. Its name was „Scout and Guide Organisation”, not „Pioneer” as in other countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

Reactivation in the communist state

After the political changes of 1956, ZHP was re-established and lots of former Scout and Guide leaders returned to rebuild Polish Scouting and Guiding. They rebuilt a co-educational merged organisation, not a joint one as it was before and just after the War. It is worth mentioning here that some troops of girls only as well as some troops of boys only existed also in ZHP.

The 1960s, 70s and 80s were difficult because of a strong influence of a communist party on the Association but a number of troops preserved the best Scout and Guide traditions. Thanks to it after a change of the political system in Poland in 1989, a transformation of the Association was possible.

The third republic - the new reality

It was on the Congress in Bydgoszcz in 1990 that ZHP decided to return to all traditional values and methods and took up intensive work towards coming back to both Scout and Guide World Organisations. Some leaders who were not satisfied with the speed of changes within the Association decided to leave it and create their own organisations. One may find today in Poland a few not recognised associations with a total membership of about 10,000 comparing to the ZHP's membership of 400,000.

Coming back to the World Organisations was quite a difficult objective but thanks to great tradition of Polish Scouting and Guiding and strong determination of all leaders it became possible. One may say that the final part of this process was the Extraordinary Congress in Poznań in 1995 which amended the Association's

Statutes making them fully compatible with the requirements of the World Constitutions WOSM and WAGGGS. ZHP was officially recognised by WOSM on 17 January 1996 and by WAGGGS on 17 July 1997.