

## Geological administration in Poland

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Following the system transformation of the early nineties, an effort has been made to reduce the role of administration in all aspects of economic life in Poland. Despite those changes, it was widely believed that geological and mining activities require state supervision. According to the Act of 4<sup>th</sup> February, 1994 — *Geological and Mining Law*, which regulates geological and mining activities in Poland, there are three levels of geological administration – Minister of the Environment, Voivode (head of the provincial government) and Starost (county administrator).

The Minister of the Environment fulfils tasks in the area of geology with the assistance of the Chief National Geologist, who exercises substantive supervision over the Department of Geology and Geological Concessions.

The scope of responsibilities of geological administration includes:

- creating the geological policy of the state;
- initiating and financing of geological research;
- granting concessions for:
  - prospecting and exploration of mineral deposits,
  - exploitation of minerals from deposits,
  - non-reservoir storage of substances and underground storage of wastes;
- supervising the fulfilment of contractual obligations by concession holders;

- managing geological data;
- balancing natural resources;
- geological mapping;
- accepting and approving geological documentation and projects, according to Geological and Mining Law;
- drafting and interpretation of Geological and Mining Law;
- granting the geological qualifications.

The Minister of the Environment grants concessions concerning fuels, metal ores and some industrial minerals (e.g., salts, gypsum, native sulphur, etc.) as well as brines, curative and thermal waters. The Minister of the Environment also grants concessions for non-reservoir storage of substances and underground storage of wastes as well as for prospecting for, exploration and exploitation of natural resources carried out within the boundaries of the maritime areas of Poland. Concessions concerning minerals other than those listed above are granted by local and self-governments.

The Minister of the Environment plays a very important role in stimulation of geological research by commissioning and financing a variety of geological surveys, reports and maps, which help to increase the level of understanding of Poland's geology. A great example of such state-supported research is a recently carried out series of extensive regional seismic experiments (POLONAISE'97, CELEBRATION 2000, ALP 2002 and SUDETES 2003), thanks to which Central Europe is now the most thoroughly investigated region in the world.

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