

Government of Canada Signs Youth Mobility Agreement with Poland. Many Similar Agreements Exist with Other Countries.

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On July 14, 2008 the Hon. Diane Finley, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration signed an agreement with Poland that allows youth from Canada and Poland to travel and work in the other country for up to one year. This presents an excellent opportunity for both young Canadians and young Poles to experience each other's culture and to gain valuable experience.

The signing of the Youth Mobility Agreement between Minister Finley and the Polish Minister of Science and Higher Education, Mme Barbara Kudrycka, follows the announcement made by Prime Minister Stephen Harper during his visit to Poland in April, 2008.

Minister Finley said in the official press release, "For more than a century, Poles have migrated to Canada and made great contributions to our country." She added, "More than 800,000 people in Canada trace their roots to Poland. This Youth Mobility Agreement provides young Canadians and young Poles with even greater opportunities to work and travel between our two countries."

"Our goal is to give Canadian and Polish youth the opportunity to discover new countries and learn about the other culture," added Minister Finley.

Youth Mobility Arrangements have resulted in more than 22,000 young Canadians choosing to travel and work abroad in approx-

imately 40 countries each year, and 36,000 foreign youth working and travelling in Canada.

The International Youth Programs are managed by the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT). Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) is responsible for issuing work permits to participants of the programs.

The signing of the Agreement between Canada and Poland offers people between the ages of 18 and 35 the opportunity to work and travel in each other's countries. Benefits to participants of the youth programs include cultural discovery, international network building and gaining the skills and work experience to succeed in an increasingly globalized society.

According to the Citizenship and Immigration Press Release, "This Agreement is another example of Canada and Poland working together to build a stronger relationship." On March 1, 2008 Canada lifted the visa requirement for Poland, allowing Polish citizens to visit Canada for up to six months without a visa.

These youth employment programs are the result of joint agreements signed between Canada and participating countries. Countries that have Joint Youth Agreements with Canada are the following: Australia, Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, Norway, the Republic of Korea, Sweden and Switzerland. And now Poland.

There also youth employment programs operate through Student Work Abroad Program (SWAP) which are operated by the Canadian Federation of Students and administered by Travel Cuts through various Universities and Colleges in Canada.

These youth programs are an excellent opportunity for a young person to travel to new countries, meet new people and experience different cultures and to gain valuable work experience.

For information on International Youth Programs, visit Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade website at www.international.gc.ca/experience. For information on visiting Canada, visit CIC's website at www.cic.gc.ca.