

Office of Rail Transport

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Rail transport usage rate in Polish regions and counties

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The Office of Rail Transport examined how rail passenger traffic looked at regional county level in 2022. Sopot, Gdynia, Skierniewice and Grodzisk Mazowiecki county were districts with the highest ratio of the number of rail passengers to the number of inhabitants. At the opposite end of the spectrum are 43 counties - inhabited by 6% of Poland's population - where passengers have no access to railway stations.

For the second time the Office of Rail Transport researched access of passengers to rail transport in counties, using the rail transport usage rate, i.e. the passenger exchange at county stations in relation to population. According to this indicator, Sopot (a city with county rights) had the best result. For Sopot, with a population of 32,700 in 2022, the rate was 391 boardings/alightings per inhabitant. It means that, assuming that the only people travelling by train in Sopot were residents of that city, each of them travelled by train almost 400 times in one year. This is significantly higher than last year's result, which was just over 233 and was also the best result in Poland. However, for tourist destinations, the high usage rate illustrates that the possibility of using rail transport to this destination is more important than the actual usage by residents in place. In the case of Sopot, the importance of the rail transport is indisputable.

Apart from Sopot, for only three other counties the rate was over 100. The second was Gdynia with a result of 138.2 (in 2021 it was 92.3), followed by Skierniewice, with 106.9 train journeys per inhabitant per year (a year earlier it was 73.9). The top four is rounded off by Grodzisk Mazowiecki county, which had a similar result to Skierniewice - 104.6 (an increase by 19 points over the year).

The next group of counties are those with the rail transport usage rate between 50 and 100. There are nine such in Poland. The first one is Gdańsk (the rail transport usage rate - 91), followed by Mińsk Mazowiecki county (76.4), Nowy Dwór county (71.7), Żyrardów county (70.8), Katowice (65.3), Siedlce (63.5), Pruszków county (57.3), then Warsaw (50.7) and Otwock county (50.2). All of these districts, with the exception of Gdańsk, are located in the Mazowieckie Voivodeship. In the Warsaw agglomeration rail transport is of great importance for county

residents.

The number of rail passengers is on the rise, but still in many locations rail transport is chosen infrequently. It also applies to locations where trains stop more than once an hour. Developing the transport offer is a task for rail carriers, public transport bodies and the infrastructure manager. A good offer with sufficient number of trains and connections is most likely to increase rail transport usage rate. Other reasons include good connectivity with other modes of transport and creating connections which take into account people's main reasons for travelling. Plans for the development of passenger rail should not overlook areas where rail currently does not reach - the creation or reinstatement of rail transport services should be the subject of detailed analysis and public consultation – comments Ignacy Góra, President of the Office of Rail Transport.

The situation regarding rail accessibility in the counties has not changed since last year's analysis. There were still 43 out of 380 counties where trains did not stop. It means that 11% of counties do not have a single active railway station. Thus, nearly 2.3 million Polish residents cannot use train travel in the county where they live.

The situation is worst in the Warmińsko-Mazurskie, Małopolskie and Mazowieckie Voivodeships. There are 21 counties in Warmia and Mazury region. 6 of them (with 204.6 thousand inhabitants) have no passenger railway stations. In the Małopolskie Voivodeship there are no railway stations in 4 counties, so 361.2 thousand people are deprived of access to the rail transport. In Mazovia 246.5 thousand people have no access to rail transport, as there are no passenger trains stop in 6 counties.

In the case of Podlaskie Voivodeship, four counties had no passenger exchange and in the remaining counties the usage rate did not exceed 10. This is the only voivodeship where none of the counties had the rate higher than 10.

The best situation in terms of railway station accessibility is in Lubuskie Voivodeship, where there is at least one railway station in every county. However, the connectivity of the rail transport with other modes of transport and the transport offer available is also important.

Data on rail accessibility in the counties shows that railways need development where they are underused. Rail needs passengers and passengers need rail. With the right offer of services, the number of passengers should increase every year.

[Summary of key information from the 2022 regional and local rail accessibility index survey](#)

Detailed data on passenger exchange in Polish counties in 2022