



UEFA's Polish choices

Four Polish cities: Warsaw, Wroclaw, Poznan and Gdansk will host the European Football Championship 2012, decided UEFA. Poland will co-host the Euro 2012 with Ukraine.

After a three-hour session in Bucharest today, fourteen members of UEFA's Executive Committee and President Michel Platini made a final decision on which cities will organize the European Football Championship in 2012.

Since UEFA announced in 2007 that Poland and Ukraine will be the host nations of Euro2012, six Polish cities: Warsaw, Wroclaw, Poznan, Gdansk, Krakow and Chorzow, and six Ukrainian cities: Kiev, Donetsk, Dnipropetrovsk, Lviv, Odessa and Kharkiv, have entered a fierce competition to organize the championship.

According to an April 2009 report by UEFA which rated stadiums, airports, hotels and transport in the cities that contested for Euro 2012, Krakow had the highest ratings and was most prepared to host the championship, while Chorzow and Gdansk were in danger of being excluded from the championship. Eventually UEFA decided to offer a chance to Warsaw, Wroclaw, Poznan, Gdansk and deprive Krakow and Chorzow of it.

Warsaw

Warsaw – the capital city, will hold the opening match, two other group matches, a quarter-final and a semi-final. The games are to be played at the National Stadium, with a potential capacity of 55,000. The stadium is currently under construction and will be finished in May 2011.

Warsaw, a city of 1.7 million people, is the major political, business and cultural center of Poland. The city, completely destroyed during the WW II, was rebuilt in socialist realism style and now is turning into a modern European city. But the old Warsaw climate can be found at the beautiful Old Town district, listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site.



UEFA praises Warsaw for its city transport and accommodation infrastructure. Also the city's Frederic Chopin Airport is good enough, UEFA claims. The problem is an unfinished stadium and lack of highways leading to Warsaw.

Gdansk

The Gdansk stadium, Baltic Arena, will have the capacity to host 47,000 spectators and would hold three group matches during the UEFA championships. The stadium is, to date, non-existent, and the exterior will resemble amber, a regional treasure that has long been extracted from the Baltic Sea. Construction started in 2008 and is expected to be completed by 2010.

UEFA's inspections of progress in the city show that they are less than pleased with stadium construction because they fear that the economic recession has slowed it down. However, event organizers are satisfied with the local airport and public transportation possibilities. Gdansk, however, faces the fact that there are too few hotels and direct international connections to the city.

Poznan

Poznan – the fifth largest city in Poland will hold three group matches at Lech Poznan's stadium. Its current capacity of 21,000 seats is being expanded to 46,000 seats. Re-construction will be finished next year.

Poznan, with 560,000 inhabitants, is one of the oldest cities in Poland and a former capital city. Nowadays, it is an important business and financial center. Recently, the UN Climate Change Conference took place here.

UEFA praises Poznan for its nearly-finished stadium and local transport. The city is also well connected by highways. Poznan's disadvantage is a small airport as well as poorly-developed hotel infrastructure.

Wroclaw

Wroclaw – the fourth largest city in Poland, will hold three group matches at Slask Wroclaw's stadium in Maslice. The stadium, under-construction, is expected to hold 44,000 soccer fans and will be finished in 2010.



Wroclaw, with more than 600,000 inhabitants, is one of the major cities of historical region of Silesia, where Polish tradition mixes with German, Czech and Jewish influences. Wroclaw is known for its more than 200 bridges and a beautiful medieval Old Town.

Krakow (eliminated)

Krakow is one of the largest and oldest Polish cities situated on the Vistula river in the south of Poland. It is inhabited by 750,000 people. From 1038 till 1596, it was a capital of Poland. Krakow is a popular tourist spot with lots of beautiful monuments and a vivid art scene.

According to UEFA's report, Krakow is well prepared for the European Football Championship. The Krakow's Wisla Stadium, build in 1953, holds over 20,000 spectators. Currently, it is being renovated and is a 'reserve' venue for the Euro 2012. Krakow has a lot of hotels to accommodate football teams as well as tourists who come to watch matches. Krakow International Airport Balice is the second busiest airport in Poland after Warsaw's Frederic Chopin Airport.

Chorzow (eliminated)

The city of Chorzow, located in southern Poland, is home to the Silesian Stadium with a capacity to host 55,000 spectators. Built in 1956, the stadium regularly hosts football matches, motorcycle speedway world championships and concerts for stars like the Rolling Stones, The Police and the Red Hot Chili Peppers.

The stadium would be prepared as a 'reserve' stadium for the Euro2012 for extra matches. While the stadium itself needs renovation and there are too few hotels and possibilities for international transportation in the immediate area, UEFA is reportedly pleased with one thing in the town: public transportation.

Ukraine

In spite of economic crises in Ukraine, the country will co-host the Euro 2012 with Poland, decided UEFA finally. The European Football Championship matches will take place in the capital of Ukraine – Kiev. The other host cities might be: Donetsk, Lviv, and Kharkiv if they prove by November 2009 they are ready to organize the championship. Dnipropetrovsk and Odessa, similarly to Krakow and Chorzow, were excluded from the Euro 2012.