

Letter to the BBC from 5

Romanians". Apparently a small majority is 43%. Remember only 45% were actually against new EU members having the same rights.

This is in line with older BBC stories such as the homeless Polish man who is an asylum seeker, which is strange as Poland's citizens have full right of access to the UK and are not asylum seekers.

We have tried on several occasions to get questions raised at the BBC governors meetings but these have simply been ignored.

Now we have to put up with the lie that it was the Poles who ran the German death camps "In 1979, he published Sophie's Choice about a Southerner who meets a Polish concentration camp survivor in New York." Other news organisations correctly stated that the camp was in Poland but once again the BBC chooses to spread lies about Poles and Poland.

I must therefore protest in the strongest manner to your claim that a German concentration camp was run by Poles. How dare you insult Poland and Poles in this way? The following will hopefully educate you better.

Krzysztof W. Kasprzyk, Consul General of Poland in New York stated, "The subject here is one innocent adjective: "Polish." But this short word may denote putting the blame for the most atrocious crime of genocide in human history on a wrong nation."

He is supported by World Jewish Congress who said: "Poland should not be blamed for the Holocaust, to blame here are the Nazis and their allies."

David Peleg, The Ambassador of Israel to Warsaw, Poland, further echoed these words when he said:

"We, being Jews and Israelis, with reject resolutely terminology such as 'Polish concentration camps'. These prejudicial and erroneous phrases represent primarily testimony about ignorance and lack of understanding of fundamental historical truth. Every thinking man knows that it was the Nazis who selected Poland for its central site for the dreadful genocide of extermination of European Jews. On Polish soil the Germans built terrifying camps where they systematically murdered 4.5 million Jews (including 3 million Polish Jews) and other nationalities including thousands of Poles."

Please inform me of what action you are taking against the individual (s) responsible for spreading these lies and correct immediately this error as it was a GERMAN concentration camp.

Also please tell me how to raise this to the next level of complaint, as clearly the BBC website staff are biased against Poland and Poles and are not going to take any action to correct these and other issues.

Also as Governors will not answer the questions how do I raise the failure of the BBC over the years to produce a documentary series on the suffering of the people of Eastern Europe (such as the Polish civilians deported to Siberia) at the hands of the then Soviet Union? Poland seems to make the news very seldom (e.g. the poor coverage of the recent Polish elections) and when they do, the stories are often negative. With the ever growing number of Poles in the UK, do you not feel that programmes, such as English lessons for Poles and programmes on Polish culture for the British viewers to better understand the new arrivals, would be very useful?

Instead we have to put up with the misrepresentation of the history of Poland and the good nature of the Poles.

Regards

Jan Niechwiadowicz, Cardiff, Wales

(Editor's note: Since his letter, the author has informed the BBC that further issues continue to happen, such as implying that Galileo (not Copernicus) discovered that the earth revolved around the sun and talking about Auschwitz and other Polish camps. Jan is a trustee of "Support Poland LTD. and moderator of the Polish Media Issues Group which discusses actions and issues. You can contact him at...

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Drobniewski from 5

personal gains at the cost of the national treasury. The political sparring continues while a qualified Polish work force seeks employment in other European countries that offer stability, better wages and peace of mind. (My feeling is that when these people return to Poland they will see what drastic changes are needed in order for Poland to be considered equal to the other European Union Nations.)

As Polish-Americans we were criticized by our countrymen in Poland for voting for PIS with comments like – "it's obvious to see that American Polonia doesn't know what is good for Poland". We heard comments that only the "higher educated voted for PO". So, what does it make us? I hear joyful comments that the value of the American dollar against the z'oty is falling but at the same time hear pleading for American sponsors to finance and invest in various projects. It isn't difficult to see that there still is a lot of blanching that must take place before the red beet borsch thinking fades from the Polish political arena. But, there is hope – for our Slavic brothers in the Czech Republic have accomplished it - so, Poland can do it also. Today the Czechs are much more successful in building a sound national economy than Poland. How many more decades will it take before the Polish politicians start thinking in red and white and not only "what's in it for me ". And how long will it take before Mr. Donald Tusk starts acting like a premier, he so desired to be, and not continue his perpetual political campaign as many of those "educated" who voted for him see him to be. □

Strybel - News Bytes from 6

Poland is sending another 400 soldiers to bolster the NATO-led peacekeeping operation in Afghanistan, bringing the Polish troop count to around 1,600. Warsaw wants NATO to concentrate Polish troops, which are now serving at different sites, and give them control of their own military zone.

Lithuania's Poles have not received all their land back by the end of 2007 as originally pledged by that country's authorities. Only about half of the property denationalized after Lithuania dumped soviet rule in the early 1990s has been returned to its rightful Polish owners. The government has appealed for swifter settlement of the issue, but local Lithuania authorities often drag their feet and favor the property claims of ethnic Lithuanians rather than Poles.

Jerzy Kawalerowicz, one of the pillars of Poland's movie industry, died recently in Warsaw at the age of 85. One of the founders of the "Polish school of cinematography" that achieved world-wide renown in the 1960s, his productions included the 1965 blockbuster "The Pharaoh", a movie version of the 19th-century novel of Bolesław Prus. In 2001, Kawalerowicz directed the newest version of "Quo Vadis", based on Henryk Sienkiewicz's 1912 Nobel Prize-winning novel.

Unemployment in 10 Polish cities has fallen to levels of from 2.4% (Sopot) to 4.8% (Wrocław). Other cities with low unemployment rates include Poznań (3%), Warsaw (3.1%), Katowice (3.4%) and Kraków (3.9). The exodus of some two million Polish workers-seekers to the British Isles and elsewhere as well as new jobs created in Poland by foreign investors have helped lower the jobless rate. As high as 20% countrywide a few years ago, the national average is now around 10%, but there still are small towns with 30% unemployment.

Poland's Catholic Episcopate is protesting against plans to refund the cost of in vitro conceptions, which it regards as an "iniquitous and impermissible" form of abortion. The creation of test-tube babies for couples unable to conceive the normal way requires many embryos to be frozen or destroyed. Refunding the costs of that procedure would mean that Polish taxpayers who regard it as morally wrong would be forced to help finance it.

Poles are reassessing their values, according to a survey conducted by the OBOP polling group. Jobs, which were very important to 77% of those surveyed eight years ago, have dropped to 58%. The No.1 value is family (88%) and having children (74%). Further down are: friends (47%), education (41%), religion (41%), free time (38%), wealthy lifestyles (29%) and serving others (29%). Career success, which three years ago was very important to 39%, has dropped to 18%. Only 7% regarded politics as very important.

The image of a smiling John Paul II from the first years of his pontificate has been ordered by 40% of Italians who want to enhance their cellphones with a picture. The mystic Padre Pio is second in popularity with 35%. Other favorites in the patron saints series area include Saints Lucy, Anthony, Rita, Agatha and Joseph. The service conceived by a Milan-based company will soon be available in Poland and the USA.

Russian Army Major Sergei Yurenya has been sentenced to seven years in prison by a Moscow military court for being a Polish spy. The major admitted to having accepted money from Polish special services for information on the location and troop strength of Russian soldiers based in the Moscow Military District. He was arrested in March 2007 when trying to join Russia's Federal Security Service (secret police), the successor to the dreaded Soviet KGB.

Poland is demanding an air-defense system to protect Polish air space in exchange for allowing the US to install an anti-missile base on its territory. The base is to protect the US against missiles from rogue states such as Iran and North Korea. Russia is bitterly opposed to the system and warns that interceptor missiles fired from Poland could automatically trigger a retaliatory Russian ballistic-missile attack.

Polish copper giant KGHM is considering investments in copper-mining operations in Peru and Canada, industry sources report. The 2007-2016 strategy of the state-controlled concern, based in southwest Poland's Dolny Śląsk (Lower Silesia) region, includes plans to spend 1.5 billion zlotys (about \$577 million) on foreign deposits. KGHM (Copper Mining and Metallurgy Complex) is Europe's largest and one of the world's leading copper producers. **Construction of the European Solidarity Center** in Gdańsk has been awarded to the local Fort building firm which specializes in hotel and department-store construction. Situated near the Three Crosses Monument to slain shipyard workers outside the gates of the Gdańsk Shipyard, the center will house conference halls, a library, archives and museum featuring a permanent Solidarity exhibition. Its grand opening is set for 2010, marking the 30th anniversary of the Solidarity free trade union that brought about the demise of communism.

Russia's Eastern Orthodox leader has demanded the liquidation of the four Roman Catholic dioceses set up by the late Polish-born Pontiff John Paul II in 2002. According to Patriarch Alexei II, Russia is "the canonical territory of the Orthodox Church" and the presence of Catholic diocese amounts to proselytism, an attempt to attract converts to Catholicism. The Vatican has tried to appease the Russians by replacing a high-ranking Polish prelate with one of Italian ancestry.

The old royal capital of Kraków is quickly developing into a major Central European business center. Largely known up till recently for its architectural relics, night spots and cultural activities, the city is now having a hard time meeting the demand for office space and conference halls. In 2007, five times as many building permits were issued than in 2006, and some 60 modern office buildings are expected to go up over the next two years. Residential construction is also increasing apace.

Poland's most expensive computer game, The Witcher (Wiedźmin), is now available on the very demanding US market after making its European and Asian and début. Based on Andrzej Sapkowski's historical-fantasy book series, The Witcher is a breakthrough in the Polish entertainment industry. Launching the game cost 22 million zlotys (about \$8.8 million), some 25

percent more than Andrzej Wajda's movie "Katyn". Animation has been provided by Oscar nominee Tomasz Bagiński and music by the Polish death metal band Vader.

Poland's famous school for the blind at Laski near Warsaw was destroyed recently by a blaze caused by faulty wiring. No-one was injured, but much unique Braille printing equipment, books and teaching aids went up in smoke. The school was part of a leafy campus community for the blind set up in 1910 by Countess Róża Czacka who also founded the Franciscan Sister Servants of the Cross. Over the years, the campus has also served as a retreat for Warsaw intellectuals. At present, 320 blind children are being trained there how to function in the seeing adult world.

For the first time in history, Poland has qualified for the 2008 European Soccer championships being co-hosted next summer by Austria and Switzerland. The Polish national team is due to play its first match against Germany in Klagenfurt, Austria on June 8th. Next they face Austria on June 12th in Vienna and finally, again in Klagenfurt, play against Croatia on June 16th. Due to the proximity of the championships, many Polish fans are already planning

Outbreaks of deadly H5N1 bird flu have been noted in northern Poland in late 2007, triggering such precautions as the creation of three km (1.9-mile) danger zones and 10 km (6.2-mile) safety perimeters around the flu sites. Thousands of turkey and chickens being raised in the contaminated areas have been culled, and a number of countries have banned poultry imports from Poland. One of the European Union's biggest producers, in 2006 Poland exported 230,000 tons of poultry to European markets.

British actor Michael York is the narrator of a new documentary about the late Pope John Paul II, due to be released in 2008. Based on the book "Testimony" of his long-standing private secretary Cardinal Stanisław Dziwisz, the film will follow the John Paul's pontificate on the basis of existing film footage, photos and documents. Dramatized sequences will be created of events that went unrecorded such as the Polish Pope's first Wigilia at the Vatican in 1978.

A downtown Warsaw school and surrounding apartment buildings had to be evacuated after 35 unexploded World War II 150 mm artillery shells were uncovered by construction workers. Polish bomb squads are frequently called in to dispose of such war-time which can still kill, maim and cause property damage when tampered with. In November, an unexploded artillery shell was found during renovation work in the office building of Poland's new prime minister.

The head of Britain's Catholic Church wants migrant Poles to worship in English instead of their native tongue. "Otherwise the Catholic Church in Britain will split up along national, ethnic and linguistic lines," the Archbishop of Westminster Cormac Murphy-O'Connor said in a recent interview. "I am concerned about the Poles in Britain creating a separate Church and would like them to become part of the local Catholic Church." His word echoed the attitudes of America's Irish bishops round the turn of the 20th century who also wanted to anglicize Polish immigrants.

Polish baby boom in Britain is causing concern in the United Kingdom, since Polish women giving birth are entitled to free medical care and generous welfare benefits. The Daily Mail newspaper complained recently that the Polish births in 2007 alone would cost the British taxpayer some £20 million (more than \$40 million). The number of Polish births in Britain has grown from 1,830 in 2004 to an estimated 13,000 in 2007.

Europe's tallest skyscraper is due to be built in downtown Warsaw by Jan Kulczyk, one of Poland's wealthiest businessmen at an estimated cost of one billion zlotys (about \$400 million). The 68-story, 282-meter (925-foot) structure is expected to house luxury apartments, a hotel and office space. It will be 75 feet taller than Europe's currently tallest building, Commerzbank Tower in Frankfurt, Germany, and 167 feet taller than Warsaw's Palace of Culture, now Poland's tallest building. □