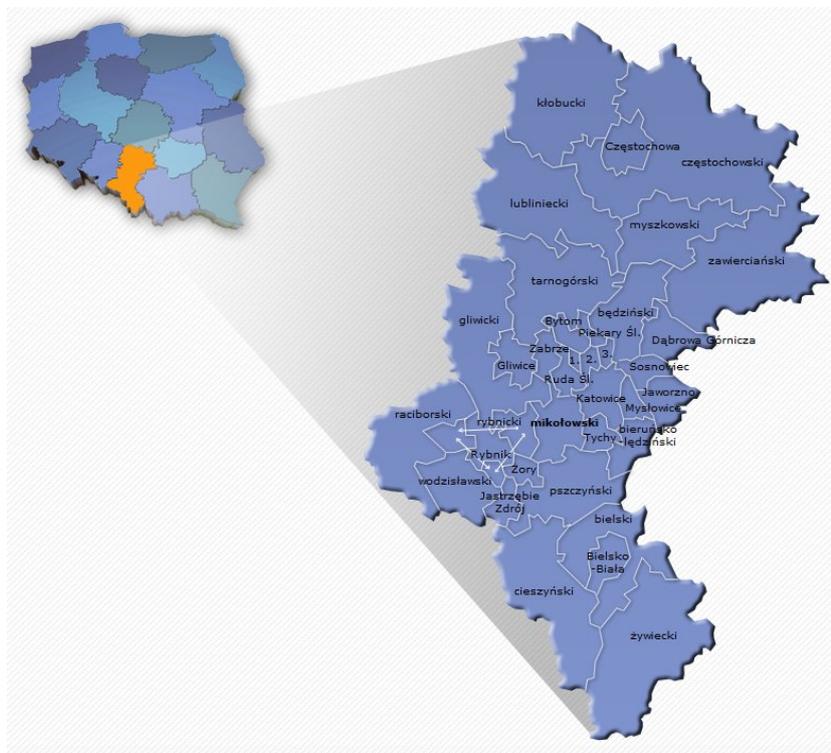


1. Major facts about the city and region

Counting more than 90.000 inhabitants, Mikołów County (Powiat mikołowski) came into operation on the 1 January 1999, in Silesian Voivodeship in southern Poland. Mikołów County consists of five, dynamically-developing communes which have recently undergone changes in post-communist period. Each of five communes has its own history, tradition, peculiarity; even so, together they create one organism so called 'Little Homeland'. Despite the fact that it is among big towns, such as Gliwice and Katowice, it is a quiet nook of Upper Silesia, between the noisy industrial and scientific centers and the rest areas of Beskid Mountains. The territory of Mikołów County covers 232 square kilometres.

Enhancement of the landscape



Today Mikołów County is proud of its constantly growing municipal and road infrastructure. The recent years have brought changes in heavy industry. It has been adjusted to the needs of free market economy and has been made more

environmentally friendly. Much attention is paid to development of small and middle - sized enterprises, investments connected with housing, tourism, sport and recreation and also protection of the natural environment- it was regulated by the Program for Environmental Protection for Mikołów County for years 2004 – 2011, the planning document which is an element of realization of the National Environmental Policy.



Urban green areas are important elements in the space of the county. Quantity and variety of actions in relation to the formulation and rehabilitation of green areas, as well as equipment to adapt existing areas of woodland, through appropriate selection of species and varieties of trees and shrubs adapted to the soil and habitat conditions, directly affect their functions of recreational and aesthetic values in the general urban landscape. Planned intentions include:

- Nurture and maintenance of county parks and green areas for housing.
- Diversifying the composition of the high and low green city parks, green areas and green belts of street estate through

plantings of native species of trees, shrubs and vines, and by the introduction of rare and valuable species and varieties.

- Implementation of green areas around buildings equipped for recreational sport and recreational activities.
- Arrangement of green areas within the educational institutions - as far as possible the creation of arboreta and botanical gardens.
- The creation of protective isolation zones and low and high greenery.

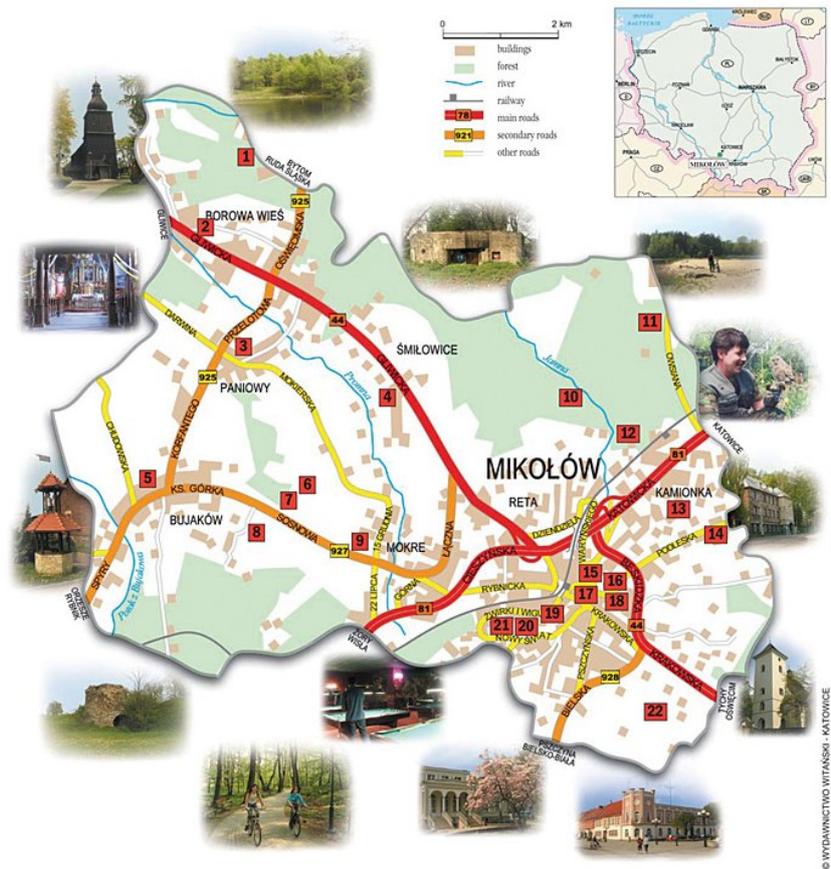
The county's focus of nature conservation mainly includes legal protection of areas of exceptional natural value - the establishment of the proposed nature-landscape – and of areas proposed for protection as nature-scapes and organic farms. The qualities of monumental trees should also be considered as natural monuments. There is a network of protected areas and objects in order to maintain continuity, to preserve local 'corridors' and to remove ecological barriers - this involves, inter alia, an increase of forest cover and seat for at least 20%.

Environment

Mikolow County residents enjoy and value a clean and attractive environment and support new initiatives to further improve environmental conditions. In the last 5 years, residents have improved their recycling rate to 29% and it is still climbing. Recyclables and waste are separated by householders and collected on alternate weeks. Green garden waste can be collected for a small annual fee and road sweepings are also recycled with organic matter composted and the grit reused in landscaping works.

There are also training activities organized by environmental organizations, eco-social themes including the benefits of thermal renovation of buildings, modernization of central heating boilers and furnaces in households using biomass combustion process.

Technical reclamation includes the shaping of land surface, restoring water courses and transfer of engineering networks. There then follows the biological reclamation, i.e. revegetation. Already reclaimed slag heap "Skalny" in the Łaziska, turned up



covered with lush vegetation, becoming a place for family walks - in the past it was a biggest burning slag heap in Europe!

Plans for the future

Very important issue for us is the water cycle study and strategic flood risk assessment, both of which recognize that the area, while likely to be affected by climate change, is also one of potential water shortage which will, unless properly addressed, threaten to damage important ecological areas. Alongside this, work is being undertaken to quantify the necessary infrastructure, social as well as physical, to help us bringing forward truly sustainable new developments. A study about the local potential for renewable energy is underway.

A further important piece of work which has been undertaken is the preparation of a green infrastructure strategy which looks at current assets and how they can be enhanced. By taking these factors into account as new development is planned, it is our aim to make sure the valued environment of Mikołów County and the surrounding countryside can not only be protected, but enhanced over the coming decades.

2. The actual situation and recent developments of parks and gardens in the region

Silesian Botanical Garden

The Silesian Botanical Garden is the youngest botanical garden in Poland. It was founded as an “Association of Societies and Institutions” in May 2003. The Garden’s opening dates from 1996. A description of the natural landscape had been prepared, the municipal land use of Mikołów was changed, and land was obtained from The Agricultural Property Agency of the State Treasury. All this work needed much persistence and determination. After receiving permission from the Minister for the Environment in February 2006, we became a member of the Botanical Gardens’ Society in Poland.



The Centre for Ecological and Environmental Education (C3E) is the administrative centre for the Silesian Botanical Garden (SiBG – see www.sibg.org.pl). Mikolow City Council provides this institutional base which is located in new buildings and is supported by several other sponsors – members of the Association of Societies and Institutions. An initial five-year contract with Mikolow City Council has been signed in relation to the C3E program. C3E programs offer enrichment education for adult leaders and young people in our region.

The mission of the Botanical Garden is to protect and preserve the endangered plant species of the Upper-Silesian region for future generations. The Garden boasts a number of collections, ranging from the dendrological, habitat-based, and decorative to herbal ones. The institution is also involved in environmental

and nature-based education, instigating meetings directed at a variety of age groups. Classes and workshops for children and teenagers are held in interesting nature spots, where the 'nature stories' formula leaves room to move beyond theory and get involved with its practical applications. The Gardens also hold various competitions and projects relating to nature conservation, and are a centre of scientific activity. The Silesian Botanical Garden is supported by the cities of the Silesian Voivodeship, the University of Silesia, the Silesian University of Technology and the Polish Academy of Sciences.

There is a variety of habitats both cultivated and wild in the 100-hectare site in Mikolow-Mokre which is used for both plant protection, scientific, educational, recreation and cultural purposes. The untamed and cultivated gardens are dedicated to maintaining the biodiversity of Silesian flora and fauna along with plants that yield high levels of bio-energy. Rare habitats and around 30 threatened species of plants are conserved in the garden. Recently four small ponds have been created to develop aquatic plant collections and to for water retention. An ambitious design and location for a Japanese Garden have been identified and funding from sponsors is being sought to implement this. In addition, a Terrace Garden is being planned and will be established in due course along with other concepts such as a reservation to display a collection of diverse native species of grasses; a tree renewal enclosure, arboretum; etc. The full details with visual impressions of these concepts and a detailed map of the garden can be seen at www.sibg.org.pl (in Polish) and at <http://esdinsibg.wordpress.com> (in English).

Planty Park in Mikolow

The favourite recreational place in Mikołów is the Planty Park (photo below). It is located between the Konstytucji 3 Maja Street and the Aleksander stream and it covers the area of over 13 ha. The origins of the Planty Park go back to the 18th century. It was then that the hussar colonel Korwin-Wierzbicki founded a garden-park which he named Charlottenhal out of love for his beautiful wife Charlotte. Near a little bridge in the centre of the park, there is a stone obelisk dating back to 1796 commemorating the historical fact. In 2001, the renovated park was registered as a monument of the Silesian Region.



Voivodship Park of Culture and Recreation in Chorzów

The Voivodship Park of Culture and Recreation is a complex located in the centre of the Metropolitan Association of Upper Silesia in Silesia. Founded in the 1960s from the initiative of a local politician Jerzy Zietek, it became a sports, recreation, arts, community centre (www2.wpkiv.com.pl/main/index.html).

The 620-hectare area is a place full of unique flora; a citizen-friendly place of relax. It offers many attractions for people of all ages. It is to be a place of rest for the citizens being tired of the city noise. It is the largest city park of this type in Europe. In addition to the extensive green area, there are many facilities located within the park, among others: planetarium, Silesian Amusement Park, rosarium, Paintball Park, 'Fala' swimming pool complex, 'Palenisko" Rope Park, ZOO, garden, Upper Silesia Ethnographic Park, Silesian Stadium, Silesian Sculpture, narrow gauge railroad, yachting port and bicycle paths. The Silesian Stadium hosts not only international football games, but also great music events.

Municipal Palm House in the city of Gliwice

The Palm House was set up in 1880 within the Fryderyk Chopin's Municipal Park. Building a greenhouse is a modern architectural design with an area of 2000 m², where grows more than 5,600 plants, and the oldest specimens are more than 100 years old. Municipal Palm House is the educational venue for popularization of flora and fauna of non-native

climatic zones. It enables children and young people to gain information on plants and animals in a much more interesting way than learning from school books. It provides adults with perfect natural surroundings in which they can unwind and relax. For elderly people, on the other hand, the Palm House is a pleasant spot for meetings and socialising with others (www.palmiarnia.gliwice.pl).

Botanical Garden of City Zabrze

Garden was established in 1938. During World War II has been designed for growing vegetables. Currently garden occupies an area of about 6.5 ha. One of the parts of the botanical garden, was designed in the French style with dominate of the regularity and geometric shapes, and with the quarters separated by a hedgerow. In contrasts, there is also a part of the park which is characterized by naturalness of the landscape (English style). Children will have great fun on a well-equipped playground, located in the middle of the garden. Near economic sites, there are two natural ponds and artificial pond with an island in the middle. Wink is combined with a stream located near the Rockery. There are about 5,000 specimens of trees and shrubs. It also has a collection of multi-annual herbaceous plants of more than 200 taxa. There also is The Centre for Ecological Education of children in the Botanical Garden of City Zabrze (www.mob-zabrze.pl)

The Moravian Gate Arboretum

It is situated on the east slope of the valley of the Odra River with three streams running nearby. The diversity of configuration and biotype (from wood to marshy forest) and the influence of the Moravian Gate upon the climate have contributed considerably to the existence of biodiversity. As the Obora Forest has never been deforested completely, we can still admire even hundred and eighty-year-old trees. The visitors can choose one of two walking routes: an educational and dendrological, both 2.5 kilometres long (www.raciborz.pl/eng/moravian_gate_arboretum.html).

The dendrological route leads through numerous gullies, steep hills, picturesque streams, and boggy thickets. This relatively small area shows diverse vegetation of forest communities consisting of various species. Particular stops of the ecological

path allow the visitors to observe various habitats, their flora and fauna as well as the interactions taking place between elements of the forest ecosystem. The path allows the visitors to learn about particular green and bushy plants accompanying the forest and realise that forest is a complex organism, where not only trees matter.

3. Useful links

Important parks and gardens in Silesian Voivodeship:

- Historic Park of Pszczyna
<http://www.pszczyna.info.pl/pl/zabytkowy-park-pszczynski/strona/53>
- Complex of Landscape Parks of Silesian Province
<http://www.zpk.com.pl/>
- Cistercian Landscape Compositions of Rudy Wielkie
<http://www.rybnik.pl/index.php?id=541>

Organizations in the field of parks and gardens:

- Katowice City of Gardens
<http://www.2016katowice.eu/>
- Association "Green Zagłębie"
<http://www.zielone.org.pl/>
- Workshop for All Beings
<http://pracownia.org.pl/>
- Ruda Śląska's Society of the Friends of Trees
<http://rtpd.eu/>

More information about Hybrid Parks and INTERREG IVC
www.hybridparks.eu